RITA DECOURSEY AND MARLENE VAN DOORN

In memoriam Maria J.L. van Yperen

23 February 1938 – 12 June 2010

For over 25 years Maria van Yperen was the face and the voice of KITLV's flagship journal *BKI* for contributors around the world. As Associate Editor, Van Yperen guided authors through the review and revision process, from the initial submission of their manuscripts to final publication. Once an article had been accepted, Ria edited the text conscientiously and corresponded with the author about any troublesome passages, acquiring a reputation for thoroughgoing editorial revision. Although an occasional author was annoyed by the very idea of editorial changes, considering his own English to be beyond improvement, Ria's high standards for English language use most certainly contributed to the quality and high standing of the journal.

Communication with contributing authors for much of her tenure was still through typewritten letters sent by post, in later years through equally carefully drafted emails. When the opportunity arose, Ria also enjoyed meeting authors in person. Scholars with occasion to be in Leiden would stop by Ria's office to go over some detail of their current article, or to express their appreciation for her careful editing. In later years, a good conversation with Han Bing Siong, J.H.F. Sollewijn Gelpke, or Roy Jordaan, among others, formed a welcome break from more routine work.

Regular meetings between Editor and Associate Editor were a recurring highlight in the *BKI* publication cycle and Ria felt particularly fortunate to have a good working relationship with each of the three Editors with whom she worked, first R. Roolvink, then Hans Claessen, and finally Ben Arps.

Until her retirement in 2003, Ria and I worked side by side at KITLV Press, editing other people's English texts. Ria was always extremely supportive as a colleague and she and I often consulted each other in searching for the best word choice or a suitable rephrasing of a Dunglish sentence.

Ria's early childhood was spent in Rotterdam. Like so many others, her family emigrated to Australia shortly after the end of World War II. There Ria completed high school and earned a bachelor of arts from the University of Sydney. She subsequently returned to the Netherlands, where she spent her entire working career, starting at KITLV in 1967. In Leiden, Ria decided to pursue the dream of continuing her education, which demanded much of her free time for several years. Fellow students in Indonesian studies who

became life-long friends include Willem van der Molen, Roger Tol and Sander Adelaar. Ria completed her master's degree in Indonesian languages and cultures at Leiden University in 1988, her thesis being a translation of the Malay *Syair Sinyor Kosta* into English.

What especially brightened Ria's last few years at the institute was the Sinyor Kosta project, one part of which was the English translation that she had prepared for her thesis. Ria always greatly looked forward to the meetings with Hans Teeuw, Muhammad Haji Salleh and Roger Tol on this project, the results being published in 2004 as: *A merry senhor in the Malay world; Four texts of the Syair Sinyor Kosta*.

In her working life, Ria's great love was translation, and her early years at KITLV were spent translating books to be published by the institute. Being nearly bilingual, as well as a competent writer, Ria had what was needed to translate well. Her translations reflect her keen feeling for language and her mastery of the meaning and content of the original text. She never translated a sentence before she properly understood it first.

Even after retiring, Ria looked forward to continuing doing translation work, and she got the chance when Pieter Drooglever asked her to translate part of his voluminous *Een daad van vrije keuze*, published in 2009 as *An act of free choice*.

Although her duties for *BKI* always came first, Ria appreciated the opportunity to converse with colleagues at the institute, perhaps particularly the younger generation of PhD students, among them Luc Nagtegaal, Marleen Heijns, Bernice de Jong Boers, Freek Colombijn, and Jaap Anten. Ria was a skilled conversationalist, and appreciated a sharp wit, British understatement, and political satire.

Ria's sense of social justice was strong. She was a committed trade union member and active for many years in Amnesty International. At KITLV she set up a women's group to discuss work-related issues. She was also involved in the lengthy preparations leading to the inauguration of the institute's first 'ondernemingsraad', a Dutch form of workers' council, to which she was elected a member.

Moving back to Australia in 2007, largely to be with her only remaining family members, her brother Kees and her niece Peta, Ria left behind a wide circle of friends and colleagues in the Netherlands, many of them connected in some way to KITLV or to Indonesian studies. She died of cancer on 12 June 2010 beside her beloved Lake Macquarie.

The following are among the publications Ria translated. The fact that Ria's name seldom appears on the title page, or even on the verso of the title page, means that the list is unlikely to be complete. Acknowledgement of her work is frequently tucked away unobtrusively in the preface of a publication. As A. Teeuw, about to detail the specific contribution of each of the five

authors of *Siwaratrikalpa*, writes: 'I should actually have said six authors, for although the name of Miss M.J.L. van Yperen does not appear on the title-page [...], she has nevertheless had an important part in [the book's] creation. She has exercised considerable influence on the English of the book, not only as co-translator of the work of the Dutch authors, but also as permanent linguistic conscience of the English-speaking authors. [...] It can rightly be said that without her devoted co-operation the book could never have appeared in this form' (Teeuw, Galestin, Robson, Worsley and Zoetmulder, *Siwaratrikalpa of Mpu Tanakun: An Old Javanese poem, its Indian source and Balinese illustrations*, 1969:5-6).

Monographs translated by Maria J.L. van Yperen

Drooglever, Pieter

2009 *An act of free choice; Decolonisation and the right to self-determination in West Papua*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications.

Clara van Groenendael, Victoria M.

2008 *Jaranan; The horse dance and trance in East Java*. Leiden: KITLV Press. [Verhandelingen 252.]

Jordaan, Roy E. (ed.)

1996 *In praise of Prambanan; Dutch essays on the Loro Jonggrang temple complex*. Leiden: KITLV Press. [Translation Series 26.]

Josselin de Jong, J.P.B. de

1987 *Wetan fieldnotes; Some eastern Indonesian texts with linguistic notes and a vocabulary*. Dordrecht: Foris. [KITLV, Verhandelingen 130.]

Clara van Groenendael, Victoria M.

1985 *The dalang behind the wayang; The role of the Surakarta and the Yogyakarta dalang in Indonesian-Javanese society*. Dordrecht: Foris. [KITLV, Verhandelingen 114.]

Meilink-Roelofs, M.A.P. (ed.)

1982 *Dutch authors on West Indian history; A historiographical selection*. The Hague: Nijhoff. [KITLV, Translation Series 21.]

Droogers, André

1980 *The dangerous journey; Symbolic aspects of boys' initiation among the Wagenia of Kisangani, Zaire*. The Hague: Mouton.

Uhlenbeck, E.M.

1978 *Studies in Javanese morphology*. The Hague: Nijhoff. [KITLV, Translation Series 19.]

Marks, A.F.

1976 *Male and female and the Afro-Curaçaoan household*. The Hague: Nijhoff.

Drewes, G.W.J.

1975 *The romance of King Anlin Dharma in Javanese literature*. The Hague: Nijhoff. [Bibliotheca Indonesica 11.]

Buschkens, Willem F.L.

1974 *The family system of the Paramaribo Creoles*. 's-Gravenhage: Nijhoff. [KITLV, Verhandelingen 71.]

Lier, R.A.J. van

1971 *Frontier society; A social analysis of the history of Surinam*. The Hague: Nijhoff. [KITLV, Translation Series 14.]

Schulte Nordholt, H.G.

1971 *The political system of the Atoni of Timor*. The Hague: Nijhoff. [KITLV, Verhandelingen 60.]