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**Method**

by Dick Raaijmakers; edited and translated by
 Vincent W.J. van Gerven Oei
 Onomatopee, Eindhoven, NL, 2009
 384 pp., Illus. b/w. Type, NA; € 15
 ISBN: 978-90-78454-35-9.

Reviewed by Rene Beekman
Sofia, Bulgaria

r@raakvlak.net

Method is the second of four theoretical works by Dutch composer, theatre maker, and theorist Dick Raaijmakers.

Raaijmakers began work on *Method* in 1978, a year after the publication of his text *De Kunst van het Machine Lezen (The Art of Reading Machines)*. It would take Raaijmakers nearly five years to complete the work, and another three before it was finally published in Raaijmaker's native country The Netherlands.

In late 2009, Onomatopee, an organisation based in the Dutch city of Eindhoven and that describes itself on its website as an "institution for reflection and communication", published *Method* in an English translation by Vincent W.J. van Gerven Oei. In the book's postlude, van Gerven Oei says that *Method* "aims to describe the workings of the world in a flat, mechanical, 'stupifying', 'Kaspar Hauserian' logic" (p. 320).

Method consists of two parts; Mover and Perceiver. In Mover, Raaijmakers starts from This and That, Here and There; the atoms of the reality that *Method* describes. Using these atoms, their positions and relations, cause and effect, Raaijmakers builds several kinds of constructions, including the Technical Construction or TC. A TC, in Raaijmakers' world, is a construction that a Mover can exert pressure on, put to work, and have it make impressions on the world on its behalf. Raaijmakers describes the TC as "an effectively executed existence of the hand" (§.79).

In the second part of the book, the view rotates and becomes that of a Perceiver, one who views the mechanics described in the first part of the book from aside. The Perceiver builds a Perception Construction and, when turning 180 degrees, reports to us, the readers. We, then, have to either believe the flawed report of the Perceiver or go out into the world and become Movers ourselves, which takes us back to the beginning of the book.

As a text, *Method* works much like a funnel. With military precision, structured in paragraphs that resemble tomographic slices of the world and which enact the book's motto "Je mehr den Nagel auf den kopf . . .", blow by blow, Raaijmakers' view of technology is delivered to the reader. Raaijmakers' unusual use of language, his choice of sentence construction, his use of sexusemblance and

gendered anaphors and possessives, give *Method* a multitude of layers that sink in, blow by blow, Je mehr den Nagel auf den kopf. . .

In the words of van Gerven Oei; "*Method* imitates the action of the Mover and Perceiver, and becomes mechanical and technical. Means and target — text and subject — thus coincide" (p. 320).

Though not all of Raaijmakers' unusual use of the Dutch language is transferable in translation, Van Gerven Oei's excellent work makes this important text by Raaijmakers finally accessible to a non-Dutch-speaking audience.

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Contact LDR: ldr@leonardo.info

Contact Leonardo: isast@leonardo.info

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