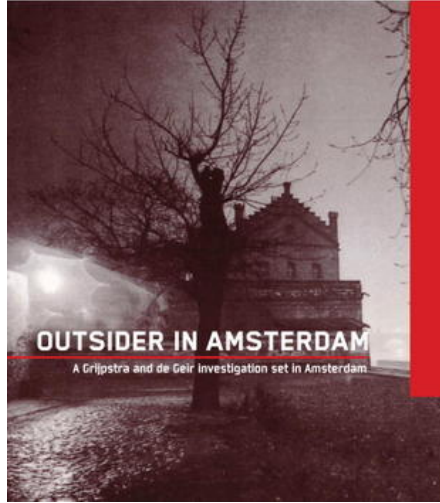




JANWILLEM VAN DE WETERING



# Outsider in Amsterdam

*Janwillem van de Wetering*

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# Outsider in Amsterdam

*Janwillem van de Wetering*

## **Outsider in Amsterdam** Janwillem van de Wetering

On a quiet street in downtown Amsterdam, the founder of a new religious society/commune—a group that calls itself “Hindist” and mixes elements of various “Eastern” traditions—is found hanging from a ceiling beam. Detective-Adjutant Gripstra and Sergeant de Gier of the Amsterdam police are sent to investigate what looks like a simple suicide, but they are immediately suspicious of the circumstances.

This now-classic novel, first published in 1975, introduces Janwillem van de Wetering’s lovable Amsterdam cop duo of portly, worldly-wise Gripstra and handsome, contemplative de Gier. With its unvarnished depiction of the legacy of Dutch colonialism and the darker facets of Amsterdam’s free drug culture, this excellent procedural asks the question of whether a murder may ever be justly committed.

## **Outsider in Amsterdam Details**

Date : Published July 1st 2003 by Soho Press, Inc. (first published January 1st 1975)

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Author : Janwillem van de Wetering

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# From Reader Review Outsider in Amsterdam for online ebook

## Bettie? says

Description: *On a quiet street in downtown Amsterdam, the founder of a new religious society/commune—a group that calls itself “Hindist” and mixes elements of various “Eastern” traditions—is found hanging from a ceiling beam. Detective-Adjutant Grijpstra and Sergeant de Gier of the Amsterdam police are sent to investigate what looks like a simple suicide, but they are immediately suspicious of the circumstances.*

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This is the one with miso paste, white Liberty Harley (as Lisbeth Salander would say: "sweet"), vicious siamese cat, and a charming Papuan.

4\* Outsider in Amsterdam  
TR Tumbleweed

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## Harry says

A bit of a disappointment for me. I am Dutch and have lived in and around Amsterdam, so imagine my anticipation of reading Wetering (a well known Dutch author), knowing it would be like coming home. But it didn't happen. I'm not sure exactly what the problem is with this book. Some of the Dutch humor does come through, the curious Dutch sensibility that lets any emotion come to the surface only after filtering it through a sobering, rational mind often does come through as funny. Perhaps it's a bad translation..I often found myself puzzled with the phrases I knew were translated from Dutch into English and found them wanting. Or perhaps the problem lies with the not-so-great mystery. I had the culprits figured out almost as soon as they were presented in the book. In any case, I could only give this book 2 stars.

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## Sue says

This is my first Dutch mystery, perhaps my first Dutch novel. It begins with the arrival of the lead detectives at the Hindist Society, whose leader has been found hanging from a noose in his quarters. Of course there are questions without answers about the death, the Society, life and death itself, the presence of drugs in Amsterdam, cats--yes cats as there is one over active and somewhat diabolical, well-loved specimen involved in the story.

Grijpstra and deGier are the lead detectives in question in this first of a series novel. It was written in the

1970s and features no high tech devices but much thought about the meaning of it all---work, family, fighting crime, etc. While I enjoyed these characters and found the secondary characters well drawn, something seemed missing, something difficult to put my finger on. It may be the writing itself which seems quite utilitarian.

I may try another in the series in the future but I won't race to it.

Rating 3.5\*

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### **Pia says**

There's something missing for me in this book. I don't know if it's the translation or the writing, but after I read it, I felt that I enjoyed it, but did not grasp everything. It is not a complicated book, for certain. It's probably just a slow read and I was hoping for something else.

This book is a best seller/classic mystery from 1975. Cops Grijpstra and de Geer are called to a murder scene, that of the leader of an esoteric sect. There's any number of suspects, as he was not a well liked man: his ex-wife, a boarder, the people that worked for him in his sect/society/restaurant.

Maybe because it was written more than 40 years ago, there are some racist and misogynist comments that would not be acceptable now, and it was difficult for me to place myself in the context of the time.

A good thriller, with a well written plot and interesting characters.

I received an ARC of this book in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Aj Sterkel says**

I've come to the conclusion that I don't like police procedurals. This seems to be another detective novel where the cops have no personality. They do police stuff and ogle women. That's it. What about the rest of their lives? Do detectives only pop into existence when there are ladies or corpses around?

DNF after 60-something pages.

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### **Bill says**

Outsider in Amsterdam is the first book in The Amsterdam Cops series by Janwillem van de Wetering. The Amsterdam cops are partners Detective Grijpstra and Sgt de Gier. While on patrol both are sent to investigate a suicide in the building owned and operated by the Hindist Society. The body belongs to the owner, Piet Verboom. The question they must answer is whether it was a suicide or a murder.

Thus begins their investigation. It's an interesting story, somewhat disjointed and rambling. What I did like was how the characters, both the cops and the victim and witnesses are developed. There is a lot of music in the book; Grijpstra likes to play the drums and de Gier, the flute. There are some neat scenes featuring the

two of them.

The other characters are also interesting, from the Chief Inspector, their listening post and also their guide on the investigation, to van Meteren, possibly the main suspect, a Papuan ex-policeman from Indonesia, who now lives and worked for Verboom. Even de Gier's cat, Oliver gets a starring role.

The investigation rambles as I mentioned as the cops explore the possible motives for the crime, if it was in fact a murder and often runs out of momentum. But the Amsterdam cops persist, with humor and philosophical discussion. It wasn't a perfect story by any means but it held my interest and made me want to further explore the series. I liked the locale of Amsterdam, a place I've never visited and it was well portrayed. Most enjoyable and worth trying (3.5 stars)

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### **ania says**

"Nature doesn't like gaps, it fills them up."

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### **Thomas says**

I enjoyed reading this book and rate it 4.5 stars out of 5(rounded up to 5). I received it through NetGalley from Soho crime. Soho crime is celebrating 25 years of publishing international crime fiction with a reading challenge. I'm reading my way through Janwillem van de Wetering over the next two months.

This is book one in the Grijpstra and de Gier mystery series. Grijpstra is an adjutant and de Gier is a sergeant in the Dutch Amsterdam municipal police. They are called to the scene of a man found hanging from a roof beam. Their boss, a Chief Inspector tells them it is suicide, but they are not convinced and get his permission to continue investigating. I enjoyed the camaraderie between the two men and their somewhat unorthodox methods,i.e. having a beer with a suspect and chatting amiably. The plot has a few twists and turns, with more than one suspect. There is a drug smuggling connection. I liked the ending, which tied up all the threads.

Some quotes: "Bodies, suspended by the neck, are never quite still."

"Join the navy and see the sea, join the police and see the soul."

I recommend this book to mystery fans of the seventies

Once I was past the fourth chapter, it was hard to put down.

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### **Jigar Brahmbhatt says**

Not awesome, but quirky. No wonder the series had a certain appeal for the flower-power folks.

The detective duo are worldly-wise and do not mind breaking into lengthy philosophical discussions. When they reach the crime scene for the first time they enter a Samuel Beckett kind of argument about who should ring the doorbell. It makes perfect sense when one of them convinces the other saying: "You have an elegant index finger!"

It is actually an amusing read, not overt or melodramatic. I'd check more books in the series if I were bestowed with infinite chronons of time in my life.

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## Paromjit says

This is a police procedural written and set in the 1970s Amsterdam. As a result, it carries some of the toe curling attitudes towards women and 'foreigners' prevalent at that the time. It captures Dutch colonial history and its consequences rather neatly. The author has skilfully created a strong sense of Amsterdam as a location which I appreciated as I love the city. Piet Verboom is the leader of a religious group/cult known as the Hindists who is discovered hanged. Detective-Adjutant Gripstra and Sergeant de Gier are on the case. What looks like a suicide arouses the suspicions of the police. As the case develops, it becomes clear that drugs are a big issue. In a story of twists, the question arises whether a murder can ever be justified. With interesting police officers who actually have a life such as playing music, this is a character driven story that engages the reader. Philosophical questions on life and society are discussed. This is an absorbing read. Thanks to Soho Press for an ARC.

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## Rachel N. says

Gripstra and de Gier are on the police force and are assigned to investigate a man found hanging in the Hindist Society who may not be a suicide. The crime is reported by a resident Van Meteren and much is amde of the fact that he is from new Guinea. The two officers definitely have some unorthodox police procedures including napping on the job and taste testing items to see if they are drugs. The whole investigation was rather slow and there is definitely some dated treatment of women. I did enjoy the descriptions of Amsterdam and its surroundings.

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## Mark says

The first novel in the *Grijpstra en de Gier* series is a famous one because it was filmed with the brilliant Rutger Hauer, sans the mustache de Gier carries in the novels, and the equally brilliant Rijk de Gooyer ( who did play Grijpstra in another movie but sadly without Hauer). The movie breaths like the book by the Wetering the laidbackishness that is actually quite characteristically of most of the series. The books are less about the solving of crime but far more about the human interaction and their frailties.

Somebody is murdered and Grijpstra & de Gier arrive to take the matters in their detective hands, when they have time between their musical sessions where de Gier plays the flute and Grijpstra the percussion. In this 1st novel the commissaris does not feature as he will in the next novels so it is up to the two gents to solve the murder & whatnot. De Gier falls for a beautiful lady in more than one way, while Grijpstra detects. The postcard they receive at the end of the book is kind of nice.

A brilliant first attempt by a writer that does not let his books be translated into English but simply rewrote them for an English reading audience.

The characters of van de Wetering have been used for a TV series from which some new books were born, albeit not written by their creator and it shows. They lack the characteristics and mood from van de Wetering.

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## **Lyn says**

This was a pleasant surprise.

First published in 1975 as *Het link in de Haarlemmer Houttuinen*, I received this new English translation, apparently translated by the author, and was introduced to his charismatic world of partner investigators Detective-Adjutant Gripstra and Sergeant de Gier. The two combine to form a yin and yang of Dutch detective cool.

What begins as a simple investigation of a probable suicide of an unlikeable and problematic young man leads to an outright murder investigation. While van de Wetering tells a fine murder mystery, the real attraction here is the duo of Gripstra and de Gier and the fascinatingly colorful depiction of Amsterdam.

Writer Janwillem van de Wetering's prose is light and very approachable and while his characterization is somewhat stilted, the dialogue and group dynamic is worth the read alone. Exploring themes of drug culture, counter culture, colonialism and police procedure and civil rights in Holland. The philosophic discussions between the two were mesmerizing.

\*\*\* A free copy of this book was provided in exchange for an honest review

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## **miteypen says**

This is a quirky little book about two police detectives in Amsterdam. It was published in 1975, and I'm assuming that the story's time period is the same, so it has a bit of an old-fashioned flavor to it. But it doesn't really feel outdated. I call it "quirky" because of the way the personalities of and interplay between the two detectives are described. There is a certain tongue-in-cheek wit in the writing which also contributes to the quirkiness.

These aren't your typical hard-boiled detectives, nor are they superstars. In some ways their approach could be called plodding, but they still manage to get the job done.

There are a lot of descriptions of Amsterdam itself--its architecture, its history, and some of its social problems--which add additional flavor to the story, as well as anecdotes about Papua, a province in Indonesia that was once under Dutch colonial rule.

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## **Karl says**

The book makes me want to go and visit Amsterdam, in the summer, You know this is not your average police procedural when the main character play jazz, and actually have lives outside of work. I look forward to the next book in the series.

