FICTION

An idealist in search of freedom and truth

Houtekiet

GERARD WALSCHAP

Jan Houtekiet is a tramp who lives on the moor. When he makes farmer's daughter Lien pregnant, he decides to build a little house there. Others follow his example and soon, a new village, Deps, arises, which rejects the rules of the outside world. No one blinks an eye at the fact that there are children fathered by Houtekiet running round all over the place. Absolute freedom reigns in Deps.

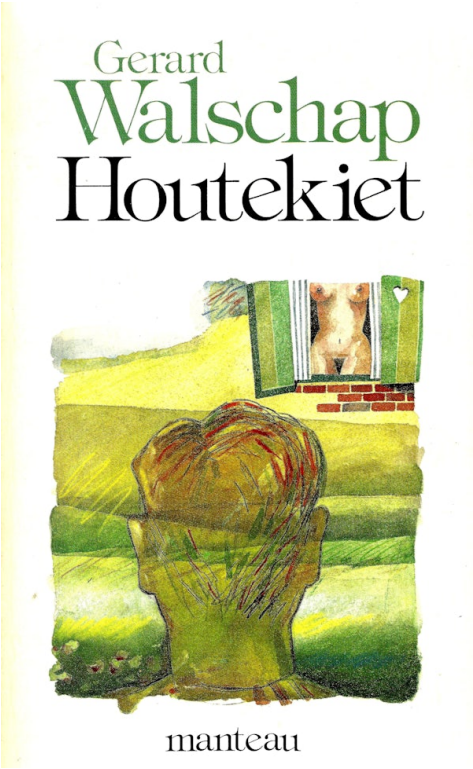
When the spirit of freedom wanes in Deps, however, Houtekiet takes to his heels again. On his return, he is torn between his wife Lien and the quiet love of Iphigénie. Iphigénie's death brings him to his senses and he actually finds a metaphysical peace in the church tower that the village now boasts.

> **Walschap possesses the rare gift of being able to bring every character to life**
>
> DE TELEGRAAF

In 'Houtekiet', Walschap gives a concise, powerful portrayal of his own ideal of the individual and society. 'Houtekiet, that's me,' he admitted. This is a novel about civilisation and faith that goes beyond the traditional differences between culture and nature, between institutionalised religion and individual vitalism. It's also an exciting and highly paced story that delves as deeply as a slow, exhaustive study.

> **An enthralling creation myth with almost biblical appeal and ambition**
>
> DE MORGEN

FLANDERS LITERATURE



AUTHOR

In his controversial books, **Gerard Walschap** (1898-1989) agitated against the sometimes dubiously idealised regional Flemish literature of the first half of the 20th century. His novels are level-headed. Regarding content, he created a new type of novel, in a fresh style, with authentic characters eager to rid themselves of the straitjacket of God and the Church. Walschap became the Godfather of a generation of writers opposing the Catholic Church, such as Louis Paul Boon, Marnix Gijsen and Hugo Claus.

ORIGINAL TITLE Houtekiet (1939, Nijgh & Van Ditmar, 230 pp.)

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