

## **Very Feminine, Yet Unmercifully Intelligent. A portrait of the Dutch critic and translator Elisabeth de Roos (1903-1981)**

Elke Brems and Dorien De Man  
University of Leuven, Belgium

The Dutch author and translator Elisabeth de Roos has largely been ignored by literary historians. Nevertheless, she played a major role in the literary scene in the Netherlands between 1925 and 1955. She was a very productive and respected essayist, critic, journalist and translator, but in the rearview mirror of literary history her husband Eddy du Perron outshined her. The contemporary gender discourse, in which de Roos herself took part, created a blind spot for the contribution to innovation and poetical conceptualisation of female authors. The infamous journal *Forum* to which both she and her husband contributed was a mouthpiece for a masculine discourse: being a fellow was the highest goal. After their marriage her husband pursued his writing career, whereas de Roos took care of the household and was the family breadwinner by writing journalistic pieces instead of literary work. After her husband's death at the start of the Second World War, de Roos started to work as a translator, a profession in which she soon gained a high degree of expertise and professionalism. She wrote lengthy and substantial essays as prefaces to her translations, revealing her thoughtful literary ideas that preferred intellect and lucidity to melodrama and sentimentality and *partis pris* to half-heartedness. An analysis of her translation of *Wuthering Heights* suggests she didn't smoothen the source text to please the target audience, in accordance with her poetics.