

VESTDIJK'S 'SYMFONIE VAN VICTOR SLINGELAND'

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## ABSTRACT OF THESIS

The thesis constitutes a study of the trilogy of novels by Simon Vestdijk entitled Symfonie van Victor Slingeland. It is an evaluation and interpretation of the novels based on the theory that the author is an extremely self-aware, self-conscious writer, and that this fact is vital in determining the nature of the novels and the two main characters.

Chapter 1 shows how Vestdijk is conscious of his own role as a novelist, which finds expression in the inclusion of a novelist character, S, who is himself engaged in writing during the course of the books. There are various parallels in modern European literature, most notably André Gide's Les Faux-monnayeurs, and the comparison serves to throw light on the Dutch novels. Vestdijk's self-awareness extends to his position as an artist: both his position as an artist in society, and his position with regard to other artists and art-forms. This in turn finds expression in the trilogy, firstly in the characters of S and Slingeland, and secondly in the interaction of these two main characters. I have dealt with these two points in two separate ways. Chapter 2 is an analysis of the individual characters of S and Victor Slingeland, and of their relationship from a psychological point of view. Chapter 3 treats them as individual representatives of artists in general and also of different branches of art.

The aim was to present a study of these novels based on a theory about the author, for which the study itself in turn provides the evidence, my conclusion being that my hypotheses i) Vestdijk is a self-conscious writer, and ii) this is the main factor governing the 'ontstaan' of the novel and its form, were correct.

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All novelists are self-aware to a greater or lesser degree and must realize that they occupy a special position in society because of their power to influence society by their writing. Their response to this position varies of course - some see it as a novel one, and have social consciences, writing with an aim to expose, even change whatever it is that they feel strongly about. They have consciously decided to use their influence to try and expose their views on society. Other novelists who are more philosophically inclined than politically tend to be more individualistic and subjective in their writing, and their thinking is directed towards themselves in the first place. There is no doubt that Vestdijk fits into this last category.

## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is to present a study of the trilogy of novels by Simon Vestdijk entitled Symfonie van Victor Slingeland, an evaluation and interpretation of the novels based on a theory that the author is an extremely self-aware, self-conscious writer and that this fact is vital in determining the nature of the novels and the two main characters. My intention is that an interdependence, or better still, a reciprocity between theory and study will develop, so that the study, at the same time as being dependent on the original assumption, will provide the evidence for it, resulting in a theory on Vestdijk's personality and the nature of the trilogy.

All novelists are self-aware to a greater or lesser degree and must realize that they occupy a special position in society because of their power to influence society by their writing. Their response to this position varies of course - some see it as a moral one, and have social consciences, writing with an aim to expose, even change whatever it is that they feel strongly about. They have consciously decided to use their influence to try and impose their views on society. Other novelists who are more philosophically inclined than politically tend to be more individualistic and subjective in their writing, and their thinking is directed towards themselves in the first place. There is no doubt that Vestdijk fits into this last category.

In a very few cases, the kind of self-consciousness which leads to a high degree of subjectivity has manifested itself in a particular phenomenon which I shall term the 'novel within a novel', as found in the works of Simon Vestdijk, André Gide and Aldous Huxley. I am not using this term in the strictest possible sense of two actual novels, an inner and an outer one. We must take the characters' word for it that the inner novel exists in most cases, although sometimes we are allowed a glimpse of the actual text. Reinhard Kuhn has talked about the 'Künstler-roman'<sup>1</sup> which began with Goethe's Werther and continued through the Romantic movement up to the present day, where some of its representatives are André Gide's Les Faux-monnaveurs; Flann O'Brien's At Swim-Two-Birds; and Iris Murdoch's Under The Net. The term 'Künstlerroman' is too general despite the fact that most of the novels mentioned do contain a writer-figure. Vestdijk himself used the term, which he explains in the essay 'Het lyrisch beginsel van de roman'<sup>2</sup>.

'Hier (in the 'kunstenarsroman') scheidt de romancier niet alleen een roman, maar bovendien nog een schepper in de roman.'

This quotation describes the novels I am writing about, except that they go one step further - the creator within the novel is actually engaged in creating yet another novel.

Steven Kellman has isolated a sub-genre which he calls the 'self-begetting novel'<sup>3</sup>, of which the main features are that the central action is the writing of a novel; the central protagonist is a novelist; and the actual novel begets both a self and itself, i.e. it represents a self-portrait. However, if there is such a novel, I have yet to find a true one. Les Faux-monnaveurs and the Symfonie van Victor Slingseland come the closest to it, but neither of them

possess all of the characteristics listed above because the action never hinges on the writing of the fictitious novel. I shall, then, simply refer to the 'novel within a novel'. The two works mentioned above, with the addition of Point Counter Point by Huxley, have certain features in common: firstly, the inner novel is written by a character who contains so much of the author's own personality that one automatically compares and even identifies the two with each other. Miriam Allott, in her book Novelists on the Novel, includes excerpts from Les Faux-monnaveurs and Point Counter Point in which she seems to have fallen into the trap of taking pronouncements of the novelist characters to be those of the author. Secondly, the fictitious writers' comments on their own work - the inner novel - and the judgement of the other characters are in general applicable to the outer one, providing the reader with a built-in critique. Finally, since the novelist figure is writing about people and events around him (the very ones with which the actual novel is concerned), what we see and hear of the inner novels presents a mirror image (if often a distorted one) of the outer novel. This acts as an effective device for awakening the reader's awareness of perspective.

It is in this light that Vestdijk's Slingeland trilogy will be studied here - as a product of his overriding interest in himself. His very first novel Kind tussen vier vrouwen which was only recently published in 1972, is about himself as a child. His introspection was so great that it manifested itself here as an account of his psychological development during childhood and adolescence, and the various forces at work on his character. There are many novels containing autobiographical elements which go to show how his thinking and imagining were pervaded with images of himself. Gide

also shares some of the conscious egocentricity and even went as far as publishing his Journal des Faux-monnayeurs, an account of the creation of his novel, demanding from the reader an interest in the inner workings of his mind as great as his own. (It is interesting here to note that Thomas Mann, whom I have occasion to quote later also wrote a similar account of the genesis of his novel Doktor Faustus: Die Entstehung des Doktor Faustus.) Vestdijk does not use his characters so much as a mouthpiece for his own ideas like Gide, but as a representation of different facets of his own character. They demonstrate a recurrent need for systematic self-examination: as Vestdijk left childhood and student days behind him, he reviewed and assessed this period of his development in his work, firstly in Kind tussen vier vrouwen and then in the Anton Wachter novels which were partly based on this long first novel.

It is significant that the novels which concern us appeared after a break in productivity of three years during which he would have had a great deal of time for reflection, and, what is more, 'op latere leeftijd', as Vestdijk himself puts it. Knowing his disposition for introspection, it is likely that he felt the need to review his life as an artist whilst there was still time. This is what the author himself has to say about his development as a novelist: 'Typeerend voor mij is wel, dat ik begonnen ben met autobiografische romans, en pas via de historische roman bij de kontemporaine roman beland ben.. ..In de gang van zaken zit dus een lijn; je kunt zeggen dat ik de zuivere fictie pas op latere leeftijd na veel ervaring, heb kunnen schrijven.'<sup>4</sup>

This is of course very true, provided that one makes a distinction between actual, concrete autobiographical facts and the abstract,



intangible autobiographical 'truths' - for example psychological tendencies, such as the one to depression, and the disposition to be an artist.

The Symfonie van Victor Slingeland constitutes the memoirs of a writer who is known simply as 'S' throughout the books. Ostensibly they are concerned primarily with the conductor friend of S - Victor Slingeland - and S takes pains to stress that he is not writing an autobiography, and yet he turns out to be as central to the trilogy as his friend, forcing one to take his comment 'Aangezien ik hier geen autobiografie schrijf..' with a pinch of salt. In this way the trilogy reflects Vestdijk's own position, since, despite an apparent conscious effort on S's part to omit irrelevant facts (i.e. about himself), there is still enough indirect information to learn from, and this applies to Vestdijk and his writing too. In other words, an author can put a great deal of himself into a book without it being factual autobiographical evidence. This places one firmly in the totally subjective realm of interpretation. But the temptation to read so much into the Slingeland novels is justified in the respect that they are so rich in allusions both to Vestdijk's own life and to his other works, not to mention blatant hints as to hidden meanings - take the initials of certain characters' names, for instance: S, Victor Slingeland, Stan Vastenou, and Simon Vestdijk - although one cannot discount the possibility of red herrings. Knowing that Vestdijk disliked curiosity about himself on the part of readers, he could be taking revenge, or at the least leaving them in doubt as to whether they can take these characters with their combinations of S/V initials to have any connection with the author.

There is one vital way in which S is more important than Victor- without him, these memoirs would not exist. He is by no means the traditional narrator, the invisible eye which sees and relates. The story is told from S's point of view and coloured by S's feelings, either on the occasion when the events described took place, or when reviewing them. Taking this into account, one must also look at the two main figures in the light of their relationship to and with each other. Sometimes the character of Slingeland comes to the fore, and we are temporarily no longer aware of S, sometimes it fades completely into the background, when the focus shifts to S at work and we witness the writing of a novel and its reception. This fictitious novel acts as a kind of mirror to the actual novel, both when it comes to shedding light on Vestdijk's own method of going to work and when it comes to forestalling criticism. It becomes gradually apparent that he is aware not only of himself as a novelist and of the work he produces and its possible shortcomings, but also of the more general implications of his authorship, namely his position as an artist in society. Since the way to understanding an artist is through his work (indeed, would he be an artist if he produced nothing?), I shall first look at the trilogy from the point of view of its form, the main feature of which is the novel within a novel, and the function that S has as author of the fictitious inner novel. I shall then turn to the characters of S and Slingeland, who, as artists, provide the material firstly for the discussion on the role and problems of the artist in society, and secondly on the different categories of artist. I shall look at them in this light only after I have presented a psychological study which is

essential in that, besides complementing the last chapter on Vestdijk and 'kunstenaarschap', the psychology of the characters is a main feature of the trilogy.

The Victor Stiggeland trilogy is one of the best examples of the type of novel I have described in the Introduction, and serves the novel within a novel. Novels which contain a novelist character and passing references to his work are relatively plentiful, but the theme has never to my knowledge been fully developed, nor all its possibilities explored in one single novel. The 'Symfonie' comes closer to this than most of the novels in question, but even here it is not central to the trilogy with respect to the story being told (i.e. the history of the conductor Victor Stiggeland), although in one or another sense it could well be regarded as central. It is the fact that Victor Stiggeland is the central character of the trilogy, and that he is a novelist, which makes the trilogy as a whole so important, not only for the study of Vestdijk's novel fragments, but also as the story-teller. To elaborate profusely without the books would not even arise. What is more - it is entirely up to him what he will include in his account, and this is naturally dependent on what he is interested in, and on what aspects of Victor's life he considers important. Since there is no omnipresent, invisible narrator, what we learn of Stiggeland is limited to what he himself has either experienced at first-hand or heard second-hand. Thus it is not Vestdijk's intention to present the reader with an objective study of a conductor, but a subjective one as seen through the eyes of a fictitious novelist character.

This matter is further complicated by the fact that the books are narrated in the first person singular, which results in a kind of

## CHAPTER ONE

### VESTDIJK AND THE NOVEL

#### Narration

The Victor Slingeland trilogy is one of the best examples of the type of novel I have described in the Introduction and termed the novel within a novel. Novels which contain a novelist character and passing reference to his work are relatively plentiful, but the theme has never to my knowledge been fully developed, nor all its possibilities explored in one single novel. The 'Symfonie' comes closer to this than most of the novels in question, but even here it is not central to the trilogy with respect to the story being told (i.e. the history of the conductor Victor Slingeland), although in another sense it could well be considered central: despite the fact that Slingeland's life is the focal point of the trilogy, the writer S, who is also the narrator, emerges as vitally important, not only for the story-line as Slingeland's close friend, but also as the story-teller. To elaborate: presumably without S the books would not even exist. What is more - it is entirely up to him what he will include in his account, and this is naturally dependent on what he is interested in, and on what aspects of Victor's life he considers important. Since there is no omnipresent, invisible narrator, what we learn of Slingeland is limited to what S himself has either experienced at first-hand or heard second-hand. Thus it is not Vestdijk's intention to present the reader with an objective study of a conductor, but a subjective one as seen through the eyes of a fictitious novelist character.

This matter is further complicated by the fact that the books are narrated in the first person singular, which results in a kind of

double subjectivity: firstly from S's point of view, as we have already discussed above, and secondly from Vestdijk's own point of view. When Vestdijk uses the first person singular, not only the fictitious character is speaking, but Vestdijk too, according to the writer himself:

"In dit verband schiet me iets te binnen; als ik een historische roman schrijf, doe ik dat heel vaak in de 'ik'-vorm, maar probeer dat tegelijk zo objektief mogelijk te doen.... Ik krijg daardoor een combinatie; enerzijds is er de 'bekentenis'-roman (want de Ik is ook wel een beetje mijn Ik), anderzijds, (doordat ik toch die Ik weer niet ben, maar een fiktief personage) sta ik vrij ten opzichte van het onderwerp en bewaar ik mijn objectiviteit." 5

It is true that Vestdijk is here talking about historical novels, but it is worth considering the possibility that when he uses the 'Ik'-form he does so deliberately, because he has some kind of confession to make - and this is confirmed in the conversation between Nol Gregoor and Vestdijk:

G "Welke overwegingen doen jou besluiten voor een romanfiguur de ik-vorm te kiezen of de hij-vorm?.....Nou, bijvoorbeeld in de Slingeland-roman de schrijver S."

V "Ja, ik had toen de behoefte, - ik had een tijd niet geschreven door ziekte -, om me eens echt los te schrijven, en dan kies je de ik figuur." 6

To go back to my comment that whatever we learn of Victor must be limited to what S has experienced or heard, I should like to point out a few examples of possible inconsistencies in narration. In Open boek, when Victor goes abroad for the first time, there is a definite deviation from the usual narrative style, which can really only be viewed as an inconsistency in Vestdijk's work, since it is rather striking and interrupts the narrative flow. Under the circumstances, this break is unavoidable because it is dictated by the subject-matter: Victor and S are miles apart at this stage - Victor in the Austrian Alps and S in Holland. Whilst Victor could

(and no doubt would) have told S much of what happened to him, he would be unlikely to remember all the details included by S in Chapter VI 'De huisberg' and Chapter VII 'Gamshütte' of Open boek, Part 1 in the following two examples.

'Op straat ontsnaptten weinig voorbijgangers aan zijn (Victor's) aandacht, en menigeen, die zijn donkere, peinzende ogen ontmoette, voelde zich, al naar gelang van de eigen inborst, vaag betrupt, of aangemoedigd, of op een plezierige manier ter verantwoording geroepen.'

Obviously the description of the passers-by is totally invented and not observed by the narrator; the question is whether one should criticise Vestdijk for an inconsistency in his narrative technique, or whether one should allow S, who is after all a writer himself, the occasional flight of fancy which could serve to help characterize him as a novelist.

'Al een kwartier was Victor van plan geweest iets te gaan bestellen; maar hij bleef maar zitten, willoos, vaag nieuwsgierig ook hoe vervelend het zou worden, wanneer iedereen erin volhardde zijn mond te houden.'

Temporarily, then, S has thrown off his rôle as witness and recorder of events to become the all seeing eye of the traditional narrator. But at the same time, although this would point to a change in tone, there is nothing remotely objective in his style because, whereas in a traditional novel one is, as a rule, unaware of the narrator's personality, we know that these events took place in S's imagination. Without these rather sensitive descriptions, the prose would tend to be bare and factual, since Vestdijk himself would be limited to what S had heard from Victor in letters and conversation. In other words, Vestdijk, when faced with a choice between inconsistency of mood and inconsistency of narrative technique, deemed the former the more important of the two.

This is not the only instance of such a deviation from the narrative norm. The first two chapters of Terug Tot Ina Damman contain similar examples. Here, despite the fact that it is narrated in the third person singular, the norm is reality as seen through the eyes of the main character, Anton Wachter. The book opens with an impartial description of his new school and its surroundings. If this had been the only example of such a deviation, it would perhaps be more acceptable if regarded as a short preamble to the story, setting the scene, especially as the last sentence reinforces this impression:

'Dit was de school - en de omgeving van de school!'

However, later on in this chapter, and at the beginning of Chapter II, there is a similarly objective portrait of one of the schoolmasters, Meneer Greve. Since none of the other characters are treated in this way, one is somehow led to believe that Greve is going to figure prominently in the story, which is proved to be untrue and so this could be considered a fault of the book. One cannot even call it a consistent inconsistency; the deviation from the normal narrative technique does not occur at intervals, say when a new character (Ina Damman, perhaps) appears, or a new environment comes to play; it is confined to the opening chapters and also to one short passage in Chapter V of Part 2, which has not been mentioned above.

It comes later on in the book when Anton has fallen in love with a rather reluctant Ina, and where Ina is seen in conversation with her friends whilst Anton is not present. Evidently, therefore, it cannot be related from his point of view; indeed it would seem that nothing could have been further from Vestdijk's mind at the time. The effect of this sudden switch is brutal. Out of the blue we are presented

with another view of Anton - Ina's own, and probably the one shared by many of the people with whom Anton comes into contact. We are faced with the conflict between subjective reality, which provides the usual perspective of the book, and a more objective reality, of which we are given a glimpse here. Whilst the reader is perfectly aware of Ina's lack of interest in Anton, the harshness of the truth is dulled by Anton's self-delusion which is experienced at first hand:

'- maar Ina Damman en hij waren voor elkaar voorbestemd. Ze vond het misschien niet altijd even prettig, of amusant, maar er viel weinig aan te veranderen, want hij kon zich niet meer voorstellen hoe zijn leven zonder haar zou zijn, of het hare zonder hem.'<sup>9</sup>

In this passage which immediately precedes Ina's conversation, we are cleverly lulled into a false sense of security, then any illusions are painfully shattered by Ina's cruel words:

"Blijf jullie nou alsjeblieft bij me om vier uur, als die vervelende jongen er weer aankomt".

In other words, we are made to live through the same experience as Anton. I think this is probably the most effective way of achieving such a degree of identification, but at the same time, it is impossible to ignore the fact that this passage represents a major inconsistency in the style of the novel. In this case, as in Open boek, Vestdijk has been willing to sacrifice a stylistic consideration for a much broader general one, such as the impact of an event, or the mood of a passage. The overall effect is of overriding importance.

It is necessary, but difficult, to remember that S is a fictitious character (The degree to which he can be compared with Vestdijk, and identified with him, will be discussed later). This is not so much due to the obvious similarities between them, such as name (or rather initial, presumably of first name) and profession, as to the fact that



Vestdijk uses first person narration. Whereas in Gide's novel, Les Faux-monnayeurs, - because it is narrated in the third person - one is at a sufficient distance from Édouard as to be in a position automatically to compare Édouard's work with his creator's own and realize where they differ, when one is reading the Slingeland novels, there is a tendency not to differentiate between S and Vestdijk.

Another possible reason for this is inherent in the modern novel. The emphasis in the classical novel is placed entirely on event and character - in fact any narration using the first person singular was usually only included in the form of extracts from diaries and the occasional interpolations by the narrator. Although one is not conscious of the character of the narrator, one assumes that he is the author, and the tendency to identify the two with each other would not lead to a fundamental misunderstanding of the work concerned. The temptation to do this is almost second nature; but it would be very dangerous in a modern novel where the emphasis has shifted away from telling a story to propounding ideas - and the ideas which S puts forward need not be those to which Vestdijk would subscribe.

On the other hand, once one has become aware of this complexity, it gives another dimension to the novels. The work can be taken on two levels; there is the primary story level where one reads of Victor's various affairs with women, for example, and where one becomes intrigued with his psychological problems. This is basically what one is led to expect from the trilogy's title. However, one can take a step further back - outside S, as it were - and become the allseeing eye oneself. From this vantage-point it is interesting to look at the

relationship between the two friends and at S's character.

### The Main Characters

At this juncture, one should perhaps attempt a very basic and superficial evaluation of the characters - not as individualistic creations of the author, (see Chapter II), but either as the possible embodiment of someone Vestdijk knew in real life, or as symbolic figures.

Taking S to stand for Simon, there would seem to be a likelihood that these novels could be romans à clef, if only Vestdijk had been a particularly close friend of some conductor as was S. However, it is probably more likely that Vestdijk was here romanticising an acquaintance whom he found to be an attractive person. He mentions this to Nol Gregoor, in fact:

"Victor Slingeland, die toch al een dubbelzinnige figuur is, omdat hij ontworpen was naar iemand die niet eens muzikaal was, laat staan een dirigent, terwijl het toch een heel interessante man was." 10

It has been suggested that Alfie Homan is a portrait of Nijhoff and one might therefore expect the chapters dealing with this character and his circle of friends to represent a portrayal of literary social life in Holland at the time, rather like the one in Aldous Huxley's novel Point Counter Point. This is a roman à clef in that some of the characters can be identified with some prominent figure of the literary world in London in the twenties; for example Mark Rampion who represents D H Lawrence, or Burlap who represents Middleton Murry. In the Symfonie it is not so much a question of who the characters represent as on whom they are based.

It would seem quite likely that figures such as Frits and Nettie were inspired by acquaintances of Vestdijk's but this is relatively

unimportant for an understanding of the particular character, so there is not a great deal to be gained from delving further into this aspect. The fact that any likenesses are not immediately recognizable precludes the possibility of a roman à clef. Nol Gregoor has actually found a real-life Victor Slingeland, a certain Peter van der Wal whom Vestdijk knew in the Lahringen period of his life, however, I do not know if this is the same person as mentioned by Vestdijk in the above quotation. This model can really only have been used for one stage of Slingeland's life, his boyhood, which forms a small part of the books; the flashbacks to the 'houtstadje' of S's youth. Thus the character of Slingeland, as based on Gregoor's model, is only half-based on real life, as the adult Victor cannot be more than a projection of how the boy based on Peter van der Wal might have turned out.

S and Vestdijk are both novelists writing in Holland at roughly the same time with similar personalities, especially with regard to this inclination towards deep depressions which would come over them suddenly and without any apparent cause.

'Urenlang zat ik voor het raam naar die regen  
te kijken, ten prooi aan een zwaarmoedigheid  
even onbegrijpelijk als ongewenst.'<sup>11</sup>

They were even writing novels about the same people - Victor Slingeland, S..., Nettie, Adri Duprez, and so on with the important difference that these characters are fiction (based on real-life) for Vestdijk and 'real-life' for S. S certainly relies on 'real-life' characters to provide his material, but does not present portraits and often omits characteristics which are not relevant to his story. Perhaps relevant comments on the problem of identification in the fictitious novel might equally be applicable to the actual novel and throw some light on the

matter. Take Frits's letter to S in De arme Heinrich in the chapter entitled 'Interview over een mieters boek'.

'... maar het is gek, S..., ik herken jou niet.  
Je bent het, je bent het niet, het is zo  
tussenbeide, en ik zou willen weten.'<sup>12</sup>

This could indeed apply to the Symfonie van Victor Slingeland and I think Frits is expressing the thoughts of many readers who are struck with the similarities between S and Vestdijk. In the actual interview with Frits it becomes clear that, whilst the inner novel reflects many aspects of the outer novel, it does not present us with a perfect mirror image. The most significant difference is that S's central character who is indeed a conductor, is in fact a 'mengenpersoon' consisting of the conductor figure inspired by Victor and another novelist character. So it appears that there is a possibility that S's novel could be the antithesis of Vestdijk's trilogy. The former has one central character created from two people in 'real' life and the latter has two main characters. Could they in fact be created from one person in real-life; could they perhaps stand for different aspects of Vestdijk's own many-sided character? He did after all have a musical side (and a medical one, which is where Bert Duprez could fit in). In a very general sense, the latter statement is probably true, so where the main characters are concerned, one could consider the inner novel to be the antithesis of the trilogy, but where the actual method of creating characters employed by the two writers is concerned, then S and Vestdijk are anything but the antithesis of each other: in fact they employ the same method. Vestdijk imparts this quite unambiguously to Nol Gregoor during one of the radio conversations:

'V. "Maar aan de andere kant is het wel so, dat je nooit een precies lijkend portret levert. Ik geloof niet eens, dat dat door de romantiek kan. In ieder geval probeer ik het nooit. En ik combineer

vaak personen. Dat deed bv. Proust ook.  
Dat zal van meer romanschrijvers bekend zijn.  
Dat ze altijd mengpersonen nemen. Dat is  
natuurlijk een heel waagstuk, want ja, het  
kan een goeie menging worden, of een verkeerde.  
Dat voel je wel, dat wordt wel geregeld door  
geheimzinnige wetten, die je dan over de  
ernstige flaters heenhelpen. Daar vertrouw ik  
maar op." 13

Compare also the first three sentences of this quotation with a  
similar pronouncement by S:

'..want wat zijn mijn mensenportretten waard?  
Ik kan niet eens instaan voor de juistheid van  
mijn telkens hernomen beschrijving van een  
persoonlijkheid zo scherp afgetekend als die van  
Victor Slingeland..' 14

There are, then, striking similarities between the real author and his  
author character, and one can therefore conclude that Vestdijk has  
given S some of his own characteristics, although it is not yet clear,  
to how great an extent.

In the inner novel S includes a number of ghosts of himself which Frits  
finds rather difficult to grasp:

'De normale mate van vereenzelviging tussen  
schrijver en romanfiguren daargelaten, is het toch  
niet gebruikelijk om steeds maar zijn Ik te  
projecteren, en voor zover ik je werk ken, is het  
ook jouw gewoonte niet.' 15

The original writer figure who forms half of the final 'mengpersoon'  
was something of an alter ego, but not a self-portrait, which S feels  
would have been impossible; yet at the same time he feels that a  
certain degree of identification is inevitable.

'Het is bijzonder moeilijk voor een schrijver,  
om zich niet te vereenzelvigen met een schrijver,  
die bezig is vorm aan te nemen onder zijn pen.  
Het is geen zelfportret.' 16

Identification between an author and a character so akin to himself is

not only unavoidable but often unintentional. Yet another S is included in the form of the narrator.

'Welgeteld kwam ik er dus driemaal in voor,  
want ik gebruikte bovendien nog de ikvorm.  
Een voorbeeld van het bovenpersoonlijke in  
de kunst was dit boek niet.' 17

This might as well have been said of the 'Symfonie' itself.

The third S mentioned in the quotation above appears in the shape of a friend of the conductor, who, according to S, represents a caricature of himself.<sup>18</sup> This idea of an author including a caricature of himself immediately calls to mind the character of Bert Duprez, the school-friend of Victor and S, in relation to Vestdijk himself. The three boys spent a lot of time together and so whenever there is a flashback to those adolescent days, Bert appears. He also reappears during flashbacks to S's student days in Amsterdam, mainly in connection with Tante Stan. It is significant that it was Bert who studied medicine like Vestdijk, and not S. Finally the Bert of the present occasionally puts in an appearance: he is now a qualified doctor with a flourishing practice, wife and family. His bearing on the main story is peripheral, he has no direct effect on events, except perhaps where his niece, Adri Duprez, is concerned. She provides rather a gook link with the past, since she is the chief reason why S remains in contact with Bert, and is partly responsible for the resumption of interest in Tante Stan. Whereas the Bert of the flashbacks has some basis in reality (i.e. Vestdijk's own childhood and youth before he became a writer), Doctor Duprez is a purely fictional creation because he is a projection of what Vestdijk might have become, had he no artistic side to his character. In a way, Bert Duprez forms a complement to the character of S: one must sometimes ask oneself if S with all his problems

(e.g. Nettie) stemming from his writing would not have been better off as a 'normal' bourgeois citizen like Bert, or if Vestdijk might not have been happier had he carried on with medicine. The answer is made quite clear by the inclusion of this caricature, since the essence of caricature is to point out someone's faults by ridiculing him, the subject of the caricature representing in no way, then, an ideal.

The young Bert is a caricature of Vestdijk as a child. Consider S's description of his friend in the chapter 'De scheidsrechter' in Het glinsterend pantser: an only child, Bert was pale and delicate, a disappointment to his father, and overwhelmed by his mother's attentions. The descriptions of the family do tend to coincide with those of the Wachter family. Bert, like Anton, was pale-faced and dark-eyed. Compare the description of the former:

'Hij had een gezicht als half vloeibare zeep,  
spierwit.' (Het glinsterend pantser, Pt. 2, Ch. 1)

with that of the latter:

'... zijn gezicht was zo rond en zacht en bleek,  
dat het in zijn eigen vorm de kortste weg naar de  
moederborst teruggenomen scheen te hebben.' (Sint  
Sebastiaan, Pt. 1, Ch. 1).

The similarities do extend to the parents. The passage on Anton's father at the beginning of Sint Sebastiaan (P. 8 'Zijn vader...')<sup>19</sup> might just as well been written about Duprez senior; he was an extrovert, liked entertaining and did this in a public capacity as 'stadsamuseur' as did Vestdijk's own father. Also both mothers were quiet and tended to be forced into the background by their dominant husbands.

This harping back to the Anton Wachter novels only serves to strengthen the impression that Vestdijk has reached another stage of development

in his study of himself, for Bert is merely a caricature of the self he found so interesting as to write a whole series of seven novels about it. Indeed, although towards the end of this period of his life Vestdijk had already begun to write, this activity receives hardly a mention in the Anton Wachter novels. Either Vestdijk was deliberately excluding this side of himself because he felt it did not belong in a study of his development as a person, but in one concerning himself as an artist, or because he simply was not interested in this facet of his personality until much later. It is probably for this reason that the Anton Wachter series stopped where it did; after this the artist in Vestdijk began to prevail over the medical man. Whereas S seems rather far-removed from life and women, leading an apparently celibate existence, Bert fathers several children, runs his incredibly busy practice and even manages to fit in a mistress in Amsterdam. Thus the main function of Bert, who does not figure particularly prominently, is to highlight the emphasis in these books on S/Vestdijk as an artist.

Since the underlying theme of the whole trilogy is art and the artist, the main characters could perhaps be regarded as variations on this theme. S represents the creative artist, Victor the interpreting artist, Bert with nothing of an artist in him at all and Tante Stan perhaps as a modern Werther - the person with an artistic temperament who has failed to find expression for this in any form. This evaluation of the characters must remain superficial at this stage, so to return to the former method of approach, there is one clear message which emerges from the Frits/S confrontation: one must always maintain a certain degree of scepticism towards one's approach when looking at a work in terms of identifying the characters with a real-



life person. This is what Frits tries to do and S feels that it may have obscured his insight into the novel:

'Dat hij bepaalde moeilijkheden had gehad bij het lezen, begreep ik wel, al geloofde ik niet, dat hij er zulke primitieve denkbeelden op nahield over het "gelijken" van een roman als Nettie indertijd tegenover mij had doen voorkomen.' 20

It is indirectly suggested here that there is something rather primitive and basic in the desire to get behind the characters - an understandable urge, though, if one thought that one might find oneself among the characters. S finds the desire annoying, presumably because it means that the reader's interest is effectively channelled away from the actual substance of the book.

'Ik moet ergens een grens trekken, bij dit gesublimeerde geroddel. De volgende keer schrijf ik een roman over zuiver denkbeeldige personen!' 21

#### The inner novel and its bearing on the actual novel

The interview with Frits is obviously central to the 'novel within a novel' aspect of the trilogy, both from the point of view of the inner novel itself and of S's attitudes to writing in general. The most important effect of the interview, however, is probably that it provides the reader with a built-in critique, since any comments in the novel in general and on S's work can also be applied to the actual novels. Indeed, the interview gives us two different viewpoints which cover quite a lot of ground, although S seems to be looking down on Frits, who comes over as the weaker person. One is therefore tempted to listen to S's views rather than to those of Frits; after one of the latter's questions, S adds parentheses:

'(Hiermee had ik Frits erg geholpen.)',

and earlier on in the interview:

'(Dit had Frits op mijn aanraden geschreven.)', which gives rise to the impression that S was behind the questions as well as the answers! The reader has been able to read S's mind, as it were, in chapters such as 'Een roman in een roman in een roman' and 'De provincie losgebroken', and has been in the know all the way along, for which reason Frits may seem slow on the uptake of ideas, and rather than present a point of view, he acts as a catalyst for the expression of S's theories. Whether S actually echoes his creator's own ideas must be decided later.

On the question of the genesis of the novel, it is S's experience that the impulse to write does not come from external stimuli such as events around him, although these are obviously important for his work, as so many of his friends and acquaintances appear in it. In other words, one should not approach the novel in the first instance from the autobiographical point of view. S carefully steers Frits away from this aspect to the actual method of his writing.

As far as character is concerned, S is aware that his views are not widely held: he believes that it should be left up to the reader to realize all the possibilities for the development of a particular character. Given that there are three main determining forces at work in shaping a person's character - namely fate, environment and personal disposition - there are numerous ways open for this development to take. S considers the general opinion to be that characters in a novel should be larger than life, their destinies pre-determined and controlled by the author. S is not saying that his own standpoint is

anti-determinist. Given that a basic deterministic background to a novel is unavoidable for him, he must then make sure that this element of determinism stays in the background, so that it does not influence the reader, who will, as a result, have a greater degree of freedom to use his imagination.

'Trouwens, indeterminisme is pas aardig tegen een deterministische achtergrond. Het is nergens zo plezierig vrij te zijn als in een dwangstaat, en het allervrijst voelden we ons als kind, toen we niets mochten.' 22

The key to S's approach is contained in the following phrase:

'...dat iedere romanfiguur anders had kunnen zijn dan hij is.'

S does not feel that he has failed because Frits is left with this very impression, namely that characters and events could have turned out differently, depending on the interaction of the three determining forces.

Gide's novelist character, Édouard, expresses very similar views to S's, although they concern plot, rather than character.

'Vous devriez comprendre qu'un plan, pour un livre de ce genre, est essentiellement inadmissible. Tout y serait faussé si j'y décidais rien par avance. J'attends que la réalité me le dicte.' 23

La The other characters involved in the discussion are critical of this approach because it entails a complete lack of planning which spells disaster:

'"Mon pauvre ami, dit Laura avec un accent de tristesse; ce roman, je vois bien que jamais vous ne l'écrirez."' 24

Gide makes Édouard appear illogical and display a total lack of forethought and one automatically assesses his views for oneself.

S, However, possesses such an authoritative tone and manner that one tends to accept his opinions more readily.

S's own method of character creation, aside from the basic question of how character is to be determined, is not without its controversial aspects, especially in its very first stage: the way he actually arrives at a character to be manipulated and subjected to whatever forces are to work on it. This is apparently a highly conscious, objective activity for him and seems to be calculated rather than felt - to emanate from the head rather than the heart - judging from his descriptions in the chapter 'Een roman in een roman in een roman' in Open boek, where the most striking thing is the distance which S puts between himself and his characters to enable him to carry out his particular method of creation. André Gide, on the other hand, felt that his characters grew out of him, came into being and took on a life of their own. Curiously enough, the results of these two apparently opposed methods are remarkably similar. Since Gide's characters have minds of their own, according to the author, one must always have the feeling that anything can happen to them, they are capable of anything; which is exactly the effect aimed at by S.

The method described in 'Een roman in een roman in een roman' is in fact something of an experimental one, never employed by S before. Once Frits has heard S's defence of it, his response is rapturous:

'De compositie zat hem (Frits) al even hoog als de inhoud, hij sprak van een geheel nieuw en geniaal procédé van romanverwekking, door romans

in het wilde weg met elkaar te laten paren, figuren te scheppen door het in elkaar schuiven van tien andere figuren, en daar was het eind van weg, want als je figuren steeds in een andere verhouding mengde, dan kreeg je telkens weer iets nieuws. Het was de roman van de toekomst, hij wou er lezingen over houden.' 25

Frits' enthusiasm leaves S cold. True, he goes to extremes, but one would expect S to be a little excited at the idea of inventing a new genre of novel. However, this was certainly not his intention when he set out to fuse the two novels together: as far as S is concerned, it is more a case of necessity being the mother of invention. Since he was combining two unfinished books, S found himself with too many characters, and for the sake of economy, hit on the idea of fusing two or even three of the existing personae into one new character. Frits expresses the obvious objection to this method:

'Gaat dat niet wat op gesynthetiseerde mensen  
lijken, zoiets als die robots van tegenwoordig?  
Je zou dan toch in het determinisme verzeild raken.'" 26

There are two dangers inherent in this method of characterisation; the most obvious one is the risk that the resulting characters will have an alienating effect on the reader because they are not true to life. Given that one is aiming at a realistic portrayal of human life, this criticism is valid, but it is not so subtle as the suggestion that the other danger facing S is that he could find himself acting contrary to his own strong principles. If the reader is aware of the synthesis which has taken place, he must also be aware of the degree of manipulation of the characters by the author, which would surely inhibit his attitude toward the character, making him more aware of its past than of its future possibilities. Frits was only posing a hypothetical question; he was only pointing out dangers which there

is one sure way of averting. S's answer may seem simplistic, but it is the only correct one; the success of this type of characterisation is dependent on skill alone. In practice the act is not so negative, because besides merely avoiding dangers, something positive can emerge from the union between two characters; as they tend to bring out the best in each other, only certain characteristics become dominant, whilst others disappear, leaving one new character with an individual personality.

'Door zich met een ander te verbinden laden ze niet een deterministische last op zich, maar ze vinden hun innerlijke vrijheid, hun ware bestemming, soms hun geluk.'" 27

A predominant theme in S's work would appear to be relationships between the sexes - problematic ones, of course. The central character, a conductor who is clearly based on Slingeland, is on the verge of marrying, but backs out, making various excuses, the main one being his work. This calls to mind not only Victor, but also S, who gave this very reason for his inability to continue his relationship with Nettie. In fact the main female character is based on Nettie, and the work for which S gave her up was one of the two unfinished novels. S certainly identifies strongly with his characters, so much so, that he speaks to Frits about his conductor as if the latter were a living person, existing outside the novel. This is rather difficult to reconcile with the totally uninvolved way he created him in the first instance. The chapter 'Een roman in een roman in een roman' is a key one, since it gives valuable insight into this act of creation, because S is addressing himself to the reader directly, who is an unseen and unknown quantity, whose immediate response does not affect S in any way.

He is not playing to any audience and hence need not be conscious of the effect he is creating; in fact he seems to be writing more for himself, which does not mean to say, unfortunately, that he is being completely honest, for one of S's main characteristics is that he is frequently not honest with himself, although this is not consciously done. However, there is no pressure on him to give an account of his work, as in the interview with Frits, which would suggest that he was motivated in this chapter by an urge to unburden himself on the subject of his novel-writing, especially as this was connected with Victor, and seemed to remind S how much he was missing his friend.

I have mentioned S's tendency to identify strongly with characters he is in the process of creating. This has proved problematic in the past, when it resulted in his break-up with Nettie, because he became confused between the real-life person and the one he was creating. Once again his identity problems have extended beyond his work, permeating every aspect of reality to the extent that he can lose his own identity and assume Victor Slingeland's.

'Wat ik niet vergat was de vereenzelviging met Victor, iets dat mij, voor zover ik wist, nooit eerder was overkomen. Het werd misschien verklaard door onze ongewone vertrouwelijkheid en het abrupte einde daarvan, waardoor ik, trage geest, als het ware genoodzaakt was Victor in mijzelf te continueren.....' 28

The genesis of S's central character symbolizes the identification between S and Victor, since he was created for a conductor figure inspired by Victor and a novelist one based on S himself. Perhaps this aspect of S's method of characterisation is not diametrically opposed to his apparently objective mental attitude displayed

elsewhere in the chapter, and may even have sprung directly from it, as a reaction. Although S rationalizes and says that he chose this method of combining two important characters to make one for reasons of economy, one should not underestimate the part played by a subconscious urge to illustrate - make public, even - the closeness he feels both with Victor, the person, and with the character based on Victor. He feels so close to him that in his mind he is not sure where his own personality stops and Victor's begins, resulting in a loss of identity.

This would seem to be quite a common experience amongst those novelists showing a great degree of self-awareness - one which troubles Gide's novelist character, Édouard, in Les faux-monnayeurs, who finds that he too has a strong tendency to identify with his own creations, so much so, that he often lives through them instead of facing up to reality himself.

'.... je ne vis que par autrui; par procuration, pourrais-je dire, par épousaille, et ne me sens jamais vivre plus intensément que quand je m'échappe à moi-même pour devenir n'importe qui.' 29

This leads to a desire to step outside himself and watch himself at work, presumably to convince himself of his existence, though it often serves to confuse him even more.

'Je m'échappe sans cesse et ne comprends pas bien, lorsque je me regarde agir, que celui que je vois agir soit le même que celui qui regarde, et qui s'étonne, et doute qu'il puisse être acteur et contemplateur à la fois. 30



Édouard is intrigued by the idea of mirror reflections of himself, which must have some bearing on his decision to make his main character a novelist, who, like himself, is writing a novel entitled Les faux-monnayeurs. Édouard includes in his novel within a novel an image of himself whose value to him personally is a therapeutic one, because he is not merely imagining himself at work; he is projecting the reflection on to the pages of his book so that he, and others, can study it, and perhaps come to grips with the notion that he, Édouard, is a living individual personality.

In Open boek in the chapter entitled 'In de muziekkamer', Vestdijk also touches on the idea that a mirror is necessary for any artist to be able to put a distance between himself and his work. He specifically talks about the musician's mirror, the recording of his performance. Vestdijk realizes that the novelist's mirror can only be created by himself, in his own work, by including a novel which is being written within his own novel. He and Gide both employ this device, and Vestdijk suggests that such a mirror is a necessity for any artist wishing to assess his own work. Gide, in fact, goes one stage further: not content with the simple reflection, he constructs an arrangement of mirrors, as it were, enabling him to present a reflection of a reflection. There are, all in all, three novels entitled Les faux-monnayeurs. In the passages quoted above, Édouard is not simply a mouth-piece for Gide's own experiences as a novelist; one cannot fail to notice the gently mocking tone which Gide adopts towards him, both in Part 2, Chapter VII, where he (Gide) surveys all his characters,

and also through the other characters themselves. Sophroniska, for example, makes one aware of Édouard's rather inexperienced, naïve attitude towards people, and Laura points out inconsistencies in his approach to novel writing. Combined with certain remarks by the narrator, one is forced to regard Édouard with a certain amount of scepticism.

'L'illogisme de son propos était flagrant, sautait aux yeux d'une manière pénible. Il apparaissait clairement que, sous son crâne, Édouard abritait deux exigences inconciliables, et qu'il s'usait à les vouloir accorder.' 31

In an abstract way, Gide is actually reviewing the stages through which he passed during his own artistic development. By holding up his theoretical ideas on the novel for the reader himself to judge, he is acknowledging a need to step back and survey himself as a novelist. Vestdijk is motivated by a similar self-conscious desire to portray a novelist at work, but the distance which he puts between himself and S is not so great as that between Gide and Édouard. For a start, any ironical treatment of S is made impossible by the fact that S himself acts as the narrator. On the other hand, Vestdijk subtly distances himself, using the other characters' reactions and comments, which have the effect of making the reader begin to assess S's character from their point of view, and although this is an extremely indirect method of drawing critical attention to a character, it does help one to achieve a greater objectivity when analysing S.

It would seem that (despite the ironic treatment of Édouard), the latter is a much more accurate reflection of Gide than S is of Vestdijk:

Édouard and Gide (and Vestdijk too) are motivated largely by a self-consciousness of their art, which although possessed by S, does not figure so prominently in determining the subject-matter of his work. S's urge to write springs from a need to describe the people he comes into contact with in everyday life. Those with whom he has close relationships are most important as he is unable to cope with this particular kind of contact with others. Whilst his awareness of his own 'kunstenarschap' does not play such a large rôle, he nevertheless writes because of a need to commit various experiences to paper, and thus come to terms with them more easily, like Édouard. One such experience is his friendship with Victor Slingeland; his identification with Victor at a personal level is contained in his work in the fusion of the novelist and conductor characters, and also as one of the main themes, which is the 'identificatie tussen vrienden'. Originally there were two novels; one about a writer and the other about a conductor, who, in the first place, was not based on Slingeland at all, but as the friendship between the two men progressed, this character gradually took on more and more of Slingeland, who is clearly the most important person in S's life whilst he is writing his novel. It is not surprising, then, that when deciding to fuse the two main characters, S made the resulting one into a conductor: his interest in himself and his work had been superseded by the involvement with this friend. It is interesting that at this point the prospect of combining the pair seemed rather daunting to S, since as individuals the characters had so little in common. S soon discovered that the more work he put in, and the further he progressed, the easier his task became until it absorbed him completely, together with his

identity, to the extent that the latter became temporarily obscured. This undoubtedly helped S to create a character who was convincing in a personal capacity - but what about his professional one? There is not much evidence to suggest that the resulting character is exceptionally gifted musically, and even less evidence as regards his particular talent for conducting. S underestimates the importance of this, although he is aware of it and has a clever answer ready for anyone who draws attention to it.

'Trouwens, geen enkele dirigent kan dirigeren.  
Hij moet het eerst nog leren.' 32

This whole question raised by S in the inner novel, is begging to be asked about the actual novel. What has earlier been mooted on the subject of S's motivation for drawing attention to such a vital aspect of his work which might well attract criticism, could apply equally to Vestdijk. This is generally the case, and surely one of the main points of including the novel within a novel. Bearing in mind that the trilogy is entitled 'Symfonie van Victor Slingeland' and that this symphonic subject is supposed to be a conductor by profession, the question of whether one can picture him at work, or at least believe in his conductorship, is fundamental to his acceptability as a character. If Vestdijk chooses to make such an important character a conductor, then he should make sure that Slingeland is convincing in the rôle. In fact, Vestdijk did not have a great deal of choice in this matter, since it is necessary for S's friend to be an interpreting artist, to enable Vestdijk to propound one of his predominant themes of the trilogy: the different rôles of the creative

and interpretive artists, and their intrinsic values. But since Vestdijk has decided what Slingeland's profession is to be, he must be answerable for any criticism. He is only too aware of this fact, which is why he draws our attention to it, using S and the inner novel. Yet in doing so, he could on the one hand be inviting criticism rather than forestalling it. On the other hand, it could be a clever device on Vestdijk's part; not only does it save the reader the trouble of putting a nagging suspicion into words, but it also offers a few counter arguments which might provide the reader with an easy way out, satisfying any critical inclinations. Whilst these are both effects which Vestdijk might well achieve, another reason for including his own critique of the character of Slingeland is simply to enable him to distance himself from his work and look at it objectively in the rôle of critic, which was certainly not new to him. Actually, he had already reviewed one of his own books: De nadagen van Pilatus. Fitting in with the picture of Vestdijk which is beginning to emerge, this is not simply an academic exercise for him, but a real desire to assess himself as a novelist. The trouble with the trilogy is that because of its first person narration, Vestdijk can never talk directly to the reader about his work; it must always be done indirectly through S, who acts as a mirror for Vestdijk, through which he can view the various aspects of his work which interest him, for instance, the characterization of Victor Slingeland.

In Les faux-monnayeurs, Gide addresses himself directly to the reader when he sets aside a whole chapter at the end of Part 2 in order to step back and assess the characters as they have turned out so far.

'Ainsi L'auteur imprévoyant s'arrête un instant, reprend souffle, et se demande avec inquiétude où va le mener son récit.' 33

This is not a purely critical device. I am not even sure how truthful Gide is being with the reader: indeed he offers some critical judgement of each character, but one is left with the feeling that this is a deliberate manoeuvre on the part of the author, to illustrate how he puts his ideas on the theory of the novel into practice. The whole chapter bears witness (true or false) to the fact that Gide has no preconceived ideas as to how the novel will develop; he lets his characters take over, which is why he is so often found to be expressing dislike for a particular character, or disapproval at the way he has turned out.

'Édouard m'a plus d'une fois irrité (lorsqu'il parle de Douviers, par exemple), indigné même; j'espère ne l'avoir pas trop laissé voir; mais je puis bien le dire à présent. Sa façon de se comporter avec Laura, si généreuse parfois, m'a paru parfois révoltante.' 34

To return to Vestdijk's portrayal of Victor Slingeland, there is only one occasion on which one is allowed to witness Slingeland conducting - in Part 1 of Het glinsterend pantser. The emphasis (decided by S's personal interests) falls very heavily on Slingeland's interpretation of the work in question. The description of him actually in the act of conducting amounts to two sentences in Chapter VI, 'Het concert':

'Zijn dirigeren leek mij vooral correct. De linkerarm deed niet veel.' 35

There are a few elaborations on this original statement in Chapters VI and VIII:

'Hier was hij fel, veeleisend, de linkerarm hartstochtelijk trillend,....' 36

'Tijdens het eerste deel.... stelde ik vast, dat hij doende was een deel van zijn correctheid af te leggen en zijn linkerarm het werk gunde.' 37

34

The half-page or so of description which follows this passage is unsatisfactory in that it is redundant from the point of view of what it contributes to the characterization of Slingeland. It is remarkably ordinary, and whilst being an account of the actions involved in conducting, it is not an account of one particular conductor at work. The actual words used are too general, for example, the right hand 'onveranderlijk metronomiseert', whilst the left one 'subtiële kunstjes uithaalt', which is basically what one would expect from any conductor. On the whole, then, Vestdijk deals rather abstractly and intellectually with this character. But it is not enough to know in theory that Slingeland is a conductor, and to prove it, one is told how his interpretation of the Beethoven symphony bears his own unmistakable stamp, i.e., one learns something of the effects of the act of conducting. This leads on to the reason behind the apparent lack of description of Victor at work. Consider the following sentence from the chapter, 'Het concert':

'In het adagio evenwel kregen wij een geheel andere Victor Slingeland te zien en te horen.' 38

Bearing in mind that it is S's report of the concert which one is reading, it becomes clear that all S's attention is focused on Victor's interpretation of the music in the hope of gaining any insight into his character. He is not really even interested in assessing the resulting performance. This is a little surprising, given the amount of time which elapsed between S's visit to the concert and the writing of his memoirs; he is not recording the concert when the shock of seeing his friend for the first time in years might turn his attention to the more personal aspects and away from giving a full, rounded portrait of this famous man.

There must obviously be problems inherent in a portrayal of any kind of artist except a writer, unless, of course, the writer has also had personal experience as a musician or painter etc. Would it be fair to say that only a painter could give a realistic description of a painter at work, and similarly with a composer or a conductor? But by virtue of the fact that they are any kind of artist other than a writer, they lack the wherewithal to do so: they lack the word-artistry. If one were to criticise a writer for an unrealistic portrayal of a conductor on the grounds that he has never been one himself, then logically, he could also be criticised for writing about anyone besides himself, which shows up the fault in this kind of argument. Basically, it is a question of how well the writer can cope with, say, the field of music, where some inside knowledge must be essential to avoid very basic inaccuracies.

Both Simon Vestdijk and Thomas Mann had some experience as musicians; both played instruments and had a fair amount of musical knowledge, and both wrote about musicians, the former about a conductor and a bandmaster, and the latter about a composer in the novel 'Doktor Faustus'. It is perhaps significant that the same criticism can be levelled at the characterization of Leverkühn in Doktor Faustus as at that of Slingeland: namely that it is too abstract. Mann launches out on long detailed descriptions of the imaginary composer's work, which amount to the literary speculations of a dilettante. It becomes increasingly difficult to believe in Leverkühn unless one disregards these passages, remembering that they have no real bearing



on the main theme, which is the modern composer's search for new material and inspiration, which Leverkühn receives from the devil (as he believes, although the devil is a product of a brain affected by syphilis), hence the parallel with the Faust legend. Perhaps, though, writers are happier portraying their own kind; Tonio Kröger offers a sensitive picture of a young writer, and his problems as such, especially with regard to his relationship with society in general.

S certainly comes across as being more of an artist than Victor does. This may be due partly to the fact that Vestdijk is portraying a writer, but in the main it results from the form which the novel takes; since S is the narrator, one gains a great deal of personal insight into his moods and actions. The very first chapter of Het glinsterend pantser subtly prepares the ground for the acceptance of S as a writer. Although one is made to believe that his work in D... is not connected with art in any form, but with a science in the form of sociology, he goes much further in his observations on the population of D... than his work would demand. He is very observant, but also selective, choosing those faces and figures which capture his creative imagination. On Page 8, for example, there is a whole paragraph of fictitious conversation with a young woman. It becomes clear that S is concerned not with fact, but with fiction. He does not inquire or research into people's backgrounds; he prefers to imagine their circumstances, as in the case of the 'filmhelden'. It is evident, too, from the actual text that S possesses a certain

descriptive ability.

'...de zon ging onder in een baaierd van te hard omlijnde rose wolkjes; naast de weg rustte als het ware een hoge wilg, van boven sterk omgebogen, op twee lagere wilgen erachter, als een priester bij de officie, magisch ondersteund door helpers.'<sup>39</sup>

The image of the willow as priest, besides being highly original, says more than a page of straight description. The skill displayed here is, of course, Vestdijk's, but given that the text represents S's account of his stay in D..., then right from the beginning one is ready to believe that S's main occupation is that of a creative writer. There are, besides, several veiled hints that this essay in demography is nothing more than a temporary occupation, whose purpose is to take S's mind off his broken romance.

#### S's relationship with his characters

Even though Vestdijk is now on homeground, as it were, he still steps beyond the limits of his own experience, which, of course, is not necessarily a bad thing. He steps into the territory of literary innovation, just as in Doktor Faustus, Mann ventures into the field of musical innovation. This is where Leverkühn becomes most unconvincing, despite the fact that the ideas he expounds on harmony, including the twelve-note scale, are based on those of Schönberg expressed in his Harmonielehre. It is precisely in these sort of circumstances that one is forced to question S's literary authenticity for the first time. S experiments with a new method of creating characters in his latest novel which is written throughout the course of Het glinsterend pantser and Open boek, and actually appears at the beginning of De arme Heinrich. The method he has evolved, which

involves cold-bloodedly taking two or three characters from two unfinished novels which are to be amalgamated, seems to require a singularly uninspired technique.

'Welnu, toen ik in het beschermd domein van mijn conversatiezaal de eerste roman herschrijven ging, maakte ik van de schrijver een dirigent,.....-en dus maakte ik hem noodzakelijkerwijs muzikaal, iets dat hij aanvankelijk niet was geweest.' 40

This is put rather bluntly, but even when one is given more details, the method still appears calculating, if a little more complicated:

'Alle reden dus om te doen alsof zij wel iets met elkaar te maken hadden, hetgeen ik nastreefde met behulp van geheime zinspelingen, kleine nuances, vervormingen die niemand merken zou, en vooral door zekere eigenmachtigheden van mijn personeel, met dien verstande dat ik, als het zo eens uitkwam, een karakter uit de eerste roman ging aanvullen, discreet arceren, een beetje zinrijk verpesten, met karakters of andere gegevens uit de tweede.' 41

Compare this with S's attitude just before he decided to experiment. The emphasis is on inspiration, which he seeks in a hotel in Amsterdam, and in the streets, where he wanders around, observing the people, in case an attitude or a movement should strike him, and remain in his mind. There is a definite atmosphere of melancholia and loneliness which S cultivates to put him in the right mood for writing. Whilst this wandering round, making himself feel alone in the midst of all the people in the hotel and the street, is certainly necessary, it is only secondary to the main source of inspiration which comes from within S himself. The resulting frame of mind acts as a catalyst which releases his creative powers.

'Dat ik mijn hoofdfiguren schiep uit eigen vlees en bloed, betekende niet dat ik geen oog had voor mijn straatvlinders...' 42

André Gide would certainly have approved of S at this stage in his career:

'Une personnage ne m'intéresse jamais, tant que lorsqu'il est créé tout entier comme Ève, de la chair même de l'auteur; non point tant observé qu'inventé...' 43

One would expect S's apparently conflicting attitudes towards creating characters to lead to inconsistent characters; on the one hand they would have a tendency to take on a life of their own, like Gide's, and on the other to become numbers in some kind of scheme. Yet S somehow manages to combine the two. He comments that his task of fusing two heroes is complicated by the characters' reluctance to surrender their individuality. His remark illustrates perfectly how he copes with the duality of his approach; he is unaware of it, so that at the same time as discussing characters as if they were pieces of some jig-saw puzzle, he regards them as living individuals with minds and wills of their own.

'Mijn schrijver en mijn dirigent wilden eerst niets van elkaar weten, zij weigerden pertinent tot een levend wezen te versmelten, en dit begreep ik ook wel van hen..... Maar ik dwong hen!...' 44

In other words, S combines the two attitudes naturally within himself. As his two main characters are based on himself and Victor, he is close enough to them to identify with them at the same time as juggling with them for the sake of economy in the new novel.

S has a clearly definable relationship with his characters. Once he has created them, they take on a life of their own - like Gide's - but whereas the latter's personae then take over, their own natures determining their actions, S always remains in control of the actions

of his characters. It is as if they are indebted to him for creating them; he commands and they eventually knuckle under, however unwillingly. Gide's characters are free to choose how they will act, and the author leaves them to it, since he believes there is only one possible course open to them because they are governed by their dispositions. As Gide says to Édouard

'Comment l'en empêcher? Chaque être agit selon sa loi..' 45

S decides his characters' actions for them, but admits that his choice is purely arbitrary, and that another, completely different course of action may well have been open to them.

#### The Writer/Reader Relationship

Whilst Vestdijk himself may not actually have indulged in fusing two novels together, he certainly enjoys manoeuvring with and manipulating his characters so that they have the maximum effect on the reader. Take the two main figures in the trilogy - S and Victor Slingeland (V.S.). Already their names alone point to some connection between both of them and the author, S.V.. The various possibilities for a symbolic interpretation of this have already been discussed, but they do not fit into any kind of scheme which could be further analysed. One cannot discount the impression that Vestdijk is taking this opportunity to play with the reader, that he might have enjoyed the prospect of the time devoted to puzzling out correspondences between reality and fiction which might suggest themselves. This, of course, presupposes a certain amount of careful deliberation in order to achieve such a measured effect. Similarly, the village where S stays

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simply designated D..., recalls the village of Doorn where Vestdijk did much of his writing. The idea that Vestdijk might be teasing his audience does have a slightly alienating effect, which serves chiefly to sharpen one's awareness of the actual novel one is engaged in reading. The inner novel is even more important from this point of view. It may not actively alienate, but attention is drawn to, and focused on, the actual act of writing; one is forced to consider the methods which a writer employs when drawing a character, for example, and one is also reminded that, far from sitting down and dashing off a novel in a flash of inspiration, a novelist must often work hard to produce an apparently effortlessly and fluently written piece of work. I think it is true to say that a reader is more likely to be unaware of the novelist's art in this respect than fully appreciative.

One of the effects of alienating the reader is to put a distance between him and the work in question, but it is also possible to achieve a distancing effect without alienating at the same time. The diary of Stan Vastenou does this by changing the narrator from S to herself, and therefore altering the viewpoint; also by creating a definite break in the story and mood of Part 2 Open boek which enables the reader to attain a greater objectivity and encourages him to look critically at the 'Symfonie'. The events which are related by Tante Stan are largely those dealt with in Part 2 of Het glinsterend pantser. One is obliged to question the degree to which S's memory of events is affected by their emotional effect on him, both at the time they occurred, and at the time of relating them. This adds depth to the

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narrative structure of the trilogy since one is allowed to witness events both with the sense-of-proportion perspective of an adult and the larger-than-life-perspective of a child. What before had seemed dramatic now is only to be expected with the extra knowledge which has been acquired, because much of the drama had in fact been derived from a misunderstanding or a misinterpretation of a situation.

To a certain extent one must, in the light of this new perspective, review one's impressions of the two central characters; something which is required several times throughout the course of the trilogy, and not just in Part 2 of Open boek. S has a tendency to review his own ideas concerning Victor and his skin disease as he does in Open boek Part 1, Chapter I and Part 2, Chapter I, which has a very disconcerting effect on the reader. In the first instance, which follows on from the tense climax of Het glinsterend pantser, S pricks the bubble, as it were, and one is left wondering why one should have been carried along in the general mood of suspense and excitement of the first book. Why should a writer deliberately destroy the powerful effect he has succeeded in creating?

'Waar had ik mij druk over gemaakt? Ik had niet eens gesnapt waar het om ging.' 46

S realizes that he has read too much into this disease of Victor's; the reason for its effect on him does not have such deep psychological significance as S first imagined. Now that the reader has been successfully disillusioned, he must begin to realize that what S writes must be taken with a pinch of salt; that S has a tendency to get things out of proportion, to get carried away. Bearing this in

mind, one cannot help but read S's memoirs with a greater awareness of the fact that what one is reading at any given time is entirely dependent on the author's mood or intention at that time; one should realize that one is free to look at it from any other angle, from any other character's point of view.

Later on in Part 2, Chapter I, after S has built up interest in Victor's relationships with women, and the bearing the psoriasis has on them, just when one has become sufficiently involved in the psychology of it to want to work out some solution to Victor's problem, S rejects its importance.

'Zelfs mijn medelijden leek mij nu overdreven.  
Ging hij werkelijk zo diep onder zijn kwaal gebukt  
als ik aanvankelijk had gemeend, dan had hij zich  
toch zeker niet tot het theater geleend van dat  
sinistere tochtje van een badkamer naar een slaapkamer....  
Daarbij was het (de kwaal) dan nog zijn paspoort, zijn  
alibi, zijn vrijgeleide in het land der vrouwen.'<sup>47</sup>

Instead of the disease being the cause of some psychological disturbance leading to an apparent inability to have a 'normal' relationship with a woman, S now believes that it has the opposite effect. He goes on to systematically destroy every clue which he had put in the way of the psychological detective.

'De mogelijkheid bestond dat Victor's huidziekte  
niets te maken had met het schelden, niets met zijn  
vader, niets met zijn kunstenaarschap, niets met zijn  
celibaat, niets met zijn hele innerlijk, noch als oorzaak  
noch als gevolg, en dat er tussen alles alleen maar een  
nuttig arrangement tot stand was gekomen.'<sup>48</sup>

Having said this, however, and what is more, when he was feeling definitely anti-Victor - due, no doubt, to jealousy over the affair



with Eva - one begins almost immediately to suspect that it is largely a result of mood, despite S's statement that he had little trouble in 'mijn belevingen met Victor in de juiste proporties te zien.'. S is incapable of objective judgements of character, since what he now believes to be true or right ('Juist'), although it contains a grain of truth, is most likely to be an exaggeration which he is quite capable of refuting in the next chapter. Subconsciously he probably realizes this, which is why he preceeds his revision of ideas with 'De mogelijkheid bestond..' and concludes the chapter with 'Wat niet wegnam, dat ook het tegendeel waar kon zijn, - dat hij onnoemelijk veel had geleden.'

Although this may be confusing for the reader, it is nevertheless a good point of the trilogy. The reader is made to think for himself and form his own ideas on the characters, in order not to be swept right out to sea on S's waves of enthusiasm and jealousy. It is refreshing not to have to accept what one is told by the narrator, a traditionally authoritative figure. Only a writer with tremendous confidence in himself and his work would take such risks as helping - equipping indeed - the reader to be more critical.

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## CHAPTER TWO

### S AND VICTOR SLINGELAND

#### The Characters of S and Victor

Vestdijk's self-awareness extends beyond his own 'vak' i.e. the novel, to art and the artist in general. He is interested both in his position as an artist in society and in his position with regard to other artists and art-forms. This finds expression in the trilogy; firstly in the characters of S and Slingeland; and secondly in the interaction of these characters. These two points will be dealt with in two separate ways: in Chapter 2 I shall analyse firstly the individual characters of S and Slingeland, and then their relationship from a psychological point of view, before going on, in Chapter 3, to treat them as individual representatives of artists in general and of the different branches of art.

One cannot attempt an evaluation of any work of Vestdijk's without including a study of his skill in drawing individual characters, which are never types: each one is psychologically complex (the degree of complexity depending on the importance of the character, usually) and interesting as an individual. I must say here that the term psychology is being used in the broadest sense, since I have made no study of the subject, and although Vestdijk, as a doctor, probably had a certain amount of scientific knowledge, the skill he displays in drawing his characters springs from an intuitive feeling for

psychology (which may, of course, have been gained when he was professionally active as a doctor).

By keeping the 'kunstenarschap' of the two main characters completely separate and dealing with it in Chapter 3, I am, in a way, only following Vestdijk's example, for when writing about himself in the autobiographical Anton Wachter novels, and more indirectly in the Slingeland trilogy, he keeps these two sides of himself apart. He deals with his psychological development in the Anton Wachter series, and with his 'kunstenarschap' in the 'Symfonie'. A possible reason for this is that Vestdijk thinks that one of these two sides of himself must always predominate, and therefore play a much larger part in determining the course of his life. Since the artist in him gradually emerged as he grew older, he wrote about his development as a person in the Anton Wachter novels, because this side of him was predominant right into his student days, where the changeover slowly began to take place. After that, the artist was that part of him which, broadly speaking, governed his life by determining the further course of his psychological development, and thus his actions. This interpretation fits in best with the way this subject has found expression in Vestdijk's work. Practically speaking, it would be complicated to bring the two sides together in one book but apart from this, each side provides enough material for independent works.

It is difficult to decide who is the main character of the trilogy; Victor or S. Taking the title as starting point, one would expect

this to be Victor Slingeland. It is also true that we are given a much rounder, fuller portrait of the conductor - after all, he is the subject of S's memoirs, and there is much more to be said about his character in general than about S's. However, as I have already pointed out, the whole trilogy is dependent upon S, its creator, and what is more, the nature of the contents and the length of the work are ultimately decided by S. The length of the trilogy is particularly significant: it covers a period in the relationship between the two men which is especially important to S. In other words, the trilogy is about S's personality crisis caused by the renewing of his friendship with Victor, and by the particular nature of this friendship which I shall deal with in detail in the second half of this chapter. The picture of S which will emerge cannot be complete, because his dominant characteristic while he is writing these memoirs is the way he feels about Victor. Moreover, he is more important for the question of 'kunstenaarschap' (Chapter 3), as he gives us the inside view. We are left with a clearer idea of S the artist than of S the person.

It is important to remember that one cannot talk definitively about the characters of either of them. As far as S is concerned, it is impossible to be objective about one's own character, nor does S try to do this, except, perhaps, in the flashbacks to his youth. However, one is more likely to obtain an accurate picture of him, since one has first-hand knowledge of his thoughts. Victor is seen through S's eyes, and given that S is emotionally involved with him,

one must take into account the subjectivity of his portrait of Victor, especially in passages where he is reporting the latter's thoughts. Now I shall go on to look at the characters of the two men, using the information provided by S in the trilogy.

### VICTOR

Victor Slingeland, the famous conductor, the great man, is the subject of these memoirs entitled 'Symfonie van Victor Slingeland'. S presents us with a portrait of him which lays the emphasis on Victor Slingeland, the man, and if he sometimes glorifies him, it is not because of his greatness in the eyes of the world, but because of the effect Victor has on him as a person - some kind of attraction - which has governed S's feelings about Victor since they were boys. Despite the fact that S does lapse into hero worship, we still get to see an unpleasant side of Victor, and a slightly abnormal, almost psychologically disturbed side, which contrasts strongly with the self-possessed conductor and his rather conservative appearance.

'....maar zijn kleren waren van hemzelf, en die waren even kleurloos als correct, niet te duur, niet te oud, vouw in de broek, verder ging dat niet.' 49

What is striking, then, is the ordinariness of his dress, something which S finds impossible to reconcile with the fact that he is an artist. On the other hand, his clothes were precisely that aspect of him which made him stand out when he was a schoolboy

'Ik zag, dat zijn overjas, en niet alleen voor onze verhoudingen, bepaald te duur en te opzichtig was (beige, met een brede riem).. ' 50

Victor's clothes, and his face, change dramatically with his circumstances: when he is thrown out of his father's house, he appears in rags, his face pale and unrecognizable; when he inherits money he favours a black suit; when he goes to the mountains he adopts the dress of the people there, complete with climbing boots and walking stick, and his face, too, changes radically:

'Hoewel ik hem na die twintig jaar op straat niet voorbijgelopen zou zijn, stond daar een geheel andere man voor mij, dat zag ik met één oogopslag. Vooral het gezicht, donkerbruin boven de witte das, en mager als dat van een Zwitserse berggids, was nieuw voor mij.' 51

And yet Victor's main facial features seem to stay the same and S mentions them again and again: Victor's eyes; his brown forehead; and his eyebrows (and his voice too, with its 'deftige toon'). The eyebrows and the voice recur most often, acting as leitmotive which serve to characterize Victor and also to remind the reader of the effect he has on S, especially the former which represents that part of him which makes him dangerous and a little frightening to S: but I will explain this in greater detail later on in the last section of this chapter.

The fact is that Victor seems to change character several times during the course of the trilogy, and yet he still remains the same person for S, and for the reader. It is almost as if he were two different people because he has two such opposed sides to his character: the respectable and the proletarian, or sometimes, the normal, and the abnormal (to use these terms on a superficial level). When enumerating the facets of each of these two sides, the abnormal would

would seem to predominate, but actually there is a progression throughout the books towards the normal, a progression which seems to be aided by Victor's visit to the Alps. By normal, I mean the famous man whom S visits in his rooms in Amsterdam ('Eerste gesprek met Victor Slingeland'), the performer also, and the lover of Eva Kienpointner: a Victor who is in control of his words and actions. Once he loses control, which he does in different ways, then he becomes abnormal, almost possessed, and one is aware of a kind of devil in him, which S sensed the very first time he saw him, and which is symbolized in the shape of his eyebrows, which, when S is trying to formulate his first impressions of Victor are twice mentioned in conjunction with an imaginary pair of horns.

'("Het zou mij niet hebben verbaasd om op het dak te zien verschijnen met wenkbrauwen en horens")' 52

These act as a Leitmotif, and so does Victor's 'deftige toon', which serves to characterize his 'normal' side. Directly opposed to this, S calls him on occasions a 'proleet'.

The abnormal Victor is by far the most interesting Victor, each aspect being slightly different, yet still related to all others. Firstly there is the low, degraded aspect, which leads him to extort money from Tante Stan and to use her for sex - for it is quite clear that he felt nothing for her. She sees him as an ambitious, but not essentially great, young man.

'Afscheidsbrief aan Victor niet eens overwogen, hij is te onbenullig. Een wezen van een ander, minderwaardig ras.' 53

S is quite right when he refuses to blame Victor for the tragic

outcome of his base behaviour i.e. Stan's suicide - after all, he could not have known that his relationship with Stan would have the effect of psychologically disturbing her. He was an inexperienced young man who took on too much by involving himself with an older woman who was potentially unstable.

'Ik bedoel hiermee, dat Victor's schuld niet een schuld was tegenover Stan. Het was een schuld tegenover zichzelf. Wie zich als een proleet gedraagt is schuldig aan het zich gedragen als proleet.' 54

Victor Slingeland is not always a pleasant person to know because of his streak of contrariness. When he was a child, this was so pronounced that he was expelled from two schools, mainly for intimidating the teachers. This contrariness was not directed solely at figures of authority. However, it had to have an object, and if - as when he wanted to throw some schoolboy into the Herengracht - the original object was removed, then he turned on himself as a last resort - and so he jumped into the canal himself. He is similarly motivated when S refuses to accept his challenge to eat a sausage (GP 2 II), and he does it himself, puzzling and upsetting his friends. He still has this trait when he is older, and this time his orchestras have to bear the brunt of it, for example when he hears that they are not altogether happy with a new symphony he is proposing to introduce.

'Zonder de moeite te nemen zich op zijn goed recht te beroepen vocht hij het met het orkest zelf uit, niet door met deze mensen te gaan disputeren en hun bezwaren te ontkrachten, maar door hun Hartmann te laten repeteren tot ze Hartmann niet meer konden zien of horen.' 55

This kind of behaviour, firstly towards Dethmers, and secondly



towards the red-haired violinist, looks, in Open boek, as if it will bring about Victor's downfall, and it does, in a way, for the violinist causes a disturbance at a concert which seems to result in Victor's falling from the podium and breaking a leg, although the exact sequence of events is not known. The threat from Dethmers never comes to anything, probably because S does his best to protect his friend from harm, taking all the worry on himself.

Since this unpleasant streak in Victor was so pronounced when he was at school, it is likely that it can be related back to circumstances at home, as S tends to do, for Victor and his father were at loggerheads, particularly about Victor's career. The father did his best to prevent Victor from studying music if it interfered with the rest of his schoolwork. He was certainly extremely strict, and one cannot help feeling that he must have had the same contrary temperament as Victor, and that is why they clashed so violently on occasions, and why Victor's father went as far as shutting him up in his room for three days. It is fear of his father which has such a lasting and destructive effect, and perhaps also the fact that his skin disease appeared for the first time during those three days.

The psoriasis plays a prominent role in the first book - indeed the title itself, 'Het glinsterend pantser', is a direct reference to the visible effect of the disease, and to the symbolic significance which Vestdijk and S attach to it: it symbolizes how Victor's 'kunstenarschap' affects him. To me, armour suggests protection,

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but to S it suggests a barrier between Victor and other people, and he tries to assess its effect on him psychologically, linking it up with another sporadic 'illness' of Victor's - his complete loss of self control towards one particular person whom he calls all sorts of names (uitschelden). Whilst S is concerned with the effects of the disease on Victor, the latter is more worried about what his public would think if they got to know about it: he is afraid of newspaper gossip, and not surprisingly, when one thinks of how Bert Duprez, a doctor, misinterpreted it, giving rise to the rumour that Slingeland had syphilis.

The title of the third book is also a reference to the psoriasis, for Victor is being compared to the leprous knight, Heinrich, in Hartmann van Aue's tale, who was cured from his disfiguring disease by the love and devotion of a young girl, who was actually prepared to sacrifice herself for him. She is paralleled here by Adri Duprez, but this story only comes to the fore at the end of the book when Adri follows Victor to the Alps to offer herself to him in marriage, thinking naïvely that it is because of the skin disease that he failed to marry. However, the parallel stops here, for the psoriasis has already gone away of its own accord - once after Victor broke his leg, and once during a stay in the mountains. Perhaps the title is referring to something else - has Victor found salvation in some other way? He has found Eva Kienpointner, a woman who has had the unpleasant experience of being 'uitgescholden' by Victor, and who still loves him, despite this. Perhaps she has saved him from the necessity of having to go through one of these degrading outbursts

again.

Two of these early outbursts concern men: Victor's own father, and Bert's father. After this, the rest of the victims are all women. This 'schelden' is certainly a strange habit of Victor's: but this is precisely where it becomes difficult to actually assess his character, because our attention is drawn to the fact that S's descriptions are often highly subjective - and so one does not know how strange, how abnormal his behaviour really is. Take the Duprez incident, for example: firstly as related by S (like the other incidents):

'En toen was het Victor. Hij sprong van zijn stoel, richtte zich in zijn volle lengte op, en begon Duprez, die nu door zijn vrouw helemaal omvangen werd, uit te schelden zoals ik niet wist, dat de ene mens dit de andere kon aandoen. Dit was geen schelden meer, het was het kotsen van woorden tegen iemand aan, steeds maar tegen hem aan, of er geen eind aan kwam. Jarenlang heb ik ervan gedroomd, zo verschrikkelijk was het. Hij krijste, zijn stem was al even onherkenbaar als zijn gezicht. Want dit was niet het gezicht van onze Victor, die, betreuenswaardig maar niet geheel onbegrijpelijk, een aanval van woede had gekregen, het was het gezicht van een vrouw in barensnood, het leven dat henenvliedt en zich handhaaft, de geboorte in zicht met pijn op de grens van doodgaan, - voor zover deze woorden iets betekenen. En wat hij riep, met die hoge, krijsende stem: ik wist niet, dat scheldwoorden zó konden wonden, geuit door iemand die buiten zichzelf was geraakt.' 56

And secondly as related by Stan Vastenou in her diary:

'Dat bleek vooral 's avonds, toen dat vreselijke spektakel met Victor losbrak, dat mij alles vergald heeft, alles, ik zou haast zeggen tot Victor zelf toe. (...). Een gebroken glas, een man die opspeelt, - Elly had me wel eens verteld over die eigenaardigheid van Johan, maar ik had het nooit willen geloven, - een jongen die zijn longen leegschreeuwt om zich te verdedigen tegen zo'n ploertige sergeant-majoor. Een jongen? Al eerder op de dag had ik Victor niet meer als een jongen kunnen zien.' 57

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In other words, Stan did not find it unreasonable behaviour - no stranger than Duprez's obsession about wine glasses - she certainly did not think any the less of him for standing up to her brother-in-law.

But not every victim is strong enough to take the insults hurled at them by Victor. Alice van Voorde simply fled, and her subsequent breakdown was probably indirectly caused by her experience. Adri Duprez was mainly frightened by Victor's outburst against her, and it is suggested that it actually had a physical effect on her, producing a fever. So one cannot just pass off Slingeland's behaviour as a harmless eccentricity. There are various theories put forward by different characters as to the cause, or causes, of these outbursts: the psychiatrist Victor visits puts them down to his relationship with his father, and S also regards this as important until he discovers about the skin disease to which Victor himself ascribes the cause of his behaviour, and which the psychiatrist did not know about. S also has the idea that it is a substitute for composing because it is obviously such an intense experience.

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'Victor was geen agressieve natuur. (...) Maar door een toeval had hij ontdekt, en voor het eerst was toen zijn agressiviteit aan bod gekomen, dat het plezierig was om te schelden, - nu ja, schelden... waarschijnlijk zou er een nieuwe term bedacht moeten worden voor dit soort geestelijke genietingen. Plezierig, zeer genotvol, intens en vervullend als kunstgenot, waarom niet? Componeren kon hij niet, hij kon geen Sacré dus printemps schrijven, maar dáarin had hij zich onbelemmerd kunnen uitleven....' 58

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S comes close to the truth here by realizing that it is the quality of the experience which is the most important aspect, i.e. the pleasure it gives.

Victor also believes it to be a substitute for normal relationships with women, and admits that he enjoys it:

'Van veel betekenis was - volgens hem - dat ik, als ik zou willen, me ertegen zou kunnen verzetten. Dat is ook zo. Maar waarom zou ik het doen? Het is het enige plezier dat ik in mijn leven heb; dat klinkt een beetje gek, ik houd tenslotte ook van mijn werk, en van de bergen, en van die oude hond hier; maar ik bedoel: voorzover het vrouwen betreft.'<sup>59</sup>

There are two factors which go against this explanation; firstly Victor has turned upon men as well as women, the men being his own father and Bert's i.e. figures of authority; and secondly it is unlikely that the psoriasis should interfere so much with his relationships with women - as Eva proves to be true. The point about this 'schelden' is that it is impossible to pinpoint a cause with any certainty, in fact, one cannot do more than enumerate the likely factors contributing to it, except to say that I think Victor has a chip on his shoulder. He certainly has a grudge against his father because of the way the latter treated him, and he has a vaguer kind of grudge connected with his psoriasis - a 'why me?' feeling. If it is the case that the psoriasis interferes with his relationships with women, then it is understandable that he should have a grudge against women in general, because in a way, they have let him down: he has not found anyone who loves him enough for the disease not to matter. And so it is

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Eva who holds the key to his cure. The description of his final outburst that first night with Eva in the Gamshütte suggests that he is working through all his grudges, for he begins by cursing his father, and then he moves on to God, and finally Eva herself.

'En hij vloekte verschrikkelijk, en hij schreeuwde, dat hij het langer verdomde, dat er een eind moest komen aan het gesodemieter,.... Het was evident, hij zag het nu pas duidelijk in: God had alles verkeerd gedaan, maar dan ook alles! Godverdomme, zei hij, maar dat moest omgedraaid worden: ik verdom God, dat klonk beter.'60

(One will notice that the narration perspective has changed: S is relating what Victor has told him some time in the past. Either his memory is remarkable, and we can accept what is said as Victor's own words, or S has turned into the invisible, omniscient type of narrator, or S is letting his imagination have free rein. I shall disregard this last possibility.)

Eva's reaction to all of this is that of someone who cares - she tenderly tries to claim him, and when he eventually turns on her, her sympathy has communicated itself to him with a very definite result:

'Hij verweet haar, dat zij alles vergoelijkte en vermoede, dat zij anderen napratte, dat een vrouw altijd maar dacht dat het leven ongestoord voortgang moest hebben, terwijl het er juist om ging het leven een flinke opdonder te verkopen. Zij was een huichelaarster. Dan weer, zonder enige overgang, zette hij zijn liefde voor haar uiteen, betogende dat dit iets heel, heel bijzonders was, iets dat zij niet begreep, of wel begreep, en dat dit altijd zo zou blijven..' 61

One of the reasons for her effect on him is that she offers him

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love and a powerful feeling of security - something he must have lacked as a child because his stern father was always the dominant figure at home - she is a mother-figure to Slingeland, and for the first time in his life, Victor can trust someone enough to allow himself to feel something for them.

Victor's character, thus, does not remain static throughout the course of the trilogy: it undergoes a radical change, which, not so coincidentally, takes place in the Alps. There is no doubt that the removal from everyday life enables changes to take place that otherwise would be too drastic - this applies to S, too, and will be discussed in greater detail in the following section. But for Victor, the mountains mean removal from the music world (temporary suspension of his 'kunstenarschap'), the disappearance of his psoriasis (which one would logically expect in connection with its symbolic significance), and the breaking down of barriers which he must have built inside himself when a child - barriers which prevented him from giving free rein to his feelings, but which also protected him. Now Victor can accept his skin disease as a consequence of his being a conductor: his attitude has changed completely, he has become much more philosophical.

'In antwoord op mijn aansporing had hij de schouders opgehaald: in behandelen zag hij geen heil, en misschien had hij gelijk. Het was geen gevaarlijke ziekte, hij kon er oud mee worden, lange mouwen dragend, dassen, truien, hoge boorden. Het wás niet zo erg. Maar hij had gelijk: zou hij hier blijven, zou hij weigeren te gaan dirigeren, dan zou het wegtrekken, vanzelf. Het was een vicieuze cirkel: uit protest tegen het dirigeren, het gedwongen dirigeren, kreeg hij het, en omdat hij, juist als dirigent, bang was dat men het zou merken, werd het

nog erger. Maar hij wist dat alles zelf wel.  
Toen we terugliepen, zei hij nog, op een  
mistroostige toon, die hij tot op dit moment had  
weten te vermijden: "Je moet voor alles in het  
leven betalen, S... Niemand heeft schuld, ook Eva  
niet, zij helemáál niet". 62

Once Victor is reconciled with the fact of his psoriasis, then he  
is reconciled with the memory of his father, with God, with women,  
and with himself.

60



## S

As I said earlier, the most important aspect of S's character for the purpose of this trilogy is the way he feels about Victor. When one remembers that this began in his schooldays, then one begins to realize its significance. S has spent most of his life up till now thinking either in terms of Victor, or in terms of his writing. These are the two most important forces at work on his character. He has other characteristics which emerge throughout the course of the trilogy, which, to a large extent, are a result of the two main determining ones. His attitude to women is one of the most striking and interesting because here he comes over as unusual, maybe even abnormal. But the general picture of S which we form is of a sensitive - often over-sensitive - selfconscious man, and this leads to a tendency to get things out of proportion, hence the great number of times he contradicts himself in these books. Once he has got something out of proportion, he is, of course, incapable of any attempt at objective judgement of a person or situation: frequently the result is that his opinions swing violently from the one extreme to the other.

This sensitivity is reflected in his moods, especially in the tendency to depression or melancholia. The feelings which he describes in Het glinsterend pantser in 'Tuingodin in de regen' suggest that he even derives some kind of enjoyment out of these moods: he refers to :

"het genot van zelfbeklag"

and

"deze verkleefdheid aan een gemoedstoestand,  
die lijden betekent".

The main attraction is the sense of being absolutely alone. S must enjoy this because he deliberately seeks out places which encourage loneliness, like the garden with the statues:

'Vrolijk was het er niet, in dit kleine domein.  
De dichte nabijheid van de straatweg maakte de  
eenzaamheid des te groter, en de naar het  
tabakskleurige verschoten groene bladeren geleken  
op ashopen, zolang in de bomen gehangen voor de  
vuilnisman.' 63

He is fond, too, of staying in hotels, for example the first time he follows Victor to the Alps, when he does not try all that hard to discover Victor's whereabouts, thus prolonging the feelings of isolation, loneliness and melancholia which the impersonal atmosphere of the hotel creates. But is this a real depression, if he is in control of its duration? He does sometimes mention a lack of interest in everyday life - a certain 'lusteloosheid' (AH P. 114) - and once he is installed in his chosen spot in the hotel, he finds it difficult to leave it and break the mood. This is certainly a symptom of depression, but it would seem that although S is often on the brink of a depression, he always manages to avoid it, somehow. He tends to attribute it to his surroundings, and especially to a change in the weather:

'Men is er wel tevreden mee, melancholisch te  
zijn, zonder aanwijsbare oorzaak dan alleen maar  
regen.' 64

And later in De arme Heinrich:

'Laat het door de klimaatverandering gekomen zijn, of door de regen, of door de bergen, die, hoe onzichtbaar ook, mij laaglander door hun vreemdheid drukten, maar mijn lusteloosheid grensde soms aan melancholie....' 65

By ascribing his mood to external factors, he avoids thinking about the real reasons for his depression - or rather, the weather may well be a contributing factor, but certainly not the main one. Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of a depression is the suddenness with which it comes over one, with no apparent cause-

'...een zwaarmoedigheid even onbegrijpelijk als ongewenst',

as S puts it, and it is natural to seek an explanation and understandable that S should choose this change in the weather, as it coincides consistently with these depressions. One of the psychological factors contributing to them is that S is introverted by nature. During one of these moods he is completely alone, having absolutely no need for anyone else. At the beginning of Het glinsterend pantser we see the other extreme of his introversion: he is, in contrast to what is described above, very active and very interested in the people around him but he never wants actual contact with these people, he is content with imaginary relationships with them. In pretend conversations he discusses his own problems (GP p.8) and it is obvious that he has thought a lot about himself. S knows himself quite well, in fact, for in an imaginary talk with a woman he actually saw in the street, she tells him:

"dan heeft u altijd naast uzelf geleefd, dan kunt u moeilijk geholpen worden"

By being so introspective - and by being a writer - S misses out on reality. Everything, including his relationships with women, takes place in his head.

There is no doubt that S experiences some difficulty in coming to terms with his sexuality. According to Het glinsterend pantser Part 2, his first sexual feelings were aroused by Bert Duprez's aunt, Stan Vastenou, when he was already about eighteen. With regard to Stan, he displays the naïve curiosity of a boy much younger than himself - the way he latches on to the words 'hysterisch' and 'manziek', adjectives used by other adults in connection with Stan, is very childish. Innocence radiates from the thoughts sparked off by 'manziek':

'Onder de woordklank 'manziek' stelde ik mij voor machtige en uitpuilende vrouwenlichamen, kreunende vlezen, die af en toe, nogal vaak, een blote arm uitstaken naar een man. Dan moest zo'n man zich maar zien te bergen. Hoeren zouden wel 'manziek' zijn, en die vroegen nog geld op de koop toe.' 66

Stan has a great effect on him: he associated her with sex before he had even met her because of the book by Maupassant containing a 'grijs naakt vrouwenlichaam' which belonged to her. But it was Stan's actual body which affected him most - she had abnormally large hips which drew S's attention to her sexuality.

'Ze was alleen maar te goed gevormd. Daar waar vrouwen breder zijn dan mannen was zij zéer breed, breed en rond, wonderlijk gewelfd. Des te verbazingwekkender waren deze heupen en alles daar in de buurt, omdat zij niet alleen niet bij het serieuze, eenvoudig gevormde gezicht pasten.....maar evenmin bij de smalle schouders en de rechte, strakke rug, en dan had ze ook geen borsten, niet noemenswaard.

Ze was getekend midden in het lichaam. En daarom liep ze zo, bij de lieve goede Jezus, ze kon er niets aan doen; daarom liep ze zo, manziek wiegend, deinend met de heupen als de grote hoer van Babylon met Maria Magdalena en Cleopatra en Cléo de Mérode en Rooie Stien in één persoon verenigd...' 67

Obviously Stan has a very disturbing effect and this is because S cannot accept that he has sexual feelings: instead he feels ashamed, guilty, and sorry for Stan. He cannot cope with the sexual feelings aroused in him, and so, at this early stage, he takes the way out which he is to use many times in the future. He passes on the cause of his emotional disturbance i.e. Stan, to someone else - in this case Hendrik van Groeningen. He does not have to engineer this; it is unlikely that he would have gone so far, but since van Groeningen fell in love with Stan, he realized that this presented him with a solution to his problem.

'Voor mij: welk een opluchting!... Van Groeningen, die ik op straat groette en die dan met de hand teruggroette, verliefd te zien! - hoe hij zou kijken, hoe hij zou zuchten, de ogen verdraaien, handje pakken!... In deze romantiek vervluchtigden de laatste resten van mijn 'begeerte'. Van Groeningen was mijn plaatsvervanger, mijn alibi, mijn zondebok...' 68

Surely enough, this substitution had the desired effect:

'Ook Tante Stan was dezelfde, de enkele keren dat ik haar nog ontmoette. Van haar heupen, haar bijzondere gang zag ik niets meer, ik kon mij ternauwernood voorstellen, mij daar zo druk over te hebben gemaakt.' 69

Now that S's curiosity about sexual matters has been aroused, he needs to know more, so that when Victor takes out Anna Richter, S does the same, just to find out what the two of them did together - his persistent questions make him sound very naïve, which he is, of course, but this is also partly due to the slightly obsessive interest he has

in anything to do with Victor.

"Maar het belangrijkste was dat ik alles te weten kwam over hem"

'Zoenen? Wel wis en zeker hadden zij elkaar gezoend, daar bij het hekje, - dat ik dat wist! - o, natuurlijk van Victor zelf, - maar daar was het ook bij gebleven. Hoe dat en hoe zo, vroeg ik, bij gebleven, h<sup>o</sup>e bij gebleven?' 70

Throughout the trilogy S never has a normal relationship with a woman, he never lets anything develop between himself and a woman, not just sexually, but in a general sense. He seems afraid to commit himself in any way - perhaps because he has been committed to Victor since his adolescence - although he does fall in love, several times, in fact. He divides women into two categories: blonde and dark. He is sexually affected by the blonde women and therefore finds them more exciting, and he feels at home with the others. However, judging from his experience with Alice van Voorde, who belongs to the dark group, this distinction is not true - it is more likely that S is trying to persuade himself that this is the case, so that he does not get involved with Alice. Even when it comes to actual physical contact in the form of a kiss. S will still not admit sexual feelings:

'... laat zij het geweest zijn, laat ik het geweest zijn, maar vele hartslagen lang lagen onze lippen op elkaar, in vertedering. Het was de kus aan een zuster, die ons zo juist met klem van redenen de niet al te zeer begeerde bloedschande uit het hoofd heeft gepraat.' 71

It is as if at the moment of physical contact a part of S shuts off - he immediately shies away. He is remarkably successful in dealing with the threat to his peace of mind which Alice represents because he has Victor, a substitute for himself, ready and waiting. So he

tries to persuade Alice (and himself) that it is Victor she loves, and he engineers a meeting between them. It does not really matter if nothing comes of it, because S is mainly concerned with removing the immediate threat and after this it will not take him long to work Alice out of his system.

Both the 'dangerous' women - Tante Stan and Adri Duprez - are linked by their distinctive way of walking. This 'schommelen' is one of the main factors which make S so acutely aware of their physical presences, but it also acts as a kind of Leitmotif, recurring when one of these 'dangerous' women appears, and because it contains in it the essence of their effect on S, it serves both to remind us of this and to characterize this particular type of woman. But whereas nothing developed between S and Stan, the relationship between S and Adri reaches its climax with a kiss. After this, the first (and last, of course) instance of physical contact, S automatically cuts himself off from her.

'Mijn afscheid had ik genomen met een kus, die tegelijk aanvaard was en geweigerd, en die ik verloochend had op het moment zelf, - door mijzelf te verloochenen, goed, maar hier waren nauwelijks grenzen te trekken; toen ik haar gekust had, was zij een deel van mij geworden, juist dat deel, dat ik weer kwijt moest, afstoten moest, in de grote kringloop van wat men is en geweest is. Ik had alleen graag een foto van haar gehad, desnoods van drie of vier jaar tevoren, helemaal als kind.' 72

S has his own theory, then, as to why he recoiled from the contact with Adri - a theory which to my mind is not altogether convincing. In the first place he does not explain how Adri became a part of himself, and secondly why this part in particular had to be rejected. He has simply

decided that Adri must belong to his past. I think S is subconsciously thinking up rather abstract reasons to prevent himself becoming consciously aware of the real one. He already has enough difficulties with sex without adding a new guilt-feeling, which for S would be the result of admitting to himself that he was sexually attracted to Adri Duprez, a schoolgirl of sixteen. This is why he wants a photograph of her as a child: of course he wants to remember her, but he does not want the memory to be a disturbing one and S, like most people, considers a child as being outside the range of sexual possibilities. Moreover, he seems to want to put himself in a similar position, one where others can forget his sexuality, thus giving him the chance to escape from all his problems:

'...ik was een aoseksuele oom met bonbons in alle zakken voor 'wilde' nichtjes.' 73

By the time he looks Adri up in her hotel in the Alps, he has become a grandfather.

'Terwijl ik en een killen leren fauteuil naar hun telefonade luisterde, geraakte ik door het vooruitzicht Adri zo aanstonds te zien verschijnen hoe langer hoe meer in de hilaire stemming van een brooddronken grootvader, die zijn kleindochter de oren gaat wassen.' 74

Nettie is apparently the only woman with whom S has any kind of relationship. They even live together, but after a while S finds someone else for her - his usual way of freeing himself. At the beginning of Het glinsterend pantser he gives a psychological explanation for this, but as in Adri's case, it sounds contrived, and again he never gets beyond giving a superficial reason for his behaviour, and there are also inconsistencies. He says that he fell in love with a character in a book he was writing, who was based on Nettie, apparently



unwittingly, and that he could not love them both at once, although in practice this is what happened. The reasons he gives for breaking with Nettie sound more like excuses:

'En geen vermindering in mijn liefde voor het,, echte meisje! Maar het kon zo niet door blijven gaan; de een zou de ander in de weg staan; zou ik met haar trouwen, dan zou ik haar nahouden, dat ik haar niet geschapen had... neen, dat wou ik niet zeggen, het was geen kwestie van ijdelheid, of eerzuchtig vakmanschap, of bezitsinstinct of iets dergelijks: de ene liefde was alleen maar anders, totaal anders, dan de andere.' 75

Nettie herself, who is perhaps best qualified to judge, regards this as a cover-up on S's part for an inadequacy in himself.

'"want wie gelooft nu zoiets? Je maakte het jezelf wijs. Dat heb ik je tóen niet gezegd, omdat ik geen ogenblik kon geloven, dat het je ernst was. Je weet niet wat liefde is..."' 76

This judgement is a harsh one, but Nettie hits on the truth when she says that S is not interested in the reality of loving someone, he, like Anton Wachter with Ina Damman, is content with the knowledge that he has someone to love.

'"Maar jij kunt helemaal niet van iemand houden. Je denkt het alleen, en dat is wat anders dan wat ik zoëven inbeelding noemde..."' 77

Perhaps it is because Nettie has spoken the truth that S decides to shock her by telling her that his relationships with women are completely dependent on Victor's - since Victor has vowed never to marry, neither will he.

'Ik heb altijd dat gevoel gehad: eerst hij, dan ik: als hij niet, dan ik ook niet.' 78

In S's commentary to the reader, he begins by saying that this is completely invented to make an impression on Nettie, but he soon admits that there is some truth in it, and later comes to regard it as

a kind of vow, affecting the future:

'...deze avond geloofde ik in wat ik Nettie had gezegd, wist ik, dat het van nu af aan - niet vroeger al, niet in mijn jeugd, niet een jaar of een half jaar tevoren, maar van nu af aan - voor mij van meer betekenis zou zijn, dat Victor Slingeland nog eens gelukkig werd, o heel bescheiden maar, geen hemel op aarde, een rustig geluk, meer niet, dan dat ik de subliemste verrukkingen deelachtig werd van alle klassieke minnaars tezamen. Aan deze gedachte zou ik mij nooit meer geheel kunnen onttrekken; dat was mijn straf voor de snelle leugen, die hier in letterlijke zin door de waarheid werd achterhaald. Voor Victor zou ik zeker niet alles, en misschien maar heel weinig overhebben; maar de liefde zou mij ontzegd blijven, zolang hij nog leed...' 79

One of the results of S's inability to come to terms with the reality of a relationship is his increasing tendency to regard himself as sexless. He began by referring to himself as an asexual uncle and progressed to a grandfather, who (he hopes) is too old for other people to take his sexuality into account. With regard to Victor and Eva S adopts this attitude too:

'Het was waar, dat mijn rol in het leven meer en meer in het teken kwam te staan van de aftandse grootvader die de kleinen voor het onfatsoen behoedt...' 80

It is very true that as far as Eva is concerned, S is an asexual figure, and this is one of the reasons why he is so welcome in her house - far from adding to complications, he will make things easier for Victor and Eva. S is painfully aware of this:

'In elk geval was ik een welkome gast, en Franciscanen zouden mij als een der hunnen begroeten.' 81

S now sees himself as a monk - celibacy is surely one step further than simply being too old. It is understandable that S should be so conscious of his position in this respect, because it seems inevitable that he will fall in love with Eva too: firstly because Victor is in

love with her, and secondly because she is in love with Victor, and therefore unavailable - the perfect woman for S, for he need not worry about the problems of a relationship with her in reality: Victor will take care of that, and S is left with his dreams.

#### The conflict between dream and reality

The conflict which S experiences between dream and reality is a fundamental aspect of his personality. It affects his behaviour to a very great extent - firstly in his attitude to women, and secondly, it is closely bound up with his activities as a writer, although it is difficult to determine whether the need to write springs out of this conflict, or whether the conflict is caused by the need for a writer to live in two worlds - a fictional one and a real one. The conflict comes to a head when S goes to the Alps, which are a logical setting for S's crisis, because the mountains accentuate the discrepancy between dream (both in the sense of something unreal and something ideal) and reality: they act, thus, as a catalyst in bringing about the climax of the conflict.

One can see how the mountains have this effect when Victor is climbing the Gr<sup>u</sup>nstein for the first time and he discovers that the climb is much more difficult than it appeared to be, seen from below. Also the actual nature of the mountain turns out to be different from what he had expected, especially with respect to how it affects his climb i.e. certain rock formations caused him to make a detour; and distances are very deceptive. These experiences have the effect of making Victor aware of his own position with regard to reality:

'Dit was zijn verhaal, en toen hij ermee gereed was, zei hij schouderophalend, dat het allemaal illusie was geweest, - bedrog wou hij het niet meer noemen, - illusie van iemand die, en dit moest ik niet licht tellen, onherstelbaar leefde in een wereld van de schijn.' 82

But the illusion does in fact become reality when he goes back to Tirol to live with Eva, and it does not seem to have come as such a shock as one would have imagined. Victor takes it all in his stride and soon forgets how he felt in the beginning. For S the problem is more of a permanent one.

'Maar Victor begreep ik. Het kolossale prestige van de vreemde vrouw, de buitenlandse, de bewoonster van bergtoppen, had zich ook aan mij medegedeeld, en wanneer het waar was, dat iedere illusie, in de werkelijkheid overgebracht, met de verbrijzeling van een spiegel gelijkstond, dan was het niet minder waar, dat de scherven wel eens een werkelijkheid weerspiegelden, die de illusie overtrof.' 83

But as one might expect, the reality does not live up to the dream, because in reality one must take outside factors, i.e. other people into account.

'Dat hier alleen sprake van liefde kon zijn op de berg de Grünstein, en dat de werkelijkheid, die zoveel op een gezellige droom leek, de droom had vermoord, die anders wellicht werkelijkheid was geworden.' 84

For S, the real moment when the mirror smashes is when he learns that Eva and Victor 'waren intiem geweest'. He had clung to the idea that real romantic love, which is what he thought existed between them, has nothing to do with sex, it belongs in the dream world on the mountain. This is what S wants, then, his romantic ideal is platonic love, and sex can only destroy what romance there is.

Mountain scenery is important because it helps to foster the sense of unreality, because, for someone coming from down below, it is too

fantastic, too varied:

'Maar er bleek veel meer te zijn dan dat, want hier opende zich eindelijk een onafzienbaar en bijzonder rijkgeschakeerd en vrijgevochten landschap, waar men lachende rivieren ried, sidderende torenspitsen, en matten en auen en juichende menigten uit de middeleeuwen, misschien keek men wel tot Neurenberg. Dit was grandioos. De nevel in de verte scheen tot Denemarken te reiken. Voorgebergten lagen er als groene waakhonden.' 85

In the mountains one is continuously aware of death because one is so close to it the whole time. Moreover, S experiences the not uncommon urge to must simply step off the mountain to his death. This is not an urge to commit suicide: the mountains seem to have some unseen power, forcing one towards the edge, which lies in the fact that they make everything else so unreal, that death itself does not seem important any longer. But all the same, S knows deep down - he is forced by the mountains to become aware of this - that death is real (and life too, therefore?) which is why he does not take the fatal step. He does not escape totally unscathed, however, for a stone hits him on the head, rendering him unconscious for a while. During this time he has a hallucination in which he acts out the climax of his feelings of hostility towards Victor, so that they can become close friends, closer than they were before.

S seems to regard life as consisting of a polarity between dream - both in the sense of something that is desired and something that is unreal - and reality. It does not appear to be possible for him to live in either the one world or the other, so he is always the victim of the conflict between the two. When he goes to the Alps, he becomes aware of this and begins to think about it, but before this, it found

constant expression in everything he did. It is one reason why, on the surface, he appears inconsistent, because he has difficulty in distinguishing between dream and reality. This is, of course, most obvious in his relationships with women - in theory, in his thoughts and dreams, S falls in love with several women, but in reality, he does not want them. This is connected with his sexual inhibitions, but most of the time, he is so detached from reality that he falls in love with the idea of being in love.

... reason than we realize, but one which helps understand why he should have chosen this particular aspect, which we had had personal experience of it. It is clear from the way the essay is written - the style is very laconic and every sentence is aimed for the explanation - that Veitlik had spent some time thinking about this phenomenon and formulating it most carefully. Besides, appearing in his subsequent work, this kind of idealization is a recurring theme in his fiction.

The basic qualities of the relationship as defined by Veitlik in 'De groenheid van Judas' are as follows: - for want of a better term I shall call it hero-worship, as there are two people involved, and it tends to focus on the character of the 'worshipper', probably because the other is often a rather vague, distant ideal. From the very first sentence of the essay one is aware of the importance which Veitlik attaches to this adoption of another person as an ideal, as regards one's general character development.

'Grooting is vereerd, religieus en kunst, noodlijdend  
berekken. zij zijn verduidelijkt voor het leven  
veitlik' 33

### The Friendship Between S and Victor Slingeland

The key to the nature of this friendship is to be found in the collection of essays by Vestdijk - Essays in Duodecimo - in the essay entitled 'De grootheid van Judas'. Obviously there are different types of human relationships, one of which is friendship. Vestdijk has isolated in this essay a type of friendship which is certainly quite common. (He thinks that it is more common than we realize), but one cannot help wondering why he should have chosen this particular aspect, unless he had had personal experience of it. It is clear from the way the essay is written - the style is very turgid and every sentence is vital for the explanation - that Vestdijk had spent some time thinking out this phenomenon and formulating it most carefully. Besides figuring in his essayistic work, this kind of friendship is a recurring theme in his fiction.

The basic qualities of the relationship as defined by Vestdijk in 'De grootheid van Judas' are as follows:- for want of a better term I shall call it hero-worship, as there are two people involved, and it tends to focus on the character of the 'worshipper', probably because the other is often a rather vague, distant ideal. From the very first sentence of the essay one is aware of the importance which Vestdijk attaches to this adoption of another person as an ideal, as regards one's general character development.

'Opvoeding en moraal, religie en kunst, menselijk bereiken, zij zijn ondenkbaar zonder het levende voorbeeld.' 86

The hero must be a living person and not an abstract ideal, because the aim is to become like the object of admiration. One needs to be able to identify with the hero, with the result that:

'...de bewonderde vriend drukt het stempel van zijn karakter op ons.'

I cannot here ignore a remarkably similar kind of relationship described by Vestdijk in the essay 'Marsman als Apollinische Persoonlijkheid'<sup>87</sup>. He talks about a type of friendship which would seem to be exactly what we are discussing here - friendship with 'een uitverkorene, als evenbeeld van zichzelf: leerling, vriend of vriendin'. There is one main difference, this being the word he uses to describe the friend. In 'De grootheid van Judas' he is an 'ideaalbeeld', and in 'Marsman als Apollinische Persoonlijkheid' an 'evenbeeld'. The former springs out of a need to model oneself on someone, the latter out of a kind of narcissism/solipsism. However, both types of friends share a need to maintain a distance between each other, because any kind of union would in both cases ruin the relationship: for the first type because it is a paradoxical relationship in that an urge to become closer to the friend is an essential feature, but the closeness will in turn destroy everything; the second type simply does not experience this urge. /e Although on the fact of it we are dealing with the same kind of friendship in both essays, from a psychological point of view this is not true. The instances of such relationships in Vestdijk's fiction all belong to the first group which is typified by the fact that everything is seen through the eyes of the 'leerling', who is dissatisfied with his present self and seeks a 'meester' who is different in character



from himself (compared with the other group whom Vestdijk describes as twins).

To return to the essay on Judas: the first stage of the friendship is the need on the part of the hero-worshipper for someone on whom to model himself. The second stage is a reaction against the urge to become like the hero, quite simply, as Vestdijk puts it,

'omdat wij de andere niet willen worden.'

although the reason behind it is not so simple. We need the hero-figure for inspiration - to give us something to live for - but as soon as we succeed in becoming like him, then we have **no-one** left to look up to. There are two possible solutions to this problem. The first is to stop striving towards the ideal, in which case, says Vestdijk, he ceases to be an ideal. Alternatively we can turn against the object of our admiration and try to belittle him or hurt him, perhaps. This is what tends to happen, because it enables him to remain as the focus of the emotions, only now different ones have come into play. To sum up:

'Eerst bewondert men - dan wil men navolgen, - tenslotte breekt men af...'

Vestdijk goes on to illustrate his theory by using as an example one of the most important and widely adopted hero-figures in the West for the last two thousand years, i.e. Christ. The reaction to Christ of the majority of his contemporaries can be identified as fitting in with Vestdijk's principles. During the first stage they shouted 'Hosanna!', and during the second, 'Crucify him!'. But the relationship of Judas with Christ is much more interesting. Judas had to betray Jesus to

remain faithful to his ideal. Of all the Twelve, he was the one to do it because it was he who felt the desire to identify with Jesus most strongly, and thus it was also he who had to take the most drastic measures. His action, though damnable in the eyes of most people, was inevitable if he was still to be able to look up to and admire Christ.

'Zo gezien, verried Judas zijn Meester uit vroomheid.'

As well as such a universal example of the theory, there are a few others which are much more important and revealing for the interested reader of Vestdijk, because they are to be found in his fiction. Vestdijk thought out the theory, and he should know best how to put it into practice - which he did in the epic poem Mnemosyne in de bergen, and in the short story De bruine vriend. However, the best, most full portrayal of this kind of relationship is to be found in the Slingeland trilogy in the friendship between S and Victor Slingeland.

There are many similarities between all three works, although Mnemosyne in de bergen and the Symfonie van Victor Slingeland are perhaps more closely linked by the fact that they are both set in the Alps. De bruine vriend can be compared with a very small section of the trilogy: Part 2 of Het glinsterend pantser, as these both deal with the youth of the friends. In both cases the hero is a newcomer into the school milieu who has been sent down from his last school for various misdeeds, and who makes a tremendously strong first impression on the narrator - in both cases a fellow pupil.

L.G. Abell-van Soest, in an essay entitled 'De bruine vriend onder  
88  
de sterren', has looked at the relationship between 'de bruine vriend',  
Hugo Verwey, and Henk Mannoury in the light of the essay on Judas.  
I should just like to point out the most important aspect of the  
story, as far as my comparison is concerned, and that is the initial  
reaction of narrator to newcomer. Henk Mannoury adopts Hugo Verwey  
as his 'ideaalbeeld' partly because the manner of the latter ('deze  
jonge vorst') was such that Henk was forced to look up to him, and  
partly because Hugo was two or three years older which, in the  
school environment, naturally put him in a superior position.  
However, judging from the narrator's comments, the main factor was  
the physical attraction which Henk felt for Hugo, which, as the  
narrator says, does not mean a conscious sexual attraction. It is  
the powerful effect of the mere presence of the hero on the narrator  
which is common to both books. So far the correspondence between them  
has been close, but it goes no further, for Henk makes the break  
with Hugo without the two of them ever having been friends, whereas  
S and Victor go on to become the best of friends, although the climaxes  
of the relationships follow the principles laid down by Vestdijk in  
the essay on Judas. Both narrator characters - and also the student  
in 'Mnemosyne in de bergen' - make an attempt to harm their 'ideaalbeeld'  
physically. Victor Slingeland escapes unscathed, but Hugo Verwey  
catches pneumonia as a result - and the soldier in 'Mnemosyne' is  
actually killed.

To move on to 'Mnemosyne', the two main characters are described as

a student, and a soldier, who later turns out to be the god Mercury. The soldier acts as the student's guide in the mountains, and although Victor does not actually accompany S on his walks, he advises him and certainly knows more about the mountains than S. In the beginning the student looks up to the soldier, his master:

'Zoo, in de schein'ring van dit oord,  
Schrijdt nu de meester van het woord,  
Naast hem de leerling van de droom,...' 89

The soldier seems to have magical powers (Victor tried his hand at using magic to make him master over nature, but without success.<sup>90</sup>).

'De wapens meester alle drie  
Van ernst en spel en fantasie,  
Dwingt hij, hun korte rustpoos lang,  
Natuur naar zijn gedachtengang,...' 91

In other words, the soldier is an example of the 'ideaalbeeld' taken to extremes, which, in the context of the poem, is perfectly acceptable.

According to Vestdijk's theory, the student's attitude towards the soldier must change. This is brought about by an external factor, a girl with whom the student falls in love, but who prefers the attentions of the soldier. This event is crucial, for it makes the student feel that he no longer wants to be like his master. His reply to the soldier's question about the coming day's walk betrays the change in his attitude.

'....."Wat geeft  
Het om verder de berg op te gaan,  
Nu w'ons tóch met elkaar niet verstaan?"' 92

He goes along, but turns against the soldier and kills him by pushing a piece of wood over a ledge on to the soldier sleeping below.

In the Symfonie van Victor Slingeland, the friendship is not developed chronologically - at the beginning of the first book we are already at the start of the second stage, where there is a conflict in S's mind between wanting to be like Victor and not wanting to be like him. We are able to witness the first stage of the relationship, but not until Part 2 of Het glinsterend pantser, when S goes back to his schooldays in the 'houtstadje'. S's feelings towards Victor are perfectly expressed in the following quotation from Part 2, Chapter VII, 'Geheimen over en weer'.

'Ik zag hem als de man, de jongen, die alles kon,  
alles voor anderen kunnen bewerkstelligen en in orde  
maken, de ware vriend, de jeugdvriend...'

The description of the first meeting between S and Victor at school, shows that from the very beginning S had picked him out as his 'ideaalbeeld', or rather that the effect of Victor's mere presence was so great that S had no alternative but to look up to him. This does not mean to say that Victor automatically had this effect on everyone: the mysteries of physical attraction seem to be playing their part here. Right from the start Victor Slingeland was regarded by S as a kind of god, someone far superior to himself:

'... geef hem een paar horens, en hij is de god Pan.....  
Het zou mij niet hebben verbaasd hem op het dak te zien  
verschijnen, met wenkbrauwen en horens en die smakeloze beige  
jas, roerloos over ons uitstarend, één voet vooruit'. 93

One cannot help but recall the short story 'Arcadië' by Vestdijk here, in which Pan appears as a devilish incarnation of sexual urges and the fear which they arouse. S also refers to Victor as Mephistopheles at one point, so perhaps my choice of words (i.e. god) was a little

unfortunate. However, what is important is that Victor was very different from the other boys at school with S and Bert Duprez, hence the great impression he made on S, who twice comments that he has never seen or heard anyone like Victor before.

'Dergelijke gezichten waren op onze school nog niet eerder vertoond, en wat wilde hij met dat gezicht, waarom stond hij daar?' 94

And in the following paragraph:

'....zulke stemmen hadden wij in ons houtstadje nog niet gehoord..'

The similarity of construction of these two quotations serves to strengthen the impression that this feeling is one of the dominating ones inspired by Victor.

'.... dat wij, wie weet, de ware Victor nog nooit hadden meegemaakt, dat wij ons domweg hadden vergist, dat hij anders was, anders dan wij in onze meest overspaanen dromen konden bevroeden.' 95

According to S, the predominant feeling aroused in himself was one of curiosity, not just because Victor was so different, but because S was sure he had some kind of secret. Indeed, S was not disappointed, for his secret turned out to be his musical ability. He played the piano well, which impressed S immensely because now Victor took on added importance as a master figure, and S, who also played (and probably reasonably well, as Annie Duprez obviously valued his opinion of Adri's piano playing) was the student.

'Maar neen, hij speelde toch, een 'echt' pianostuk, iets voor grote mensen, en hij speelde het ook als een groot mens, niet als een leerling'. 96

Once his curiosity had been satisfied, S had something more permanent, more concrete, to admire in Victor, and on the occasions when he

hears him playing or conducting, S's feelings of admiration and adoration grow until he forgets any of the doubts which he may have had concerning Victor.

In fact, the only occasions when S sees him performing are after breaks in their relationship. The first was after a pause of a few months, whilst S was a student in Amsterdam.

'Ik kan dat niet beschrijven. Het was niet, dat hij onberispelijk speelde, of ook maar een bijzondere opvatting liet raden, het was ook niet de verbazing omdat hij de verloren tijd zo glansrijk bleek te hebben ingehaald, maar het was omdat hij het was, die daar achter de vleugel zat te spelen, mijn jeugdvriend, mijn vriend. Met zijn te grote handen, zijn gebreken en zijn kleinzieligheden, zijn geheimen en zijn grootheid.' 97

Later on, after a gap of twenty years, similar feelings are aroused in S:

'Want in mijn verbeelding zag ik mijn jeugdvriend voor zijn orkest staan, hoog opgericht, een kunstenaar. Meer dan dat, een meester.' 98

It is striking that the expression 'Jeugdvriend' occurs in both these quotations - and in several other places too, most prominently at the end of Het glinsterend pantser. The last four words of this book are : 'mijn jeugdvriend, mijn vriend.' I think S attaches so much importance to the fact that Victor is a friend from his schooldays, because he is aware that his feelings for Victor are unusually strong, and he is trying to rationalize this. We see an example of this immediately after Victor has appeared on the platform (Chapter VI 'Het concert') at the beginning of the concert, and S is intensely moved, seeing his friend for the first time after so long.

'Ja, en nu voelde ik ook iets als trots, omdat hij het zo ver gebracht had....., en omdat hij mijn vriend was geweest. Een jeugdvriend, dat is altijd méer. Een jeugdvriend, die slaagt in het leven, heeft het verouderen overwonnen en het vergankelijke van oude betoveringen; hij heeft alles gedaan, ook voor ons. Hij zet de tijd even stil, het is goed hem terug te zien.' 99

However, that very same evening, after the concert, the doubts have already set in. S's attitude towards Victor is constantly changing: one moment he is belittling him to Alice van Voorde, the next, he is praising him to the skies.

'...vóór alles nam ik terug wat ik gezegd had, ik nam het nogmaals terug: Slingeland was groot als mens, en een dirigent was niet de mindere van een componist, - integendeel zelfs....' 100

Compare this with the following passage from the chapter preceding the concert:

'Ik zou zwijgen als het graf over Slingeland.... over een dirigent, een kunstenaar van de tweede rang...' 101

This is the very beginning of S's turning against Slingeland, for he has discovered that there is one field where he is Victor's superior: he is a creative artist, whereas Victor merely interprets the work of other creative artists. Victor obviously still has a great effect on S, but as soon as S feels the danger of losing his identity completely to Victor approaching, he has his way out, his weapon against Victor's influence, ready and waiting.

Vestdijk has not put his theory into practice quite so simply - it would hardly fill three books, and would not make for convincing psychology, either. His skill as a novelist, which is evident from



the way he handles the S/Victor relationship, lies in the depth of the characterization. For example, the conflict between the creative artist and the performing artist, although fundamentally necessary for the break between the two friends, or rather S's attempt to break away, can hardly be regarded as the only cause. I think it is the most important, being such a basic difference, which, in the eyes of most people, puts S in a superior position to Victor, but - as in Mnemosyne - women also have a part to play in alienating S from his 'ideaalbeeld'

The first woman to come between the friends is Stan Vastenou. Neither of them is in love with her, but she communicates something sexually to S, and possibly to Victor too, since the latter had an affair with her, treating her badly, extricating money from her to pay for his studies. Although S regards her eventual suicide as inevitable, his opinion of Victor must obviously be affected. Actually, he cannot keep separate the different forces which are turning him away from Victor: he always comes back to the artistic problem, as one can see from his reaction to Stan Vastenou's diary:

'Zolang het dagboek als realiteit in mij leefde, werd ik toch voortdurend bekropen door het gevoel, dat Victor als mens betrekkelijk onbelangrijk was, en dat Stan hem met het tienvoudige overtrof.....Wel was hij behalve mens ook kunstenaar....maar mij bracht deze overweging niet veel verder, zij scheepde mij alleen maar dat oude probleem op: wat was een dirigent waard? Hoeveel kon men hem vergeven? Moest men schrijver meer vergeven worden, of juist minder?' 102

The S-Alice-Victor trio also provokes this reaction, i.e. the need to determine which is better, a creative artist or an interpreting one.

'Met Alice had ik nu al ongenoegen gehad over de verschillen tussen het scheppende en het uitvoerende kunstenaarschap, en ik had niet de minste lust hem te verpletteren met mijn meerderheid, of mij door hem te laten verpletteren.' 103

But the most striking aspect of this triangle is the way it comes into being: at a moment when S is most affected by Victor, during the journey back after the concert, he persuades Alice that she is actually in love with the conductor, despite the fact that she shows signs of being attracted to him. Such a strange action implies a highly complicated psychology, which is typical for the characters in this trilogy. At the moment in question S looks up to Slingeland so much that he uses Alice as a means to help him become more like his 'ideaalbeeld'. It is not enough for S that she should simply be in love with him; he intends them to meet, and I think that he is hoping that Slingeland will fall in love with her too (S is actually in love with her, although we know no more than that 'voor ik in slaap, had ik nog wel met verliefdheid te kampen..'). This is something of a variation on the original theme in that here the hero-worshipper is not vainly striving to become like his hero - S does not change himself, but tries to change Victor's circumstances and make them more like his own.

Adri Duprez fulfils a similar rôle to that of Alice: she completes a triangle with S and Victor, meeting S first, who then passes her on to Victor. But she is also like Stan Vastenou in that the immediate impact she makes on S is physical (Het glinsterend pantser P 18).

In this respect, S sees Alice and Adrie as direct opposites:

'..maar vast stond, dat ik mij bij de donkeren (like Alice) thuisvoelde en dat de blonden (like Adrie), voor mij het gevaar vertegenwoordigden, het gevaar en de fascinatie.' 105

S realizes that he is falling for Adri and fights against it, but circumstances - and his own weakness - conspire to bring them together. In fact fate also has a part to play - in bringing Victor and Adri together. Their first meeting takes place without S's knowledge, and the element of chance (or fate?) involved is so great that one feels that the S/Adri/Slingeland triangle is inevitable: firstly, from the point of view of the natural dispositions of the character. If Adri had not met Victor by chance, then S would have introduced them. But the mere fact that it did occur by chance seems to confirm the inevitability. As soon as he hears of the meeting, S sees Adri as a natural successor to Stan and Alice (Het glinsterend pantser 3 V). In other words, all three determining factors for events in the novel mentioned by S in the interview with Frits seem to have played their part here. To go back to Chapter 1 of my thesis P.22 one can now say that either S is not the mouthpiece for Vestdijk's own ideas on novel-writing, or, if he is, then Vestdijk does not always put his theory into practice, for the standpoint governing the relationships between these characters is clearly determinist, as defined by S himself. This is the one attitude which S does his best to avoid adopting. Actually, in the chapter entitled 'Surprise zonder surprise' we can see that S is aware of this to a certain extent, and he spends the first paragraph rationalizing:

'De kans was te gering. Maar dan wist ik opeens, dat de redenering niet deugde. Een kans mocht nog zo gering zijn, als kans bestond hij toch, en uit hoofde van dit bestaan was hij ook nooit gering: wanneer iets kon gebeuren, dan kon het ook gebeuren in zijn volle omvang, massief, in al zijn verpletterende werkelijkheid. Vandaar dat waarschijnlijkheidsrekening onzin was, iets voor schrijvers en demografen in hun studeerkamers.' 106

S attributes the turn of events not to chance or fate, but to the devil, a devil, who seems to be a personification of the sexual side of love - the frightening, dangerous side for S, who convinces himself that this devil is doing everything in his power to bring him and Adri together, something which S considers wrong because of the age gap between them. However, the devil provides S with a reason not to feel guilty about his desires - if the power of this external force i.e. the devil proves to be stronger than S's good intentions, then the latter is helpless and not responsible for his actions. S has yet another excuse connected with Adri herself: if he could make her love him, then this would distract her attention from Victor. But he knows that this is not to be (because fate wills it?). Adri visits Victor of her own accord, and though S dare not interfere directly, he does go to see Victor.

So far, the women mentioned have been responsible for the two men keeping in contact: in S's student days, Victor looks him up in connection with Tante Stan; S would never have gone to that concert without Alice; and Adri provides him with a reason this time. It does seem that S needs a reason to go and see Victor, perhaps so that he need not admit to himself that he wants to see him, because he is afraid of the strength of his feelings for Victor.

As I said earlier, the way Victor treats women provides S with a reason for turning against him. It is a very gradual process, (and what is more, the length of this process governs the length of the

trilogy, i.e. this is what the work is about.), but with Adri S's subconscious begins to react quite strongly against Victor right at the beginning. I am referring to S's dream described in 'Surprise zonder surprise', which begins with a conversation between the friends where the relationship seems to be on its usual footing. Later we see Victor as the conductor at work - also nothing new - but at the end there is a revolting vision of Victor vomiting. Now he reminds S of a dog: in other words S, in his subconscious, cannot possibly look up to him any more.

The relationship with Adri Duprez is continued, on and off, throughout the trilogy, sometimes simultaneously with the Victor/Eva/S one, and she also has a minor part to play in the final climax on the mountain. Before one can look at this, it is necessary to go into the Eva relationship in some detail. Together with the character of Eva comes the whole question of such a drastic change in setting - one cannot get further away from the physical geography of Holland than the Alps. One must therefore consider the significance (if any) of the mountains. Taking 'Mnemosyne in de bergen' into account, it then seems quite likely that the Alps, perhaps because they are so far removed from normal life down below, have an effect on certain characters - those characters who are going through some kind of personality crisis, especially those who are trying to break away from their 'ideaalbeeld'. The student in 'Mnemosyne' and S are in this very position and their stories follow the basic lines laid down by Vestdijk in the essay on Judas. Eva's rôle, like that of the

innkeeper's daughter, is that of a catalyst in S's breaking away. This time it was Victor who found Eva, and S who later fell in love with her. Like the student, he wanted no more than to be able to worship his beloved from afar.

'Dat ik niet de minste hoop op wederliefde behoefde te koesteren of op welke vervulling ook, - ook al zou Victor niet hebben bestaan, - had ik dadelijk wel geweten; maar ook dit hoorde erbij, ook dit verhief mij in eigen ogen een weinig boven wat ik de laatste jaren geweest was. Eva Kienpointner, dacht ik, Eva Kienpointner, - maar wat een vrouw ook, hoe is het mogelijk, dat juist zij deze taak ten uitvoer heeft te brengen, als strenge godin van het gebergte voor mij alleen.' 107

Now that he has found a woman to love in this idealistic way, S no longer has such a great need for Victor. But it is difficult for him to transfer his affections. This is the thought which is uppermost in his mind whilst he is following Victor up into the mountains on that crucial day.

'Ik had nog de vrijheid, de vrijheid om te bewijzen, dat ik mezelf was. Vijf minuten later, wanneer hij de jongen had vooruitgestuurd en mij aangehoord, zou daar een eind aan zijn gekomen. Dan was ik weer de satelliet van Victor Slingeland.' 108

S knows that now is his chance to free himself.

'..hij had mij alles gegeven, en hij had alles weer teruggenomen, net als God. En wat had het voor indruk op Eva kunnen maken, zij die niets om mij gaf? Toen ze zei: 'Ich könnte ihn ermorden', toen had ik moeten zeggen: dat zal ik dan wel doen.' 109

Whether he actually tried to kill Victor or not is difficult to decide. S is sure of it at first, but later attributes it to a hallucination caused by a falling stone hitting him on the head. Perhaps it does not matter - perhaps the fact that he could admit

it to himself is enough:

'Ik had mij van Victor willen ontdoen, nadat ik maanden lang vergeefs gepoogd had mij van hem te bevrijden. Het was in het geheel niet onaannemelijk, dat ik het gedaan had.' 110

And Victor's words which end the trilogy suggest this too. He is not talking about S's ordeal on the mountain, but it is clear that what he says is meant to apply to S.

'..hij zegt, dat er één verdomd rotte plek is, waar je zo ongeveer met je hoofd naar beneden hangt, maar als je daar voorbij bent, dan gaat verder alles vanzelf, dan glijd je als het ware vanzelf naar boven, dan kan niets je meer gebeuren...' 111

Vestdijk leaves S's future open, but I think it is sufficiently clear that S has come through his crisis, and things can only improve. I also think that Vestdijk is suggesting a possible solution for the dilemma which the hero-worshipper must inevitably find himself in. If it is possible to find a third person whom the friends can both love in their different ways, then the feelings of hero-worshipper must become less intense if they are to be shared between them. The element of admiration is still there, but not the vain striving to become like the hero. S's reconciliation with Victor is sparked off by the latter's admission that he had in fact always admired S and his work - the hero jealous of his worshipper? This information, coming as it did at the best possible moment when S was ready to accept it without feeling let down by Victor, had the optimum effect. The fact that S was not disillusioned by what Victor disclosed proves that he has overcome his difficulties, the only ones remaining being more or less practical ones -

'de onmogelijkheid van schuld en scheiding  
en bevrijding..' 112

In other words S (and Victor) know what they want from each other,  
it is simply a matter of how to set about achieving it.



### CHAPTER THREE

#### VESTDIJK AND THE ARTIST

Victor Slingeland and S are both artists. This is not coincidence, because it constitutes one of the central themes of the trilogy. Vestdijk makes his two main characters into a novelist and a conductor because he wants to analyse the question of whether any one type of artist is intrinsically more important or valuable than another. One is aware of a great split between Victor and S precisely because their branches of art are so far apart: and yet there must be some links. Again one is faced with the problem of whether to take the views expressed in the trilogy as Vestdijk's own, since they are presented as a product of someone else's pen i.e. S's. I am inclined to think that this time it does not matter. The point is that Vestdijk, when he wrote these books, had arrived at a stage of his career where he needed to evaluate his function as an artist. Using the character S, he surveys his own particular branch of art - novel-writing. (One must mention here that although Vestdijk wrote a lot of poetry, his production in this field diminished as he grew older, so that hardly any new work appeared in the 1950's and '60's. He is primarily a prose writer with such a phenomenal output of novels that it is not surprising that he made S a novelist.) But he did not stop here, preferring as well to examine the question of the artist in general: how the latter fits into society, how being an artist

affects him, and whether the nature of his own branch of art makes much difference.

It becomes clear that Vestdijk is hyper-conscious of his role as an artist, but not from any ethical point of view. He is never concerned with using his art to convey a message to the public like some modern writers. He is basically writing for himself because he does not have any strong feelings about politics or social problems. He is fully aware of this, as emerges in conversation with Theun de Vries:

'VRAAG: "Heeft de kunst, zoals ze nu geworden is, een functie in het sociale bestel? Een roeping?"

ANTWOORD: "Nee, die kan ik er echt niet in vinden, Voor mezelf dan. Ik neem aan dat het voor iemand anders, jou bijvoorbeeld, heel anders ligt: vanuit dat standpunt mag je dan bij mij een manko vaststellen..." 113

In this respect one could conclude that Vestdijk has no message, which is, in fact, one of his main characteristics as a writer; and yet he offers so many ideas on so many subjects, for instance, music, religion, psychology, philosophy. Given that this is the case, then it does not really matter whether we take the ideas expressed here as being Vestdijk's or S's now that we are in the more general realm of ideas. What is important is that Vestdijk has put these ideas down on paper so that his reader may also consider the subject which has concerned him whilst writing these books, and probably for some time before.

What I have said above amounts to a description of Vestdijk himself as an artist - a rather conventional one who certainly does not fit in with modern trends in novel-writing in that he is not experimental

in any way, or politically committed. He does, however, fit in with his own idea of how an artist should be, as described by him in a speech delivered in 1937 to a conference of the 'Kunstenaarscentrum voor geestelijke weerbaarheid' entitled 'Kunstenaars en oorlogspsychologie'. Or, equally possible, he has based his concept of the artist on himself. This speech is perhaps a good starting-point for this chapter as it presents us with a series of definitions of 'Kunstenaarschap'. Vestdijk deals with the various possible psychological causes of going to war, and after each, he gives a definition of the artist which shows how the latter does not fit in with the normal patterns i.e. the artist is outside, even above war.

I shall only concern myself with Vestdijk's idea of 'Kunstenaarschap' as emerges from these definitions - one which is very idealized. The artist is someone who is different, but this does not make him an outcast: he is above society. It is his strong individualism that sets him apart from the mass.

'De kunstenaar is een individualist. Meer nog, - want het individualisme vooronderstelt en erkent een gemeenschap, waar het de antithese van uitmaakt, - de kunstenaar is autonoom, is een wereld "sui generis", een monade, om met Leibniz te spreken, "zonder vesters" op andere werelden, of beter: zonder andere vensters dan die prismatisch een beeld ontwerpen, dat nooit kloppen zal met het beeld dat die werelden zich van elkaar hebben gevormd. Deze creatieve autonomie is trouwens bij de behandeling der vorige punten steeds het centrum geweest van mijn betoog, waaraan ik nu wel een grotere elasticiteit kan verlenen door toe te geven, dat een kunstenaar als mensch bovendien lid van een gemeenschap is, dat hij daarnaast deel uitmaakt van een geestelijke élite...'

It is true, however, that Vestdijk does qualify his definitions

when he says on page 16:

'Zelfs wanneer men, zoals ik hier doe, het oog richt op een geabstraheerd, in zekeren zin geïdealiseerd kunstenaarschap, - onvermijdelijke voorwaarde om dit onderwerp in groote lijnen te kunnen behandelen...'

The rest of society, the 'buitenwereld', has no claim on the activity of an artist because his actions are always directed towards himself:

'En dat niet omdat de kunstenaarsaanleg een meer dan normale activiteit van den kunstenaar buitensluit ... maar omdat de activiteit van den kunstenaar niet meer disponibel is voor de buitenwereld.' 116

Vestdijk is here talking about the creative artist, who he believes is engaged in re-creating the outside world, or rather his impressions of it. Thus he needs to set himself apart so as to obtain an overall view which would not be possible if he involved himself in any one part of it (war in this instance). Vestdijk even goes so far as to suggest that there is an opposition between 'kunstenaar' and 'mensch', or that the one excludes the other :

Le? '.....zweeg onmiddellijk de kunstenaar en trad de mensch in zijn rechten.' 117

This is what happens to Victor when he meets Eva and cuts himself off with her for a time.

"Overigens was ik nooit zo weinig... kunstenaar als toen. Ik was voor het eerst een mens, en voor het laatst." 118

This idea has also found expression in the work of Thomas Mann. In Tonio Kröger it is presented as an irreconcilable conflict: Tonio is an artist, but he would much rather be an ordinary person. Thus his and Vestdijk's ideals are directly opposed because one's impression is that Vestdijk looks down on the ordinary man, whereas Tonio longs to

be like him. However, Tonio sees the two types as opposites for the same reason as Vestdijk: namely as a result of the artist's need to observe before he can create (i.e. recreate what he has observed).

"Es ist nötig, dass man irgend etwas Aussermenschliches und Unmenschliches sei, dass man zum Menschlichen in einem seltsamen fernen und unbeteiligten Verhältnis stehe, um imstande und überhaupt versucht zu sein, es zu spielen, damit zu spielen, es wirksam und geschmackvoll darzustellen.. Es ist aus mit dem Künstler, sobald er Mensch wird und zu empfinden beginnt." 119

In keeping with the conflict he experiences, Tonio Kröger regards his 'Künstlertum' as a curse, an inescapable fate. Vestdijk, on the other hand, seems to accept that he is placed outside society by the fact that he is a creative artist, and this is reflected in the speech, and years later in the conversation with Theun de Vries:

'Het verschijnsel kunst komt vooral in zijn kritische functies ook wel eens tegenover het leven te staan, maar het hoort er ook daardoor onweerlegbaar bij.' 120

This does not mean to say that he finds it easy being an artist, but he accepts it as something inevitable for himself, although he would not wish it on anyone else:

'..en tenslotte is het streven naar synthese misschien een vollere levensuiting dan het 'ontginnen' van een talent. Wat mijzelf betreft; ik heb voorgoed en eenzijdig voor het talent partij gekozen, desnoods dan bij een volkomen minderwaardige persoonlijkheid, maar dat is een weg, die ik niet graag een ander zou aanpraten!' (cf Ch3 P17) 121

Thus Mann and Vestdijk have one basic belief in common; that one is born an artist, and presumably therefore, that one is an artist even when one is not creating. They feel that there is a particular kind of personality which is an artist's, and, like Goethe's Werther, it is still possible to be an artist without ever finding the right medium

in which to express oneself. Vestdijk does not even bother to single out this aspect of 'Kunstenaarschap' - he takes it completely for granted.

'..het lag in de natuur van den kunstenaar reeds opgesloten voor hij zich nog van zijn kunstenaarschap bewust was.' 122

He goes on to refer to it as a calling, and by doing so, he automatically brings in a comparison between being an artist and doing other jobs. One is forced to look at this occupation in relation to others, and Vestdijk does this consciously because he wants to show how his calling is superior to all others:

'De kunstenaar is de eenige mensch wiens beroep tegenwoordig nog in de volle beteekenis van het woord beroeping is, meer nog, wiens leven niets anders is dan die roeping; de kunstenaar is de eenige wiens dagen steeds verschillend zijn, die zich weet te onttrekken aan een hand over hand toenemend machinalisme in onze cultuur, 123 de eenige die niet gebonden is aan een dodelijk specialistendom!.'

He emphasises this point elsewhere by referring to being an artist as a craft in the old sense of the word: as well as being called to a particular craft, one has to work hard to achieve and maintain a high standard:

'Want dat is onze essentiële opdracht, de trouw aan de arbeid. Je hebt in ons ambacht mensen die zogenaamd al maar op inspiratie zitten te wachten en dus eigenlijk de helft van de tijd of langer helemaal niet schrijven...Dat vind ik een vreemd soort auteurs, schrijvers die eigenlijk de naam niet verdienen.' 124

From a study of this lecture and from reading various essays of Vestdijk's - particularly from 'De leugen is onze moeder' and 'Essays in duodecimo' - it is possible to gain a general idea of his attitude to the artist and his work. Vestdijk, like other self-conscious, individualistic authors (Thomas Mann and Goethe spring immediately to mind) believes that an artist is set apart from ordinary people, and  
because of his

creative occupation is somehow superior, and in this superior position is freer, since the normal system of ethics does not apply to him:

'... je kan het ook weer stellen als de moraal van de kunstenaar tegenover de moraal van de massa, daar gaat het mij heel erg om.' 125

These ideas are expressed more fully in the essay 'De kunstenaar en de moraal', and whilst trying to assess the artist's position with regard to the rest of society, Vestdijk always takes one thing for granted:

'Niemand twijfelt eraan, dat een begaafd kunstenaar in de wereld van de geest 'hoger staat' dan een eminent bankier of een bekwaam ambtenaar;... een kunstenaar, die onsterfelijke scheppingen produceert..' 126

The creative artist is subject to

'de drang tot het nabootsen van de Schepper', 127

and is capable of obtaining immortality of a sort through his creations. I cannot help detecting a certain sense of the artist being in contact with some kind of supernatural force, be it God, or a 'magisch element', which is another term Vestdijk uses in the conversation with Theun de Vries (p. 90). This of course gives rise to a discussion on the place of interpreting artists, who one would expect to be inferior to the creators in Vestdijk's view, as we see expressed in Het glinsterend pantser Page 1 Chapter V, or in the essay 'Roem en waardering', where, when he describes a creative artist at work, one is forced to ask oneself whether Vestdijk had ever considered the fact that not all artists believe in art as something intrinsically great. He gives rather a cliché picture, in fact, although this may of course be how he experiences it.

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up into two aspects which are far apart, because of the personal nature of the one, and the abstract nature of the other, there is nevertheless a certain amount of overlapping due to the fact that the basically abstract discussion is embodied in the characters of S and Victor Slingeland. The first section of this chapter will deal with them as two separate individuals, both artists, and both suffering because of this fact. But sometimes this suffering is connected with the nature of the branch of art in question, and this will lead us on to the second section and the abstract discussion.

The effects on the artist of his 'kunstenarschap'

There are two main themes which emerge on this subject: firstly, the artist as outsider, and secondly the artist as martyr to the cause of art. The general feeling is that the artist must necessarily suffer because of the nature of his occupation which not only affects him psychologically, but also interferes with his relationships with other people. Perhaps the second springs from the first, or vice versa, but that can be decided after we have examined the causes of the artist's isolation and its effect on him by looking precisely at these things with regard to S and Victor. These themes are most prominent in the first book of the trilogy, although they do continue through the other two; but everything has really been said in 'Het glinsterend pantser', - the others tend to reiterate or expand. The title 'Het glinsterend pantser' refers directly to the question I am dealing with since it is a metaphor for Vestdijk's skin disease and a symbol for his isolation. Is one therefore justified, on the strength of the title,

in saying that this question forms the main subject of the first book? It is certainly most prominent here. Then this theme fades into the background, and others, such as the friendship between the two men, which are present in the first book, but not yet meaningful, are developed and given meaning in the following two novels.

Let us first look at the theme of the artist as an outsider. In these books, as in the lecture, we come across two sets of opposites: artist/bourgeois and artist/life. One must, of course, be careful not to equate the bourgeois existence with life straight away, although it is possible that they may come to the same thing, as we find in 'Tonio Kröger'. Tonio's problem is that he must write, therefore he is an outsider, but he has enough of the 'Bürger' in him to realize this, and he is very unhappy because he cannot join in with everyday life and become a 'Mensch'. This aspect is not so much in evidence in the 'Symfonie van Victor Slingeland', except perhaps in the relationship between Victor and Eva Kienpointner.

Victor's skin disease is, rather basically put, a kind of indicator of the degree to which he is an artist. It is also symbolic of the barrier which being an artist puts between him and other people.

'Eigenaardige speling der natuur: de man met het grootste prestige het verst van zijn medemensen verwijderd; misschien omdat weerstand, zijn ware element, door die anderen niet meer geboden kon worden, misschien door een onverbiddelijke wet, die wil dat iemand, die iedereen betovert en behekt, zelf niet meer de betovering deelachtig kan worden, die naar de verlossende liefde voert, - een man in een pantser..' 129

The last phrase only acquires its full significance retrospectively,

but there can be no doubt that it is meant to be taken in conjunction with the passage describing the skin disease. The first quotation supplies the word 'pantser', and the second the word 'glinsterend', making the metaphoric function of the book's title apparent.

'....meer in kleine kernen hier en daar, witte punten, schilfers, glinsterend, nu ja, zo was het wel, al was het maar nietig en verspreid: glinsterend in dat melkwitte schijnsel van de lamp in het midden van de zoldering.' 130

The word 'gepantserd' appears in 'De arme Heinrich' in the same connection as 'pantser' in the first quotation, and points to the symbolic function of the title.

'Die hun klachten golden had er geen weet van; hij was gepantserd in zijn onaandoenlijkheid, die soms zoveel van domheid weg had, of op zijn best van domslimheid; hij bleef buitengesloten, hij mocht de maat slaan met zijn stokje, verder niet.' 131

The point about the psoriasis is that it comes and goes; at some times it is better than at others, once it disappears completely (AH P. 167). Vestdijk makes it quite clear that when it disappears Victor has left his 'kunstenaarschap' behind him and is leading the life of an ordinary bourgeois man. When he is in hospital with a broken leg there is a noticeable change in his personality - he is much more friendly and jovial and finds it easier to have contact with other people. On page 42 (AH) S comments that he seemed to have forgotten all about being a conductor, and on the next page he tells how the psoriasis is getting better. In other words, the connection which Vestdijk intends us to make is quite obvious. Eva's part in this is that she is a representative of the bourgeois milieu; she is a housewife looking after her husband and children. Yet she cannot be altogether

narrow-minded because of her affair with Victor. S concludes that she is basically very bourgeois, but that sometimes she loses her head. Given what Eva stands for, it is significant that whilst Victor's psoriasis is beginning to heal for the first time, his relationship with Eva is beginning to gather momentum.

'De psoriasis was so goed als genezen, wonderlijk genoeg. Aan de toegepaste therapie hechtte hij weinig waarde; hij liet in het midden, of het resultaat te danken was aan de bedrust, de opluchting na een ongeval dat hem zijn leven had kunnen kosten, of goddelijke tussenkomst...(,..) Eerst de brief, die hij mij zwijgend overreikte, bracht enig licht in deze raadselen.' 132

The letter came from Eva, inviting Victor to come and stay with her in Tirol. The disease disappears altogether whilst Victor is living with her, but as soon as the prospect of leaving and starting work again comes nearer, the disease reappears i.e. the alternative state to being an artist is to be ordinary and bourgeois - for Vestdijk as well as Thomas Mann.

The point is emphasised by the character of Bert Duprez who is a typical representative of the bourgeoisie, fitting into the conventional pattern of family life. I have already said in my first chapter that Bert Duprez is a caricature of Vestdijk minus his artistic tendencies. We are clearly intended to be left with the impression that S's state is infinitely preferable to that of Duprez, who is so busy earning a living that he has time for nothing else. From Victor we are given the idea that the bourgeois state is preferable because it is easier, and entails less suffering. From S we have the impression that to be an artist is unquestionably the better kind of existence, even if one must pay for it. I think

Stan Vastenou's tragedy must be looked at in this light of the artist/bourgeois conflict. The fact that she writes in her diary not just events, but impressions too, together with the fact that it becomes clear that she is sensitive to art because she is so influenced by the French novels she reads, and the fact that she uses the diary to express things which would not be acceptable in normal conversation, suggest that she is somehow different from the people she mixes with. Perhaps if she could have sublimated her strange, disturbing thoughts in some way i.e. by creating something inspired by them, she would never have felt the need to kill herself. This being the case, her tragedy would have been her failure to find a suitable medium. I think this is partly the case, but partly also the fact that she was trapped by her bourgeois existence which she made no attempt to escape from on a practical level. Her affair with Victor shows that she was capable of breaking away mentally, when she realizes that she really enjoys the sexual side of the relationship. Although society does not know about the affair, Stan knows what their reaction would be, and so she becomes alienated from society by her liberation from their standards. Stan, like S and Victor, is someone apart and I think that the initials of her name must be taken as an indication that she has something in common with the two main characters; she endures the same kind of suffering, although she cannot be called an artist.

In the trilogy, then, there is a definite concept of the artist as

outsider, and this fairly general aspect is symbolized by Victor's skin disease. But this is not its only function: it serves to make one aware of the effect of 'kunstenaarschap' on the individual artist. It causes him suffering because of his problematical relationship with society, but it also directly affects him physically (not always, of course) and mentally. Victor is a particularly good example, since his disease is certainly linked with the fact that he is an artist. There is even an idea of martyrdom to the cause of art when S talks about the lesions as 'stigmata' (OB P10). There is definitely an idea that one must pay for the privilege of being an artist in some way - in Victor's case, as Part 3, Chapter VII of 'De arme Heinrich' entitled 'Met de huid betaald' suggests, with his health. Psoriasis does often disappear for no apparent reason, and it tends to reappear when the sufferer is unhappy or nervous. Victor's first symptoms appeared when he was shut up in a room for three days by his father - the first time he experienced being cut off from the people around him. Later on it reappeared when he had to go back to his conducting which would mean an end to his cosy life with Eva and isolation by means of his work. It is hard to imagine more of an outsider than the schoolboy Slingeland, but it is impossible to say whether this was eccentricity in the extreme, or a result of his 'kunstenaarschap'. In 'Tonio Kröger', where the latter is true, the artist in question is very unhappy with the situation, but Victor does not seem to have been conscious of the way he stood out, or to have suffered particularly because of it. S is aware of his own isolation to a certain extent, but this is not the real problem. What makes him

suffer is the actual act of creating, which affects him psychologically, especially in the form of depressions. According to S every creative artist experiences them because the act of creating demands so much of him, leaving him completely drained and empty. Victor deliberately stopped himself developing in the direction of creating and concentrated on conducting because he was so afraid of the emptiness.

"Als jongen heb ik wel eens gefantaseerd aan de piano, hoe gaat dat, je vingers bewegen, en dan komt er wat; maar na afloop had ik altijd een allerbedonderdst gevoel, niet omdat ik geknoeid had, maar....(...) Maar dat gevoel waar ik het over had: dat was precies als zo'n depressie, alleen duurde het maar een paar minuten; je bent volkomen leeg, en je kunt niet voor - of achteruit, en bang ben je ook, en dat is niets voor mij..." - "Die leegte kent iedere scheppende kunstenaar", zei ik, want ik durfde nu wel iets meer te wagen, "scheppen is scheppen uit niets..." 133

S, in fact, quite enjoys being different and standing back from the people around him.

'Mijn geld was op, en het is trouwens een feit, dat zich in een conversatiezaal voortreffelijk romans laten schrijven, vooral wanneer zo'n witte, lompe hotelkop naast je staat met hete koffie erin. Die laat ik dan koud worden, en ik let op het rimpelende vliesje, trillend van mijn schrijvende hand. Ergens achter mij wordt gefluisterd, - wie is dat, een Engelsman, een Groenlander? - neen, het is alleen maar het laatste en beslissende experiment in een geluidwerend kabinet. En hoe heerlijk, hoe zeldzaam moedgevend, wanneer men zijn manuscript open en bloot op het schrijfbureautje met het leege laatje heeft laten liggen, en een discrete vreemdeling slaat er een blik in en denkt bij zichzelf: dat zou wel eens een meesterwerk kunnen zijn.' 134

One gets the impression that he regards his position as a privileged one, which coincides with Vestdijk's own ideas as they come across in 'Kunstenaars en oorlogspsychologie'. S has a fixed idea that

this is how the artist should be, and he is understandably disappointed, when he sees Slingeland again, to find that the latter no longer stands out in this way.

'Terwijl hij mij sigaretten, sigaren aanbood.... nam ik hem nog eens goed op, om, als het kon, de oude Victor terug te vinden. Het was opmerkelijk, dat ik de grootste moeite had hem mij als dirigent voor te stellen, al was het alleen maar door het uiterst burgerlijke interieur, - goed, een huurkamer; maar zijn kleren waren van hemzelf, en die waren even kleurloos als correct, niet te duur, niet te oud, vouw in de broek, verder ging dat niet.' 135

Although S can enjoy the sense of belonging to an elite group, loneliness sometimes gets the better of him, and then he becomes really very unhappy.

'Een zware loomheid is mij, nu ik dit alles neerschrijf, komen bevangen, een loomheid, die mij de oude onvrede brengt met het schrijven zelf en het leven dat men daarvoor leiden moet, een hondeleven, op de keper beschouwd.(...)..het einde is toch maar triestheid en regen, en men kan weer naar de oude beelden terugkeren, in eenzaamheid, om ze te bedanken voor het weinigje dat ze hebben kunnen doen en het vele dat ze, toch wel niet met voordacht, want zo zijn ze niet, hebben nagelaten. Wie zou daar niet loom en moe onder worden.' 136

S also has problems in his relationships with individuals and this is a direct result of the psychological effect of writing. Most novelists' raw material is reality - the world around them - and in order to be able to make use of it at will, they must be able to detach themselves completely from it. In S's case this means that as he works, the world he is creating becomes real for him, and then he confuses his creations with reality. One such creation is a female main character based on Nettie, someone whom he loved and with whom



he had a relationship. The fictitious character has many things in common with Nettie, but is not, of course, the same person.

Unfortunately, his own creation must have been closer to his ideal than the real person, so he falls in love with someone who does not exist except in his own head and on paper. This idea of not being properly alive to a situation in reality may spring from the fact that he is so used to manoeuvring peoples' lives from outside, that when something happens to him in real life, for instance when he falls for Alice, the whole of him cannot take part, and he relapses into the state of manipulating, which is why he tries to arrange things between her and Victor. S begins to suspect this himself when he realizes that he finds everyday problems more difficult to cope with than other people:

'Legde ik in mijn personages alle veerkracht en spontaneïteit, die ik zelf zo goed had kunnen gebruiken? Verkwistten zij mijn natuurlijk aanpassingsvermogen?' 137

It seems likely that the more self-conscious a writer one is (like S or Vestdijk himself), the more difficult it must be to write, because one must also learn to detach oneself from oneself i.e. to split, as it were, and observe oneself. This accounts for the inability to have a normal one-to-one relationship.

"Maar heb je toen alles in die roman gezet?" (...)  
"Nee. Ik had dat kunnen doen, het was 'gefundenes Fressen', om het zo onsmakelijk mogelijk te zeggen; maar nee, dat zat helemaal niet bij mij voor. Die roman heb ik ook niet afgemaakt. Ik begreep opeens wat het betekent om schrijver te zijn. Men leeft voortdurend naast zichzelf; nee, het is nog veel erger, men leeft - hoe moet ik mij uitdrukken? - men leeft als het ware dwars door zichzelf heen, zoals dat standbeeld hier in de tuin met één been over zijn

gewonde vriend heenstapt en zich niet meer van hem kan losmaken. Naast elkaar: dan kun je jezelf observeren, je staat naast jezelf, je kijkt opzij: hé, daar staat die vent weer, laten we hem met de pen beschrijven, hoe hij staat, hoe hij doet, hoe hij loopt, hoe hij eet.' 138

There is a different kind of split which S experiences as a result of the way he sometimes fails to observe the boundary between fiction and reality: because Nettie still exists in reality, he still reacts to her, but at the same time he is reacting to the other woman in his life, one who does not exist. In other words there are two parts of S corresponding and reacting to the two different worlds. And since the two sides do not balance each other out, there is no equilibrium, and one side must always suffer at the expense of the other. S found it impossible to continue with Nettie, but nor was it possible for him to live totally in a fantasy world, and so he lost out on both counts.

'Toen begreep ik dat schrijvers verdoemd zijn. (...)  
Twee totaal verschillende manieren van voelen, van kijken, beschouwen. Om een voorbeeld te geven: alleen voor het fantoom kon ik medelijden voelen...' 139

S enjoys the idea of being someone special, but he can only do this when he manages to forget for a moment what being a writer entails. It has caused him a great deal of suffering, something which he would not wish on anyone else.

'"D... moet mij genezen, en is daar ook al aardig mee bezig. Maar ik zal nooit iemand aanraden om schrijver te worden, een echte schrijver, iemand die schrijft, bedoel ik, en die goed schrijft, als ik dat zo zeggen mag."' 140

Victor has the same experience; he does not like conducting and yet he accepts it as part of his life.

"Het is een rotvak. Het is nog erger dan acteurs, ik had beter meubels kunnen gaan maken, net als mijn oude heer.." 141

Both these outbursts convey a sense of helplessness, of being condemned to suffer, because if one is born an artist, one has no choice but to be one.

#### The performing artist versus the creative artist

Most of the ideas dealt with in Part 1 of this chapter - i.e. Vestdijk's ideas about the artist in general - are quite common, and are to be found in many works besides the few I have cited. Maurice Beebe, in his book Ivory Towers and Sacred Founts has looked at the artist as hero in works of fiction from Goethe to James Joyce, and he has isolated two different artistic traditions which he names in the title. The 'ivory tower' idea is that the artist is superior to other people, in fact sometimes he is regarded as having an almost god-like position, whilst the artists belonging to the 'sacred fount' tradition take part in life, enjoying it to the full, and deriving their inspiration from this experience. I think it is clear that Vestdijk belongs to the former group, and his novelist character, S, certainly does.

In the trilogy Vestdijk does not only concern himself with expressing what he feels to be the role of the artist, or with what this means to the latter personally; he also deals with the actual nature of 'kunstenaarschap' in relation to the different art forms, which, as far as I know, is a new theme to be treated in fiction. Vestdijk is interested in the fact that there are different kinds of artists, and wants to discuss the differences, instead of taking the various

categories for granted and automatically placing the creative artist above the interpreter in terms of their contribution to art. It is striking that, on reading Beebe's book, the word 'artist' is used to mean a 'creative person', and only creative artists or potentially creative artists are dealt with in the works he chooses. Perhaps this is because writers, being creative artists themselves, prefer to write from first-hand experience, but one also comes up against the notion that a performing artist is somehow only half an artist, or not a 'real' artist.

'Most of the authors of artist-novels would rank the composer higher than the musical performer, the dramatist higher than the actor, the original painter higher than the engraver or copyist.' 142

It seems that Vestdijk himself is of the same opinion - at least he was when he gave the talk on artists and war, Kunstenaars en oorlogspsychologie; he makes it quite clear that by 'kunstenaar' he means a real artist, a creative one:

'Enigszins overdreven gezegd, zou men den kunstenaar, den scheppenden kunstenaar wel te verstaan, kunnen definiëeren als dat menschelijk wezen dat den oorlog niet begrijpt, en dat in dit ombegrip tegenover georganiseerd geweld vrouwen en kinderen nog overtreft. Wat beteekent dit? Het beteekent, dat de afwijzende houding van den kunstenaar tegenover den oorlog, die in eerste instantie instinctief en onbewust is, zulke excessieve vormen aanneemt, dat zelfs zijn oordeel en opvattingsvermogen er door beïnvloed worden. De scheppende kunstenaar staat tegenover den oorlog als een héél klein kind: volkomen hulpeloos, zonder er iets van te vatten, zoomin van de oorzaken van het verschijnsel als van het verschijnsel zelf.' 143

And yet he cannot have taken it completely for granted, otherwise he would not have made the question one of the main themes of the Slingeland trilogy, Het glinsterend pantser in particular. S

himself seems to be of the same opinion as his creator, although he is not altogether sure of his standpoint. It tends to be rather influenced by the state of his relationship with Slingeland, something which we have come to expect from S.

Let us now look more closely at how this theme is developed in the trilogy. S's very first comment on this subject, made in passing, makes it quite clear that he considers a conductor, an interpreting artist therefore, to be in a completely different class from himself:

'Alleen een uitgelezen dirigent had dit tot stand kunnen brengen, al kan men natuurlijk over dirigenten lachen.' 144

However, this mocking attitude is slightly suspect: S gives himself away at the end of Chapter V.

'Ik zou zwijgen als het graf over Slingeland. Wat was dit voor manier om mij een krantenbabbeltje toe te schuiven alsof het een kostbaar document was, een palimpsest, een zweetdoek van de heilige Veronica, over een dirigent, een kunstenaar van de tweede rang, ook al likte men zijn schoenen, en mij, de creatieve kunstenaar, nu ja, wel te 'begrijpen', - zoals ik mij had uitgesloofd, zou een kind het begrepen hebben, - maar geen letter van me te lezen en te doen alsof mijn boeken lucht waren. Zet een of andere kwibus neer, laat hem een hoofdstuk van me dirigeren, zet het in de krant, en ze draait om als een blad aan een boom!'. 145

His remark contains a certain amount of ill-feeling, sour grapes, really. S is aware of his generally accepted superior position as a creative artist, and he finds the differences between different kinds of artist interesting on an intellectual level, but behind all this lurks the character of Victor, who, as a performer, has achieved a kind of immediate success which S probably never will attain: success in the form of recognition of his talent and acclaim from

his contemporaries, resulting in fame.

The performing artist is by the nature of his profession more in the public eye than the creator: he works before an audience, and his aim is to please the latter. He always has to reckon with the immediate reaction of the public, something which understandably puts a strain on Victor and which is emphasised by the fact that this is why his skin disease is such a problem for him: he must always bear in mind that others might be able to see it, since he is so often the centre of attention of so many people.

"Je kunt alles overdrijven, - neen, jij niet, beste kerel, maar ik. Het is tenslotte van weinig belang, maar als kunstenaar ben je overgevoelig voor die dingen..." (...). "Maar ik sta altijd voor die mensen te kijk, vergeet dat niet. Met een rok aan mijn lijf, en ze hebben geen x-stralen in hun ogen, maar je voelt het..." 146

This may be unpleasant for Victor, but on the other hand, as a performing artist, he does get instant recognition (or condemnation, of course), whilst a novelist or a composer may wait for years. He may not even achieve it in his own lifetime.

Chapter V of Het glinsterend pantser Part 1, 'Het gebroken hart', contains the nucleus of the discussion. S is here talking seriously to Alice van Voorde, and the rancour does not creep in until the very end of the chapter, when the serious discussion is over. S talks about the various types of artist, and comes to the conclusion that there are three basic types: the creative (scheppend) artist; the performing (reproducerend, uitvoerend) artist; and the copyist (kopiist). The latter only applies to painting and sculpture, and

is the least important. But whereas we would expect to hear now that the performing artist is above the copyist but below the creative artist, according to S, as far as music is concerned at any rate, a performer is just as important as a creator because he is in fact re-creating.

'In de muziek is het herscheppen even belangrijk als het scheppen, in de ogen van velen zelfs belangrijker. Pianisten, violisten zijn 'grote kunstenaars'. 147

Without the performer, the music would not exist. So although he is dependent in the first place on the composer, the composer is also dependent on him. S himself describes Victor's work as a conductor in terms of 'Beethoven het bestaan schenken'<sup>148</sup>. Since this is the case, it is difficult to know who deserves the praise, the creator or the interpreter/performer: it is only at a good performance that one is really made aware of the composer's achievement, but this is entirely dependent on the conductor (or individual performer, of course, depending on the work in question), who should therefore merit the praise in the first instance. However, it is really a matter of individual reaction, and S's is to praise the composer.

'Wij hoorden die plaat uit. Waar de mystiek-erotische verukkingen van het tweede deel, innerlijke eenzaamheid begunstigend, mij van mijn gastvrouw schenen af te voeren, daar werden wij door het derde weer tezamengebracht, want deze feestmuziek, die ik altijd wat te 'wild' had gevonden, bracht, in deze meesterlijke interpretatie, zulk een geestdrift bij mij teweeg, dat ik mij uitspreken moest, niet over Slingeland's verrichtingen, maar over de componist, van wie zij nog meer platen in haar bezit bleek te hebben.' 149

S goes even further and says that the conductor is really only an instrument of the composer and is unimportant compared with the latter:

'Hoe mooier zijn (Slingeland's) muziek is, des te onbelangrijker is hijzelf, daarvoor is hij dirigent, het hoort bij het vak..' 150

However, not long later, he expresses a directly opposed point of view on this subject, and it seems quite likely that this last statement was motivated by jealousy.

'vóór alles nam ik terug wat ik gezegd had, ik nam het nogmaals terug: Slingeland was groot als mens, en een dirigent was niet de mindere van een componist, - integendeel zelfs,..' 151

Typically, S lets personalities and his own emotions affect his judgement. Victor, as a conductor, felt that he should be able to erase his own personality, as it were, and not let his presence come between the audience and the music. But this is extremely problematic because he cannot choose what reaction individual members of his audience will have. After the concert described in Het glinsterend pantser, Part I, Alice is moved to tears by the music. By Beethoven's or Slingeland's music?

'En deze vrouw daar vlak naast mij, die ik meegenomen had in een auto en in de nacht terug zou brengen naar haar ouderlijk huis, hilde om de muziek van een ander. Een ander, - Beethoven, of Slingeland zelf? (Eigenlijk had ik moeten schrijven:) Slingeland of Beethoven zelf, maar Slingeland was zoveel meer 'zelf' dan zelfs de grootste componist.' 152

In other words, it is impossible to ignore the conductor's presence, especially as the audience actually witness him in the act of re-creating.

The rivalry between the 'uitvoerend' and the 'scheppend kunstenaar' finds expression on a personal level in the relationship between S and Victor Slingeland. It is evident, as we have already seen,



that S is jealous of Victor's fame: Alice realizes that this is what is behind most of S's depreciatory remarks regarding conducting in general.

"Daarmee verraad je jezelf. Je bent gewoon jaloers. Jij zou eigenlijk, als schrijver, óók voor een orkest willen staan..." 153

S's one consolation is that his work is of a more lasting nature. Whilst Victor may quickly find acclaim, he will quickly be forgotten, too, for the music he produces only exists for the duration of the performance. Alice takes away this small comfort by pointing out that with modern recording techniques, this is no longer the case. The other factor contributing to S's anti-Victor (and hence anti-conductor) feelings is that S is offended because Victor shows so little interest in his writing: he thinks that Victor has not realized that he is famous in his own way, that he, too, is important as an artist. It is true that Victor does not take the trouble to read any of his friend's work, but the reason for this is that he feels intellectually inferior to S, and is afraid that what he reads will go over his head. Victor is actually jealous of S.

"Waarop wil jij jaloers zijn? Ik ben altijd jaloers geweest op jou! Op school al: iemand met jouw kop. De boeken, die je schrijft... En ik maar een verdomde pestdirigent. Ik lees nooit boeken, maar ik weet verdomd goed, dat ze iemand geen prijzen geven, als het niet goed is wat hij schrijft." 154

If Victor, as an interpreting artist, feels inferior to S because he can write good books, does this mean a 'victory' for the creative artist? Or, since they are both jealous of each other, does it mean that the whole thing is really rather pointless?

After reading the trilogy one is left with a confused idea of the relationships between different kinds of artists. No consistent conclusions have been reached in the books, although there is, I think, an underlying feeling that the creative artist is somehow superior. However, from S's comments, the need to try and evaluate the relationships is definitely communicated to us, even if we do come to the conclusion that it is not possible to do so, since it is largely a question of individual reactions, and since the issue is often clouded by S's personal feelings. Considering the differences is certainly an interesting exercise, but it does not equip one to make a value judgement. I cannot imagine how one could ever be suitably equipped, and besides, there is nothing to be gained from doing so, except, as in S's case, personal satisfaction.

So far we have talked about creative and interpreting artists as two completely separate categories, but S has a theory on the nature of authorship which disregards the boundary between the two kinds of artist. We have isolated two separate categories because the nature of the work carried out by a creator is totally different from that of an interpreter, as it has been described here so far. S puts forward the idea that a writer actually combines being a creative artist with being an interpreting one.

"Iemand, die een voortreffelijke kopie van een Rembrandt kan maken, is een kunstenaar in zijn soort. In de literatuur niets van dat al, tenminste tegenwoordig niet meer. Daar sta je op jezelf. Je hebt geen kopiist, geen pianist, geen violist, geen dirigent, want je bent dat allemaal zelf. En dan maak je brokken. Als je noten wilt opschrijven, sla je met je eigen dirigeerstok de pen uit de hand, pats." 155

He seems to be saying that the task of a writer is therefore harder because of the differing natures of the two kinds of artistic activity involved: i.e. as an author one sometimes reaches a point where the two sides are working against each other, which results in nothing being produced. This point of view of S's really is an addition to the conception of the artist as a split personality, although it only applies to a writer, of course.

However, S's statement is problematic in that he does not make it clear in which way a writer could be considered to be interpreting or copying. The obvious answer is that he is reproducing or interpreting life itself. He has nothing of a copyist in him, for, unless he writes down dialogue which he has actually heard, he is going to be seen reproducing life as seen through his eyes i.e. giving subjective reproduction of the objective reality. An objective one is, of course, impossible: the German Naturalist, Arno Holz, even uses a formula to express this - 'Kunst = Natur - x', 'x' being the personality of the author which prevents him from objectively reproducing life. Looked at in this way, then, the writer can be considered an interpreter as well as a creator.

But this really only covers part of the nature of an 'uitvoerend kunstenaar': there is still the performing aspect to be taken into account. In music and in the theatre one interprets and performs at the same time; the actual performance constitutes the

interpretation for the audience, but the performer must first decide on his interpretation before he puts it into practice. The point about the performance is that it involves an already existing work of art. So surely it is the reader who completes the writer's task by taking an existing work of art and bringing it into being in his own mind, just as the conductor or instrumentalist brings a piece of music back to life from being print on paper. In other words, in the realm of novel-writing, it is the reader who is the 'uitvoerend kunstenaar' in the sense in which S uses this term elsewhere, whilst the novelist creates, one aspect of this activity being the interpretation of the world around him, which is not the same thing as 'uitvoeren'.

## CONCLUSION

Chapter I shows how Vestdijk is conscious of his role as a novelist. This is seen as a decisive factor in determining the form of the trilogy since Vestdijk includes a reflection of himself, namely a novelist character who is himself supposed to have written the trilogy. This is one of the various devices used to awaken the reader's awareness of the writer behind his work. Another is the interviewing of S by Frits, where the attention is turned to the work produced by a writer and the methods employed by him. Although the subject of the discussion is a different work by S, we are forced to relate this work to the trilogy and are therefore placed in a position from which we can observe the process of writing (creating?) at close quarters.

The possibility that the author is playing with the reader should not be discounted. The slightly alienating effect which results also heightens the reader's awareness that he is, after all, confronted with a novel written by S/Vestdijk.

Vestdijk's self-awareness extends to his position as an artist: both his position as an artist in society, and his position with regard to other artists and art-forms. This has found expression in the trilogy firstly in the individual characters of S and Slingeland, and secondly in the interaction of these two main characters. In Chapter 2 I have analysed them from a psychological point of view, again firstly as individuals, and then in terms of their

relationship. Victor and S are both quite complex psychologically, their main difficulties being in the area of personal relationships, especially with women. Their own relationship is unusual in that it lacks an explicit sexual element, and yet it goes beyond the usual limits of a friendship between two men, particularly where S's devotion sometimes turning to worship of his friend is concerned. True, the picture we are given is one-sided, since it is described by S, and therefore perhaps says more about S's character than about the friendship. However, there are certain correspondences between this friendship and ones occurring in other works of Vestdijk, which make a treatment of the relationship valuable in a study of the trilogy, enabling one to establish a theme recurring in Vestdijk's work as a whole rather than in the trilogy alone.

Victor and S embody the discussion on the artist, which I have dealt with in Chapter 3. Vestdijk's idea of the artist which emerges is of a privileged member of society, who, because of his elevated position is both cut off from normal everyday life and at the same time is subjected to much criticism from the rest of society. In other words, being an artist entails suffering in the form of depressions, difficulties in forming relationships with others, not only because of the alienating effect of his position, but also springing out of psychological difficulties, especially in coming to terms with reality, when he (as a novelist, at least) is so often living in a fictional world. One is born with the disposition to be an artist, hence the feeling of resignation

to one's fate which is present in both S's and Victor's attitudes. Vestdijk's view of the artist is a traditional one, belonging to the so-called 'ivory tower' tradition, with the artist belonging to a kind of spiritual elite. In the trilogy this takes the form of martyrdom to the cause of art.

This is Vestdijk's idea of the creative artist, and Victor, because he wished to avoid the psychological suffering involved, yet still possessing the artistic disposition, chose to become an interpreting artist. This way, being only half an artist, as it were, he has one foot firmly in everyday life and succeeds eventually in striking up a satisfactory relationship with a woman, admitting to S at the end of the last book that he does indeed consider himself - as interpreting artist - inferior to S, the creating artist.

The Slingeland trilogy occupies a very important place in the work of Simon Vestdijk. In the first place it is his only trilogy of novels, and although it was not originally planned as such, he found that Het glinsterend pantser contained enough potential material for two continuations. It is material which has occupied many novelists, a few of whom I have mentioned in my Introduction, and to which each writer is capable of giving a new turn, since it concerns the artist in society, and the novelist and his work. The trilogy, then, places Vestdijk in a European literary tradition rather than movement, and the fact that it was written thirty one to thirty three years after Tonio Kröger and Les Faux-monnayeurs (both published in 1925) does not hinder the comparison with these works.

The trilogy, then, places Vestdijk in a Western European literary tradition rather than in any particular movement, and the analysis of the work and the comparison with other works show the importance and originality of Vestdijk's contribution.

1. Vestdijk, De laatste in zijn soort, p. 147.
2. Stroom des Vrees, 'Gedrukt in "De Gids" als zelf-begeefting overal', Amsterdam, 1904.
3. Stroom des Vrees, Paradigma, Amsterdam, met S. Vestdijk, p. 127.
4. 1914, p. 70.
5. Vol Gedeelte, Met Gedeelte in samen met S. Vestdijk, p. 44.
6. S. Vestdijk, Open Boek (GB), p. 44.
7. 1914, p. 50.
8. S. Vestdijk, Tussen het Eke Dagen, p. 137.
9. Vol Gedeelte, Met Gedeelte in samen met S. Vestdijk, p. 35.
10. S. Vestdijk, Met Gedeelte in samen met S. Vestdijk, p. 44.
11. S. Vestdijk, De laatste in zijn soort, p. 147.
12. Vol Gedeelte, Met Gedeelte in samen met S. Vestdijk, p. 31.
13. OP, p. 40.
14. AE, p. 91, 92.
15. AE, p. 45.
16. GB, p. 103.
17. AE, p. 68; OS, p. 103.
18. S. Vestdijk, Sint Sebastiaan, p. 8.
19. AE, p. 99.
20. AE, p. 95.
21. AE, p. 45.
22. André Gide, Les Faux-monnayeurs, p. 120.
23. 1914, p. 70.
24. AE, p. 97.



NOTES

- 1 Reinhard Kuhn, 'Proust and Sartre; the Heritage of Romanticism', Symposium, Winter 1964.
- 2 S Vestdijk, De Leugen is onze moeder, P. 147.
- 3 Steven Kellman, 'Sartre's "La Nausée" as self-begetting novel', Symposium, Winter 1964.
- 4 Theun de Vries, Hernomen Konfrontatie met S Vestdijk, P. 123
- 5 Ibid, P. 72
- 6 Nol Gregoor, Nol Gregoor in gesprek met S Vestdijk, P. 44
- 7 S Vestdijk, Open Boek (OB), P. 44
- 8 Ibid. P. 50
- 9 S Vestdijk, Terug tot Ina Damman, P. 132
- 10 Nol Gregoor, Nol Gregoor in gesprek met S Vestdijk, P. 39
- 11 S Vestdijk, Het glinsterend pantser (GP), P. 22
- 12 S Vestdijk, De arme Heinrich (AH), P. 58
- 13 Nol Gregoor, Nol Gregoor in gesprek met S Vestdijk, P. 31
- 14 GP. P. 80
- 15 AH. P. 67, 68.
- 16 AH. P. 65
- 17 OB, P. 103
- 18 AH. P. 68; OB. P. 103
- 19 S Vestdijk, Sint Sebastiaan, P. 8
- 20 AH. P. 59
- 21 AH. P. 96
- 22 AH. P. 65
- 23 André Gide, Les Faux-monnayeurs, P. 185
- 24 Ibid. P. 186
- 25 AH. P. 97

- 26 AH. P. 63
- 27 AH. P. 63, 64
- 28 OB. P. 99
- 29 André Gide, Les Faux-monnayeurs, P. 73
- 30 Ibid. P. 73
- 31 Ibid. P. 186
- 32 OB. P. 102
- 33 André Gide, Les Faux-monnayeurs, P. 215
- 34 Ibid. P. 215; 216
- 35 GP. P. 52
- 36 GP. P. 61
- 37 GP. P. 52
- 38 GP. P. 53
- 39 GP. P. 11
- 40 OB. P. 101
- 41 OB. P. 100
- 42 OB. P. 85
- 43 André Gide, Oeuvres Complètes, Vol.X, P. 549
- 44 OB. P. 101
- 45 André Gide, Les Faux-monnayeurs, P. 215
- 46 OB. P. 9
- 47 OB. P. 82
- 48 OB. P. 83
- 49 GP. P. 73
- 50 GP. P. 94
- 51 GP. P. 50
- 52 GP. P. 95
- 53 OB. P. 187

- 54 OB. P. 193
- 55 OB. P. 248
- 56 GP. P. 170
- 57 OB. P. 145 *Moneta in Angliam, Ch. XIII*
- 58 GP. P. 302 *De regimine Anglorum, P. 183*
- 59 GP. P. 294 *ibid. No. 2 June 1375*
- 60 OB. P. 61 *Moneta in St. Eborac. P. 57*
- 61 OB. P. 62 *ibid. P.*
- 62 AH. P. 290; 291 *Moneta in Angliam, P. 32*
- 63 GP. P. 25
- 64 GP. P. 24
- 65 AH. P. 112
- 66 GP. P. 136
- 67 GP. P. 138
- 68 GP. P. 141
- 69 GP. P. 141
- 70 GP. P. 155
- 71 GP. P. 71
- 72 GP. P. 280; 281
- 73 AH. P. 43
- 74 AH. P. 234
- 75 GP. P. 43
- 76 OB. P. 113
- 77 OB. P. 113
- 78 OB. P. 115
- 79 OB. P. 116
- 80 AH. P. 124
- 81 AH. P. 124
- 82 OB. P. 68

- 83 AH. P. 125
- 84 AH. P. 176
- 85 AH. P. 163
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- 87 S Vestdijk, De poolsche ruiter, P. 163
- 88 Vestdijk Kroniek No. 8 June 1975
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- 90 GP. Part 2, Ch. V
- 91 S Vestdijk, Mnemosyne in de bergen, P. 32
- 92 Ibid. P. 49
- 93 GP. P. 94; 95
- 94 GP. P. 93
- 95 GP. P. 102
- 96 GP. P. 118
- 97 GP. P. 189
- 98 GP. P. 66
- 99 GP. P. 51
- 100 GP. P. 68
- 101 GP. P. 46
- 102 OB. P. 195
- 103 GP. P. 74
- 104 GP. P. 71
- 105 GP. P. 82
- 106 GP. P. 250
- 107 AH. P. 250
- 108 AH. P. 313
- 109 AH. P. 313
- 110 AH. P. 319

- 111 AH. P. 331
- 112 AH. P. 331
- 113 Theun de Vries, Hernomen konfrontatie met S Vestdijk,
- 114 S Vestdijk, Kunstenaar en oorlogspsychologie,
- 115 Ibid. P. 22
- 116 Ibid. P. 10
- 117 Ibid. P. 6
- 118 OB. P. 58
- 119 Thomas Mann, Tonio Kröger, P. 28
- 120 Theun de Vries, Hernomen konfrontatie met S Vestdijk, P. 90
- 121 H. Marsman/S Vestdijk, Heden ik morgen gij, P. 308
- 122 S Vestdijk, Kunstenaar en oorlogspsychologie, P. 10
- 123 Ibid. P. 13
- 124 Theun de Vries, Hernomen konfrontatie met S Vestdijk, P. 55
- 125 Nol Gregoor, Nol Gregoor in gesprek met S Vestdijk P. 80
- 126 S Vestdijk, Essays in duodecimo, P. 7
- 127 Theun de Vries, Hernomen konfrontatie met S Vestdijk, P. 90
- 128 S Vestdijk, Essays in duodecimo, P. 47
- 129 GP. P. 68
- 130 GP. P. 303
- 131 AH. P. 165
- 132 AH. P. 51
- 133 OB. P. 26
- 134 OB. P. 80
- 135 GP. P. 73
- 136 GP. P. 80
- 137 OB. P. 269
- 138 GP. P. 42
- 139 GP. P. 43

- 140 GP. P. 42 *Journal of the History of Ideas*, London, 1953.
- 141 OB. P. 26
- 142 Maurice Beebe, Ivory Towers and Sacred Founts, P. 26
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- 146 OB. P. 8 The Literary Novel, Princeton N.J., 1963.
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- 148 GP. P. 83 *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Paris, 1954.
- 149 GP. P. 37 Journal of the History of Ideas, Oxford 1942.
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- 154 AH. P. 329 Sartre's "Le Transcendental" as self-asserting ideal', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 1974.
- 155 GP. P. 44 'Foucault and Sartre: the marriage of Reason and Ideology', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 1974.
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