

Appendix

“We delight in incongruities.” Some thoughts on reading thirty-five years of CJNS/RCÉN editorials

Inge Genee & Madoka Mizumoto

Introduction

Most issues of CJNS/RCÉN are prefaced by an editorial. Now that all our current and back issues are available [on-line](#), it is easily possible to inspect them all together and get some idea of developments in editorial policy and some of the issues that have concerned the editors over time.¹ While some things have surely changed since the early 1980s, others have remained remarkably similar. A careful reading of the editorials published between 1979 and 2014² reveals a journal explicitly envisioned as multidisciplinary, multigeneric and multilingual, with a small but very loyal base of readers and contributors, and a unique approach to assisting its authors; despite some challenges and changes along the way, it is, perhaps surprisingly, still going strong after 35 years.

The *Canadian Journal of Netherlandic Studies / Revue canadienne d'études néerlandaises* ([CJNS/RCÉN](#)) is owned and administered by the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Netherlandic Studies / Association canadienne pour l'avancement des études néerlandaises ([CAANS/ACAÉN](#)). The Association was founded in 1971 at a meeting of the Learned Societies (now Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences, [CHSS](#)) at Memorial University in St. John's

¹ This is an updated version of a talk presented at the [Annual CAANS/ACAÉN meeting held in Ottawa on May 30-31, 2015](#). The text was written by Inge Genee and the research was conducted by Madoka Mizumoto. A lively discussion followed the talk, and was continued at the AGM after we presented our [Editor's annual report](#), which raised some of the same issues alluded to in this essay.

² A few issues are missing an editorial, and usually there is a single editorial for any double issue, so 34 volumes does not quite equal 72 editorials: not counting the current issue, we have 47 editorials: 13 by Adrian van den Hoven (1979-1989, issues I,i-X,ii), 26 by Basil Kingstone (1990-2010, issues XI,i-XXXI,ii), and 8 by myself (Inge Genee; 2011-2014, issues 32.1-35).

Newfoundland. From the beginning a [Newsletter](#) was published, but the precarious existence of the still very small association did not allow for something more official in the first few years. Things changed for the better in 1978. Gus Dierick, an early and very active member of CAANS/ACAÉN, writes on its [website](#), "it could be argued that it was a conference organized by the CAANS-Windsor Chapter in 1978, in which 19 professors and students participated, which gave new impulse to the Association, for the following decade, the 1980s, saw the mandate originally enunciated by Prof. Levenson beginning to be fulfilled in earnest." Part of this new impulse was the establishment of a scholarly journal. Its first issue appeared in the fall of 1979.

In the 35 years of its existence, CJNS/RCÉN has had three editors-in-chief. The first editor was Adrian van den Hoven of the University of Windsor, who set the general tone and editorial direction for the journal and ran it for the first decade from 1979 to 1988. The second editor was Basil Kingstone, also of the University of Windsor, who took the helm in 1989 and ran the journal for more than two decades. Professor Kingstone retired from his position in 2011 and Inge Genee from the University of Lethbridge has been the editor since then. The editors-in-chief are supported by an editorial board, which tends to contain about four to six members. The [current editorial board](#) contains six members.

A multidisciplinary, multigeneric, multilingual journal

Unlike most other scholarly journals in the humanities, CJNS/RCÉN is deliberately and emphatically multidisciplinary, multigeneric, and multilingual.

CJNS/RCÉN has always published articles from any discipline or scholarly approach and on any topic, as long as they contain "Netherlandic" subject matter in the broadest sense of the word. Adrian van den Hoven already mentions that architecture, political science, art and literature are suitable subject matter in [his first editorial](#)³ in 1979: "In my office there hangs a picture of Leuven's city hall, a building which I count among the world's architectural masterpieces. An article dealing with its various aspects would fit perfectly in this journal. For that matter,

³ Since all references in this essay are to editorials and articles published on our website, we have chosen to use hyperlinks to the original sources rather than in-text references, which would become unnecessarily repetitive. We hope this will encourage the reader to click on some of the links and read the quotes in their original context, and perhaps even (re-)read some of the other contributions referred to as well. Most of them have stood the test of time very well and are still interesting to read.

so would a discussion of South Africa's apartheid policies, an analysis of Karel Appel's paintings, the writings of Hugo Claus, of Lucebert, or of Vondel."

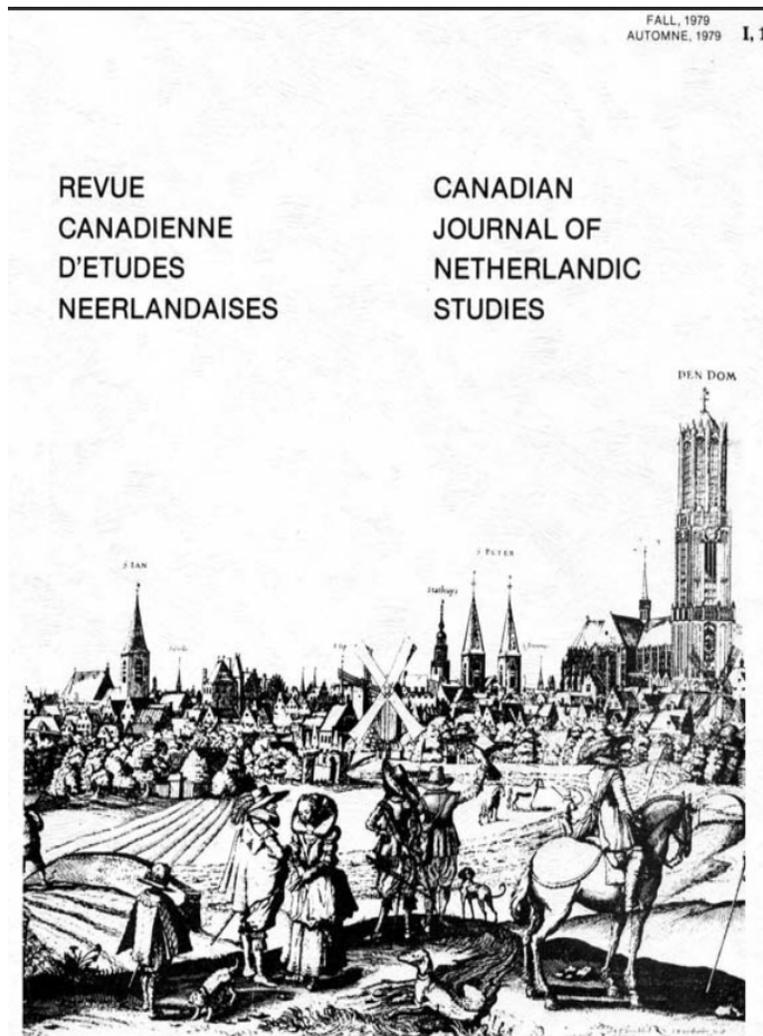


Image 1. Cover of issue 1,1 (fall 1979), the first issue of CJNS/RCÉN.

This deliberate multidisciplinary is reconfirmed by Gus Dierick and Basil Kingstone in their [Foreword](#) to the special issue entitled [Voorwaarts/Forward. An anthology of writing from the Canadian Journal of Netherlandic Studies](#), which they edited in 1996 on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of CAANS: "The present anthology is meant to demonstrate the wonderful variety of scholarship which the organization has been able to tap into, and to emphasize the particular strengths of our journal. Both the regular and the special issues of the CJNS attest to the

good health of interdisciplinary Netherlandic studies in Canada and, in the modest measure in which we have been able to solicit contributors, the United States."

The multidisciplinary approach presents some obvious challenges. Already in the [editorial to the very first issue](#) in 1979 Adrian van den Hoven noted that "[s]ome people will object to the broadness of our approach and insist that it must perforce result in a mismatch. However, we delight in incongruities [...]." In general, breadth of subject matter and approach is taken as a positive thing. The second editor, Basil Kingstone, comments on it on several occasions: in the [editorial to issue XVI.i](#) (1995) he mentions that "[t]he wide range of topics is [...] gratifying"; in the [editorial to issue XXI.i](#) (2000) he is pleased that the contributions "show a healthy variety"; and in 2001 he begins his [editorial to issue XXII.i](#) by writing: "This issue offers an encouraging variety of articles." The challenges alluded to by Van den Hoven are not often explicitly discussed in the editorials, but appear to include the following:

- Multidisciplinarity may be interpreted as a lack of disciplinary focus or specialization, which may result in potential contributors preferring to submit their work to more specialized journals, thus potentially reducing the number of submissions.
- Multidisciplinarity may also result in readers who are not already familiar with the journal not necessarily looking in CJNS/RCÉN for specialized content in their field.
- Multidisciplinarity makes the work of the editor-in-chief and editorial board more complicated, as we frequently receive contributions on topics with which none of us is sufficiently familiar to make a sound judgement about the content. Finding suitable specialists to review such submissions becomes an even more important task in such cases and can occasionally be quite tricky.



Image 2. Cover of special double issue XVII, i-ii (1996): Voorwaarts/Forward. An anthology of writing from the Canadian Journal of Netherlandic Studies. On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Netherlandic Studies (1971-1996). Edited by Augustinus P. Dierick and Basil Kingstone.

In addition to being multidisciplinary, CJNS/RCÉN is also multi-generic. Besides the usual scholarly articles, it aims to include contributions in other genres. [Van den Hoven](#) writes in 1979: "... any well written article, story or poem, dealing with an aspect or aspects of Netherlandic culture in the broader sense of the word, would be welcome." Memoirs and personal reflections are also included occasionally. In

addition, the journal has, from the beginning, included book reviews in a separate review section. The first poetry appears already in the second issue ([I.ii 1980](#)), a small set of poems about WWII by [Maria Jacobs](#) and a similar set without a specific theme by [Kees Snoek](#), both in the original Dutch with translations in English and French. The same issue also contains some personal pieces, one [a memory of an unloved grandfather](#), the other [a reflection on a trip "back home"](#) by a Canadian immigrant.

In the best Canadian tradition, the journal was originally envisioned as being bilingual, and Van den Hoven in his [first editorial](#) accordingly solicits contributions in English and French. Beginning with the double issue [IV,ii/V,i \(1983/1984\)](#), the editorials themselves are usually also presented in both English and French. It appears that Dutch was included as an acceptable language for publication later on.⁴ The first Dutch language article was published in the [Fall 1998 issue \(XIX,ii\)](#), a paper by Claire Carbonez-DeJaeger entitled "[De Belgische aanwezigheid in Canada](#)". Dutch poetry with English and French translations was included much earlier, as mentioned above.

A more emphatically trilingual policy has been pursued in recent years: beginning with [issue 32.1 \(2011\)](#) all editorials are now presented in English, French and Dutch, and beginning with the special double issue [33.2-34.1 \(2012-2013\) *Islam in the Netherlands: Entering the twenty-first century*](#) all contributions are now accompanied by abstracts in English, French and Dutch.

Over a period of 35 years, CJNS has published 382 contributions (including articles, translations, stories, poetry) and 91 reviews. Of the 382 contributions, 341 (89%) are in English, 25 (6.5%) in French, 15 (4%) in Dutch, and one in German. This last one is a little surprising. It is a paper by Fritz Wagner from the Freie Universität Berlin entitled "[Zu Goethes Reineke Fuchs](#)" for the thematic issue on *Le Roman de Renard / On the Epic of the Beast* ([IV,i, 1983](#)), accompanied by an English abstract (abstracts were not usually included in the early years).

⁴ Basil Kingstone (pers. comm.) informs me that as far as he remembers articles in Dutch would always have been accepted, but in the early years none were received. I have not found any editorial comment to indicate an explicit policy change, but the inclusion of Dutch poetry with translations early on seems to suggest that the journal was, implicitly at least, trilingual from the very beginning.

caans & acaen

**Canadian Journal of Netherlandic Studies
Revue canadienne d'études néerlandaises
33.2 & 34.1 (2012-2013)**



Special issue

**Islam in the Netherlands: Entering the twenty-first century
Guest editor: Maurits S. Berger**

Image 3. Cover of special double issue 33.2-34.1 (2012-2013).

Authors and audience

Both CAANS/ACAÉN and CJNS/RCÉN enjoy a small but dedicated following. This is reflected in author and reader statistics.

The 382 independent contributions published in Volumes 1-34 were produced by 240 different authors. 60 of these contributed more than one piece: 33 contributed two pieces, while the remaining 27 each contributed 3 or more pieces. It will not surprise anyone that those who have contributed multiple pieces tend to be those who have also been most active, either in CJNS/RCÉN, as

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editors, guest editors, or editorial board members, or in CAANS/ACAÉN, as members of the executive, or both.



Image 4. Cover of special issue IV,i (spring 1983), edited by Haijo Westra.

Between the lines we can read that unsolicited submissions from scholars not already associated with CAANS/ACAÉN and/or from outside of Canada are comparatively rare. Van den Hoven writes in the [fall 1987/spring 1988 issue](#): “We are very happy about three developments [...]: firstly, the increasing number of

submissions from the US [...]; secondly, the increasing number of articles on art history [...]; and thirdly, the rising number of women contributors." Some of Kingstone's comments allude to the same: "We enjoy receiving unsolicited manuscripts," he writes in issue [XII.ii \(1991\)](#). In issue [XV.i \(1994\)](#) he says: "This issue has a number of encouraging features. For one thing, the contributions come from a variety of places, and for another, there are articles in all our working languages. And thirdly, we have several reviews." Issue XXII.ii (2001) contains four contributions, two of which, as Kingstone mentions in his [editorial](#) "were unsolicited. The contributors also come from a variety of places – Vancouver, Toronto, Milwaukee and Ljubljana – and that is a healthy sign too."

Special issues by guest editors are another way to attract contributors not normally associated with CAANS or CJNS. The guest editors of the special issue [XIV.1 \(1993\)](#) mention: "To our pleasant surprise, contributions made their way to the Journal from three continents and six different countries. [...] These are signs that our journal is becoming known far and wide, and that the culture of the Low Countries has numerous adepts, and continues to fascinate." The most recent special issue was the already mentioned double issue [33.2-34.1 \(2012-2013\)](#) *Islam in the Netherlands: Entering the twenty-first century*, whose guest editor and contributors were experts not otherwise associated with CAANS.

The readership is expected to be mostly in Canada. As Van den Hoven writes in his [first editorial](#): "[A]s this journal emanates from Canada, we are especially interested in articles that touch upon questions which also (in)directly concern Canadians. To give an example, the Belgians are struggling with a language conflict similar to ours. Holland is becoming a multiracial society just as is Canada. Therefore, in either case, there may be lessons to be learned. In addition, we are interested in finding out what has happened to all those "Lowlanders" who settled in Canada." The localization of the readership in the first 30 years is related to the fact that CJNS/RCÉN is connected to CAANS/ACAÉN in more than one way. Membership of the Association includes a subscription to the journal, and since the vast majority of individual members tend to be located in Canada, this means most readers are also in Canada. Institutional members included several libraries located in the Netherlands, UK, other countries in Europe, and the US. However, since the transition to publication online only, beginning in 2011 (see the [editorial to issue 32.1](#)), non-Canadian and non-institutional memberships have decreased, but international readership has increased.

Issue types

CJNS/RCÉN normally publishes two issues per volume, but there have been several double issues as well. The majority of issues are regular omnibus issues. These may contain articles independently submitted to the editor or solicited by the editor or a member of the editorial board. Some articles begin as oral presentations at the CAANS/ACAÉN annual meeting which is held each year in conjunction with [Congress](#) in the last week of May. In earlier years such contributions usually became part of regular issues, but more recently they often appear as separate Proceedings issues, provided there are enough such contributions to fill an issue. The review process is the same in both cases.

As mentioned above, there are also special thematic issues on a specific topic, which may be guest edited. The first of these was edited by Adrian van den Hoven in May 1983. In his [Foreword](#), Van den Hoven writes: "This is the first issue of what, we hope, will become a regular feature of CJNS/RCEN: namely, special issues intercalated with regular issues. These special issues, under the editorship of a specialist, will deal with one theme, one question, one problem and bring together papers by experts in the particular field." The most successful of these thematic issues probably remains the double issue Volume [XXVIII \(2007\)](#) on the occasion of the 400th birthday of Rembrandt van Rijn, guest edited by Augustinus P. Dierick and Ton Broos. Two of our special issues, Volumes [XX \(1999\)](#) and [XXV \(2004\)](#) are not collections of articles but rather books, both co-published with the University of Calgary Press.

Publication schedule

CJNS/RCÉN normally publishes twice per year, in spring and fall. It is sometimes a struggle to produce the scheduled issues in a timely manner. Various factors contribute to this, but the most important ones are probably difficulties receiving enough high quality submissions to fill the scheduled issues in a timely manner, and work load constraints for the editors, who are not paid for their work and usually do not have much in the way of editorial assistance. Early on, in spring 1981, Adrian van den Hoven' editorial reports on attempts to solve the first problem by appointing "contributing editors [...] whose role it is to contribute or induce other persons to contribute to the Journal on a regular basis. Minimum requirement: one submission per year." He also urges "those who organize, or are about to organize conferences bearing directly or indirectly on Netherlandic

studies" to "inform us ahead of time. Also, they should tell their contributors of the existence of CJNS/RCEN and request that they submit their papers to us as well." In fall 1985 he adds to this plans for "an International Advisory Board of prominent scholars in Netherlandic studies" in order to "expand both our readership and our contributorship outside Canada."

Canadian
Journal of
Netherlandic
Studies

caans & acaen

XXVIII
2007

Revue
canadienne
d'études
néerlandaises



About & Around
REMBRANDT

Image 5. Cover of volume XXVII (2007): About and around Rembrandt. Special issue in commemoration of the 400th birthday of Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn. Edited by Ton Broos and Augustinus P. Dierick

Despite all these efforts, delays in the publication schedule do occur, and remarks in the editorials allude to this, sometimes covertly, sometimes more explicitly. The double issue which is Volume [III \(1982\)](#) "has had an extremely long gestation

period." The double issue [IV.ii/V.i \(1983\)](#) "presents its readers with a considerable backlog of material." In issue [VI.ii \(1985\)](#) Van den Hoven writes: "We are still running a year behind, as is not uncommon with scholarly journals, but hope to remedy this soon." But in the double issue Volume [VII \(1986\)](#) he again mentions "a great effort to catch up to the present", and in the double issue [VIII.ii-IX.i \(1987-1988\)](#) he begins: "This issue is the first stage of a big effort to catch up with our publication schedule." Basil Kingstone writes in issue [XIV.ii \(1993\)](#): "We hope to get this issue out with less delay than the last one." In the same editorial he gives us a little view in the pre-computer age editorial kitchen in explanation for the delay of a previous issue: "[T]he issue was completely retyped to make the camera-ready copy for the printer, though many of the contributors undoubtedly composed their piece on a computer or could have it typed up on one. So we appeal to you: do please send diskettes, plus a printed copy. The diskettes can be converted to Word Perfect 6.0 and the layout lost in the conversion can be typed back in, much faster (and with less errors creeping in) than if the whole thing is retyped." In issue [XXI.i \(2000\)](#) he writes: "Your editor is retiring from teaching and is thus in a position to devote more time to other pursuits, including publishing your Journal. He even dreams of doing something few scholarly journals achieve, namely putting each issue in the mail in the year and season it says on the cover!" I myself allude to delays in the editorials to issues [34.2 \(2013\)](#), [35.1 \(2014\)](#), and [35.2 \(2014\)](#), all of which were late. In a similar vein, Joan Magee discusses gaps in the publication schedule of the first few years of the Newsletter in her [overview article](#) in volume III (1982).

Editorial process and peer review policies

Quality control can be difficult to manage for a journal like CJNS/RCÉN. The multidisciplinary approach means that no editor is able to assess all submissions. Even with a broad editorial board this is difficult to do. It looks like initially contributions were entirely reviewed internally within the editorial board. Thus it would have been important to have a sufficient number of active members. Adrian van den Hoven mentions in his editorial to issue [II.i \(1980\)](#) that "[w]e have expanded our editorial board greatly." In the [next issue](#) he is more specific about the review process: "As of this issue, each article is being refereed by Associate editors according to their special competence. In practice, this means that each article, story, or poem is read, accepted, or rejected by at least three persons (for

example, yours truly just had one story rejected)." In the editorial to issue [VI.i \(1985\)](#) he expresses his satisfaction with the general state of affairs at CJNS and also mentions that "[i]ts editorial board is made up of well established scholars, each of whom is competent in several areas and each of whom is eager to insure that CJNS maintains its scholarly standards."

While CJNS/RCÉN's rejection rate has always been relatively low, it is by no means the case that all submissions are accepted. Van den Hoven already mentions above that one of his own submissions was rejected, and in the same editorial he expresses the tension between on the one hand getting enough submissions to fill the pages of the journal and on the other hand protecting the quality as follows: "[I]n order for it to prosper a journal requires the cooperation and active collaboration of many and a tiny handful of people would soon become inadequate. Therefore, if you have an interest in matters Netherlandic or if you know of someone who does, send in your/his/her name and plans for future submissions, and the name will go on the masthead. Of course, this is not a guarantee that whatever one sends in will be published (it is not true for my own work), but it does mean that CJNS/RCEN will continue to receive a steady flow of articles dealing with any and all aspects of 'Neerlandia'."

As a small journal, we see it as an important service to the scholarly community to assist especially younger scholars in revising their contributions so they become publishable. Larger journals with the luxury of many more submissions than they can publish will tend to reject those that are not already close to ready on first submission. We tend not to work like that, and it is that policy that explains, in part, our low rejection rate. As I wrote in the editorial to issue [35.1 \(2014\)](#), if we feel there is something of substance and interest in a submission but it is not ready for peer review, "we prefer instead to work with authors to revise their papers and sometimes seek extra peer reviewers (in addition to the normal number) to help with this process. This can be quite time-consuming, as you can understand." On the other side of the process we also frequently provide quite a lot of practical assistance with formatting for those authors who struggle to format their paper fully according to our stylesheet. I explain this in the same editorial: "[...] most journals will not send out a submission for peer review until it has been formatted exactly according to their style sheet. We tend not to be so strict. When a submission comes in, we determine if it qualifies as a scholarly article and if its subject matter is appropriate. If it is, we send it out for review. When the reviews are in and we are ready to send

comments and suggestions for revisions to the author, we then ask the author to ensure their revised version is correctly formatted. Most authors are very careful at this point and pay special attention to our author guidelines. But if there are still aspects that are not perfect, or if an author is uncomfortable with it, we often take over part of that process.” Since 2011 we have the support of a part-time managing editor funded by the University of Lethbridge Journal Incubator to help with some of the practical things, such as formatting and proofreading.

Conclusion

CJNS/RCÉN is a small niche journal that continues to fulfil a need in publishing high quality content with a Netherlandic focus from a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds and on a wide variety of topics. Its “incongruities”, in particular its multidisciplinary, multigeneric, and multilingual character and its approach to assisting its authors, are at the same time its main strengths and challenges. An examination of 35 years of editorials shows that these concerns have existed from the beginning. Given that they have always found solutions, if sometimes resulting in publication delays, we may trust that the future will continue to be kind to our journal.