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De nieuwe gids and its Informal Patronage System

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the funding and finances of *De nieuwe gids*, a late nineteenth-century periodical believed by many to be the archetypical Dutch cultural magazine. The editors of *De nieuwe gids* introduced new ways of running their business and had new ideas about their role as professional writers and painters, about the pitfalls of creating for money, and about the relationship between art and finance. The paper argues that they alleviated their uneasy relationship with money through different forms of patronage. The editors acquired a substantial capital from a consortium of eleven backers, and used this money for the continuation of the magazine as well as for the upkeep of those members of their group who had no other resources. They made sure that money was circulated and transferred in such a way that all members profited: artists without money could keep on writing and painting, and artists who did have money invested in the continuity of the group as a whole and in their own place within it. This patronage system was remarkably successful, probably because it did not affect the artistic prestige or credibility of the editors, nor of the benefactors involved.

KEYWORDS

Patronage, commercialism, money, network, gift theory, *De nieuwe gids*, Dutch periodicals, nineteenth-century periodicals, Tachtigers.

This paper focuses on the funding and finances of *De nieuwe gids*, a late nineteenth-century periodical, believed by many to be *the* archetypical Dutch cultural magazine. In Dutch literary history, it outshines all others in eminence and impact. Between 1885 and 1894, the magazine published the work of a circle of neo-romantic and naturalistic writers and artists, known as the ‘Tachtigers’ (‘men of the eighties’). In many ways, they revolutionized Dutch literature and painting, breaking with traditional rules and introducing new ones — many of which are influential to this day. In the Netherlands, the poetic revolution that *De nieuwe gids* initiated had an enormous impact — perhaps even bigger than that of other European magazines in neighbouring countries during the same period: *La Jeune France*, the *Yellow Book*, or *Blatter für die Kunst*. What interests me most is that the Tachtigers also introduced new ways of organizing their own finances and running their businesses. They had new ideas about their role as professional writers and painters, about the pitfalls of creating for money, and about the relationship between art and finance. And while researchers have paid ample attention to the form and content of *De nieuwe gids* and literally hundreds of books and articles have been written on the artistic ideals informing the magazine, little attention has been paid to the question of who actually paid for its publication. Where did the money come from? How were bills paid? Who invested in the magazine? And what return on their investments did they anticipate? I will also address the Tachtigers’ thoughts on professionalism and moneymaking, and the way that these were reflected in the choices that were made in funding the magazine — another issue that has not been explored before.

The young Dutch poet Willem Kloos claimed to have stood in the drawing room of ‘an older, literary, rich lady’ in 1885. Kloos sought funding for the launch of *De nieuwe gids* and asked this rich lady, ‘with hardly any hope of success’, for monetary support for his magazine. She listened carefully, but ‘without any sign of kindness in her eyes’. This was not surprising. The self-styled ‘bohemian, living from hand to mouth’ was facing one of those ‘well-bred bourgeois patricians’ that the Tachtigers so looked down on, and most of the time the feeling was mutual. The lady turned, put something in an envelope, handed it to Kloos and said: ‘Here, take this, and advance it to your Treasurer. If I had any confidence in your artistic future, I would do more, but now I can hardly give anything more than this.’ She did not request a receipt, and assured him that although she meant well, she considered the money ‘completely lost’. Back on the streets, Kloos went on to discover an ‘unmistakably real banknote of one thousand guilders’ in the envelope.¹ One thousand guilders in 1885 would be equivalent to €12,000 today.² Such generosity, displayed so casually by such an easy-going and undemanding patron — it almost sounds too good to be true. And sure enough, the story is nothing more than a myth — dreamt up much later, in 1910, by Kloos himself, in an attempt to glorify the early days of the magazine.³

1 The original text of the quotations, in Dutch: ‘een oudere, letterkundige, gefortuneerde dame; ‘haast zonder-hoop-van-welslagen; ‘zonder dat ik in haar oogen iets vriendelijks kon lezen; ‘bohémien, die van den dag op den dag leeft; ‘deftig-burgerlijke heeren en dames; ‘hier, neem dat meê, en stel dat aan den penningmeester van je tijdschrift ter hand. Als ik vertrouwen had in jullie letterkundige toekomst, zou ik méér willen doen, maar nú kan ik niets anders geven als dit; ‘als geheel verloren; ‘een onniskanbaar-echt bankje van duizend pop’. Letter from Willem Kloos to Frederik Van Eeden, 30 May 1890, Goverdus’s Gravesande, *De geschiedenis van ‘De nieuwe gids’* (Arnhem: Van Loghum Slaterus, 1955), pp. 263–64.

2 Internationaal instituut voor sociale geschiedenis, www.iisg.nl [accessed 10 May 2016].

3 Willem Kloos, ‘Hoe “*De nieuwe gids*” tot stand kwam en wat hij heeft gedaan’, *De nieuwe gids*, 25 (October 1910), pp. xi–xxvii. Kloos had already told this tale in a shorter version in 1909, claiming that it involved a lady ‘who said: I do not have any faith in this, but it’s all the same to me; please accept one thousand guilders’. E. A. d’Oliveira, *De mannen van Tachtig aan het woord: Een onderzoek naar eenige beginselen van de ‘nieuwe gids’-school* (Amsterdam: De maatschappij voor goede en goedkoope lectuur, 1909), p. 38.

For both individual artists and editors of magazines, the support of a rich patron was something to be proud of. It is interesting that Kloos wasn't the only Tachtiger to invent a patron. His fellow editor Lodewijk Van Deyssel also fabricated a protector. In 1885, he informed Albert Verwey, one of the other editors, that he 'had received an anonymous letter from Amsterdam, containing a sum (150 guilders) the sender intended me to put towards a trip to the mountains. I thought: I will do exactly that, and set off without further ado'.⁴ This benefactor, who supposedly nonchalantly sent Van Deyssel today's equivalent of nearly €2,000, was an even bigger fiction than Kloos's 'lady with the unfriendly eyes': Van Deyssel's patron never existed, whereas Kloos's benefactor *did*, even if she gave her money for very different reasons and under very different circumstances than he tried to make people believe in 1910.

The Tachtigers' relationship with money was an uneasy one. It is perhaps too strong to say that making money was taboo in their circle, but they certainly disapproved of linking art and earnings in any overt way. The editors and writers of *De nieuwe gids* strived for independence and autonomy, not only morally and artistically, but also financially. A few of them had side jobs, private incomes, or well-to-do spouses, but most Tachtigers tried to earn their living through writing or painting. The Tachtigers never had a very large audience, and getting by on what they sold was never easy. Getting a job as a journalist or leading a double life as a hack writer was seen as a dubious form of selling out. Their views and practices reflect the professionalization and autonomization of the cultural field at the time. As the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu has shown, power relations between writers, publishers, and the public changed profoundly in the second half of the nineteenth century.⁵ In the Netherlands, as elsewhere, the changing social, economic, and cultural environment of writing and publishing led on the one hand to a larger number of 'professional' authors, who wrote for a living and catered to a mass audience, and on the other hand to the rise of a class of deliberately non- or even anti-commercial writers. This category was interested in selling their work to a very select audience only, without having to compromise or to pander to the 'ignorance' of the general public. The Tachtigers adopted a double strategy: they believed in selecting their followers and in catering to a small and elite public of connoisseurs, but aimed simultaneously at a form of financial self-sufficiency.

This, of course, could not but lead to a perpetual and collective shortage of money — an impecuniousness not only felt by individual Tachtigers, but shared by the group of writers and painters as a whole. The money earned, loaned, or obtained within the group tended to circulate through an informal, private system of gift and exchange from one member to another. Some artists often found themselves on the receiving end (such as Kloos and Van Deyssel); others tended to be mostly givers (such as the painter Willem Witsen, who had a wealthy father, and treasurer Frank Van der Goes, who worked in insurance). Still, the surviving letters and documents show that all Tachtigers, rich and poor, shared in a collective sense of financial vulnerability and apprehension — alternating with short-lived bouts of pecuniary faith and confidence.

Their system of extensive reciprocal support stands in the tradition of what art historian Peter Springer has called 'artists' patronage'. In the support artists give each other, he argues, roles are typically interchangeable, with recipients of help often acting as

4 'uit Amsterdam een anoniemen brief [had] gekregen, inhoudende een bedrag (f 150.-), dat de schrijver voor een bergland uitstapje door mij aangewend wilde zien. Ik dacht: ik zal dat maar precies zoo doen en vertrok lakoniek onmiddellijk.' Letter from Lodewijk Van Deyssel to Albert Verwey, 10 September 1895. Harry M. G. Prick, ed., *De briefwisseling tussen Lodewijk Van Deyssel en Albert Verwey*, 3 vols (The Hague: Nederlands Letterkundig Museum en Documentatiecentrum, 1981–86), II (1985), p. 127.

5 Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), p. 32.

givers as well, and givers as recipients.⁶ This system had its pitfalls. As I will show below, most of the time it worked beautifully, but it could also cause resentment and spite. I also argue that the Tachtigers combined their artists' patronage with more traditional forms of support. The editors of *De nieuwe gids* managed to attract a consortium of eleven backers that provided the means for publication of the magazine — Kloos's 'lady with the unfriendly eyes' was one of its members. The balance sheets of the magazine show that this group invested a total of 4,000 guilders between 1885 and 1891.⁷ Four Tachtigers stepped in as well, adding another 750 guilders to the capital of the magazine, making a total of 4,750 guilders (equivalent to nearly €126,000). This money was meant as a loan, but *De nieuwe gids* never made any profit and never paid any of it back.

Some of the eleven bondholders supported not only the magazine, but individual writers or painters as well. And yet another group of patrons had nothing to do with the magazine, but gave extensive support to specific artists associated with *De nieuwe gids*. All-in-all, three systems of patronage seem to have functioned around *De nieuwe gids*: the reciprocal arrangement of the artists themselves; the efforts of the consortium of financiers who backed the magazine; and the involvement of a circle of regular patrons who subsidized individual artists. However, the question is whether these alliances always ran smoothly. It is very possible that the artists' need for autonomy and financial independence sometimes failed to match with the demands and wishes of the patrons.⁸ It is therefore not surprising that Kloos and Van Deysel dreamt up fictive benefactors, whose support was not only generous, but above all, casual and off-hand 'without any strings attached'. The question is if the eleven (very real) backers of *De nieuwe gids* were prepared to be as compliant.

Backroom Business

De nieuwe gids was launched by a small group of friends: five young men who shared the same literary ideals and whose decision to collaborate was based on friendship and idealism. Some of them had money of their own; others were much less fortunate. None of them joined the venture to get rich: *De nieuwe gids* was not started as a business venture, but as an attempt to bring together like-minded people and to promote new ideas. From the beginning, the nature of the collaboration was essentially informal — the success of the magazine depended very much on colloquial relationships and exchanges, both within and outside of the small group of founders. The backroom business of the magazine was conducted in cafés, student rooms, and informal gatherings — and in hundreds of letters, most of which have survived, and upon which much of the research for this paper is based. Some financial records and minutes of meetings have also survived, but not many, in keeping with the casual, even careless way in which the magazine was managed.

Money was discussed at length in the hundreds of letters the Tachtigers wrote to each other. How to make their work more lucrative, but without artistic compromise?

6 Peter Springer, 'Künstler als Mäzene', in *Sammler, Stifter und Museen: Kunstförderung in Deutschland im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Ekkehard Mai and Peter Paret (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1993), pp. 295–319.

7 All data on the exploitation of *De nieuwe gids* are derived from financial documents in the Kloos Archive in the National Library, The Hague, KB 69 E 22 and 69 E 24.

8 See, for instance, the conflict between George Breitner and his patron J. H. W. Kool, who 'didn't like George spending his money (and not even on his work [...]) and fooling him around' ('[Kool] vindt 't niet prettig dat G. 't geld op maakt (en niet eens voor z'n werk [...]) en hem 'n beetje voor den gek houdt'), according to Willem Witsen on 15 November 1887. Leo Jansen and others, eds, *Willem Witsen: Volledige briefwisseling*, Stichting Willem Witsen, Digitale Bibliotheek voor de Nederlandse Letteren (2007), www.dbnl.org [accessed 1 October 2013].

How to pay the rent, but without ‘selling their souls’ to either publisher or public? Many who have published on the *Tachtigers* have since commented on their habit of ignoring their audience and their lack of concern for the commercial appeal of their work. However, the letters reveal that for many *Tachtigers* the fact that their poems and paintings had to be distributed or sold at some point was not problematic in itself. They actually liked presenting their work to a public. They did, however, feel uncomfortable with an all too obvious association of monetary value with artistic value. They would have preferred to completely separate the two, and were annoyed by the fact that creating art unavoidably had to be followed by an assessment of its economic worth.⁹ *Tachtiger* Frederik Van Eeden, who was a writer and a doctor, told his diary in 1895 that: ‘there is no way of making money that I find right and proper’.¹⁰ And founder and editor Verwey stated that he would much rather give away his book of poems, *Verzamelde gedichten* [*Collected Poems*] (1889), than sell it at a given price. ‘And sometimes I fancy printing my poems on a slip of paper and selling them for a song, so everyone could read them and profit from them.’¹¹ A painter and photographer, Witsen had the same aversion to the economic transactions needed to distribute his work: ‘I think it’s very tiresome, always this selling and playing the salesman [...] I wish I could give away the whole lot; at least to people worthy of it.’¹² This was crucial: if selling was required, the *Tachtigers* would much rather sell to a public that they did not have to look down on. In practice, this meant a public that was able to appreciate their work.

Not long after launching the magazine, the *Tachtigers* started to use the expression ‘a N[ieuwe] G[ids] public’ in their letters, meaning an audience that was well-informed, well-read, open-minded, and ‘willing to try to understand our poems’¹³ — as opposed to what they called the ‘narrow-minded hostile mob’ that they considered would never even begin to understand.¹⁴ It would never do to try to meet this type of reader halfway. The worst reproach to any *Tachtiger* was to accuse him of trying to ‘gain favour with the public, to make advances to the public [...] just to satisfy his vanity and greed’.¹⁵ The elusive ‘N.G.-public’, by contrast, showed promise. It could conceivably be gradually educated and enlightened. Van Eeden predicted that the magazine would be ‘read by thousands’ and pointed out that *De nieuwe gids* was meant for more people than for ‘its coterie’ alone: ‘we want to stand among the people, and keep standing there.’¹⁶ Verwey, in June 1887, commented:

- 9 See also Helleke Van den Braber, *Geven om te krijgen: Literair mecenaat in Nederland tussen 1900 en 1940* (Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2002), pp. 54–75.
- 10 ‘Geen wijze van geldverdiene die ik waardig en goed vind’. H. W. Van Tricht, ed., *Frederik Van Eeden: Dagboek 1878–1923*, 4 vols (Culemborg: Tjeenk Willink/Noorduijn, 1971), I, p. 357.
- 11 ‘En soms [...] zou ik lust hebben [mijn gedichten] te laten drukken op zakjespapier en ze voor ’n bagatel te verkoopen, dat toch iedereen ze kon lezen en er zijn voordeel mee doen.’ Letter from Verwey to Elisabeth Van Vloten, 13 October 1888. M. H. Schenkeveld and Rein Van der Wiel, eds, *Albert Verwey: Briefwisseling 1 juli 1885 tot 15 december 1888* (Amsterdam: Querido, 1995), p. 553.
- 12 ‘k Vin ’t anders ’n vervelend ding, altijd dat verkoopen en koopmanetje spelen en te moeten hooren van veel of niet veel, — ’k wou dat ’k alles kon weggeven; aan menschen ten minste, die ’k ’t waard vind’. Letter from Van Looy to Witsen, 12 February 1888; letter from Witsen to Van Vloten, 20 July 1891. Jansen and others, eds, *Willem Witsen*.
- 13 ‘Een N.G.-publiek [dat] wil trachten onze verzen te verstaan’. Letter from Van Eeden to Verwey, 23 June 1887; letter from Verwey to Van Looy, 13 May 1886. Schenkeveld and Van der Wiel, eds, pp. 159 and 312.
- 14 ‘Grooten bekrompen vijandigen troep’. Letter from Van Eeden to Verwey, 3 February 1888. Schenkeveld and Van der Wiel, eds, p. 404.
- 15 ‘Een wit voetje bij het publiek te krijgen, met het publiek te coquetteeren [...] voor de voldoening van [zijn] ijdelheid en geldzucht.’ Letter from Charles Van Deventer to Verwey, 8 April 1888. Schenkeveld and Van der Wiel, eds, p. 417.
- 16 ‘Door duizenden gelezen [zal] worden; ’alleen voor ons plezier, voor een onder-onsje; ’wij willen in de menschen staan, en blijven staan’. Letters from Van Eeden to Verwey, 12 August 1885 and 3 February 1888. Schenkeveld and Van der Wiel, p. 28; ’s Gravesande, *De geschiedenis van ’De nieuwe gids*’, p. 146.

Is this whole N.G. anything else than an attempt to convert people to comprehending what was incomprehensible at first? Aren't the good things about new ideas mainly good and new because they could not be understood at first, and then could be accepted as understood afterwards? Is being too demanding for one's readers actually wrong? I would almost like to call it a virtue.¹⁷

Kloos was optimistic about the possibility of educating the public. He trusted that 'the cultivated and art-loving public will [...] learn to appreciate modern Dutch art more and more, if the artists continue to provide good work'.¹⁸ But his colleague Van Deyssel, who was a very prominent Tachtiger, doubted if it was wise to put too much emphasis on the intelligibility (and commercial appeal) of their work. He would only be prepared to do so himself: 'if it agreed with my artistic vision. But I am convinced that it would be wrong to sacrifice anything for it, and that my art should correspond with what I would write if I was alone in this world.'¹⁹ Still, paradoxically, Van Deyssel did dream of recognition and profit: in 1885 he wrote provocatively that he only 'exploited himself by writing' to 'attain the one goal: as much fame, honour and wealth as possible'.²⁰

But for Kloos, such an overt connection between economic and artistic value remained off limits. In 1890, he claimed he never wanted anyone to think 'that my production has ever been or will ever be dependent on monetary reward [...] As if the hope of monetary reward would inspire new thoughts in me, or provoke new visions!'²¹ This did not mean that Kloos rejected all payment for his work. He desperately needed the money *De nieuwe gids* paid him for his editorial duties and was convinced that the magazine owed it to him to pay him as much as he needed to survive. He claimed that taking a regular job would cause him to 'die or at least stultify'. He hated the thought of 'having to do taxing work that I would rather avoid'.²² As an editor of *De nieuwe gids* he earned 600 guilders a year, and this was, along with the variable payments for the poems he published, his only regular income. In 1890, he wrote:

I have to have a regular income, something I can be sure of, and that will allow me to fulfil my basic needs. This is also what I have been promised when the N.G. started. They as good as told me 'we know you can't survive on 600 guilders, but our

17 'Is de heele N.G. wel iets anders dan een poging om de menschen te *bekeeren* tot het begrijpelijk vinden van het eerst-ónbegrijpbare? Is zelfs het goede van nieuwe ideeën niet voornamelijk goed en nieuw daarom, dat het eerst niet begrepen en daarna als wel begrepen geaccepteerd wordt? Is het te hoog gaan voor zijn lezers dan wel een fout? Ik zou het haast een deugd willen noemen.' Letter from Verwey to Van Eeden, 27 June 1887. Schenkeveld and Van der Wiel, eds, p. 315.

18 'Het ontwikkelde publiek, dat iets aan kunst heeft, [...] hoe langer hoe meer van de moderne hollandsche kunst zal leeren genieten, als de bestaande artisten maar voortgaan met goed werk te leveren.' Letter from Kloos to Arij Prins, 17 September 1886. 's Gravesande, *De geschiedenis van 'De nieuwe gids'*, pp. 124–26.

19 'Voor zover het overeen zou komen met mijn kunstinzicht. Maar ik ben overtuigd, dat ik daar niets voor mag opofferen, en mijn kunstwerk moet overeenkomen met wat ik zou schrijven: indien ik alleen op de wereld stond.' d'Oliveira, p. 28.

20 'Literair exploiteerde [om] het ééne doel te verkrijgen: zooveel mogelijk roem, eer en rijkdom.' Prick, ed., *De briefwisseling tussen Lodewijk Van Deyssel en Arnold Ising jr 1883–1904* (The Hague: Nederlands Letterkundig Museum en Documentatiecentrum, 1968), p. 123.

21 'Mijn productie ooit afhankelijk is geweest, of kan zijn van de geldelijke belooning, die ik er voor kreeg [...] Alsof er door het uitzicht op geldelijke belooning, nieuwe gedachten in mij zouden geboren worden, nieuwe inzichten ontstaan!' Letter from Kloos to Van Eeden, 2 June 1890. 's Gravesande, *De geschiedenis van 'De nieuwe gids'*, p. 297.

22 'doodgaan of ten minste versuffen'; 'ingespannen werk te doen, dat ik liever laten zou'. Letter from Kloos to Van Eeden, 30 May 1890. 's Gravesande, *De geschiedenis van 'De nieuwe gids'*, pp. 263–64.

future is totally uncertain, the whole business may collapse, so we can't do more at the moment, but as soon as possible we will see what we can do.²³

And the editors of *De nieuwe gids* agreed with him. They thought that an eminent writer like Kloos merited the highest fee the magazine could offer, if only because of the value of his work — even if he would never put pen to paper again. Van Eeden wrote to him:

We know very well that in these revolutionary times in our country hardly anything of value has happened that hasn't been influenced by you. And that you, of all people, have every right to any benefits this magazine can give in a country like ours. I am convinced that one day you will make a living off the magazine, and even if you produced nothing more, I would still find that just and proper.²⁴

A closer look at the financial position of *De nieuwe gids* shows that the magazine found it hard to find a public. Van Eeden's prediction that thousands would read the magazine did not come true. Table 1 below shows the numbers of subscriptions and the losses from year to year. The magazine grew in popularity from 274 subscribers in 1885–86 to 597 in 1891–92, but still the losses mounted: from 1,472 guilders (equivalent to around €17,500 today) in the first year to 3,273 guilders (equivalent to almost €40,000 today) in 1890. No figures are known for later years. Although the bonds the editors managed to place cut the losses somewhat, the magazine never made any profit.

	Subscriptions	Losses (cumulative)	Bonds placed
1885–86	274 (at f 7,50 a year)	f 1472	f 1750
1886–87	352	f 2545 (+ 1073)	f 375
1887–88	441	f 3207 (+ 662)	f 375
1888–89	511	f 3552 (+ 345)	f 1000
1889–90	533	f 3273 (- 297)	–
1891–92	597	[not known]	f 1250
Total			f 4750

Table 1 Financial overview for *De nieuwe gids*²⁵

However, 500 subscribers was not a bad result. Other magazines with the same number of subscriptions managed very well at the time. Van Eeden argued in 1889 that 'it is too bizarre that with all our subscribers our business should still be bad and we should still be paying such scant fees. [Rival magazine] *Nederland*, which does

23 'Ik moet een vasten grondslag hebben van inkomsten, iets waarvan ik zeker ben dat het inkomt, en waarmee ik mijn brood-noodigste levensbehoefte verschaffen kan. Dat is mij, in het begin van de N.G. ook beloofd. Men zeide mij ongeveer: we weten wel dat je van f 600 niet leven kan, maar onze toekomst is heelemaal onzeker, misschien mislukt de heele zaak, we kunnen dus op het oogenblik niet meer doen, maar zoodra mogelijk willen we zien wat we doen kunnen.' Letter from Kloos to Van Eeden, 2 June 1890. 's Gravesande, *De geschiedenis van 'De nieuwe gids'*, p. 297.

24 'Wij weten heel goed dat er in den tijd van omkeer in ons land bijna niets van beteekenis is voorgevallen buiten jou [sic] invloed. Dat jij dus vóór iemand anders recht hebt, op de grootst mogelijke voordeelen die dit tijdschrift in een land als 't onze geven kan. Ik ben overtuigd dat je er eenmaal een voldoende bestaan in zult vinden, en al produceerde je nu verder niets meer, dan zou ik dat toch niet onbillijk vinden.' Letter from Van Eeden to Kloos, 6 June 1890. 's Gravesande, *De geschiedenis van 'De nieuwe gids'*, pp. 274–75.

25 The financial situation of the magazine after 1892 is unclear. The continuation of *De nieuwe gids* after 1894 was made possible by a generous donation from sculptor and patron Saar de Swart. 's Gravesande, *De geschiedenis van 'De nieuwe gids'*, p. 424; after 1900 more bonds were issued, Kloos Archive, KB 69 E 22 and 69 E 24.

very nicely, hardly has more subscribers than we do.²⁶ The question is why *De nieuwe gids* ran into so many financial problems. With the bond loan of 4,750 guilders the magazine was on firm financial footing. The contract with their publisher, Versluys, was not unfavourable either. Versluys took the usual twenty per cent cut of any money the subscribers brought in, and took care of promotion and distribution in return.²⁷ Kloos was content with the arrangement because: 'Versluys [also] put his name on the line, at a time when everybody else saw us as nothing more than young upstarts and laughed at us: without his name we would never have gotten this far, and that's worth some money.' And besides, the publisher was always 'willing to pay large advances'.²⁸

Bondholders

From the very beginning, *De nieuwe gids* succeeded in finding a circle of well-wishers willing to invest in the magazine by buying bonds. A consortium of eleven backers succeeded in covering the debts of the magazine and supplementing the income of the group as a whole. As mentioned above, all they received in return was a neatly printed bond, with the conditions of the loan clearly stated (but largely ignored later) on the flipside.²⁹ In the existing literature on *De nieuwe gids*, there is much incorrect speculation about the extent of this support and about the financiers involved.³⁰ Table 2 below gives the full and correct list of backers.

As indicated in the last column, most of these eleven investors did not only support the magazine, but also individual Tachtigers. These patrons functioned quite anonymously behind the scenes of the magazine; even among specialists, their names are not readily recognized. Who were they? In a way, this consortium connected the world of art and literature to the world of money and investment. Some of the eleven patrons were wealthy family members or acquaintances of the Tachtigers themselves (numbers 2 and 4). Others were part of the large Jewish community in Amsterdam (numbers 9, 10, and 11 all worked as jewellers and diamond cutters). Some were representatives of what was called 'Young Amsterdam': the community of successful young urban people, socially dynamic and politically active, often working in industry or trade.³¹ Together, these youths formed the hub of the so-called Second Golden Age that took shape in the last part of the nineteenth century, propelling Amsterdam into prosperity and modernity. They paid for *De nieuwe gids* with money earned in finance (numbers 1 and 3), in law and insurance (numbers 6 and 7), and in the trade of tobacco, wood, or grain (numbers 3 and 5). More than half of these patrons were young, or at least very close

26 'te dwaas [is] dat wij met zooveel abonnés nog slechte zaken maken en schrale honoraria zouden geven. *Nederland*, dat heel goed floreert, heeft maar weinig abonnés meer.' Letter from Van Eeden to Kloos, 13 July 1889. 's Gravesande, *De geschiedenis van 'De nieuwe gids'*, p. 246.

27 Letter from Kloos to P. L. Tak, 14 July 1887. 's Gravesande, *De geschiedenis van 'De nieuwe gids'*, p. 212.

28 'zijn naam er aan gewaagd heeft, toen iedereen ons als kwajongens beschouwde en uitlachte: zonder dien naam zouden wij zoo ver niet zijn, en dat is geld waard'. Letter from Kloos to Tak, 14 July 1887. 's Gravesande, *De geschiedenis van 'De nieuwe gids'*, p. 212.

29 Kloos Archive.

30 's Gravesande (*De geschiedenis van 'De nieuwe gids'*) mentions on page 28 an amount of 8,000 guilders, supplied by the numbers 1–4 of my list and by four contributors to the magazine; but a little later he suddenly claims that forty bonds were issued, worth 250 guilders each (making a total of 10,000 guilders). Those bonds were issued, according to 's Gravesande, to the eleven patrons on my list, to the four contributors, and to another five unknown benefactors. A closer look at *De nieuwe gids* archive reveals that he must have seen the names of those last five (whose names were B. Gomperts, Dubourcq, Schlencker, Hugo Muller, and Loopuyt, according to 's Gravesande) on a little scrap of paper on which Tak hastily scratched a few names of possible new investors, Kloos Archive, KB 69 E 22. The surviving financial accounts do not give any indication that those five did indeed contribute — neither the amount of 8,000 guilders nor the amount of 10,000 guilders can be traced.

31 Frank Van der Goes, 'Jong-Amsterdam', *De nieuwe gids*, 6 (1891), 395–421.

	Bought bonds in	In the amount of	Also supported
1. Jacoba Cornelia ('Koojsje') Jolles-Singels (1847–1901)	1885	f 1000	Writers: Kloos, Thijm, Bosboom-Toussaint Painters: Veth, Derkinderen, Bosboom Musicians: Diepenbrock ¹
2. Jan Van Gennep (1830–1911)	1885	f 500	Writer: Van Eeden ²
3. C. V. Gerritsen (1850–1905)	1885	f 250	[Unknown] ³
4. Marie de Gijselaar-Van Assendelft de Koning (1859–1937)	1888	f 250	Painters: Breitner, Witsen ⁴
5. M. J. Tiele (1841–1924)	1888	f 500	Writer: Van Deyszel ⁵
6. N. A. Calisch (1858–99)	1888	f 250	[unknown] ⁶
7. A. Van der Horst (1861–1936)	1890	f 250	Writers: Van Deyszel, Kloos ⁷
8. A. Kapteyn (1848–1927)	1890	f 250	Writer: Van Deyszel Painter: Witsen ⁸
9. A. Van Wezel (1856–1921)	1891	f 250	Writer: Van Deyszel Painters: Karsen, Witsen ⁹
10. D. S. Granaat (1863–1928)	1891	f 250	Painter: J. Mendes da Costa ¹⁰
11. Jacob Batavier (1860–1923)	1891	f 250	Writer: Van Deyszel Painters: Van der Valk, Van Looy ¹¹

Notes

- 1 Walter Thys, *André Jolles (1874–1946) 'Gebildeter Vagrant' – brieven en documenten* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2000), pp. 21–31.
- 2 Van Tricht, ed., pp. 106 and 509; Schenkeveld and Van der Wiel, eds, pp. 45 and 275.
- 3 Gerrit Voerman, 'Gerritsen, Carel Victor', in *Biografisch Woordenboek van het Socialisme en de Arbeidersbeweging in Nederland*, socialhistory.org/bwsa [accessed 1 October 2013].
- 4 Schenkeveld and Van der Wiel, eds, p. 435; [Anon.], 'Jules L. N. de Gijselaar', *Algemeen Handelsblad* (9 April 1915).
- 5 [Anon.], 'M. J. Tiele', *Het vaderland* (12 December 1924).
- 6 Van der Wiel, *Van Rapenburgerstraat naar Amerika: De levenstijd van diamantbewerker Andries van Wezel (1856–1921)* (Zwolle: Waanders, 2010), p. 60; Prick, *Een vreemdeling op de wegen: Het leven van Lodewijk Van Deyszel vanaf 1890* (Amsterdam: Athenaeum-Polak & Van Gennep, 2003), p. 388.
- 7 Under the sobriquet 'Huzzle Puzzle', Van der Horst is mentioned in a lot of letters by the Tachtigers; see also Van der Wiel, p. 45, and Prick, *In de zekerheid van eigen heerlijkheid: Het leven van Lodewijk Van Deyszel tot 1890* (Amsterdam: Singel Publishers, 1997), p. 558.
- 8 Witsen wrote regularly to Albert Kapteyn (Jansen and others, eds, *Willem Witsen*). Kapteyn's wife stimulated his interest in art. P. J. Meertens and A. Kloosterman, 'Muysken, Geertruida Agneta', in *Biografisch Woordenboek van het Socialisme en de Arbeidersbeweging in Nederland*, socialhistory.org/bwsa [accessed 1 October 2013].
- 9 Van der Wiel, pp. 64, 75 and 80.
- 10 Van der Wiel, p. 192.
- 11 Van der Wiel, pp. 11, 45 and 75.

Table 2 Financial backers of *De nieuwe gids*

in age to the Tachtigers they supported (numbers 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 11 were members of the same generation). Even Kloos's 'lady with the unfriendly eyes' (who was called Koojsje Jolles-Singels in real life, number 1) was only thirty-eight years old in 1885 (while Kloos was twenty-six at the time).³² And the eleven backers were very much interconnected: they all knew each other socially or professionally.

Also worth noting is the prominent role of women: two of the eleven patrons were female, and behind two of the male patrons (numbers 3 and 8) stood wives who were the driving force behind their commitment to *De nieuwe gids*. This prominence of female patronage wasn't restricted to the circle of the Tachtigers, or to the Netherlands: international research has shown that many female patrons were active in Europe during this period. At a time when married women were expected to be wives and mothers only, patronage offered them a unique chance to be socially active and useful, in a role

32 'Contemporary' in this case means born after 1855.

that was widely accepted without being too conspicuous.³³ In Germany, France, and the United States, ambitious and intelligent bourgeois wives supported artists in a number of ways — sometimes only financially, but often in the capacity of *salonnière* and networker as well. Of the eleven patrons mentioned above, patronage seems to have had this function of liberation and empowerment for Marie de Gijsselaer (number 4) and Jolles-Singels.³⁴

The question remains as to whether these eleven patrons did indeed keep a respectful distance and refrain from trying to influence or control the editorial policy. For the most part they did. The consortium believed in the magazine and in the people editing it, but did not mingle in the running/day-to-day affairs of *De nieuwe gids*. However, some of them monitored the progress of the magazine carefully. Jolles-Singels, for instance, immediately wrote a letter to Kloos and Verwey when something in *De nieuwe gids* bothered or delighted her.³⁵ In April 1889, for example, she declared that the latest issue of *De nieuwe gids* was ‘a prince of joy’ to her, but that she had her doubts about some of the earlier editorial choices: ‘You people are so fortunate with those great and endlessly consoling gifts of yours [...] I am very glad that there is nothing by Van Deyssel in this lovely issue. It is no doubt my fault that the art of Van Deyssel is not to my taste [...] [The last issue of *De nieuwe gids*] seemed heavy with dirt to me, as a result of these fragments [by Van Deyssel].’³⁶ Kloos and Verwey reacted immediately, claiming that they hoped that their patron would ‘have a little more faith in us’.³⁷

Jolles-Singels was no outsider. As we have seen, Kloos chose to fictionalize her as an ‘older, literary, rich lady’, a bourgeois philistine unlikely to be interested in funding his magazine. In reality she was a member of the most vibrant artistic circles of her day, and met and received artists on a daily basis. She read most of the important European magazines and collected volumes of French symbolist poetry. Kloos had known her for years before asking her for money, and, standing in her drawing room, must have been far more confident than he let on in his account. She did donate 1,000 guilders in the early days of the magazine (this wasn’t a myth), but unlike Kloos would have us believe, she had every confidence in the magazine and truly wanted to help. For her the involvement in *De nieuwe gids* was ‘a way to keep in touch with youth — it helped me, to some extent, to keep up to date and has brought me so much joy’.³⁸ But she did tend to underplay her own importance as a patron:

33 Myriam Chimènes, *Mécènes et Musiciens: Du salon au concert à Paris sous la IIIe République* (Paris: Fayard, 2004); Antje Ruhbaum, *Elisabeth von Herzogenberg: Salon - Mäzenatentum - Musikförderung* (Freiburg, Centaurus-Verlag, 2010); Ralph P. Locke and Cyrilla Barr, *Cultivating Music in America. Women Patrons and Activists since 1860* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Sylvia Kahan, *Musical Modern Muse: A Life of Winnaretta Singer, Princesse de Polignac* (Rochester, University of Rochester Press, 2009).

34 Marie de Gijsselaer visited artists in their studios and then asked her husband to buy the work she liked. Letter from Verwey to Kitty Verwey-Vloten, 16 May 1888. Schenkeveld and Van der Wiel, eds, p. 435; Jolles-Singels organized concerts in her drawing room and was hostess to a number of musicians, painters and writers. E. Naaijckens Singels, ‘Jacoba Cornelia’, in *Digitaal Vrouwenlexicon van Nederland*, resources.huygens.knaw.nl/vrouwenlexicon [accessed 13 January 2014].

35 For instance, in the letter from Jolles-Singels to Kloos, undated: ‘And I would also like to know why Deyssel thinks Netscher is without any talent’, Kloos Archive, 69 E 22.

36 ‘een prins van vreugd. Wat zijt gijlieden toch rijk en gelukkig met die groote gaven, die het vermogen hebben om oneindig te troosten. [...] Ik ben heel blij dat er in dit mooie nummer niets van Van Deyssel staat. Graag neem ik aan dat het aan mij ligt dat mijn smaak de kunst van Van Deyssel niet dirigeren kan. [...] [Het vorige nummer van de N.G.] lijkt [...] mij zwaar van vuil, door die fragmenten.’ Letter from Jolles-Singels to Verwey, 5 April 1889. Thys, p. 91. The fragments by Van Deyssel she refers to are from his prose poem *Menschen en Bergen* (1886).

37 ‘een beetje meer moed op ons [zou] krijgen’. Letter from Kloos to Jolles-Singels, 16 May 1886. ‘s Gravesande, *De geschiedenis van ‘De nieuwe gids’*, pp. 106–07.

38 ‘Een manier om op de hoogte te blijven ‘van wat er omging in de jonge wereld [...] [zoo]dat ik daardoor eenigszins met mijn tijd mee ben gegaan wat zooveel vreugd in mijn leven heeft gebracht’. Letter from Jolles-Singels to Kloos, 16 May 1886. Thys, p. 86.

I am glad if all goes well, and I will be proud as a peacock if others accede that I wasn't so far wrong in deciding to give all of you a chance to show your worth. But I assure you that I am not vain enough to think that I contributed as much to *De nieuwe gids* as you seem to think. Talent will always find a way, and you could very well have done all of this without me.³⁹

Kloos and Verwey did not need to worry about meddling or intrusiveness. Most patrons weren't even interested in getting their money back — or were wary of conflict with the editors of the magazine, who had a reputation of imperiousness and belligerence.⁴⁰ 'Calisch has been sitting around in old Israel's studio for two years abusing the N.G., but now he is happy to buy a bond, and this Mr. Tiele is totally unliterary and doesn't do politics either, but thinks the N.G. is an honourable magazine that deserves to be supported', Verwey wrote of the numbers 5 and 6 on the list of backers.⁴¹ Still, most of them must have been interested in the fact that their involvement with a magazine as highly rated as *De nieuwe gids* did enhance their position and prestige in the 'Young Amsterdam' community.

Informal Patronage System

Van der Goes was the treasurer of *De nieuwe gids* and one of the wealthier members of the Tachtigers circle. He played a central role in the other, more informal patronage system that was operating around the magazine. In 1890, he wrote in a letter to his fellow editor Tak:

The truth is, that the money box of *De nieuwe gids* has always been at the disposal of [its founders] Kloos and Verwey. They lived for *De nieuwe gids*, and they more or less lived off it as well. It came down to constantly helping two people who hardly had any resources. It was Verwey who for years tried to collect a monthly allowance of about 25 guilders for Kloos, and he ran into difficulties often enough. I knew of all this exactly, and it proved necessary to give over-large advances to Verwey out of our general, one could say collective accounts.⁴²

This quote offers an interesting glimpse of the informal exchange of money and gifts occurring. 'Of course I know that there is not one authority that would condone these

39 'Ik ben blij als het u goed gaat en ik zal grootsch als een gulden zijn als velen erkennen dat het noch zoo dwaas niet gezien was om u lieden de kans te geven ons te toonen wat gij kunt. — Maar ik verzeker je dat ik niet ijdel genoeg ben om te denken dat ik zooveel aan *De nieuwe gids* gedaan hebt als gij meent. Talent baant zich altijd een weg en gijlieden zoudt dit ook best zonder mij gesteld hebben.' Letter from Jolles-Singels to Kloos, 16 May 1886. Thys, p. 86.

40 Only Jolles-Singels and Calisch asked in 1893 how things stood with the return of their money (letter from Jolles-Singels to Van der Goes, 12 May 1894. Thys, p. 150 and letter from Calisch to Van der Goes, 2 November 1893. Goverdus 's Gravesande, *De geschiedenis van 'De nieuwe gids'. Brieven en documenten; supplement* (Arnhem: Van Loghum Slaterus, 1961), pp. 102–03.

41 'Calisch zat voor 2 jaar op 't atelier van den ouden Israëls de N.G. uittschelden en vindt het nu zelfs prettig dat hij een aandeel kan nemen, en die heer Tiele is totaal onliterair en doet ook niet aan politiek, maar vindt de N.G. een respectabel tijdschrift, dat gesteund moet worden.' Letter from Verwey to Kitty Van Vloten, 29 October 1888. Schenkeveld and Van der Wiel, eds, p. 578.

42 'De waarheid is, dat de kas van de N/G voor Kloos en voor Verwey altijd heeft opengestaan; zij leefden min of meer voor de N/G en zij leefden er ook grootendeels Van. Het was een voortdurend helpen van twee menschen die bijna niets anders hadden [...]. Kloos en Verwey hadden ongeveer één beurs, Verwey was het die jaren achterelkaar voor Kloos eene maandelijksche bijdrage van ± f 25.- bijeenverzamelde en menigmaal is hem dit hoogst moeilijk gevallen. Ik wist dit alles precies en de noodzakelijkheid heeft gemaakt dat uit onze algemeene, men zou zeggen gemeenschappelijke kas, op naam Van Verwey te slotte [sic] te groote voorschotten zijn gesteld.' Letter from Van der Goes to Tak, 31 May 1890. 's Gravesande, *De geschiedenis van 'De nieuwe gids'*, pp. 265–66.

expenses', Van der Goes admitted. Still, the donations to Kloos and Verwey occurred with the tacit consent of Van Eeden and the other editors of *De nieuwe gids*.⁴³ Now it suddenly becomes clear why the magazine ran into such heavy debts. Apparently, Van der Goes paid Kloos and Verwey substantial sums at irregular intervals — quite apart from the fees they earned for their work as editors. These added up over the years, and could not but lead to huge deficits. Van der Goes also gave Kloos and Verwey money out of his own pocket — up until 1890 his private support amounted to no less than 800 guilders (equivalent to €9,500 today).⁴⁴ And at the same time, the other Tachtigers tried to cover the losses by collecting money among themselves and donating it to *De nieuwe gids*. They all knew where the magazine's money was actually going, and why it was necessary to chip in.

The quote uncovers another initiative: the informal fund that Verwey tried to raise by collecting money from anyone who cared to give. The painters Witsen and Jan Veth, and the writers Van Eeden and Van der Goes (again) were among the contributors. Although the twenty-five guilders a month Verwey collected was meant to fund the magazine, it soon went to Kloos, as an addition to his salary of 600 guilders a year. This provided him with a regular annual income of 900 guilders (equivalent to almost €11,000 today), quite apart from the fees he earned as a poet.⁴⁵ And this was not all. On his own part, Witsen regularly supported Kloos: he paid part of his bills, paid the rent for his rooms, arranged visits to the doctor, and invited him to stay.⁴⁶ And things became even more complicated: Witsen did the same thing for the writer Jan Hofker and the painter Eduard Karsten — but was, at the same time, supported *himself* — by Albert Kapteyn (number 8 on the list, an engineer living in London) and Henri Samson, a physician and art collector.⁴⁷ Karsten, for his part, received help from Andries Van Wezel (number 9 on the list).⁴⁸ And Kapteyn was one of Van Deysse's benefactors as well — and Van Deysse was also subsidized (from 1890) by Van der Goes and Van Eeden (again).⁴⁹ Those two were assisted, in turn, by C. F. Van der Horst, bond holder of *De nieuwe gids* (number 7 on the list), and by the poet Herman Gorter — who would, years later, be supported in turn by Verwey (who had by then married well).⁵⁰ And the list goes on endlessly. Wealthy Tachtigers privately supported their poorer colleagues — and when, in later years, the tables turned and those who had been poor had come in shortages of money to some money, the roles were reversed. The web of patronage relationships was woven so densely that it is hard to separate one support initiative from another. It is fair to say that the group as a whole carried the burden of the occasional personal and constant collective shortages of money.

Why would the Tachtigers have relied so heavily on this form of collective and reciprocal support? The easy answer is of course that this form of giving reinforced

43 'Ik weet wel dat niet één deskundige deze uitgaven zou kunnen goedkeuren.' Letter from Van der Goes to Tak, 31 May 1890. 's Gravesande, *De geschiedenis van 'De nieuwe gids'*, pp. 265–66.

44 Letter from Kloos to Van der Goes, 25 May 1890. 's Gravesande, *De geschiedenis van 'De nieuwe gids'*, pp. 260–61.

45 Many letters have been written about this little fund; see also Van der Goes to Tak, 31 May 1890. 's Gravesande, *De geschiedenis van 'De nieuwe gids'*, pp. 265–66.

46 Charles Vergeer, *Willem Witsen en zijn vriendenkring: De Amsterdamse bohème van de jaren negentig* (Amsterdam: Thomas Rap, 1985), p. 14.

47 This has been documented in Jansen and others, eds, *Willem Witsen*.

48 Schenkeveld and Van der Wiel, p. 75.

49 Prick, *Een vreemdeling op de wegen*, p. 58; letters from Van Eeden to Van der Goes, 5 and 8 March 1890. 's Gravesande, *Brieven en documenten*, pp. 54–55.

50 See for the involvement of Van der Horst, Prick, *Een vreemdeling op de wegen*, p. 130, and for the involvement of Herman Gorter and Verwey, a letter from Gorter to Verwey, 25 January 1896, in Mea Nijland-Verwey, *Kunstenaarslevens: De briefwisseling van Albert Verwey met Alphons Diepenbrock, Herman Gorter, R. N. Roland Holst, Henriëtte Van der Schalk en J. Th. Toorop* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1959), p. 142.

their common bond. As an artistic community, the Tachtigers had placed themselves quite apart from their peers and from the existing artistic and societal context — they needed each other to strengthen their position as a group. By giving and sharing, they made their relationships productive. And there was also the issue of power. In the view of most readers and critics, writers like Kloos, Verwey, and Van Deysssel were vital to the image and impact of the magazine. These three also happened to be poor. By some coincidence, the Tachtigers who had economic resources (Van der Goes, Van Eeden, Tak) did not reach the same level of artistic authority as those who did not. Kloos and Verwey (who reinvented Dutch poetry) and Van Deysssel (who did the same for Dutch prose) were the figureheads of *De nieuwe gids*, something an artist like Van Eeden (the driving force behind many support initiatives) was very aware of.⁵¹ The conclusion could be that by giving money to their poor colleagues, the rich Tachtigers invested in the right to team up with artists who were artistically much more groundbreaking. That way, gift giving earned them the right to present themselves as a Tachtiger. Another explanation could be that they invested in their colleagues to help them stay productive. Their support enabled their friends to keep writing, and this was (by way of the growing reputation of *De nieuwe gids*) a very effective way of strengthening their own authority as well. This whole idea of making gift relations *productive* to both givers and recipients can be related directly to anthropological gift theory. Sociologists like Marcel Mauss and Aafke Komter claim that people are more ready to give when their mutual dependency is larger. People who need each other, emotionally, socially, or professionally, are more willing to acknowledge or strengthen their bond by exchanging gifts.⁵²

But more personal artistic concerns may have played a role as well. Historian Jan Fontijn claims in his biography of Van Eeden that around 1890 there were strong rumours that '[Van Eeden] only sent money to Van Deysssel to get Van Deysssel to write favourable reviews of his work', or, reversely, that Van Deysssel wrote those favourable reviews only to ensure himself of Van Eeden's support.⁵³ And it is very possible that things did indeed (partly) work that way. Gift theory states that one of the unwritten rules regulating gift giving is that gift relationships flourish if both parties invest and profit just about equally. Van Eeden and Van Deysssel both invested in their relationship, but in different ways: one of them gave money, the other what Pierre Bourdieu calls 'consecration' — the power to confer cultural prestige.⁵⁴ Apparently, this did not keep them from perceiving their alliance as a relationship of equivalence and balance.

But it was not difficult to upset this balance. The relationship between Kloos and Van Eeden is an example. Interestingly enough, the ease and freedom of their relationship dissolved the moment they started to define and specify what they actually gave to each other — and especially what Van Eeden gave to Kloos. Van Eeden had been silently supporting Kloos for a long time, and by now the poet considered these gifts as no more than his due. He did not understand why benefactors, like Van Eeden, protested if he put the relationship under pressure by asking more than they were

51 See, for instance, the letters he sent to Verwey on 12 August 1885 and on 9 April 1888. Schenkeveld and Van der Wiel, eds, pp. 28 and 419.

52 Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies* (London: Routledge, 2002) and Aafke Komter, *Social Solidarity and the Gift* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). See also Van den Braber, 'Do ut des' rond Multatuli en Jan Kneppelhout: Vormen van interactie tussen weldoeners en kunstenaars in de negentiende eeuw', *De negentiende eeuw*, 36.3 (2012), 161–82.

53 'hij Van Deysssel geld zond om gunstige kritieken [op zijn werk] te krijgen, of omgekeerd, dat Van Deysssel gunstige kritieken schreef om van Van Eeden geld te krijgen', Jan Fontijn, *Tweespalt: Het leven van Frederik van Eeden tot 1901* (Amsterdam: Querido, 1990), p. 271.

54 Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996).

prepared to give. In the spring of 1890, he decided to ask Van Eeden for more money, forcing his colleague to reconsider their mutual investment.

If you tell me now that you need 25 guilders each month, quite apart from your salary, to make ends meet — then I feel quite silly, tiredly writing mediocre articles in the evening to fill the N.G., or to make 50 guilders if I go out to read them to people, only to give you half of these 50 guilders. Whereas you have all day to write as much truly literary work as you wish.⁵⁵

Van Eeden invested time, effort and energy; he expected Kloos to reciprocate with the production of ‘truly literary work’. But this seemed to happen less and less often. Van Eeden asked him outright ‘if he couldn’t produce more?’ Kloos owed it to himself and to his benefactor to make an effort, because ‘you can produce work of the highest rank like no one else can in our country, you have material in abundance and [...] time as well’.⁵⁶ Kloos was astounded. He denied ever having received anything in the way of help or support from Van Eeden, and did not feel under any obligation to reciprocate:

You said that I should not take other people’s efforts on my behalf for granted, and especially not yours. But that’s not true. You offered to help, and out of necessity I concurred, adding that I considered all this as an advance, to be paid back after the death of my parents. Nothing more than a good turn.⁵⁷

A major discussion followed. Who benefited the most from their relationship? Their argument hit rock bottom when Kloos, denying ever having received any help, coldly demanded a list of items Van Eeden supposedly had paid for over the years:

If somebody, even if he is my best friend, lashes out in a discussion, arguing (like you did) that he has helped me for years (financially), and I am not at all aware of his, then I have the right to ask: explain this to me [...]. I am perfectly willing to acknowledge my obligations, if you can prove, verbally, not in any written form, that’s not what I’m asking, that you have indeed ‘helped me for years’. If you can’t, then you cannot accuse me of anything, if you can I will apologize for my [...] ignorance, or impudence, as you choose to call it.⁵⁸

55 ‘Als je mij nu zegt dat je f 25.- in de maand noodig hebt, behalve je salaris, om rond te komen — dan vind ik het eigenlijk dwaas dat ik’s avonds met een moeie kop nog middelmatige stukjes zit te schrijven om de N.G. te vullen, of f 50.- te verdienen als ik ze voorlees, en dan jou van die f 50.- nog de helft te geven. Terwijl jij den ganschen dag hebt om zooveel zuiver literair werk te maken als je verkiest.’ Letter from Van Eeden to Kloos, 1 June 1890. ‘s Gravesande, *De geschiedenis van ‘De nieuwe gids’*, pp. 267–70.

56 ‘Zuiver literair werk’ niet méér zou kunnen schrijven?’ ‘Jij kunt werk maken van de hoogen rang, dat niemand beter kan doen in ons land, je hebt stof in overvloed en [...] tijd ook.’ Letter from Van Eeden to Kloos, 1 June 1890. ‘s Gravesande, *De geschiedenis van ‘De nieuwe gids’*, pp. 267–70.

57 ‘Je zei, dat ik niet mocht rekenen op de werkzaamheid van anderen, speciaal van jou. Dat is niet juist. Je hebt mij zelf aangeboden mij te helpen, en door den nood gedrongen heb ik toegestemd, er bij voegende dat ik alles beschouwde als een voorschot, dat ik je bij den dood van mijn oudelui kan en zal teruggeven. Een heel gewone vriendentransactie dus.’ Letter from Kloos to Van Eeden, 2 June 1890. ‘s Gravesande, *De geschiedenis van ‘De nieuwe gids’*, pp. 270–72.

58 ‘Als iemand, zij hij mijn beste vriend, mij in een discussie toevoegt en als argument gebruikt, (zoals je gedaan hebt) dat hij mij vele jaren (met geld) geholpen heeft, en ik ben mij daarvan niet bewust, dan heb ik het recht te vragen: leg mij dat eens uit [...] Ik wil gaarne mijne verplichtingen erkennen, als je mij bewijzen kunt, alleen met je woorden, zonder papieren, daar vraag ik niet naar, dat je mij ‘vele jaren geholpen hebt.’ Kan je dat niet, dan mag je ‘t mij ook niet toevoegen: kan je ‘t wel dan zal ik je excuses vragen voor mijne [...] Onwetendheid [sic], die jij als “schaamteloosheid” qualificeert.’ Letter from Kloos to Van Eeden, 18 September 1890. ‘s Gravesande, *De geschiedenis van ‘De nieuwe gids’*, pp. 362–63.

Van Eeden was hurt. He informed Kloos that he considered the ‘jumbling of “interest” in matters of affection bad form’. Kloos clearly ‘couldn’t forgive that we have put you in a position in which you have to fend for yourself’, forgetting that ‘this kind of pride is only appropriate for someone strong enough to be truly independent’.⁵⁹ This discussion led to an imbalance in their alliance that proved hard to overcome and redress. Their relationship never really recovered. The main problem seems to have been that they made the conditions of their exchange too explicit or, as Van Eeden’s wife Martha put it, because the gentlemen ‘discussed things that should be left unsaid’.⁶⁰

Conclusion

The Tachtigers around *De nieuwe gids* found some interesting solutions to the eternal question of money. As we have seen, they alleviated their uneasy relationship with money through different forms of patronage. My research has shown that they used the capital they acquired from their patrons for the continuation of the magazine as well as for the upkeep of those members of the group who had no other resources. As a group, they made sure that money was circulated and transferred in such a way that all members profited: artists without money could keep on writing and painting, artists who did have money invested in the continuity of the group as a whole and in their own place within it. The generosity and lack of intrusiveness of the consortium of backers of *De nieuwe gids* is striking — none of them demanded any form of control. A question that is still open, then, is what it was that these patrons actually received in return for their gift. If the structure and organisation of the circle around *De nieuwe gids* clearly begs for an actor network theory type of network analysis, the patronage arrangements could be analysed much more thoroughly than I have done here by shifting focus and making more use of gift theory or even cultural economic game theory.⁶¹

What is clear, however, is that the different forms of patronage and of funding the magazine were successful because they did not affect the artistic prestige or credibility of the Tachtigers, or of the benefactors involved — if anything, their solution to the money problem enhanced their position. This was particularly true for Van Eeden, who took pride in the fact that he was the one who enabled Kloos to write his masterpieces. It was also true for Kloos, who liked to boast of the fact that people were prepared to hand him envelopes with large banknotes. And it was probably true as well for the ladies and gentlemen who were glad that the Tachtigers were prepared to accept their gifts. Kloos’s mythical patroness may have had ‘unfriendly eyes’, but she was also proud of her support.

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59 ‘het mengen van “belang” in kwesties van affecties misselijk [vond]’, ‘niet vergeven dat je door ons op jezelf bent aangewezen’, ‘trots alleen op zijn plaats [is] bij iemand die sterk genoeg is om onafhankelijk te zijn’. Letter from Van Eeden to Kloos, 18 September 1890. ’s Gravesande, *De geschiedenis van ‘De nieuwe gids’*, pp. 361–62.

60 ‘argumenteer[den] over dingen waar men liefst niet over spreekt’. Letter from Martha Van Eeden-Verwey to Kloos, 21 October 1890. ’s Gravesande, *De geschiedenis van ‘De nieuwe gids’*, p. 364.

61 Komter, *Social Solidarity and the Gift*, and Jonathan K. Nelson and Richard J. Zeckhauser, *The Patron’s Payoff: Conspicuous Commissions in Italian Renaissance Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

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