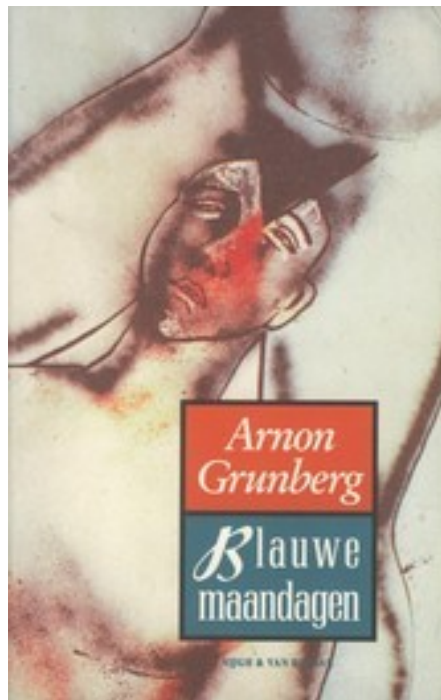




Blauwe maandagen

Arnon Grunberg

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Blauwe maandagen Arnon Grunberg

Het beurtelings hilarische en onthutsende relaas van een opgroeiende jongen die op zoek is naar de liefde. Zelf lijkt hij geen enkele liefde te kunnen voelen, noch voor zijn doodzieke vader noch voor zijn hysterische moeder noch voor zijn vriendinnetje. Hij vlucht in de betaalde liefde en uiteindelijk laat hij zich zelf voor zijn diensten betalen.

Blauwe maandagen Details

Date : Published 1994 by Nijgh & Van Ditmar

ISBN : 9789038826707

Author : Arnon Grunberg

Format : Paperback 271 pages

Genre : Fiction, European Literature, Dutch Literature, Literature

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From Reader Review Blauwe maandagen for online ebook

Sanne Meijer says

Ik ben, om heel eerlijk te zijn, blij dat ik dit boek uit heb. Ik heb alle respect voor Grunberg, maar ik snapte het boek gewoon niet. Het boek sprong van de hak op de tak en kwam onsamenhangend op me over. Na op internet wat interviews te hebben gelezen met Grunberg snapte ik wel wat beter wat hij precies wilde overbrengen met dit boek, maar dat veranderde niets aan het feit dat ik niet van het boek heb genoten.

Nicko D says

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YiPeng22 says

Refreshing. It was direct and had a lot of interesting ideas. Definitely worth a read.

Marc says

A while ago I decided to waste no more time on books that just not are for me: they get 100 pages to convince me and then it is irrevocable "lights out". This book, the debut of Grunberg, got 120 pages (close to halfway) and that is the merit of the literary talent this writer clearly has. Grunberg definitely shows us he can write. But I have already read too many books on measly adventures of a typical adolescent. And the dry, neverending nihilistic atmosphere it is drenched in, is simply a letdown. Maybe this book is a nice antidote to chick lit or romantic panting, but it's no use for me, I think I'm really to old for this rubbish.

Stijn says

Grünberg moet de auteur zijn van wie ik het meeste aantal boeken gelezen en in mijn bezit heb, maar aan zijn eerste was ik om een of andere reden nooit begonnen. Voornamelijk de schuld van de saai ogende pocket-editie die ik heb, vermoed ik. Niettemin lagen mijn verwachtingen toch vrij hoog.

Het boek is, in retrospective, typisch Grünberg: grappig absurde one-liners, rare situaties, een verknipte ouder-kind relatie, seksualiteit als belangrijk thema, een hoofdpersoonage met Joodse achtergrond, ... You name it.

Leuk om al die elementen die ik zijn andere boeken tegen kwam te herkennen, maar het verhaal in zijn geheel viel me toch wat tegen. Het begint nog oké, maar vanaf de tweede helft van het boek is het interessante er echt wel een beetje van af.

Zeker niet slecht, maar ik had er meer van verwacht.

Greg says

Blue Mondays and *The Story of My Baldness* are both winners of the same first novel award, and both written by Arnon Grunberg. Along with David's raving albeit depressing review for *Blue Mondays* it's this fact that made me want to read these two novels. I like the idea that someone was able to fool an award committee into giving him the same award twice, an award that by its nature can only be awarded once.

I meant at one point last night to ask David to explain why he loved *Blue Mondays* as much as he did, but I forgot. Maybe the same reason that he finds *Brown Bunny* to be a beautiful love story he loves this book.

Personally out of the two novels I enjoyed *The Story of My Baldness* a bit more.

When I was in my early twenties, I probably would have enjoyed *Blue Mondays* more. I think if it had come across it during my Bukowski period I would have loved it. Not that it is much like Bukowski stylistically, instead they both have that same 'fuck you, I'm not going to compromise even if I am an utter failure as a result' feeling. Do both even romanticize that stance? Both, the Bukowski *oeuvre* and *Blue Mondays* both have quite a bit of sex in them with some very undesirable partners.

Maybe in my early twenties the appeal of living a fucked up life was stronger, or with the invincibility of youth felt that everything awful would be eventually overcome and be the material to turn into something uncompromising and great. Maybe as a coming-of-age novel, *Blue Mondays* would have held something out that I would have been more drawn to then.

Instead as a coming-of-age novel *Blue Mondays* has no relevance to me. Not that our coming-of-age entertainments should be personally relateable, I mean how many of us went from being high-school losers to popular winners because of one wild and wacky prom night, or by one magical summer somewhere or whatever other contrived romances are thought up sold and consumed from various cellulose based products?

The Story of My Baldness is another view of the coming-of-age novel.

I forgot to mention earlier that Grunberg doesn't write positive coming of age novels. *Blue Mondays* cinematic equivalent would be the geeky kid who doesn't become cool by winning the cheerleaders heart, but instead says fuck the cheerleader, and realizes that for fifty bucks he can get some skanky toothless trailer park wench to blow him in the truck stop bathroom up near exit 16 of the Thruway. Not exactly an ugly duckling into beautiful swan story.

Anyway, back to the penultimate paragraph. This book is like an anti coming of age novel, the one where sex isn't the great opener of the adult world where childish things go to the past, but it's there as some unsurmountable void, where there is nothing sublime and transcendent, or even ugly and Bukowski-esque, but rather it's the source of even more problems, in the epistemological kind of vein. ---Because isn't it possible that all of these coming-of-age stories are really an epistemological coming into being of an adult viewpoint of sex in its thingness as it relates to the object of the self and as an *a priori* ontology of the dynamics between the two sets of objects that some would call intersubjective(?), and what we can adulthood is really the reductionist view of our humanness be it through a proto-Freudian montage of psycho-babble or even through the anti-epistemology rules prescribed by Mystery and his cohorts of Game playing missionaries of this particular view point that has earned the euphemistic title of coming-of-age? ----

Does the bullshit immediately above some kind meaning in this review?

The Story of My Baldness is kind of like an extended joke about the narrators baldness and his failure to 'come of age'. The narrator is telling this story after the events took place and is now hiding safely from any attempts to 'come of age' by being a philosophy student (or the writer of paraphrases of paraphrases of the Great Philosophers, which is to say a Nietzschean take on the role of the philosophical scholar a couple of generations past Nietzsche's own generation). Needless to say the general eschewing of interpersonal relationships and the submersion into bullshit academic work instead of trying to get on with the real world has a slightly more personal appeal to me than a story about sleeping with lots of whores, an activity I must shamefully admit to having never engaged in even in the singular.

Kelsi says

This book probably gets a little lost in translation. It's originally written in German and poses a good story line. But the topics are a little all over the place and blurry.

About 50 pages in and you have n idea what's going on at all. I would recommend this book to a fluent German speaker with German humor. They would probably enjoy it more. (In German, of course.)

Not a bad plot, character, or setting. Just the ever lingering note of a language barrier.

Pepijn de Groot says

Beste passage: "Ze begon aan me te sjoeren. Ik had er nu heel veel ontmoet, maar uiteindelijk trokken ze je allemaal af alsof ze glazen aan het spoelen waren. Ik had er nog geen ontmoet die het zo goed kon als ik. Misschien moest ik daar maar eens mijn geld mee gaan verdienen."

Leila Karaca says

Ik ken Arnon Grunberg vooral van de korte stukjes die hij elke dag in de Volkskrant schrijft. Deze stukjes zijn meestal serieus en gaan over slimme dingen, dus ik ging met dat beeld van Arnon Grunberg dit boek in. Ik had het niet meer mis kunnen hebben.

De eerste helft van dit boek was best oke (dat wil ik eigenlijk niet toegeven) en het was grappig (wat ik ook eigenlijk niet wil toegeven). Toen ik de recensies achterop het boek las en zag dat iedereen moest lachen om dit boek, dacht ik: ja, maar ik dan vast niet. Weer had ik het mooi mis. Of nou ja, ik had het mis voor het eerste deel van het boek.

We beginnen dit boek als Arnon ongeveer 15/16/17 jaar is (ik kan het me echt niet meer herinneren), op de middelbare school zit, bij zijn ouders woont en voor het eerste een vriendinnetje krijgt. Deze dingen zijn best leuk om over te lezen want het is grappig om te zien dat Arnon rare ouders had en wat voor een streken hij uithaalde op school.

Maar toen kwam het tweede deel van het boek. Nu komen we aan bij het moment dat Arnon van school getrapt is, zijn vader is overleden, zijn moeder nog gekker aan het worden is en Arnon geen idee heeft wat hij met zijn leven wil/moet doen. In dit deel van het boek voelt het alsof Arnon een midlife crisis heeft. Alleen is Arnon dan niet 45, maar 22. En in plaats van een motor te kopen, gaat Arnon gewoon alle prostituees van Amsterdam langs (wat dus ook beschreven werd, niet te expliciet, maar toch). Ik denk dat het nu wel duidelijk begint te worden waarom dit deel niet meer zo leuk was.

Het begint helemaal nergens meer over te gaan, ik heb me denk ik wel duizend keer afgevraagd waar dit boek heen ging. Ik had ook het gevoel dat er heel vaak random één of twee zinnen door het verhaal heen werden gegooid die helemaal nergens over gingen.

Een voorbeeld: *"Een oud telefoonboek is een prima alternatief voor wc-papier. Met het telefoonboek van Amsterdam kun je wel vier maanden doen."*

Vlak hiervoor was er geen enkele reden om dit te zeggen en hierna wordt er verder nooit meer een woord

hierover geschreven. Maar verder bedankt voor dit interessante feitje.

Ik kreeg het idee dat iemand mij een verhaal aan het vertellen was, maar dan wel iemand met de attention span van een fruitvliegje, want oh mijn god, wat werd het onderwerp snel veranderd. Ik zal het proberen iets beter uit te leggen met een mooi zelfbedacht voorbeeld. Stel iemand begint een gesprek met je over paarden (ja, weet ik veel dat is het eerste wat in mijn hoofd opkwam, don't judge me). De paarden doen hem denken aan zijn moeder, want die zat ooit op paardjes, dus nu volgt een anekdote over zijn moeder. Dat doet hem weer denken aan dat hij ooit een keer zijn been heeft gebroken, want zijn moeder is wel eens van een paard afgevallen waardoor ze haar been brak. Dat gebroken been doet hem weer denken aan een artikel over Brad Pitt die vreemdging dat hij las in een tijdschrift dat in het ziekenhuis lag toen hij daar was voor zijn gebroken been en het vreemdgaan van Brad Pitt deed hem weer denken aan zijn oma die Brad Pitts allergrootste fan is. Na over zoveel andere onderwerpen te hebben geluisterd heb je geen flauw idee meer wat het eerste onderwerp was, maar wat Arnon Grunberg dan doet is ineens weer over die paarden verder te gaan alsof ik tussendoor niet 50 bladzijdes aan andere levensverhalen heb zitten lezen. En daar kan ik niet tegen, want dan moet ik weer terugbladeren om te kijken waar hij het oorspronkelijk over had, zoals jij dat waarschijnlijk ook net hebt gedaan, want jij was die paarden vast ook alweer vergeten.

(Dat was een hele lange, slechte uitleg wat ik waarschijnlijk ook veel korter had kunnen doen, dus sorry. Als je al zo ver in deze 'review' bent gekomen, credits naar jou, je wint eeuwige roem.)

Dus, hier nog even een 'korte' en 'krachtige' samenvatting voor je, want je was waarschijnlijk alles alweer vergeten wat ik op het begin had gezegd (I don't blame you). Het eerste deel van het boek viel verschrikkelijk mee en was best grappig, maar het tweede deel van het boek viel verschrikkelijk tegen. Alles was een stuk treuriger dan het eerste deel van het boek. Er was nul verhaallijn meer en Arnon raakte een beetje veel afgeleid door zijn gedachten waardoor alles een beetje door elkaar heen ging lopen, net zoals het in mijn hele verhaal hierboven ook doet.

Lorenzo Berardi says

The curly head of Arnon Grunberg pops up pretty often on Dutch television.

He is supposed to be an intellectual and a sophisticated conversationalist with a razor shaped sense of humour, an Amsterdam-born Woody Allen.

The editor who published Grunberg in Italy goes even further comparing him to Philip Roth and Salinger. I don't get the point. Well, actually I do. Basically they want to sell more Grunberg. Good attempt, but no honesty.

Let's talk about this debut novel. Grunberg wrote 'Blue Mondays' when he was just 23. This may be a good alibi for the lack of a plot in 255 pages, but not for a confusional way of writing now and then.

The problem with Arnon Grunberg is that he is a very smart guy. He understood that the perfect formula to become an acclaimed young novelist is (and was and will be) writing about sex with a sprinkling of funny cynism.

Living in Amsterdam and having Jewish heritage he had two advantages to take and needless to say how in 'Blue Mondays' he took both.

Am I writing about stereotypes? I know, but Grunberg used these stereotypes to manufacture his early success.

I found 'Blue Mondays' very irritating with a few of occasional well written moments and just in its first part.

As soon as the protagonist (obviously an alter ego of the author) leaves behind his dead father the book has no future. Then for exactly 142 pages Grunberg narrates about having sex with different prostitutes while drinking beer and eating herring salad. He could have done it better. Tina, Sandra, Natasja, Marshalla & co. leave no trace. They simply don't have a personality of their own as well as the monodimensional protagonist.

The only positive note is that Grunberg, unlike, say, Gary Shteyngart, doesn't insist that much on ridiculizing the Jewish sexual complications. Good for us.

Somehow his way of writing reminded me two overrated novelists: the Icelandic Helgason Hallgrímur and the Norwegian Erlend Loe. These three share the same chaotic blindness in prose, also known as commercial smartness.

David says

I don't know why I feel like I have to be Arnon Grunberg's promoter on this site. And today of all days. It's been a dark, evil weekend in which I was excavating dark and evil feelings (for a creative project) and then... and then... I get a phone call from a coworker today. But today's Sunday. And you know what that means. Either they need you to come in early tomorrow or somebody's died. I didn't answer -- hoping for the former, but sucker-punched by the latter when I received a text message that a twenty-six-year-old coworker never woke up this morning. Of course, I can speculate -- underlying heart condition? drugs? carbon monoxide? -- but so what? Is that supposed to be a mitigating factor? Anyway I've wanted to vomit since then and not do much else. Not read. Not watch TV. And by the way, in case you haven't noticed, it's still February outside -- and the sky's the kind of steely gray overcast that makes absolutely everything look filthy. It's as if today were filmed for the mind's eye by Fassbinder's cinematographer. (And don't expect me to look up his name.)

What does this all have to do with Arnon Grunberg's first novel *Blue Mondays*? Nothing, I suppose. But maybe I can awkwardly contort a connection. Firstly (and this is only circumstantial), I'll never think about this book without thinking of death. Young death. Unexpected death. There were only about a dozen pages left and then *bing* the text came through. Secondly, I think this book is about the opposite of death, in a way. No not just life -- but the kind of youthful, idiotic, and ecstatic life that can't conceive of its own death.

Grunberg wrote *Blue Mondays* when he was twenty-two years old -- which is more than sufficient reason for me to hate him for all time. Do you know the kind of stuff I was writing when I was that age? I seem to recall a maudlin attempt at a novel that was nothing but *A Separate Peace* staged at a mental institution. Deplorable stuff. And there was the infamous -- and infamously humiliating -- gothsplotation story about the talking decapitated head. It was sort of like a cross between Poe and Señor Wences, I think, but even my memories are probably making it out as less horrendous than it was. So Arnon Grunberg writes his first novel *Blue Mondays* on a dare (!), the inside flap informs me. As in he wasn't really interested in writing a novel but he was somehow cajoled into doing it. Then it was published. Then it became a best seller in his native Netherlands. Then I read it sixteen years after it was published and decided that, yes, it is in fact very good.

The novel is about a character named Arnon Grunberg and his 'coming of age' -- which we all know is literary code for 'learning how to fuck and then doing it a lot.' It's not a instance of braggadocio in Grunberg's

case, however, because all but one of his partners are hookers. And often strange and unattractive ones at that. So love is obviously not in the cards for young Grunberg, who (like his characters in the brilliant *The Jewish Messiah*) isn't quite in touch with his emotions. But we'll give him a pass. He is/was still young.

Arnon Grunberg (the author now) is the same age I am, roundabout. He's published a handful of novels, one of which a bunch of people on a booknerd site in America have read, while I've done nothing much at all except wait around. For what? One has to make a living so one works in an office and should be grateful for that much in this economy. At least I can read about what the Grunbergs of the world have accomplished. But then *beep* there's a text message. How much time do you have to wait? It makes you want to puke -- not dry-heave, but ralph until you're dried out like a strip of jerky -- if you spend too much time thinking about it. But don't. But do. What I mean is do both at the same time -- start doing something and puke, if need be, because it's the puking after all that makes you do something.

That's what this novel is about, in a weird way. (Or at least that's what it's about when refracted through my current mood.) It's about being alive thoroughly, dangerously, preposterously. Maybe a little too much alive; the young aren't known for their wisdom, after all, but it's a good motivational speech at least.

And yet. I don't think I can recommend this to *you*. I can recommend it to some indefinite, hypothetical 'you' but not to you specifically -- because (let's face facts) Arnon Grunberg isn't for everybody. This novel, for example, is filled with unfathomable non sequiturs. Trying to connect all the meanings is a task unto itself -- one that not many readers will probably feel is worth the time -- but I guess that's part of being young: refusing to make sense all the time. I'll gladly dabble in that world. From time to time.

PJ Mblt says

Op je 23e al zo'n geweldig debuut afleveren, is straf. Er zijn nog wat schoonheidsfoutjes, en niet elk deel is even interessant, maar over het algemeen zeker de moeite waard.

3,5*
