

guistic studies. The museum also has a great deal of photographic material, comprising more than 57,000 photographic documents. Finally, the Museum at Tervuren houses no fewer than thirteen different specialised libraries and more than 85,000 books.

In its 100 years of history the museum has developed from a typical colonial institute into a museum and study centre where people from all over the world carry out research. And the fact that it is located near Brussels and in a beautiful French garden has helped make it also a great tourist attraction.

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**The Little Man with the Big Heart** Roger Vanderstoene among the Cree

'This is a book about a man haunted by a vision', writes Earle H. Waugh in his introduction to *Dissonant Worlds*. The man in question is Roger Vandersteene (1918-1976), who was born in the West Flemish village of Marke and from 1946 worked as a missionary among the Cree Indians in Alberta, Canada. And his vision was 'a magnificent Cree formulation of the Christian life'.

Waugh relates how Vandersteene grew up between the wars in a typical Flemish environment where Catholic piety and Flemish nationalism played a prominent role. Ever since the creation of the Belgian state in 1830 the Flemings had been battling for their identity and the status of their language in a country dominated by a Francophone minority. In the years just after the First World War the struggle for Flemish emancipation was again a burning issue, partly due to discrimination against Flemings in the army during the war. Growing up in the shadow of this conflict, the young Vandersteene was wide open to the idealism of the Flemish Movement.

Vandersteene was still in his teens when, despite his father's objections, he resolved to become a priest. In May 1937 he became a novice with the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate and took his final vows in 1941. In September 1942 he decided to become a missionary, in the conviction that he could serve Flanders best by doing so.

In 1945 Vandersteene was appointed to the vicariate of Grouard in North-Western Alberta. A year later he boarded a freighter for Canada. He was really looking forward to living among the Cree. During his training he had seen photos of the mission stations in

Alberta, and as an incorrigible romantic he was entranced by the 'primitivism' of the Indians, who still used snowshoes and dog-sleds to get around. Moreover, on reaching his post he found that for all kinds of reasons his superiors did not exercise very strict control, while the isolation of most mission stations allowed the missionaries a good deal of independence. This suited Vandersteene down to the ground: it gave him the opportunity to experiment with new ideas.

As a supporter of the Flemish Movement Vandersteene had a great respect for 'small', 'oppressed' cultures. In the lifestyle of the Cree he saw a parallel with the simple existence of ordinary Flemish folk, whose language and culture were also threatened by 'alien' rule. In the past, Catholic missionary activity had been essentially a form of religious colonisation, 'a program of cultural destruction'. The missionary's job was to convert as many 'natives' as possible and to try to suppress all outward expression of their original culture. Vandersteene, though, was fascinated by Cree culture. He ate Cree food, he dressed as they did, and in a very short time he was so fluent in their language that he was referred to in conversation as '*Ka Nihta Nehiyawew*' ('the one who really speaks Cree'). He was particularly attracted to the small Cree communities remote from the outside world, for these were as yet untouched by the dominant white civilisation. For this reason he was, among other things, violently opposed to the improving of communications in the area, for this would give the Cree access to all the evils of the modern world. He also abhorred the residential schools, where young Cree were educated far from their community. Those young people were part of a hunting culture, and so nature itself should be their school. Hence, from 1957 Vandersteene would devote his energies to the Kateri day school at Trout Lake: there young Cree could enjoy an education devised along Cree as well as Catholic lines.

Vandersteene was particularly sensitive to the dissonance between the Cree world and that of the Western Church. At first he tried to bridge the gulf by adding scraps of Cree tradition to the Christian message; by himself making a candlestick for his church from a pair of antlers, for instance. He saw family life as the core of Cree society, and so the Mass should be regarded as a family gathering 'where the emphasis was on all being part of Manitou's family'. And as in his youth he had written stories in which Mary was portrayed as a blonde Flemish maiden, so he now painted religious scenes which incorporated elements from the world of the Cree. Vandersteene did not develop any new artistic language in his paintings and drawings, he built on Flemish pictorial tradition. He regarded his poetry and his paintings as 'primarily an occasion for religious meditation'.

In 1955 Vandersteene published his book *Wabasca*, in which he gave an account of his work among the Cree and also formulated proposals for developing a strong new Cree church. At last he had discovered what a Catholic missionary could teach the Cree. He himself put it like this: 'If faith and hope live in the



*Cree beliefs, on the one hand, very few traces of love can be detected. It was necessary that the Catholic priest come to reveal to them that God can be loved and that He loves man. Very few Cree to this day have understood this element of charity. (...) Without divine love, civilisation could become impoverishing and levelling for the Cree; plain materialism and a simple lie'. Gradually the realisation had grown in him that it was not enough to jumble Cree and Christian elements together at random. To create a genuinely new religious reality and proclaim the gospel of Christian love it was necessary to go beyond such 'surface actions'.*

Vandersteene had a great belief in the power of ritual. Many times he had attended and admired Cree ceremonies. The one that made the greatest impression on him was the *wikokewin*. In this 'ghost dance' the people pleaded for protection and favours from the ancestors. While writing *Wabasca* Vandersteene at last realised how he could bring the 'dissonant worlds' into harmony: 'it dawned on him that this ceremony was a kind of Cree mass; he saw in it a sacrificial symbolism that would allow him to synthesise Cree and Christian tradition. It was first of all a total community ritual; it involved rituals of eating together; it required a singularly important role for the leaders / priests; it required ritual drumming and dancing, key ingredients in Cree ceremonial; it featured the spirit forces beyond the physical structure of the world; it required a significant sacrificial content.'

In 1958 Vandersteene began work on a thoroughgoing revision of the Holy Mass based on the *wikokewin*. From 1962 this also acquired material form with the building of a new church at Trout Lake. For its structure Vandersteene drew inspiration from the *mikiwup*, the traditional summer lodge of the Cree. Meanwhile, his spiritual authority among the Cree had risen considerably: dying, an old Indian had passed his ritual pipe to Vandersteene, so that the man from West

Flanders was now a genuine Cree medicine-man. He was soon given a new name: 'Ka Miyohwa' ('the little man with the big heart'). In the years that followed he also found the tide running his way in his reform of the Mass, since the Second Vatican Council gave scope for liturgical variation.

From the end of the sixties Vandersteene was occupied with administration. This did not prevent him roaming the wilderness at regular intervals in his second-hand Toyota and visiting remote Cree bands. But he saw the work of the Catholic missions being diluted. The Cree began more and more to model themselves on changing white society and so moved further away than ever from their traditions. The *wikokewin* experiment had not produced the desired results. On top of that, there was fierce competition from other missionaries such as the Pentecostal movement. Vandersteene felt a growing nostalgia for Flanders; but when he was there for the last time, between 1972 and 1974, what he found was not the Flanders of his youth but a consumer society which in his eyes had totally lost its Flemish soul. He returned to Canada, where in 1975 he was diagnosed with lung cancer. On 7 August 1976 Roger Vandersteene died. He was given both a Cree and a Catholic funeral.

*Dissonant Worlds* is not a hagiography. Waugh is not writing 'about a saint, (...) but about a kind of religious Ernest Hemingway'. Vandersteene had an invigorating enthusiasm, but he also had reactionary and egocentric traits. He was stubborn and self-willed, and more than once fell foul of his superiors. His blindness to the changing spirit of the age was one, not insignificant, reason for the failure of his efforts to bring about a genuine Cree Church. But his influence should not be underestimated. The drawings and writings he produced from 1962 on – while doggedly working away at his reformed liturgy – were collected and published in 1973 as *Come Lord Jesus! The Story of the Church*.

The book is still used in Canada as a kind of catechism. Vandersteene's dream did not come true, but he did leave behind him 'one of the most important legacies of interreligious encounter in Canada in this century'.

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Translated by Tanis Guest.

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## Language

### Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Dutch Grammar (But Were Afraid to Ask)

Over the past few years, a number of reference works have appeared which make a substantial contribution to the descriptive codification of modern standard Dutch. Dutch spelling, revised as recently as 1996, is regulated in a single official standard which applies in both Flanders and the Netherlands. The phonology of Dutch was the subject of a scholarly monograph in 1995, and a new pronunciation dictionary was published in 1998. Dutch vocabulary is described in great detail in the 40 volumes of the monumental Dictionary of the Dutch Language (*Woordenboek der Nederlandse Taal*, WNT), a project which started in 1860 and was completed in 1998. And in the field of grammar, we now have the new edition of the Standard Grammar of Dutch, better known as the ANS (*Algemene Nederlandse Spraakkunst*), the most comprehensive description of the syntax and morphology of contemporary Dutch. Behind these works there is a long-standing tradition of painstaking linguistic research in Flanders and the Netherlands, actively supported by the Dutch Language Union, the joint Dutch-Flemish government body for the promotion of Dutch.

In the European context, the ANS provides the Dutch-speaking community with a standard grammar which is on a par with those of the three surrounding language areas: the German *Duden Grammatik* (1995), Grevisse's *Le bon usage* (1986) for French, and the *Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* (1985) by Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik. These four grammars are broadly similar in their comprehensive and authoritative coverage of the respective languages and their grammars, which they describe in great empirical detail. This makes for interesting linguistic comparisons. Within the group of Germanic languages, for example, Dutch has no difficult cases and fewer articles than German. It can form plural nouns in -s as in English, but shares with German a more complex verb system and broadly similar word order patterns. In Dutch and German syntax, but not in English, the finite verb occupies a fixed second posi-

tion in main clauses; and as a corollary the variety of possible non-subject sentence openings in Dutch is far greater than in English. On the other hand, in its vocabulary and word formation processes, Dutch, unlike more purist German, has undergone a significant influence from French, and has usually retained the original stress on French and Romance loan words. But in English, due to 1066 and all that, this French influence has been far more pervasive. In these and many other respects, Dutch occupies an interesting intermediate position in terms of vocabulary, grammatical structure and linguistic development.

First published in 1984 in one volume of 1,300 pages, the second edition of the ANS now runs to more than 1,800 pages. It has been thoroughly revised and expanded. A new introduction sets out the descriptive principles, while other new chapters describe the sound shape and the word formation processes of Dutch, and phenomena such as negation, modality and aspect. Throughout, there is a wealth of data, descriptions and advice on spoken and written Dutch, on formal and informal registers, on what one can and cannot say in Dutch, and on the wide range of social, regional and stylistic variation in the Dutch language as spoken in Flanders and in the Netherlands.

In volume 1 of the new ANS a short outline of the sounds of contemporary standard Dutch is followed by a series of chapters on the ten major lexical categories of Dutch, ranging from Verbs, Articles and Adjectives to Conjunctions, Prepositions and Interjections. The chapter on Pronouns offers detailed information on the social and regional complexities of Dutch forms of address and clearly illustrates the changing politeness conventions and the differences in pronominal usage across the Dutch language area. The chapter on Interjections is full of lively detail on modern spoken Dutch, with formulas for social intercourse, and for the use of exclamations, tags, invectives, swear words and other expressions of Dutch emotions. The chapter on Nouns highlights the particular intricacies of Dutch diminutives such as 'radiootje', 'computertje' and 'dingetje', and links up well with the new closing chapter on Word Formation which describes in 150 pages how to create new nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs in Dutch.

Volume 2 contains descriptions of Dutch syntax and the properties of major constituents and of sentence types such as active and passive, with due attention to Dutch word order patterns. Here we find enlightening descriptions of the use of the little modal particles that can greatly affect the tone of the message that is being conveyed, and also of the characteristic differences in word order between Dutch and Flemish. An attractive new feature is the description of general processes such as ellipsis and gapping, negation, aspect and modality in the latter part of this volume, which stands out by its perceptive treatment of the finer points of Dutch grammar.

Access to the information in the ANS is greatly facilitated by a clear and systematic presentation and layout, by detailed lists of contents, by systematic cross-