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Texts, Transmissions, Receptions

Modern Approaches to Narratives

Edited by

André Lardinois
Sophie Levie
Hans Hoeken
Christoph Lüthy



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Introduction

André Lardinois, Sophie Levie, Hans Hoeken and Christoph Lüthy

In 2009 the central administration of Radboud University Nijmegen awarded the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Philosophy, Theology, and Religious Studies a large grant to fund two projects that would stimulate the research and collaboration of the two faculties. It was decided that one of these projects would be devoted to exploring common ways to study the function and meaning of texts, since texts are at the core of the subjects studied in both Humanities faculties. The word “text” here is used in the broadest sense of the term: it does not only denote literary or scholarly sources, but also oral tales, speeches, newspaper articles and comics. One of the purposes behind the project was to discover what these different texts have in common, where they differ and whether they can be studied in similar ways. The same questions underlie this volume.

In February 2009 Glenn Most (Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa / University of Chicago), the author of innumerable studies in the field of Classics, Philosophy, and the Humanities at large, was appointed visiting professor at both faculties. Together with André Lardinois, he organised an interdisciplinary research group entitled “Text, Transmission and Reception,” which consisted of researchers from the two Humanities faculties of Radboud University. Within this research group, different projects were pursued, based on the interests of the individual researchers. This resulted in four subgroups, which are also represented as sections in this volume: New Philology, Narrativity, Image and Text, and Reception and Literary Infrastructure.

After researchers of the two faculties of Radboud University had worked for over a year in these four subgroups, it was decided to organise a large conference in the fall of 2010, entitled “Texts, Transmissions, Receptions,” where they could share results with one another and also with other scholars from outside the university. A selection of the papers presented at this conference lies before you. The conference was set up in such a way that all participants could attend all the papers. This was done deliberately, so that participants could learn from each other’s, often very different, approaches. More than 70 scholars took part in the conference, which brought together researchers from such diverse disciplines as Classical Studies, Medieval Dutch Literature, English Literature, Philosophy, Religious Studies, Cultural Studies, Art History, Linguistics, and Communication and Information Studies, all united in a common interest in “texts.”

We hope that something of this unity of purpose is also apparent in this volume. Humanities studies are going through hard times, while their contribution to society is being questioned. Humanities researchers are themselves, however, often each other's worst critics. Instead of recognising their common purpose, they denounce approaches that differ from their own as if they constitute some kind of heresy. In this volume different approaches are juxtaposed which the individual contributors had previously not considered together. The hope is that the reader, like the participants at the original conference, learns from these different approaches and learns to appreciate each of them in its own right. Together they provide a broad picture of the function and meaning of texts, which still lie at the core of human communication in religion, law, politics, advertisement, journalism, philosophy and literature. If such texts are not worth studying, one wonders what is.

New Philology

The first section of this book takes as its starting point an approach to textual criticism that calls itself New Philology. It demands attention for the dynamic changes in the physical appearances and contexts of literary, philosophical and religious texts over time. This section seeks to evaluate the merits of this approach in four papers that combine theoretical reflections with either a modern or historical literary or religious text. In the first paper, Mark de Kreij examines the record of the textual transmission of Sappho's poetry in antiquity. Sappho, who lived and worked on the island of Lesbos around 600 BC, was recognized as one of the canonical lyric poets of ancient Greece. Because of this exalted status, we find quotations of her poems in many later classical authors. Together with papyrus finds, these quotations make up for our lack of a surviving manuscript tradition of her work. Usually they are studied only with an eye to the reconstruction of the lost original of Sappho's songs. As a result, they have received little attention in their own right. In the tradition of New Philology, de Kreij closely examines two fragments of Sappho that have been transmitted in more than one source, fragments 2 and 154, contrasting the different forms they take in the different sources. He argues that each of these forms is the product of its time and author, and as such constitutes a rich source of information about the reception and transmission of Sappho's poetry in antiquity. He therefore pleads for a new edition of Sappho's fragments that shows the variations in the transmission of her songs in antiquity.

New Philological text editions, which try to reproduce the different versions in which texts appear over time, are almost impossible to produce on paper,

when many variants of a text survive. Bernard Cerquiglini, one of the founders of New Philology in Medieval Studies, therefore predicted the use of computers in constituting text editions from the perspective of New Philology already in 1989. Karina van Dalen-Oskam in her article looks back at Cerquiglini's prediction concerning the role of the computer in such text editions and compares his expectations with the current state of the art in digital textual scholarship. She shows where the current situation proves Cerquiglini right, but also where technical developments have overtaken and improved upon the possibilities Cerquiglini foresaw more than twenty years ago. The new opportunities that have come about are illustrated through the example of statistical research on fifteen copies of the same episode in a Middle Dutch Bible in rhyme, the so-called *Rijmbijbel*, written by Jacob van Maerlant in 1271 BC. It demonstrates how multivariate approaches such as cluster observation and principal components analysis can help to visualize the relative position of each of the copies when compared to each other. It also shows how such methods can be used as exploratory tools, pointing the researcher to those episodes or manuscripts that deserve closer attention.

Rob van de Schoor in his contribution to the volume explores the significance of the insights generated by New Philology for the textual transmission and reception history of a printed text, *De officio pii viri* ("On the Duty of the Pious Man"), written by Georgius Cassander and first published in 1561. Van de Schoor lists 15 editions or reprints between 1561 and 1687, often with significant additions or changes to the text. These changes are often based on the religious convictions of subsequent editors. He compliments New Philology for drawing attention to such variations of a text, but he is critical of the new movement as well. First of all, as he points out, traditional philology registered these differences as well, but it evaluated them differently. Secondly, it is hard to maintain that these different versions are of equal significance, especially in the case of printed editions. Van de Schoor values New Philology more for the paradigmatic shift it represents than for the practical effect it will have on textual studies.

New Philology has close affinity with genetic editing, except that genetic editing records and evaluates variations of a text *before* its first publication (author's notes, typescripts, etc.), whereas New Philology focuses on variations of a text *after* its first appearance. We have therefore included an article by Benjamin Alexander which looks at the possibilities of the Salman Rushdie Archive, kept at Emory University in Atlanta, for the reconstruction of the creative process that led to his novels. This archive includes four Apple computers, whose hard drives allow for an almost minute by minute reconstruction of Rushdie's writing process. Alexander draws parallels with other digital archives of mod-

ern authors or the way we know other modern novels have been written. Alexander uses the findings of New Philology, as well as the concept of the *palimpsest* (a manuscript that has been written over with a new text), to argue for the significance of these earlier, creative versions of a text. Together these four contributions in the New Philology section celebrate the diversity in which a text can appear rather than trying to pin it down to one, authorial (and authoritative) version.

Narrativity

The four contributions to the *Narrativity* section broaden the scope of research on the reception of texts to the way stories are read and understood. Two of the papers focus on the characteristics and impact of literary texts, whereas newspaper stories are the topic of interest in the other two. In two papers, the analysis of these narratives (one literary, the other journalistic) is embedded within a linguistic framework, whereas the other two studies adopt a communication science model. Finally, apart from a more theoretical paper, corpus analyses are reported on in two papers, and an experiment on participants' responses to a literary text, in the other. Despite this variety in chosen texts, theoretical frameworks and approaches, the studies in this section form a surprisingly coherent set.

The chapter by Helen de Hoop and Sander Lestrade is an excellent example of how linguistic theory and analysis can be applied fruitfully to literary texts. They focus in their study on the use of a single word in Nabokov's *Lolita*: the epistemic modality auxiliary *might*. In natural language, speakers employ epistemic modality markers such as *may* and *might* to express their hypotheses about the state of affairs in the actual world. By stating that "Peter might pass the exam," the speaker communicates that he or she believes that it is possible – but not certain – that Peter will pass. Whereas people in the real world can be uncertain about such facts, omniscient narrators in fiction are not expected to suffer from such uncertainties, as they make up this world themselves.

Nabokov's *Lolita* is an interesting work of fiction in this respect, given that it is a frame story. Humbert Humbert, the main character in the story, is also a character at a higher level where he serves as the narrator when writing his confession in prison after the events have unfolded. As a result, when *might* is used, it may refer to uncertainty felt by Humbert as the character in the story or by Humbert the narrator of the events. De Hoop and Lestrade analyze all 136 occurrences of *might* in Nabokov's *Lolita* to assess whether the person in doubt is "Humbert the character" or "Humbert the narrator." The results show that

when *might* is used to express the doubt of a character, it is almost always clearly and explicitly marked by syntactic embedding. In contrast, subtle contextual cues reveal when the use of *might* has to be interpreted from the narrator's perspective. The approach taken by De Hoop and Lestrade yields interesting results for both literary studies and linguistics. For literary studies, it shows how a careful linguistic analysis can help to address the question of who is thinking, perceiving, and wondering in a story. For linguistics, the study shows how language in the hands of a genius can be used to achieve goals and effects ordinary language users would not think of, but still can understand. As such, it broadens our view of what language can achieve.

Whereas De Hoop and Lestrade study the way in which an unreliable narrator represents his own as well as other people's thoughts and words, Kirsten Vis, José Sanders and Wilbert Spooren focus on the way in which journalists represent the wording of their sources in their news reports. They show that quotations in news stories have special characteristics and serve other functions than they do in works of fiction. For instance, direct quotes do not only serve to enliven the news report, they also suggest that the journalists were present when these words were uttered, thus attesting to the veracity of these words. Vis et al. claim that journalists quote a news source directly to present themselves as reliable witnesses to the situation.

Vis et al. do not only study the use of (complete) direct quotes, but also of partial direct quotes, and of indirect representations of people's spoken or written words in news stories. These indirect representations in which people's words are paraphrased by the journalist, appear to be used to summarize a source's position on an issue. Such paraphrases are often alternated with (semi-)direct quotations of the source. Partial direct quotes, such as: *The minister found the accusation "really disgusting"* appear to serve several functions: not only do they enliven the article, they also put distance between the quoted speaker's opinion and that of the journalist.

Whereas quotations can create distance between the opinion of the news source and that of the journalist, free indirect presentations of, for instance, thoughts in news sources achieve exactly the opposite: they lead to the intertwining of the source's and the journalist's voices. Free indirect thought is a quite common technique employed in literary texts. Vis et al. show that free indirect thought, however, is absent in both recent and older Dutch news narratives. Given that journalists do not have direct access to what their sources were thinking, this may explain why they refrain from using this technique.

Vis et al. did not find any occurrences of free indirect thought in their corpus. However, there have recently been a number of articles in which journalists employ (literary) storytelling techniques, such as the use of free indirect

thought, to reconstruct the events and backgrounds of shocking news events. José Sanders and Hans Hoeken focus in their contribution on the function such reconstructions may serve and on the kind of impact that these story telling techniques may have. It has been claimed that the most important function of language is the exchange of social information. Nowadays, journalists play an important role in the exchange of such information. They function as gatekeepers who identify events that are newsworthy for the community they cater to.

One way in which an event can meet the criterion of newsworthiness is by (strongly) deviating from the expectations and norms of the community, such as a mother killing her own babies or a man killing innocent bystanders in a mall. Hard news reports on such events are typically followed by longer background articles. These articles are often cast in a narrative format which describes either the events as they have been experienced by people involved, or the psychological makeup of the perpetrator. Sanders and Hoeken point out that this distinction in focus runs parallel to the distinction made between the two landscapes a story is said to construct: the landscape of action and the landscape of consciousness. The landscape of action enables readers to assess the consequences of actions, whereas the landscape of consciousness provides readers with a potential explanation for why the perpetrator acted the way he or she did.

In the final contribution in this section, the focus shifts from news narratives back to literary stories. An important aspect that sets stories apart from genres such as text books or letters to the editor is their ability to lure their readers away from the here and now and lead them into the world evoked by the story. This experience of being lost in a book has been dubbed “transportation” and has attracted a lot of research attention. Anneke de Graaf and Letticia Hustinx in their contribution focus on the role of the character in transporting readers to the narrative world.

De Graaf and Hustinx follow up on the suggestion that it is easier to empathise with a likeable character than with an unlikeable character. In their study, they use a short, literary story about a man who travels in the Basque country in Spain and ends up being murdered by a terrorist group that is active in that area. In an experiment, De Graaf and Hustinx created three versions of this story that only differ minimally from one another. In one version information is provided that makes the character more likeable; in another version information is given that makes him rather unsympathetic. A third version, which served as a control, is relatively neutral about the character’s likeability. Subsequently, the three versions were randomly distributed among partici-

pants who indicated the extent to which they empathised with the character and felt transported to the world described in the story.

De Graaf and Hustinx found that readers of the version with the likeable character displayed a more positive disposition towards the protagonist and empathized more with him than readers of the neutral version, who in turn displayed a more positive disposition and felt more empathy for the protagonist than readers of the version with the unlikeable character. Also, the story featuring the likeable protagonist resulted in more transportation of the reader than the stories with either the neutral or the unlikeable protagonists. These results show that the portrayal of a protagonist as a more sympathetic person through descriptions of “good” actions and thoughts is indeed an antecedent of transportation.

Together, the contributions in this section reveal the relevance of seemingly unrelated theoretical frameworks and methods to the study of narrativity and narrative reception. They show how linguistic theory can inform the analysis of perspective in both literary texts and journalists’ narratives. Finally, they show how the conceptualisation of the impact of stories, originally developed to explain how literary texts affect their readers, can be extended to explain the design and function of newspaper narratives.

Image and Text

At least etymologically, images and written words appear to have common origins. These are found in the act of scratching meaningful lines on a surface in order to leave signs that last longer than spoken words. After all, the Greek word *graphein* means any gesture that literally *en-graves* something on a tablet, irrespective of whether the result is a word (the spelling of which ought to follow the rules of *ortho-graphy*), a *dia-gram* or another type of *graphic* design. In other words, when the *graphis* (a slate pencil) has carved its lines, the result may be a drawing or a letter, but in each case it will be a *graphē* or *gramma* – for these two all-embracing words mean all of these types of engravings. In the particular case of hieroglyphics, the “drawing” and the “letter” may even fall together, and only the context will tell whether the drawings should be read as text or as image.

Writing and imaging can in many cases therefore be viewed as alternative, but equivalent options. In the collection of essays that are contained in this section, however, words and images are not presented as alternative strategies for similar ends, but as parts of integrated wholes. This is due to the fact that we routinely use words and images jointly so as to reinforce the meaning of

what we wish to communicate. In everyday life, the way in which texts and images collaborate poses few problems. We have learned, and therefore intuitively understand, how words and texts interact in such cases as traffic signs, user's manuals, encyclopedia entries or advertisements. However, when we turn to historical examples, we see that our intuition abandons us quickly. Baroque emblem books, for example, in which a title, an often deliberately cryptic image and an explanation in allegorizing verses are combined to form a message, are no longer understandable to us, in the sense that we don't grasp without engaging in much historical research what we ought to do with emblems and in which cognitive, spiritual or moral ways we are expected to react to them.

But even in cases where we intuit the meaning in word-image constellations past and present, we usually cannot quite explain how exactly they work. What is the contribution of the text, what of the images? In which precise way do images reinforce the textual message? Or conversely, in which way does the text either add to, or instead merely explicate, the meaning of the images? What is the argumentative force that we attribute to a photograph with or without a caption, to a diagram with or without an explanation, to a painting with or without a title, to a map with or without inscriptions?

This precise set of questions animated the above-mentioned study group "Image and Text," in which historians of art, philosophy, literature and science collaborated with experts in media and communication science for an extended period. The four articles reproduced here are a small and yet representative expression of this work. Examining the interaction of texts and images in past and contemporary cases, they manage to provide an exquisitely complex introduction to the richness and complexity of the issues at stake. The first of them studies the triangular relation between canonical and legendary texts, the genre of sacred drama, and painting in the construction of a specific iconographical theme. The second discusses the religious and ideological considerations behind the inclusion or exclusion of illustrations in Bibles produced in the Dutch Republic between 1560 and 1680. The third contains an analysis of the use of various graphic means of representation employed in an anthropological study of North American Indians. The final essay deals with the inevitable but uneasy combination of text and image in the genre of comics. Each example confronts us with a very distinct relation between looking and reading; in each case, what words are expected to add to images or images to words follows a very different logic; finally, the four cases also differ with respect to the esthetical, pedagogical or edifying objectives that are involved.

In the first contribution to this section, Bram de Klerck examines Mary Magdalene's conversion in Renaissance painting and mediaeval sacred drama.

In this particular case study, we encounter texts and images at one remove from each other, although – so de Klerck argues – we will not understand the emergence of this new subject of Renaissance iconography, namely the conversion of Mary Magdalene, without understanding the genre of sacred drama in which this conversion was first represented. In other words, between the biblical and non-canonical texts that spoke of Mary Magdalene's life, and the Renaissance paintings of her conversion, there existed, as it were as a bridge, the genre of drama that mixed (spoken) text with visual action. The theme of Mary Magdalene's conversion is thus, as de Klerck argues, “an example par excellence of the sometimes complex relationship between texts and images” in Renaissance art, where “depictions” of a theme must be seen as “translations into visual form” of a plethora of textual and dramatic sources.

Els Stronks in her contribution compares the editions of Bible texts in the Dutch Republic with those in neighbouring countries and explores why practices of illustration in the Dutch Republic differed from those in other countries. Recent research has shown that between 1560 and 1680, religious literature produced in the Dutch Republic contained far fewer illustrations than similar literature in the surrounding countries. Stronks argues that these differences were motivated by theological and ideological views rather than by commerce. In pre-Reformation religious texts imagery served to illustrate the doctrine and to help memorize the text. Theological debates on the hierarchy between word and image, which in the sixteenth century led to iconoclastic outbursts in large parts of Western Europe, put an end to a peaceful coexistence of word and image. In the Dutch Republic, known for its religious tolerance, people from different denominations participated in a common culture, which could even lead to a mixture of Protestant and Catholic features in imagery: the paintings of Rembrandt are an example of this. However, in translations of the Bible or in spiritual song books produced in the Republic, this intermingling of word and image proved problematic. This is demonstrated in particular by the controversy surrounding the publication of the States Bible in 1637, in which the printer Paulus Aertsz. van Ravesteyn embellished initials with illustrations. It met with severe criticism and illustrated Bibles remained forbidden in the Northern Netherlands. This article shares affinity with van de Schoor's essay in the New Philology section, which registers the influence of the religious and theological viewpoints of subsequent editors on the constitution of the text of Cassander's *De officio pii viri* in the same time period.

Camille Joseph's essay, entitled “Illustrating the Anthropological Text,” analyzes the use made by the American anthropologist Franz Boas of drawings and photographs in his *Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians* of 1897. Joseph shows that for Boas photographs and drawings

constituted “data,” just like his musical recordings, the collected specimens or the evidence gathered in situ and described in words, but that he “never fully explained his use of the different kinds of ethnographic data.” The respective status of photographs and drawings changed in the course of Boas’ activity, with photographs taking prominence only towards the close of the century. Joseph carefully explains the “overwhelmingly abundant” presence of means of communication and representation in Boas’ work and documents the way they reinforce one another. We learn why this American anthropologist found photographs without explanatory captions useless; why he sometimes had drawings made that corrected the photographs upon which they were based; and why photographic portraits of Kwakiutl Indians were at times artificially arranged so as to display the elements that Boas wanted to emphasize in his text.

In the final contribution to this section, Tom Lambeens and Kris Pint draw attention to the uneasy, but necessary cohabitation of words and images in comics – a genre that has evolved since the nineteenth century as a way of story-telling by means of sequential, text-supported images. The authors speak of a “duality” of image and text that contains a tension that can be felt by the reader, whose glance has to jump to and fro between two media, as well as by the artists, who have to cope with the fact that the “anti-sensual realm of the text” in some sense disturbs the aesthetic logic of their images. The co-authors, one of whom is a comics artist himself, speak of the various strategies by which what they variously describe as a “chasm,” “tension” or “conflict” between the two means of expression can be overcome, or at least mitigated.

“Image and Text”: by responding with such different case studies to a clearly formulated set of questions, the four essays presented here make a valid contribution to a debate that sometimes suffers from totalitarian claims. Aristotle’s statement that we cannot think without mental images has led to claims that everything is an image, even what is written out in words. This view has been contested by the opposite, but equally absolutist claim that “all is text.” Whether we, as members of the human species, *ultimately* make sense of the world in primarily visual or primarily conceptual terms is no doubt a fascinating question. But irrespective of what the answer to this question might be, and irrespective of the common roots of drawing and writing in the scratching action of the primordial slate pencil, it must be evident that today, we engage very different media indeed when describing, interpreting or re-inventing the world, whereby textual and graphic means constitute two large types. The ways in which these two types interact is rich, complex and mysterious enough to deserve our intellectual attention.

Reception and Literary Infrastructure

The three contributions in the final section of this book look at different aspects of the reception of texts that influence their understanding. Sabrina Corbellini and Margriet Hoogvliet discuss the dynamics of the process of translation, transmission and reception of the Latin Bible into the vernaculars during the late Middle Ages. Next to the clergy which traditionally used Latin as its language, a *respublica laicorum* for which the vernacular was the language of communication, developed in this period. This cultural transformation, which started in France and Italy, has been much discussed in recent research, especially with regard to didactic and moralizing literature. Corbellini and Hoogvliet instead concentrate on the emancipation of the laity through active readership of religious literature in the vernacular. The authors apply the concept of “cultural transfer” to discuss the processes of translation and dissemination of the Bible into the vernaculars. They stress the reciprocity of the exchange: laymen as well as the clergy played an important role in the transmission of the texts. Very often manuscripts would contain a selection of Bible books instead of a complete translation. Corbellini and Hoogvliet argue that these fragmented Bibles should not be interpreted as part of a strategy of the Church to keep the “real” Bible away from the lay, but instead as a strategy of the clergy to propagate the text of the Bible. As for the participation of the new reading communities: the compilations and copies made for personal use were passed on from one generation to another and thus helped individuals, families and (semi-)professional networks of laymen to construct their religious identities. In this process they were supported by the activities of members of the clergy who actively supported the religious ambition of lay believers, both men and women. There are close parallels between this paper and the papers in the *New Philology* section: translations can be seen as an extreme example of the variation of a text, which opens it up to a whole new readership and to new ways of transmission and reception. It also shares affinity with Els Stronks’ paper in the Image and Text section on the appearance of Bible texts in the Dutch Republic.

In his essay on the interpretation by Petrus Ramus and Johannes Kepler of Proclus’ *Commentary on the First Book of Euclid’s Elements*, Guy Claessens approaches the notion of reception from a philosophical perspective. Claessens’ goal is to show that both Ramus’ and Kepler’s reading are based on their own ideas and preconceptions about mathematics, while they at the same time feel the need to ground these ideas in text of a fifth-century, classical Neoplatonist. Ramus’ evaluation of Proclus’ commentary of Euclid is mostly positive. According to Proclus, the history of mathematics is an evolutionary process,

and Ramus agrees. But the reading of the French logician differs from that of Proclus on two important points. Ramus transfers the notion of mathematics as a process of reminiscence from the level of the individual to that of a collective evolutionary process. Secondly, mathematical learning, according to Ramus, does not involve the remembering of innate concepts but of mathematical practices instead. (Later Ramus changed his ideas about the history of mathematics and accepted Proclus' idea of *recordatio* as an individual recollection of innate concepts.) Ramus blames Plato for the corruption of the history of mathematics. According to him the return of a natural geometry is only possible when the words *usus* ["practice"] and *finis* ["purpose"] become synonyms again, and geometry returns to being the *ars bene metiendi* ["the art of correct measuring"] instead of a philosophical doctrine. Ramus' appreciation of the work of Euclid thus closely follows the development of his own ideas.

The reading of the German astronomer Kepler of Proclus' *Commentary on the First Book of Euclid's Elements* differs greatly from Ramus' utilitarian approach. According to him the philosophical relevance of geometry is reflected in the archetypical construction of the cosmos, Claessens explains. For Kepler, Proclus' text is fundamental for a correct understanding of geometry's philosophical foundation. He therefore criticizes Ramus in his *Harmonices mundi* (Linz 1619), using Proclus' treatise. In his meticulous analysis Claessens demonstrates how both Ramus and Kepler go back to the text of Proclus to restore the fundamentals of geometrical thinking, but in diametrically opposed ways.

While Claessens explains the different interpretations of Proclus from the different, philosophical ideas of two of his later readers, Ramus and Kepler, Laurens Ham in his contribution to this volume attributes the lack of consensus among modern critics about the meaning of *Max Havelaar*, the famous novel of the nineteenth-century Dutch writer Multatuli (Eduard Douwes Dekker), to the ambivalent and complicated relationship the author adopts towards his readers. Multatuli's works provoke discussion in every new generation of readers. Did the author of *Max Havelaar* really suggest a societal change? Was he a modernist writer or an anti-modernist? Or was he, after all, a conservative who wanted to keep the Dutch colonies and only tried to change individual opinion? In his essay Ham shows how the way in which Multatuli communicates with the reader-in-the-text contributes to the ongoing controversial status of his work. Multatuli provokes his readers, but also tries to win them for the good cause, i.e., a better life for the Javanese people.

In his contribution Ham focuses on a pamphlet Multatuli wrote in 1861, commissioned by the Rotterdam publisher Nijgh. This text, *Show me the place where I sowed!*, was published to raise money for the victims of a flood in the Dutch East Indies. It belongs to the so-called benevolence books, a now-forgot-

ten genre, which functioned as an instrument for charity: all profits went to the poor or to people affected by a natural disaster. Traditionally author and readers/buyers belonged to the same social class and shared the same religious beliefs; they usually adopted a conservative political agenda. Multatuli, however, explicitly violates the rules of the genre. On the one hand, he provokes and even scolds his readers, while on the other hand, he tries to attract them by giving them what they expect: a sentimental story about a Javanese family of victims. Moreover, the text starts with a long metafictional comment in which Multatuli states that he is not a conventional author, like the other benevolence writers. Ham shows how the peculiar way in which this author connects with his readers in this pamphlet, but also in *Max Havelaar*, contributes to the ambivalent reception of his works.

All three papers in this section taken together demonstrate how the reception of a text depends upon the form it takes, including the languages in which it is translated (Corbellini and Hoogvliet), the ideas and preconceptions of its readers (Claessens), as well as the narrative strategies adopted by the author himself (Ham). They demonstrate, as do the other papers in this volume, how the interpretation of narratives consists of a complex interplay between author, text and reader. The author can influence this interpretation by the narrative strategies he adopts or the style she chooses. The same text can appear over time in many different forms, with or without illustrations, in translation or in revised editions, which inevitably influence its meaning. Finally, every reader comes to the text with his or her own preconceived ideas and expectations. No approach by itself can cover all these different aspects of the process of understanding a text. This volume therefore collects a wide variety of different approaches which together illuminate the complex meanings of texts.



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