

# Invisible Ink. Uncovering Meaning from Texts using Digital Tools. Els Stronks



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# Invisible Ink. Uncovering Meaning from Texts with Digital Tools. **Els Stronks**



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## Introduction

Some changes in science are accompanied by a lot of noise – such as the opposition of Dutch Universities to the current Dutch policy of measuring university success rates solely in terms of economic profits – while other revolutions are completely silent.<sup>1</sup> In my field, literary studies, a silent revolution is taking place. We were once scientists who focussed our attention on a single letter difference – see the dropped ‘e’ in Marsman’s *‘verkracht’* – *‘veerkracht’*:

H. Marsman, *Tempel en kruis* (Amsterdam: Querido 1940)

[...] have I not always claimed:

“when the heart no longer defends itself

one will find strength and comfort in a friend?”

but there is no creature as poor as a friend

and no life, however much loved,

that rapes us and gives us wings.<sup>2</sup>

The revolution entails that we are now exploring vast digital corpora

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1 This lecture largely stems from my (Dutch-language) KB/NIAS reading in January 2015, see <http://www.kb.nl/nieuws/2015/jeugdige-overmoed-els-stronks-over-denkbelden-over-jongeren-in-digitale-teksten>.

2 ‘[...] heb ik zelf niet altijd beweerd: / “als het hart zich niet meer verweert / vindt men kracht en troost bij een vriend”? / maar geen wezen zoo arm als een vriend / en geen leven, hoezeer ook bemind, / dat ons verkracht en vleugelen geeft’, H. Marsman, *Tempel en kruis*. Amsterdam: Querido 1940, p. 65.

using digital means. In this context, you are looking for large patterns and are no longer required to pay attention to a single letter. But old habits die hard and the overt problems in texts that have been digitalized using Optical Character Recognition still catch our eye despite this shift in approach. I will give an example, to indicate the problems we are facing: if you look for the 20th-century word ‘internet’ in a corpus of 18th-century Dutch texts that have been digitalized with OCR techniques, then you find this word, because the software misreads the underlying term [*inschiet*] in one way or another.<sup>3</sup>



(c) Slaa op Rom. 16: 20. b. en 24. 1 Cor. 16: 21, 23. (Men zal het zeker bedenkelijk vinden, dat vs. 22. daar tussehen **inschiet**, ik zie, in de Hift. Eccl. van den doorkundigen VENEMA, dat die groote Man meent: „ dat dit vers of van de kant in den text gekomen zy, of

(c) Slaa op Rom. 16: 20. b. en 24. 1 Cor. 16: 21, 23. (Men zal het zeker bedenkelijk vinden, dat vs. 22. daar tussehen internet, ik zie, in de Hift. Eccl. van den doorkundigen Venema, dat die groote Man meent: dat dit vers of van de kant in den text gekomen zy . of " van zyn f laats, agter vs. 20. geraakt zy agter ys. 21." De laatste gisfing is zeker de draaglykfte) 2 Cor. sv 13. (daar wat meer bykomt). Gal. 6.' 18. (alwaar de verandering



This is reason for literary scholars to feel some unease, but we also see the benefits of this move towards large-scale analyses. So we are developing new methods and terminology to move forward: for example, the *close reading* that we did for centuries is complemented by *distant reading*, a term coined by the literary scholar Franco Moretti. Distant reading takes place by having the computer index, count and group words and phrases. Distant reading is similar to the trick where invisible ink is revealed; it is invisible on application but can later be made visible by certain means. In this case, these ‘means’ are digital analysis tools. We expect the computer to show us something unseen using this different reading method. It is significant that an important repository of digital analysis tools for literary scholars has the motto: ‘[Voyant Tools](#): See Through Your Texts’.

This impression is reinforced when we see how distant reading often works in practice. To detect major shifts in literary styles, the

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.earlydutchbooksonline.nl/nl/view/image/searchvalue/internet/searchaction/list/id/dpo%3A11388%3Ampg21>



American computer scientists Hughes, Foti, Krakauer and Rockmore used a computer to analyse a selection from the text corpus of the Project Gutenberg for what are called ‘function words’. These are not the words that close reading literary scholars primarily or traditionally pay attention to (meaningful words such as nouns, verbs), instead these are articles, interjections and prepositions – ‘content-free words’, as the researchers call them, and even this name in itself will cause some literary scholars to shudder. Words, such as: the, a, on, etc. It is possible to measure shifts in style using these function words: since they are frequently used, each text and the individual patterns of the use of these words reveals the personal style of each author.<sup>4</sup> If you and I were to each write at least 5,000 words, digital tools such as Stylo could unerringly pick out who wrote what. The conclusion of the research group that looked at a selection from Project Gutenberg, is that literary writers change their writing style every 25 years after around 1900. Before that time, there were no style changes as such and entire generations wrote texts in an indistinguishable manner:

“... whereas authors of the 18th and 19th centuries continued to be influenced by previous centuries, authors of the late 20th century are strongly influenced by authors from their own decade.”<sup>5</sup>

The computer scientists did not consult specialists in the field of historical literary studies – my particular specialty – otherwise they may have reached another conclusion, namely that apparently it was only centuries after the Romantic period when originality was the new standard did authors actually create something original. That is, they broke away from the style of the generations before them. Within one generation, the styles of an author still display a remarkable degree of similarity.

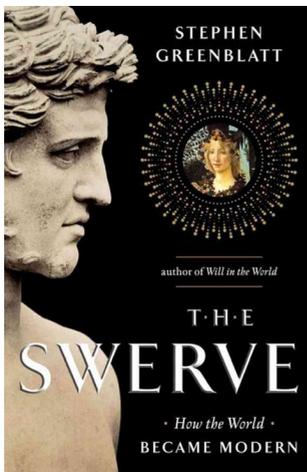
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4 Another method, based on a ‘classification algorithm’ which is known as ‘Nearest Shrunken Centroid’ was recently assessed for stylistic analysis of a corpus of 19th-century novels by M. Jockers, *Macroanalysis. Digital Methods and Literary Analysis*. Urbana, Chicago, Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2013.

5 J.M. Hughes, N.J. Foti, D. Krakauer and D.N. Rockmore, ‘Quantitative patterns of stylistic influence in the evolution of literature’. In: *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States* 109:20 (2012), p. 7682-7686, quote on p. 7685.

This one example will hopefully make it clear why the word ‘revolution’ is not misplaced. We no longer make statements about one text or a small group of texts, but about entire families of texts and centuries of text production. The example also makes it clear that we now share our field of work with computer scientists. The fuzzy logic of literary texts, with its figurative language for example, is a challenge to computer scientists.

The digital analysis of texts ironically takes us back to our core business as historical literary scholars. Under the influence of theorists like Stephen Greenblatt in the last decades we significantly changed our research questions as literary scholars: we moved away from text immanent problems to problems regarding the context of texts, bravely looking for some world-changing function that these texts had on the course of history. Greenblatt himself, for instance, recently argued on the basis of the rediscovery of a poem by the Roman poet Lucretius during the Renaissance, *De rerum natura* [On the Nature of Things], that the world would have been quite different without this rediscovery. The poem forms the basis of modern science, according to Greenblatt, for it describes empirically a universe of atomic particles with behaviours dictated by forces independent of the divine. The world swerved in a new direction as a result of the rediscovery of the ideas in this poem, paving the way for Newton, Darwin, Einstein and all other modern scientists.



Stephen Greenblatt, *The Swerve*. How the World became Modern. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011.

Much can and has been said regarding Greenblatt's claim, but I will not discuss that here. For me, what is important is the contrast between the digital turn, which is very text-oriented, and Greenblatt's paradigm which expands from text to history. The digital turn gives us new tools to re-inspect the sources in which we mainly work, texts, looking for new insights.

### Early Modern Views on Youth

I would like to share some of these new insights with you today. I gained these insights during my fellowship at KB/NIAS last autumn and they relate to the creation of ideas about the specific characteristics of youth. During that fellowship, two new tools were constructed, a [nGram viewer](#) and an [analysis tool of the Short Title Catalogue Netherlands](#), both of which have already proved very useful, not only for me but also for other literary scholars specialized in Dutch literature. I will also incorporate into this reading some results that we booked with these tools after the fellowship.

From previous research we already know that ideas about the youth were given special forms in the early modern period. While we can assume that there have always been ideas about the youth, only in 16th-century Europe did adults decide to take a closer look at the specific behaviours and feelings of the youth for a wide variety of reasons. In particular, humanists like Erasmus and Montaigne focused mainly on the educational challenge: how do you get young people to the point that they think for themselves and make wise decisions? Reformers like Luther saw the young as new recruits for their churches or young souls to be rescued from sin.<sup>6</sup>

They all had their own motives, but from this time the youth no longer escaped the attention and involvement of the church, parents and teachers that we now take for granted. A major role in the discovery by adults of the youth in the early modern Netherlands was played by the start of book production in this country:

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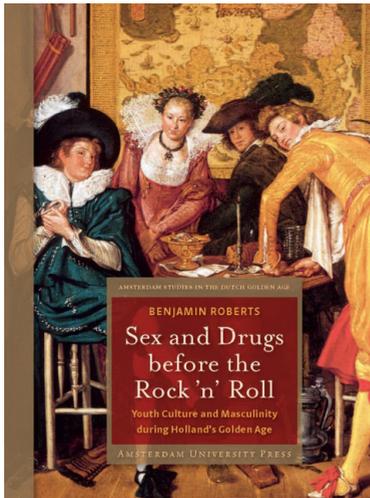
<sup>6</sup> See for instance G. Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978; and A. Walsham, 'The Reformation of the Generations: Youth, Age and Religious Change in England 1500-1700', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th series 21 (2011), p. 93-121.







Existing research particularly highlights the percentage of theological and pedagogical texts in book production that were aimed at protecting and curbing the youth, and which contain very pronounced ideas particularly with reference to children. You will immediately recognize some of these: for instance, the minister Willem Teellinck wrote that children are like a sheet of 'white paper' [wit pampier], in the early 17th century, in order to warn adults that this paper was doomed to become soiled by the sinful nature of man unless ecclesiastical authorities, and to an increasing extent parents, managed to expunge this.<sup>7</sup> Texts like these imprinted the ideal of parental control in the collective memory in the Netherlands. We derive mainly the spectre of derailing youth from much scarcer research into early modern notions of the youth – for example, see Benjamin Roberts' recent *Sex and Drugs before Rock 'n' Roll. Youth Culture and Masculinity in Holland's Golden Age*.<sup>8</sup>



*Benjamin Roberts, Sex and Drugs before Rock 'n' Roll. Youth Culture and Masculinity in Holland's Golden Age. Amsterdam: AUP, 2012.*

As a result of this existing research, the idea gained prominence that the groups of youth (that were increasing as a result of prosperity)

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7 Quoted in J. Dekker, 'Shifting pedagogical ambitions in Dutch history'. In: W. Koops, & M. de Winter (eds.), *Wereldwijd opvoeden*. Amsterdam: SWP Uitgeverij, 2011, p. 30-47, quote on p. 31.

8 B. Roberts, *Sex and Drugs before Rock 'n' Roll. Youth Culture and Masculinity in Holland's Golden Age*. Amsterdam: AUP, 2012.

formed a particular problem factor for the early modern Republic. But what if we assume that this interest arose not only from concern, but also because people – including young people – saw opportunities? If we search using digital resources, is it possible to uncover a different dynamic between young and old in historical texts and historical text production; one which gives us a picture not only of the concern of adults but also of the youthful zest of the early modern Netherlands? The first indications from existing historical research are that the position of the youth in early modern Europe was also characterized by independence. Many countries, including the Republic, had an organized guild system where young people learnt a trade under the guidance of a master and once they had mastered the trade they formally broke away from this master and made their own way. Until recently we thought that such apprenticeships were a phased process in which tradesmen were only gradually given responsible work within the business,<sup>9</sup> but recent research shows that learning and actively working were usually combined from the start, which means that guidance and working independently continually went hand in hand.<sup>10</sup>

In theory there was every reason for concern in the early modern Netherlands, which was not only related to sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll. The country was at war with the Spaniards while an internal battle also raged, and this disruptive social state provided many opportunities for radicalization, especially for the youth who grew strongly in numbers during this period. For example, if we look at the statement that was drawn up in 1619 by the Synod of Dordrecht, where the ecclesiastical debates that almost led to civil war in the young Republic had to be heavily controlled. The increasing numbers of the youth were given special attention in this statement, because the next generation held the key to the future (of the Reformed church). For this reason, therefore, there should be nothing that could mislead the youth either in schools or in schoolbooks:

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9 Epstein, S.T. and Maarten Prak, 'Introduction'. In: S.R. Epstein and Maarten Prak (eds.), *Guilds, Innovation and the European Economy, 1400-1800*. Cambridge 2008, p. 1-24.

10 Wallis, Patrick, 'Apprenticeship and Training in Premodern England'. In: *The Journal of Economic History* 68-3 (2008), p. 832-861. (The Dutch context is being studied by Ruben Schalk, but results are not yet published.)



*This honourable Synod urges all clerical authorities to look after everyone in their care; to ensure they are able to withstand all novelties and dispose of them as if they were unwanted weeds. And to also look after the schools and their teachers, that should not – again – be able to plant unwanted and disruptive ideas in the young people’s heads .<sup>11</sup>*

These types of passages make me curious about the way in which media played a role in the reflection in the young Republic on the role of the younger generations in the development of the country.

### Media Interference

Media interference came first and foremost from adults. Aristotle thought it was the task of adults to lead the unbridled vigour of the youth in the right direction.<sup>12</sup> For example, by curbing the youthful exuberance of the youth. This youthful exuberance makes young people tend to do the impossible and at that age they are not yet tempered by the experience of failure: ‘They [=youth] have high aspirations; for they have never yet been humiliated by the experience of life, but are unacquainted with the limiting force of circumstances’.<sup>13</sup> Vondel, who was elderly at the time, wrote about curbing this youthful exuberance in the early modern Republic in 1654 in his tragedy *Faëton*. At the beginning of this piece, the young *Faëton* discovers that the sun god Apollo is his father. *Faëton* informs Apollo of this and Apollo promises his son he will make up for the lost years all at once and that he will give him anything he wants. *Faëton* chooses to ride on Apollo’s sun chariot. Because he is a young boy, he is unable to control the sun chariot and the supreme god Jupiter is forced to

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11 ‘Daer en boven vermaent dese Eerweerdige Synodus ernstelijck alle kerkelijcke vergaderinghen, datse neerstighe wacht houden over de kudden die haer bevolen zijn; datse in tijts haer stellen tegen alle nieuwicheden die in de Kercke souden mogen oprijzen, ende de selve als on-cruyt uyt den acker des Heeren uytroyen; datse goede acht nemen op de Scholen ende de Leeraren in de selve, op dat uyt besondere gevoelens ende quade meyningen die de jeucht soude mogen ingeplant werden, niet wederom eenich verderf voor de Kercke ende de Republijcke veroorsaect en werde.’ ‘Iudicium Synodi Nationalis, 1619’, in: J.N. Bakhuizen van den Brink (ed.), *De Nederlandse belijdenisgeschriften*. Amsterdam: T. Bolland, 1976 (second edition), p. 283.

12 See P.M. Westenberg, *De jeugd van Tegenwoordig!*. Diesoratie Universiteit Leiden. Leiden, 2008, p. 4.

13 J. Jensen Arnett, *Emerging Adulthood: The Winding Road from the Late Teens Through the Twenties*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, p. 328.



intervene to avoid disaster. Jupiter first puts Apollo under pressure to intervene, but when he fails to do so, it is Jupiter himself who ensures that *Faëton* falls from the sun chariot and thus relinquishes control of it. *Faëton* is buried in Italy. Vondel concludes with: 'look and learn from this grave, young and old:/Italy is the cemetery of reckless courage'.<sup>14</sup>

Young and old can therefore learn something from the fall of *Faëton* as a result of his reckless courage. But *Faëton* is not the only one who is deemed reckless in the piece.<sup>15</sup> Once the supreme goddess Juno finds out what Apollo promised his son, she asks him the rhetorical question: 'You swear against the reckless, but allow recklessness?'.<sup>16</sup> There is no understanding for the adult form of recklessness: in Juno's eyes, Apollo is to blame for this recklessness. But the youthful version of recklessness can count on understanding. The understanding of Apollo the father, who calls *Faëton* an 'Innocent young knave'<sup>17</sup>, is hardly surprising. But understanding is also heralded by a chorus of singers who have a neutral role of commenting in the piece. The chorus argues that Jupiter's actions are disproportionate [Jupiter, too impatient and too harsh in his punishment of this young boy, was after revenge rather than justice]:

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14 'elck spiegle zich aen 't graf, dat jongh en out zeit:/Italje is 't kerckhof van de reuckelooze Stouthheit', F.M. Sterck, H.W.E. Moller, C.G.N. de Vooy, C.R. de Klerk, B.H. Molkenboer, J. Prinsen J.Lzn., L. Simons, C.C. van de Graft, L.C. Michels, J.D. Meerwaldt and A.A. Verdenius (eds), *De werken van Vondel. Tiende deel 1663-1674*. Amsterdam: De Maatschappij voor goede en goedkoope lectuur, 1937, p. 93.

15 In a song from 1610 we find *Faëton* also typified by his 'audacity': 'Dats *Faëton*, die door stoutheyt groot/Ded' u end' oock *Driaden* hinder//Maer loon zijns wercks is nu zijn doot.' [This is *Faëton*, who hindered you and the Driads, but has ended up with what he deserved], see 'Herfst-lied', in: *Den Nederduytschen Helicon*. Alkmaar: Jacob de Meester, 1610, p. 191.

16 'Gy zwoert [=zwoor] dan reuckeloos [=roekloos], en stont [=stond] het reuckloos [=roekeloos] toe?', J.F.M. Sterck, H.W.E. Moller, C.G.N. de Vooy, C.R. de Klerk, B.H. Molkenboer, J. Prinsen J.Lzn., L. Simons, C.C. van de Graft, L.C. Michels, J.D. Meerwaldt and A.A. Verdenius (eds), *De werken van Vondel. Tiende deel 1663-1674*. Amsterdam: De Maatschappij voor goede en goedkoope lectuur, 1937, p. 64, third act, r. 765.

17 'Onnoosle [=onschuldige] jonge knaep', J.F.M. Sterck, H.W.E. Moller, C.G.N. de Vooy, C.R. de Klerk, B.H. Molkenboer, J. Prinsen J.Lzn., L. Simons, C.C. van de Graft, L.C. Michels, J.D. Meerwaldt and A.A. Verdenius (eds), *De werken van Vondel. Tiende deel 1663-1674*. Amsterdam: De Maatschappij voor goede en goedkoope lectuur, 1937, p. 53. Jupiter also emphasizes the innocence of *Faëton* in the fourth act (r. 1132).



Jupijn, nu t'ongeduldigh,  
Te streng in 't straffen van een zaeck,  
Medoogenwaerdigh, vlamt op wraeck  
Des jonglings [=wraak op de jongen], al t'eenvuldigh [=eenvoudig,  
simpel].<sup>18</sup>

Jupiter himself was certainly not perfect during his early years and, according to the chorus, intervened too impatiently in a case that was worthy of more compassion.

But it was not only adults who intervened in the lives of early modern youth through the media. As I discovered during my fellowship, the youth were also in control, often helped by adults. I would like to clarify how potentially explosive such media use is by pointing out parallels with modern times. The role of media in the recruitment of Western European youth for IS is currently causing us as much worry as the wrong schoolbooks did during the almost-civil war in the Republic.



Screenshot of the suicide video of 19-year old Abu Abdullah al Hollandi from Maastricht, from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mczpdBld2EA>.

## Digital Analysis of Styles and Topics in Texts for the Early Modern Youth

The previously mentioned stylistic tool Stylo has helped me to ascertain that texts specifically for the youth were available on the book

18 J.F.M. Sterck, H.W.E. Moller, C.G.N. de Vooy, C.R. de Klerk, B.H. Molkenboer, J. Prinsen J.Lzn., L. Simons, C.C. van de Graft, L.C. Michels, J.D. Meerwaldt and A.A. Verdenius (eds), *De werken van Vondel. Tiende deel 1663-1674*. Amsterdam: De Maatschappij voor goede en goedkoope lectuur, 1937, p. 84.



market in the Netherlands from 1591.<sup>19</sup> These were especially lyrics about love and about 44,000 were published between 1590 and 1800.<sup>20</sup> This was a unique situation in Western Europe. England had its *broadside ballads*, but these were not specifically or exclusively for young singers. Germany also had various collections that were known in the Netherlands (for instance, *Venus Gaertlein* (1656))<sup>21</sup>, but these were one-offs. The closest are the French *air de cour*,<sup>22</sup> but far fewer were produced over a much shorter period (1570-1650) and they were intended for a much more elitist audience.

The stylistic analysis also made clear that the Amsterdam printer, Barent Adriaensz. and his *Nieuw Aemstelredams liedboek* published in 1591, was the starting point of this typically Dutch genre.<sup>23</sup> Adriaensz. started out as a bookseller in a building on the Warmoesstraat in 1588, initially with a fairly traditional fund to bring in money.<sup>24</sup>

When Adriaensz., who was very young at the time, published his *Nieuw Aemstelredams liedboek* songbooks on non-religious subjects were already available, such as the *Antwerps liedboek* from 1544 and the *Aemstelredams Amoreus lietboek* from 1589, and he made early modern use of these. When we look at the volume in the 'traditieklikker', which will soon be available in the *Liederbank*, it is apparent that he re-used a number of lyrics.<sup>25</sup>

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19 For the situation in England see P. Griffiths, *Youth and Authority. Formative Experiences in England 1560-1640*. Oxford: OUP, 1996, in particular Chapter 4.

20 A search has been made of the *Liederbank* for words that are associated with youth (in title and keyword index) in order to reach this estimate. Thanks to Martine de Bruin.

21 In a 19th century reprint: M. Freiherrn von Waldberg (ed.), *Venus Gärtlein. Das Liederbuch des XVII Jahrhunderts. Nach dem Drucke von 1656*. In der Reihe: Neudrucke deutscher Litteraturwerke des XVI. und XVII. Jahrhunderts. No 310 – 313. Halle: Niemeyer, 1890.

22 J. Brooks, *Courtly Song in Late Sixteenth-Century France*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000.

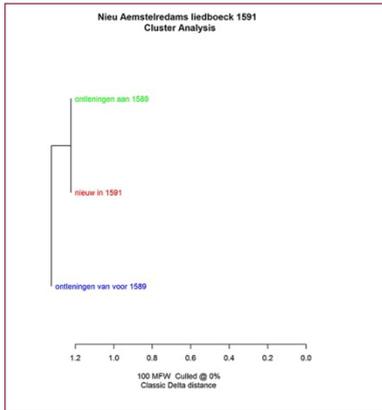
23 For a detailed analysis of the novelty of Adriaensz.'s publication see E. Stronks, "'Dees kennisse zuldy te kope vinnen': song culture and the value of 'know how' in the early modern Republic", *De zeventiende eeuw*, 30 (2014), p. 147-167.

24 For example, see the arithmetic book *Die maten vant coren, assche, teer [...]* ende pot-assche by Nicolaus Petri and a traditional arithmetic volume such as *Een Nieuw Refereyn boeck vol Amoureuse ende sotte ofte boertelicke Refereynen*.

25 In the 'traditieklikker' you can see the lyrics that appeared in earlier publications for any song texts that are included in the *Liederbank*. A preliminary version is available at: <http://145.100.58.11/DSOLenduser/>.



If we compare the new songs from Adriaensz.'s collection stylistically to the songs he took from existing publications from 1544 and 1589 that were not specifically designed for youth, we see that the songs from 1544 and 1589 are stylistically much more related to each other than the new songs Adriaensz. produced in 1591:



Cluster analysis with *Stylo* of old and new songs in *Nieuw Aemstelredams liedboek*, 1591.



After the *Nieuw Aemstelredams liedboek* not only were there more of this kind of songbook, but there were also emblem publications and combined song and emblem publications. All in all, this meant that the Dutch-speaking region had a huge contingent of texts for the youth long before the boom in children's literature in the 18th century.<sup>27</sup>

This research mainly emphasizes the educational nature of these texts. Arie Gelderblom contends that the youth received advice in these volumes, for instance regarding the choice of a partner as an investment in long-term happiness.<sup>28</sup> From this perspective, the choices available to a young man were much more obvious than for an old man, however much cash an old man had available at this time.

27 See for example A. Baggerman, 'The infinite universe of 18th century children's literature. Required reading and experiences of reading by fictional and real-life children around 1800', in: C. Jarzbowksy and M. Safley (eds.), *Childhood and emotions*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2013, p. 106-121.

28 See A. Gelderblom, 'Investing in your relationship', in: E. Stronks & P. Boot (Eds.), *Learned love. Proceedings of the Emblem Project Utrecht Conference on Dutch love emblems and the internet*. Den Haag: DANS, 2007, p. 131-142.



*Nil auroi nil te coronati pascunt?* *Vanos quid ab senex amores expectis?* *Quid aureorum me beatit copia?*  
*Argentens referet a balna nil mouet?* *Tinnulan tua finemque ritę respice.* *Amare si prouata sine dulcissimo*

SE N E X

M O R S

I V V E N T S

B b

Ionghe

Anonymous, Nieuwen Ieught Spiegel. Amsterdam: [Heyns], 1617, emblem 41, p. 193.

It is a world of youth that seems ruled by adults with a firm hand. Eddy Grootes has already remarked that the parents of the young singers and readers must have noted with appreciation that the lyrics were imbued with Petrarchism. That literary fashion, based on Petrarca's complaints about the inaccessibility of his beloved Laura, put an emphasis on control and lack of sexual confidence, which would be appreciated by the parents.<sup>29</sup>

But it is also a world that encourages the youth – we have already seen this in the call of Adriaensz.'s 'maechdekens' [maidens, virgins] – to behave differently than adults. By using what is called a topic modeler, software that shows which words occur together frequently and which might therefore have something to do with the subject or theme of the text, we can investigate all the Dutch songs that have recently been digitized in the context of the Dutch Songs On Line project to see how different that world was. For this analysis I used Mallet, a freely available topic modeler trained on English texts (which means that the software filters English stop words that blur the image from the analy-

29 See E.K. Grootes, 'Het jeugdig publiek van de "nieuwe liedboeken"' in: W. van den Berg and J. Stouten (eds.), *Het woord aan de lezer. Zeven literatuurhistorische verkenningen*. Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff, 1987, p. 84.



ses). You first have to create your own stop word list for early modern Dutch by making a couple of Mallet analyses, which gives you common stop words that you put in a ‘stop word list’ and you then allow Mallet to make another analysis without those words.



[Mallet homepage](#)

If we separate all publications that are meant for the youth from those that are not, there are 35 for the youth. I based the distinction on the titles of the publications and, in one case when the title was uninformative, on the basis of the foreword<sup>30</sup> – and analysed this using Mallet. It appears that these set of words make up the most common topic:

0,43309        hert kan leven vry heb soet soete lust min sult ziel quam  
had vast ander pijn eerst verdriet geeft hemel schoone liefde voort  
son hoeft rust doot weder wert sinnen anders nacht hoop sterven  
oogen reden lof goet water komen mocht zee stem schoot hout  
hebben leeft

The words are clearly associated with the petrarchistic model of pangs of love, souls who hope to find each other and celestial bodies like the sun and stars watching it all. The most consistent set of words in the publications that were not intended for the youth, a total of some 390, look very different:

<sup>30</sup> I selected publications with (spelling variants of) youth and youngsters in the title or the preface heading.

0,22436      heer godt vader groot leven goet heere geeft sult gaen  
hemels onse geest hebt sonden christus lof soet hebben jesus desen  
godts werelt menschen soon maria geven stemme quam uwen  
moeder sullen hoort boven heeren iesus doot hemel komen singen  
grootte heb man nieuwe dagen

Songs for adults are dominated by the religious (God, Jesus, Mary, sin), but that topic as a whole (0.22 vs. 01.43 for the dominant topic in the songbooks for youth) is present much less consistently. However, the second set of words common in the publications for adults is strongly related to the first on religion:

0,2193              god gods hert heer kan ziel goed dood word gelijk  
woord tijd hand laat hebt lof bloed liefde leven vreugd mensch  
eeuwig lust nood volk kind stem mag lang gemoed heb wereld land  
geest mond liefd werd wild zeer groot hoog menschen vind kom weg  
houd rust

Religious words are often associated with words like lust, peace, people, country and world. Adults apparently focus on the world around them, while the second topic for the youth:

0,2157              gaan heb kan gaat lief lied laat zeer ziet kwam tyd  
meisje zoet zonder ging sprak nieuw liefde min vader staan man  
trouw god vrouw dood had jonge staat goed zyt kom vreugd groot  
gelyk hebben verdriet kind boer geld lieve meid voort hand zult nooit  
gedaan

continues to be the fixation on love (and money).

The songbooks thus formed a world in which God, politics and unrest seem absent. A fictional world where adults and their concerns do not count and in which the political and religious reality of every day seemed to be far away. Money did play a role in that world of lovers, which confirms Gelderblom's conclusion that the jargon of love was not free from economic ideas. If we analyse the emblem publications of the Emblem Project Utrecht, where Gelderblom is based, using Mallet it is once again clear how dominant the petrarchistic idiom is:



2,24187          hart liefde lief venus laat altyt leven vreugt soet kan  
doot gaat pyn mag tyt brant min minnen staat groot sinnen gaan vry  
ent goet maakt gelyk lyden nagt hant boven ander mogt geeft soete  
syt anders minne mont man lust minnaar sin lang smart nooit gesigt

but again we see economic terms resurface:

0,0722          liefde minnaar cupido wert liefdes kragt bemint kan  
selfs minnaars beminnen rust **fortuin vinden** vier eerst oorsaak  
geniet behoort ieuget middel vergeefs meerder kwalik vertreet voegt  
opregt gelieven wet kruit swaar arbeit stryt cupidoos leuen eint  
verblyden sulks pynen begeert ouden vangt enig nature tonen spiegel  
vrouw dienst jaagt

0,07273          **sparen** paren dwaas persone prinsesse woort diet  
winter denken kar gerne kerssouwe gesank dapper gebragt aansag  
von ras joffrouwen lestmaal plein stonden druk daat stoot deser tant  
segge openbaren datse **ryk** ruben **rasende** fin hoopt getuig gedenkt  
goedertier mihi hups geprent ontvlugten dinc bede beelde dames

I would like to draw special attention to the word ‘*rasende*’ (rage), which I will discuss later. Daniel Meyer, a student of the minor, Digital Humanities which we have had for bachelor students in Utrecht for the last 2 years, also came up with the idea to see what topics dominate each century. From his analysis, we can see that in the world of these youth songs a different topic dominated each century:

16e eeuw (8 bundels):

0,5196          heer god heere groot ouer sullen allen heeren leuen  
teghen recht gods dauid gaer dyne sonder menschen werden bist

17e eeuw (64 bundels):

0,68315          godt leven heer siet hert mensch lust stemme ziel  
dagh schoon lof god menschen hemel licht onse rust recht

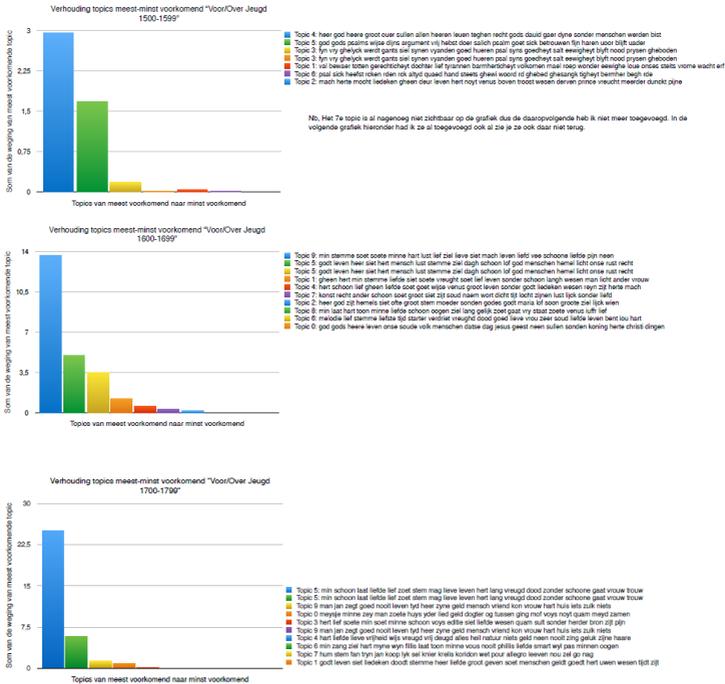
18e eeuw (75 teksten):

1,25606          min schoon laat liefde lief zoet stem mag lieve leven



# hert lang vreugd dood zonder schoone gaat vrouw trouw

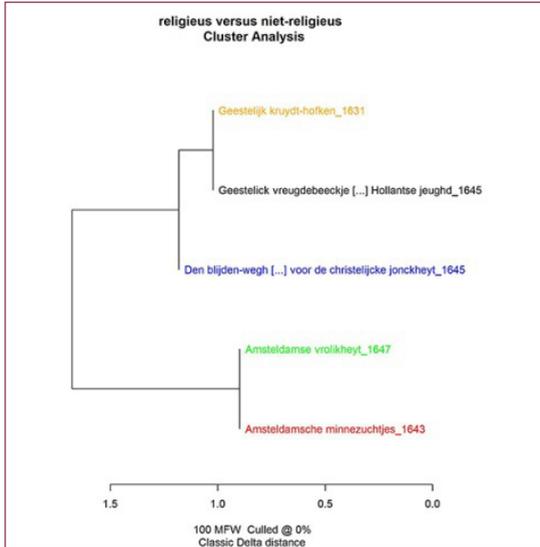
It was therefore only in the 18th century that words associated with love are the most dominant. In the two centuries before that, religion is one of the strongest signals in youth songs. A graphic representation of the range of topics shows how dominant one specific topic often is per period:



Graphical representation of the distribution of topics per century, based on Mallet analysis. This is a review of the words that are frequently used together in the Dutch original.

In all these analyses of patterns, there are many warning words and concerns. If you alter the settings of Mallet slightly (you set it to select more or fewer topics), you get very different results. The number of texts that you use for your analysis is crucial to the results, even for well-proven tools like Stylo. This is apparent when we look at some religious songbooks for the youth which started to appear from the second quarter of the 17th century, initially in the Catholic Southern

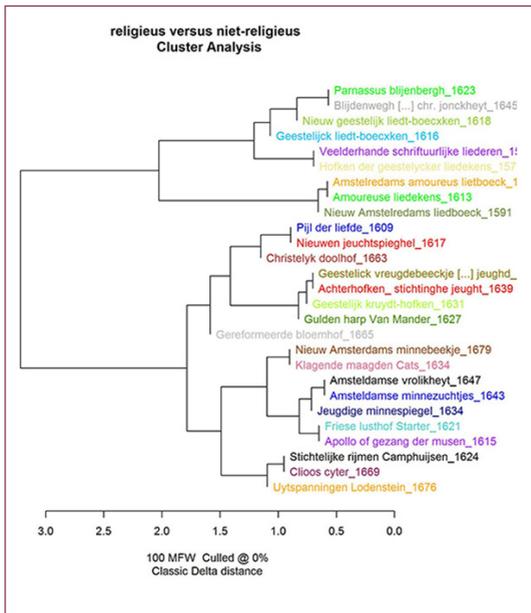
Netherlands. According to an analysis using Stylo, the selection I made of publications that appeared around 1620-1645 are stylistically quite different from non-religious publications of the same period.<sup>31</sup>



Stylo analysis of a sample of religious and non-religious songbooks that appeared around 1645.

But if you take a larger sample of religious and non-religious publications, the distinction does not appear to be as absolute as in the small sample. Although there two types of groups that are always based on chronology (the older with the older publications, the newer with the newer publications) and often fall into units, there are also exceptions. The *Den christelyken dool-hof* of 1664 for example, is close in style to the early 17th century publications of *Den pyl der liefden* (1609) and *Nieuwen jeuchtspiegel* (1663). What these publications have in common is that they were meant for the youth and this apparently led to an overlap in style, where the religious variant was more than 50 years behind the non-religious publications in terms of style:

31 See for more details: <http://blog.kb.nl/onderwerp/els-stronks>.

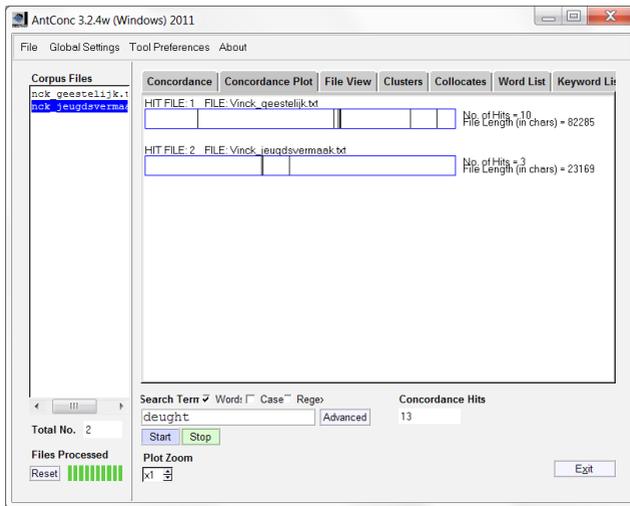


*Stylo analysis of a larger sample of religious and non-religious songbooks published in the 17th century.*

From a somewhat smaller scale analysis of two publications by the same author which both appeared in the year 1662, it becomes clear how little difference there is between songs for adults and youth when it came to hymns. These hymns were published in the *Nieuw geestelijck lied-boecxken* and the *Nieuw liedt-boecxken, genaemt jeughtsvermaeck*.

We are talking about stylistic analyses, since it is not immediately evident what they say about the content. If we make a more substantive analysis with the tool AntConc, which can find concordances in texts (indexes of words and the spread of the use of those words in texts), it becomes clear that there is virtually no difference between the two publications. Whether this author writes poems for adults or the youth, he uses the word ‘*deucht*’ in a relative sense just as often (in absolute terms: the word appears more often in the religious book for adults but that publication has nearly three times as many words, and if we correct for this, there appears to be relatively no difference).





*AntConc, Concordance of the plot of Nieuw geestelijk lied-boecxken and Nieuw lied-boecxken, genaemt jeughts-vermaeck.*

I assume, as you will have noticed in the meanwhile, that ideas are culturally determined and decisive for those who grow up in that culture. If we expect the youth to exhibit problematic behaviour or a penchant for rebellion, we anticipate that as a society and neutralize or facilitate that behaviour. Cultural expressions play a major role in this process and in the early modern period when texts were written with a view to very concrete social functions, texts in particular were decisive.<sup>32</sup> Vondel quoted Plato in the preface of his *Faëton* for a reason: ‘*We will encourage the mothers and nannies to tell the young knaves excellent fables and to shape their spirits more with fables than with hands.*’<sup>33</sup> Seeing a performance of Vondel’s *Faëton* was supposed to shape the feelings of the youth better than a beating. It is not only

32 An example of the effect of texts on the imagination of a young author can be found in F. Heinen, ‘Bijzonder gemiddeld’, *de Volkskrant*, 27 December 2014, Vonk, p. 2.

33 ‘Wy zullen de moeders en voesters vermaenen den jongen knaepen uitgeleze fabelen te vertellen, en hunne gemoeden naertiger met Fabelen dan met handen te fatsoeneeren’, J.F.M. Sterck, H.W.E. Moller, C.G.N. de Vooyts, C.R. de Klerk, B.H. Molkenboer, J. Prinsen J.Lzn., L. Simons, C.C. van de Graft, L.C. Michels, J.D. Meerwaldt and A.A. Verdenius (eds), *De werken van Vondel. Tiende deel 1663-1674*. Amsterdam: De Maatschappij voor goede en goedkoope lectuur, 1937, p. 35.

literary texts that define our social world, but also legal texts. In the Netherlands, for example, since the '*kinderwetje van Houten*' in the 19th century child labour has been stigmatized as 'undesirable', and perhaps even as 'inhuman'.<sup>34</sup> This is how we have considered child labour elsewhere in the world<sup>35</sup> since this time, but in the Netherlands child labour was formerly organized and connected to education, in guilds for instance.<sup>36</sup>

### Between Regulation and Thriving

All these texts focused on the regulation and thriving of the youth and, if we look at our own time, the balance between these two extremes is an art because all too often the emphasis is on regulation and other forms of problematics. Our thinking about young people, for example, is determined by researchers for whom problematic behaviour is a natural starting point. For instance, an announcement of [an interview with Professor Erik Knorth](#), a professor of Special Education from Groningen, on the website of the University of Groningen stated: 'Innocent we are when we are born. Fragile and pure. But as we grow many things can go wrong. Every year in the Netherlands some 270,000 children and youth come into contact with Youth Care Services because of behavioural or educational problems.'. The media also determine our views and, because excesses are particularly interesting and newsworthy to the media, this reinforces and distorts that image even more.

During the fellowship, I looked not only for patterns in texts but also at production patterns of texts to guard me against any bias, for example, the ages of publishers and authors. Barent Adriaensz. was approximately 26 years old when he started a trend in 1591 with his



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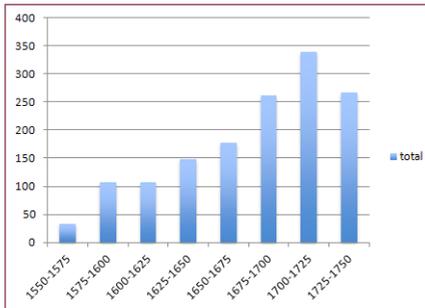
34 W. Schenkeveld, *Het Kinderwetje van Van Houten. Sociale wetgeving in de negentiende eeuw*. Hilversum: Verloren, 2003, describes briefly how Dutch thinking changed about this phenomenon.

35 See A. Twum-Danso Imoh and R. Ame (eds.), *Childhoods at the Intersection of the Local and the Global*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, for a comparative perspective on global notions of children.

36 See the research by Ruben Schalk at Utrecht University and his forthcoming dissertation which has the working title: *Institutional change and the financing of education in the Netherlands, 1750-1930*.

*Nieuw Aemstelredams liedboek*<sup>37</sup>, which was exactly the age at which the average youth in that period married. Marriage was seen as the end of childhood.<sup>38</sup>

It is no accident that such a young printer dared to venture into publishing such a collection. Young authors increasingly played a role in the production of youth literature. If we look in the Short Title Catalogue Netherlands at the 3,700 authors from the period 1540-1800 of whom we know their year of birth, we see that 1,000 of the 3,700 authors debuted (in print) before the age of 26.<sup>39</sup> The distribution of the 1,000 authors gives this image:



Age at which authors debuted between 1540 and 1740, based on the new search tool STCN.

The age of debuting authors therefore decreased in the period between 1540 and 1800 by about 10 years. The authors were getting younger and young authors increased in number, as this detailed view shows.

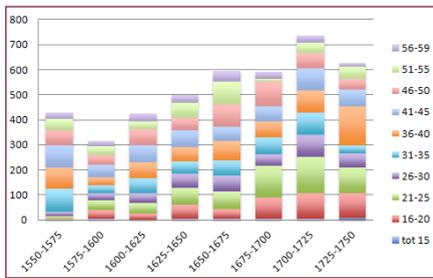
37 L. Lapikás, *Fragment Genealogie Hartogvelt*, version 1.2, Muiden, 2010.

<http://www.nikhef.nl/~louk/HARTOG/generation2.html>. See also J.A. Gruys and J. Bos, *Adresboek. Nederlandse drukkers en boekverkopers tot 1700*, Den Haag, 1999 and P.C. Molhuysen en P.J. Blok (eds.), *Nieuw Nederlandsch biografisch woordenboek. Deel 1*. Leiden: Sijthoff, 1911, part 1, p. 29-30.

38 G. Dorren, *Eenheid en verscheidenheid. De burgers van Haarlem in de Gouden Eeuw*, Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2001, p. 40 regarding procedures around marrying.

39 This overview included authors whose date of birth is listed in STCN (only those without x's, such as 162x) as between 1540 and 1750, titles with a publication date without x's. Catalogue errors (debut by an author under 10 years old for example) are corrected. Not included are: anonymously published titles, titles by authors whose date of birth is unknown (because the graph is based on analysis of the difference in birth + year of publication of the first title of an author) and authors born after 1740 (because not everyone of that cohort debuted before 1800 and that data could therefore be contaminated).





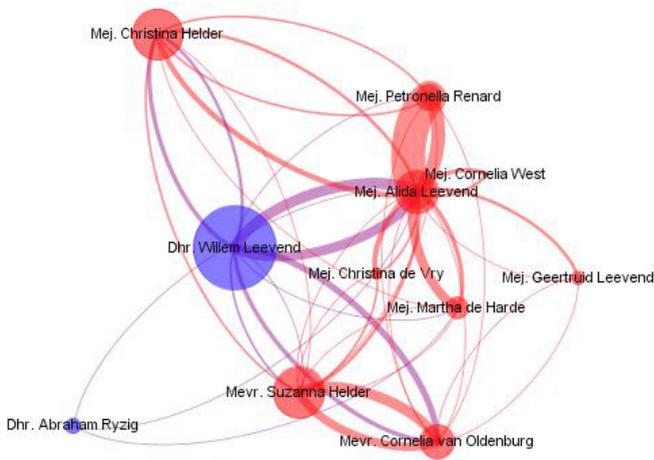
Age distribution of debuting  
 authores per period (1540-1740)

These data bring new facets of the expanding universe of early modern youth into view. This gives rise to a number of new questions: young authors are represented in the early modern age – for instance by Vondel in his *Aenleidinghe ter Nederduitsche dichtkunst* [Introduction into Dutch poetry] – as imperfect copies of more mature writers who have spent their life refining their writing skills by copying their predecessors. But how much of this was idealization rather than common practice? If we look at the sheer number of young authors and publishers entering the book market every year, how much space were they able to create for themselves? In the upcoming conference [Knowledgeable Youngsters](#), we hope to answer some of these questions.

We get yet another view of something different from a second, non-text-based input for pattern-seeking, in which fictional characters are used in network analysis. I am making use of research conducted by Daphne Helvoort during the Masterclass Computational Literature that I gave during the fellowship together with Karina van Dalen. We can see the network of characters who wrote to each other in the epistolary novel *Willem Leevend* written by Betje Wolff and Aagje Deken, visualized using the programme Gephi.<sup>40</sup>

40 In order to create this visualization, Daphne van Helvoort has compiled a file in which the exchange of letters between characters is expressed as a connection between the source (in this case the letter writer or addressee) and the target (the addressee or addressees). This data is converted into a network visualization that shows not only those who are in contact, but also how intense this contact is. In addition, this also displays who has a lot of contact with others. This is expressed in the size of the nodes: the objects representing entities in a dataset. For each addressee and/or addressee a unique node is created. These nodes are connected by means of edges. The more intense the contact between two characters, the thicker the edge. For the terminology used see K. Cherven, *Netwerk Graph Analysis and Visualization with Gephi: Visualize and analyze your data swiftly using dynamic network graphs with Gephi*. Birmingham/Mumbai: Packt Publishing, 2013.





*Analysis of the correspondence between characters in the epistolary novel Willem Leevend by Betje Wolff and Aagje Deken visualized using the programme Gephi.*

The visualization shows that the young Alida Leevend almost exclusively corresponds with young characters who are almost exclusively young women. This is therefore a form of *peering* and perhaps even *peer pressure*. We know from modern studies that *peer pressure* is pretty much the most powerful force that exists when it comes to forming ideas about yourself and each other during your youth.

### Cascading our Way through Texts

Finally, there is a form of digital analysis that approximates the approach that literary scholars have traditionally taken. It works like this: you are reading and suddenly your eye catches a word or words. This happens, for example, because you are reading something you have already read elsewhere. You are on the trail of intertextuality, reusing texts based on underlying patterns. This type of reading has already changed dramatically due to digitization, because standard search tools such as Google make it much easier than it used to be to search for relationships in texts and text passages. This may possibly be expanded shortly and true pattern analysis may become within reach, perhaps because we can use tools developed for detecting text

reuse (also called plagiarism).<sup>41</sup>

My quest began with a single word that I noticed in the preface of the publication *Mengelzangen* from 1717 by Hermanus van den Burg. Van den Burg was 35 years old when he wrote that preface and he defends himself against the (fictional) allegation that he was focusing too much on the youth at his age.<sup>42</sup> Van den Burg hopes people will allow him to do so [I want to rage with the young, and be quiet and sedate at some other time, when I am old and my soul is escaping me while I am sitting by the fire with a nose leaking drops of snot in my beard]:

..... ' k wil met de Jeugd nu raazen,  
En op een andren tyd, bezadigt zyn van Geest:  
Als my van Ouderdom de Ziele dreigt t'ontsluipen,  
En ik, zoo krom als gy, in 't hoekje van den haard,  
De druppels die den neus, half reukelooz, ontduipen,  
En vlugten uit het hoofd, zal vangen in den baard [...].<sup>43</sup>

Van den Burg feels youthful, although measured by early modern standards he was no longer a youth. Hence also his defence, in which the word 'rage' stood out. Apparently his readers knew without explanation what that was and that it was not a negative state to be in: in fact it was a state you could look back on with desire. Van den Burg's phrase 'I want to rage with the young' speaks of respect and perhaps a bit of jealousy for something that the youth could do *par excellence*. In a slightly later text by Wolff and Deken located via the Dictionary of the Dutch Language (WNT), we see that word 'rage' is used in the same way and that there is respect for this youthful state [youth with youth, old with old; it is better for Keetje to romp and rage, than to

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41 Peter Boot recently presented a paper on this topic at the conference of the Renaissance Society of America, building on research by others including M. Potthast, see for instance M. Potthast et al., 'An Evaluation Framework for Plagiarism Detection', *Coling* 2010, p. 997–1005, see: <http://dl.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=1944681>. Boot used Text:Pair.

42 In the preface to his *Mengelzangen* in 1717 he wrote that the 1<sup>st</sup> edition of these songs appeared in 1713, see H. van den Burg, *Mengelzangen*. Amsterdam: H. Blank, 1717 (2nd, extra edition), p. viii, [http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/burg005meng02\\_01/burg005meng02\\_01\\_0003.php](http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/burg005meng02_01/burg005meng02_01_0003.php).

43 'Nodiging', Hermanus van den Burg, *Mengelzangen*. Amsterdam: H. Blank, 1717 (2nd, extra edition), p. xii.



become ill and scandalous]:

Jong bij jong, en oud bij oud; 't is beter dat Keetje stoeit en raast, dan dat zij ziek en kwaadsprekend wordt.<sup>44</sup>

The WNT defines the meaning of this word as ‘make fun, frolic’ but that the word ‘rage’ combined with youth has a complicated history and perhaps it means even more. At the time, it undoubtedly made readers reminisce about the epic *Orlando Furioso* written by the Italian poet Ariosto in 1532. In that epic Orlando is a heroic knight in the service of Charlemagne, until he falls in love and in his daftness does not know what to do. The epic was translated in 1615 for the first time into Dutch and served at the time as the ‘highest example of sincere chivalry’ according to the title.<sup>45</sup> The epic is not really a book aimed at the youth and remained so when it was translated for the second time in 1649 and was given a title which rings a bell for the Dutch: *De razende Roelant*.<sup>46</sup> In this book, the raging love of Roeland is made the most of, but it is not specifically for a young audience. This is apparent because in the same year there was a follow up to the work entitled *De bezadigde Roelant*.<sup>47</sup>

After the mid-17th century, the word is increasingly linked to the youth. We find it in the Mallet analysis of songbooks by Van den Burg and at almost the same time in another publication – ‘t *Vermaaklyk Lottooneel van Holland*<sup>48</sup>: ‘It is good to hug sweet Girls and sweet raging’. In a second adventure novel by Nicholas Heinsius, which

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44 B. Wolff and A. Deken, *Historie van Mejuffrouw Cornelia Wildschut*. 's-Gravenhage, 1793, part 3, p. 342.

45 *Il divino Ariosto oft Orlando furioso. Hoogste voorbeeld van oprecht ridderschap. Oock claren spiegel van beleeftheijt voor alle welgeboorne vrouwen: begrijpende ouer hondert nieuwe historien*. Antwerp: D. Mertens, 1615.

46 *De razende Roelant*. In ‘t Italiaans gestelt door Louys Arioste, and translated by J.J. Schipper. Antwerp: F. Fikkaert, 1649. A modern integral Dutch translation only appeared in 1998 (*Orlando Furioso – De razende Roeland*. With all illustrations by Gustave Doré and an introduction by Italo Calvino. Translated by Ike Cialona. 2 Dln. Amsterdam: Athenaeum – Polak & Van Gennep, 1998). See also this recent adaptation for children: Agava Kruijssen, *Razende Roeland*. Houten: TerraLannoo, 2007.

47 *De bezadigde Roelant*. Door François van Rosset, in ‘t Frans gestelt, en nu vertaelt door I.I. Schipper. Amsterdam: I.I. Schipper, 1649.

48 ‘t *Vermaaklyk Lottooneel van Holland, Zynde een mengelmoes van zinryke, keurige, geestige, snaakse, vremde, en wonderlyke Loteryspreuken*. Leiden, 1705-1707, part 1, p. 152.





appeared in 1712, *Don Clarazel de Gontarnos, ofte den buyten-spoorigen dolenden ridder*, we see that the expression ‘razende Roelof’ is now also associated with the youth. It is used here for the young protagonist Clarazel who – like Don Quixote – is desperate to be a knight, but who also has characteristics of Ariosto’s Orlando such as his love and his youth. When Clarazel emerges after a rash decision as the protector of a traveling bishop, he is called to order by the guard of the bishop<sup>49</sup> [The corporal, in charge of three others, did not know what to make of his answer and he responded: ‘My God, I have no idea what kind of raging bull you are, and for what reason you have to attack the bishop in an attempt to guard him from robbers’]:

De *Corporaal*, dewelke de drie overige Ruiters *commandeerde*, en niet wist wat hy van de woorden gedenken sou, die hy hem [=Clarazel] hoorde spreken, antwoorde op een bezadigde wyze: Ik weet by God niet, wat een rasende *Roeland* gy zyd, of wat reden gy hebden myn Heer den Bisschop, dien wy door order van onze Ritmeester na *Bourges* begeleiden, om hem voor d’aanval van struik-roovers te beschutten, aldus op den vollen land-weg aan te randen.<sup>50</sup>

In the following period this ‘rage’ is used as a general indication of noisy and high-spirited youthful behaviour. Consider the Saint Nicholas song written in 1845 ‘Behold the moon shining through the trees / Comrades! cease your wild roar’<sup>51</sup> written by J.P. Heije.

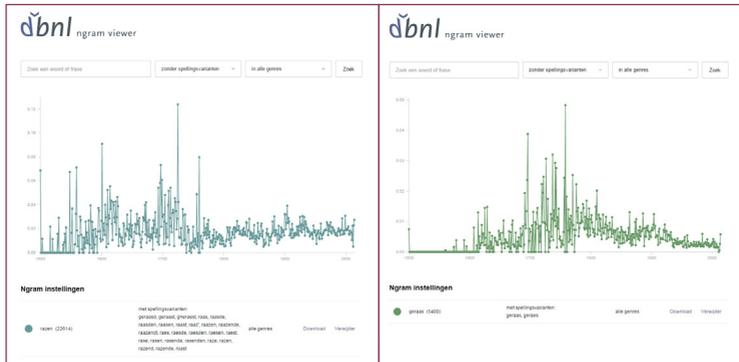
It is this kind of rage that we also find in the children’s book *Razende Roeltje* by Diet Kramer in 1931. We can do a little bit of pattern analysis already by taking the frequency of words as a starting

49 See also <https://onzetaal.nl/taaladvies/advies/een-razende-roeland>.

50 *Don Clarazel de Gontarnos, ofte den buyten-spoorigen dolenden ridder: behelzende desselfs standvastige liefde voor de schoone Silviana, syne dappere daden, wonderlyke avonturen en gevaarlyke gevechten tegens wreede reusen, verschrikkelijke monsters, bedriegelyke tovenaars en boos-aardige ridders : benefens de doortrapte fielteren van Gandales, sijn schild-knecht*. Gilbert Saulnier Du Verdier, Nicolaas Heinsius. Amsterdam: P. Verbeek, 1712, p. 322. In J. te Winkel, *De ontwikkelingsgang der Nederlandsche letterkunde*. IV. Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche letterkunde van de Republiek der Vereenigde Nederlanden (2). Haarlem: Bohn, 1924, part 4, p. 307 and an unpublished thesis by Michiel van Laarhoven (*Een ridder als bestseller Een onderzoek naar Heinsius’ Don Clarazel*, Utrecht 2005) highlighted the similarities to Cervantes’ *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, but not the possible similarity to Ariosto’s Orlando.

51 ‘Zie, de maan schijnt door de boomen,/Makkers! staakt uw wild geraas’.

point. You can see on the nGram viewer of DBNL that the word *rage* is used less and less and that we will soon lose contact with its meaning:



DBNL, nGram viewer, search results for *rage* and *roar* with spelling variations.

If we focus on words such as these – in addition to ‘rage’ also ‘prancing’ or ‘dancing’<sup>52</sup> or ‘shocking’<sup>53</sup>, then it is easier to see how

52 A small start: when publisher Geert van Oorschoot looked back in *Tirade* 200 on the founding of the magazine in 1957, he wrote: ‘A group of prancing youth, full of energy, so intelligent that they are sceptical and they have no ready solution at hand! They wanted to do something with the literature. Perhaps they wanted to do something with our homeland, that was my naive expectation. You should not thwart such a group, but give them the space they say they need. And so began *Tirade* with Emmens, Smit, Goudsblom, Eijkelboom, Vinken and Nieuwenhuys.’ [Een groep steigerende jongeren, blakend van energie, bovendien zo intelligent dat ze sceptisch zijn en geen kant en klare oplossing bij de hand hebben! Ze wilden met de literatuur iets doen. Ze wilden misschien wel iets met ons vaderland doen, was mijn naïeve verwachting. Zo’n groep mag je niet dwarsbomen en moet je de ruimte geven die ze zeggen nodig te hebben. En zo begon *Tirade* met Emmens, Smit, Goudsblom, Eijkelboom, Vinken en Nieuwenhuys], see [http://www.tirade.nu/?page\\_id=296](http://www.tirade.nu/?page_id=296). When *Faëton* made the request to his father to drive the sun chariot, he used the same word ‘prance’: ‘Heer vader, gunme en laetme op uwen wagen steigeren’, J.F.M. Sterck, H.W.E. Moller, C.G.N. de Vooy, C.R. de Klerk, B.H. Molkenboer, J. Prinsen J.Lzn., L. Simons, C.C. van de Graft, L.C. Michels, J.D. Meerwaldt and A.A. Verdenius (eds), *De werken van Vondel. Tiende deel 1663-1674*. Amsterdam: De Maatschappij voor goede en goedkoope lectuur, 1937, p. 49.

53 Another small contribution: see C. Visser, ‘De toekomst van de jeugd’, in: *De Gids*. Jaargang 144, Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1981, p. 561-568.



you not only find the ideal of children playing in early modern texts,<sup>54</sup> but also the ideal of the young person who stands up for himself, looks for like-minded peers and who develops responsibility for his own actions – exactly the stages that are distinguished in modern psychology for adolescence.<sup>55</sup>

## Conclusions

These are very short. However limited the analysis might be from case to case, and from tool to tool, we can identify something from the combinations of analyses. These are mostly new questions, I think, because the results are so preliminary due to the unstable tools and incomplete text collections that I cannot present them as conclusions. One question, for example, is what effect this enormous contingent of texts would have had on the youth. Did it form the breeding ground for the empowerment of Dutch youth, which was observed by international travellers in the early modern period?

The first experiments conducted using digital resources provide some insight into our existing knowledge which is valuable. Much has already been written in existing research about the amazement of those travellers, but whether such observations were as large in number – and therefore so widespread – will have to be seen: we will need to systematically digitally peruse all travel texts to see how often they report this empowerment, and what exactly this empowerment meant. During this fellowship, my initial unfocused search into what material is currently digitized has not immediately provided me with a wealth of quotes.<sup>56</sup>

Experiments like this are valuable because they help to make the tools better. [Nederlab](#), a digital research platform that is currently being set up for Neerlandici, is hard at work. This should serve as an incentive for the eventual digitizing of texts, since it has become clear that this is worthwhile.

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54 See for example this quote from Doctor Johan van Beverwijck: ‘Geen jonckheyt dient verdriet geen kint en dient te quelen./Het spèl ontsluit den mensch, en oeffent hem het lijf,/En dat is al het huys een eerlijck tijt-verdrijf [Young people do not deserve to have any sorrow, they instead deserve to play and in doing so develop their skills, by way of passing their time joyfully]. Cited via J. van Beverwijck, ‘Schat der gesontheit’, in: *Alle de wercken*. Amsterdam: I. I. Schipper, 1660, p. 177.

55 P.M. Westenberg, *De jeugd van Tegenwoordig!*. Diesoratie Universiteit Leiden. Leiden: Universiteit Leiden, 2008.

56 See also <http://blog.kb.nl/de-mythe-van-de-mondige-nederlandse-jeugd>.



If we want to give this particular test substantial scientific value, we need all the other corpus' to search for different angles. For example, the difference in thinking about girls and boys, or the difference in thinking about the adult and juvenile physique or on the changing relationship between parents and children. And what about the differences in views held by those in the countryside and in the cities? And from different religious backgrounds?<sup>57</sup> In the upcoming conference *Knowledgeable Youngsters*, we hope to shed more light on these questions. I myself will be looking at the personification of 'Inquisitiveness' [Docilita], depicted as a young girl in Cesare Ripa's authoritative *Iconologia*, thus establishing a natural bond between youth and this specific human quality.



'Leersucht' [Inquisitiveness] depicted as a young girl, in A. Houbraken, *Stichtelyke zinnebeelden, gepast op deugden en ondeugden*, in LVII tafereelen vertoond door A. Houbraken, en verrykt met de bygedichten van Juffrouw Gezine Brit. Amsterdam 1767. [first edition 1723], fol. 2r.

In my paper, I will explore how this bond manifested itself in Dutch textual and visual culture in order to find out how inquisitiveness contributed to the ideal of the knowledgeable youngster. Together with curiosity, inquisitiveness has been identified as one of the driving forces behind the changes in early modern knowledge culture. The majority of scholarly attention focused on curiosity (see for

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57 For the latter, see for example C. Girtanner, *Verhandeling over de ziekten der kinderen en derzelver natuurkundige opvoeding*. Leiden: Honkoop, 1797, p. 14-15. Translated from German.

instance Kenny's *The Uses of Curiosity in Early Modern France and Germany* (2004)). It is the re-appreciation of this particular human quality that appears to explain the revolutionary nature of the changes in early modern knowledge culture, and the social tensions caused by this revolution. Curiosity entailed 'the subversiveness of asking and the lawlessness of the intellectual ambition to know more'<sup>58</sup>, and the thousands of representations of curiosity in texts, prints and other art forms turned this subversiveness and lawlessness into a social force to be reckoned with.

In contrast, the less researched concept of inquisitiveness in current research is often characterized as the traditional learning style of memorization – symbolized by the parrot on Inquisitiveness's shoulder in Ripa's *Iconologia* – that needed to be reduced for the changes to take place. In my paper, I will discuss negative and positive cultural representations of youthful inquisitiveness to find out what roles these representations fulfilled for both the youth and the adults in the Low Countries. Were the adults urged to follow the example of the youth, rather than to control and tame?



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58 B. Benedict, *Curiosity: A Cultural History of Early Modern Inquiry*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001.

## About the Author



Els Stronks is Professor of Early Modern Dutch Literature and Culture at Utrecht University. She previously taught at Indiana University (Bloomington, Indiana), and is the author of several articles and books, one of which is her recent book on visual culture in Dutch literature, *Negotiating Differences; Word, Image and Religion*. She has participated in several digitization projects (the Emblem Project Utrecht, Dutch Songs On Line, Annotated

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Els Stronks was a Fellow at NIAS in 2014/15, where she held the position of [KB-Fellow](#), co-sponsored by the National Library of the Netherlands.



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