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Institutional contexts and the literary education curriculum.

Author selection in Dutch literary textbooks, 1968-2000.

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Abstract

This article draws on Bourdieu's field theory and neo-institutional theory (particularly the notion of 'institutional logics') to study how education curriculum content is influenced by choice behavior in other theoretically relevant institutional contexts. First, we analyze how author selection in literary textbooks for Dutch secondary education has changed over time (in terms of consensus, hierarchical order and innovation). Data consist of complete word counts for 934 authors discussed in 34 Dutch literary education textbooks, published between 1968 and 2000. Second, we examine to what extent changes in this selection can be explained by taking into account selections by literary critics (using 15 standard literary reference works) and students (using reading lists). Results show textbooks increasingly focused on a more limited group of authors, raising the overall levels of consensus and hierarchy. However, in terms of female and ethnic minority authors, textbooks have become more heterogeneous. Relating textbooks to contexts confirms the hypothesis that the literary curriculum has become more student-oriented and less "canon"-oriented. The authors suggest institutional logics in secondary education have changed since the 1960s: criticism has a lesser part in the legitimization of author selection in literary education, while students' needs have become more important.

INTRODUCTION

Curriculum content is primarily the result of a selection process by persons institutionally related to education. Society delegates to them the task of selecting, transmitting, and evaluating knowledge that is regarded worthy and important for students to learn (see Bernstein 1971; Benavot et al. 1991). Research into worldwide curriculum trends has substantiated the institutionalist view that curricular knowledge is shaped by the interplay between institutional actors and society. This interplay has been made possible by the rise of standardized models of modern society and education (Meyer 1980; Thomas, Meyer, and Ramirez 1987). Reviewing contemporary research on changes in the curriculum observed during the last decades, McEneaney and Meyer (2000) stress this gradual evolution of curriculum content in accordance with cultural models of modernity. For the literary curriculum, McEneaney and Meyer (2000: 198, referring to Bryson [1998]) recapitulate the trend as: “canons are weakened and efforts are made to find materials that appeal to the students.”

Worldwide analyses of curriculum change stress the global scale at which educational transformations occur, but tend to disregard the micro level at which curriculum content is being taught and the meso level at which curriculum content is being selected. Long-term curricular change is said to “occur[s] in routinized ways, as teachers and policymakers adapt to changing wider cultural models and contexts” (McEneaney and Meyer 2000: 202), but extant literature fails to provide insight into how these actors actually adapt to changing circumstances. This article sets out to improve our understanding of how curriculum content at the textbook level is influenced by social changes in the past decades. More specifically, it offers an institutional

analysis of how the curriculum has been and continues to be shaped by choice behavior of actors in relevant institutional contexts: experts who traditionally held authority to legitimize curriculum content and students whose preferences have become an increasingly relevant factor in teaching during the past decades.

Our research focuses on changes in author selection in literary textbooks for Dutch secondary education in the period 1968-2000. By “author selection” we mean the institutional process leading to the decision to include authors in a textbook and devote a certain amount of discourse space to their work.¹ Two research questions are addressed with respect to author selection. First, to what extent has it changed between 1968 and 2000? This involves a retest of the hypothesis that the literary curriculum has become more student-oriented and less “canon”-oriented reported above.

The study covers the period 1968-2000. After 1968 an important educational reform reshaped secondary education in the Netherlands, introducing new school types, more elaborate tracking options and new examination regulations (Dronkers 1993). This reform bears strong resemblances to developments in other Western countries in the 1960s (cf. Marwick 1998); it is also in line with the rapid expansion of educational enrollments after 1960 (cf. Schofer and Meyer 2005). In the following thirty years, the interests and developmental needs of the increasingly diversified student population became a matter of growing concern to curriculum developers. In 1998, this trend culminated in another major educational reform, as grades 12 to 14 were reorganized into an educational trajectory called the “Second Phase”. The Second Phase legitimized the student-oriented approach, already well under-way, by introducing participatory

¹ Occasionally we will be using the notion of *classification* to refer to this process of consensus formation among cultural experts on the nature and value cultural products are deemed to have as well as to the temporary results of this process as shown, for example, in Top-ten lists.

practices that incorporated students' interests into official examination regulations (Roelofs and Terwel 1999).

The second research question is: to what extent can we explain changes in author selection in the period 1968-2000 by taking into account choices in other institutional contexts? Endorsing a central idea of John Meyer and his group and the institutional analysis of organizations, we presume that changes in educational selection of the cultural material are increasingly affected by changes in the institutional context at the meso and macro level (Meyer, Kamens, and Benavot 1992). Traditionally, textbooks in literary education offered an overview of a nation state's literary history by highlighting literary periods, movements and authors deemed important by critics, literary scholars and peer authors. Since the 1970s, however, author selection in textbooks is expected to have loosened its tie with criticism, as literary education adapted its content orientation to the needs and preferences of its student audience.

Our contribution to prior research is the following. First, advancing on McEneaney and Meyer (2000), we aim to show trends in curriculum content on the meso level rather than the macro level. Our central units of analysis are the authors who are selected in textbooks rather than aggregated school subjects. Second, we present new measuring instruments to analyze the way institutional actors select and classify cultural products. For this purpose, we combine two theoretical approaches. On the one hand, we discuss Bourdieu's (1983) theory of the cultural field and the production of symbolic value by that field's institutions, with a major role to be assigned to criticism. On the other hand, we draw on the new institutional approach in which organizational decision making is interpreted in terms of reducing uncertainty and taking into account institutional ties (DiMaggio & Powell 1991). Third, we empirically test the hypothesis that curriculum content has become more student-oriented and less "canon"-based by relating

curriculum selections to choice behavior of two relevant institutional actors (literary critics and students) in preceding time periods. In doing so, we overcome the major problem for curriculum research concerning the lack of comparable longitudinal data on argumentations, criteria and other key elements in the choice process of curricular gatekeepers, which has limited past research on the curriculum. Building on research in the sociology of literature (cf. Bourdieu 1980; 1983; Griswold 1993) and the sociology of education (cf. Meyer 1980; Bourdieu 1979), we analyze processes within these institutions, similarly to organizational analyses of for-profit and non-profit cultural sectors (e.g. Bielby and Bielby 1994; DiMaggio 1991). A last contribution of this article consists in extending to a European perspective the issue to what extent female writers, ethnic minority writers and writers of semi-literary genres have been able to enter the curriculum the past thirty years (cf. Tuchman and Fortin 1984; Corse and Griffin 1997; Bryson 2000). In particular, the Netherlands represents a good test case of arguments that attribute de-canonization to multiculturalism. In the period under investigation, the student population in Dutch secondary schools has become strongly diversified in terms of ethnic and class origins. Studying textbooks makes it possible to establish in a reliable and extensive way what choices have been made over time to accommodate this changing population.

The article is organized as follows. The next section opens with a discussion of literary education from the perspective of Bourdieu's field theory; hereafter, we introduce the neo-institutional notion of 'institutional logics'. In section three we set forth three properties of author selection (consensus, hierarchical order and innovation) which permit us to measure changes in curricular content. Section four posits the ensuing hypotheses about trends in curricular change and factors that are believed to explain these changes. The Methods section describes the data set and specifies indicators that measure the three changing properties of author selection, with

relevant details presented in the Appendix. The Results section reports trends in author selection and the influence of institutional contexts. We conclude by briefly considering ways to improve the analysis in follow-up research.

LITERARY CURRICULUM AS INSTITUTIONALIZED CHOICE PROCESS

Literary education and the literary field

Since the 1970s, sociology of culture has outlined the institutional nature of processes of material and symbolic production and consumption of cultural products (e.g., Hirsch 1972; Peterson 1976; Bourdieu 1979, 1983; Becker 1982; Griswold 1987; Lamont and Fournier 1992). It stressed the interdependence of production and consumption: While the meaning and value attributed to cultural products is influenced by the social status of its audiences, people's social status is in turn affected by the products they consume (Bourdieu 1979; DiMaggio 1987). It is specifically Bourdieu's (1977; 1983) theory of the cultural field that has made it clear that properties and value are assigned to cultural products (symbolic production) through a process of consensus formation among critics (including academic scholars) – the legitimate agents of symbolic production and consecration. According to field theory, other institutional actors in the particular field tend to follow and adopt critics' value attributions because these critics can refer to their socially acknowledged qualification (being a professional 'expert'). It is this institutional embeddedness that creates 'belief' in their way of interpretations, evaluations and classifications (Bourdieu 1977; Van Rees 1983). This 'belief' or approval of an audience is necessary to have their classifications accepted, talked about, and transferred to other domains, such as cultural policies or educational curricula (cf. Ohmann 1983; Corse 1995). At the same time, despite their authority in the field, critics have

limited room to move due to institutional isomorphism. If their classification practices are too idiosyncratic, they run the risk of getting isolated; if they are too conservative they might be blamed for lacking vision and originality. Since either extreme would diminish other actors' belief in their expertise, they will be likely to follow the standards in the field.

Regarding the field of literature, literary education is among the institutions which over the past 150 years tended to reproduce the overall patterns of critical selection and, in a less direct manner, its classificatory labeling in terms of movements, styles and the like (Graff 1987; Applebee and Purves 1992). Textbook editors, along with teachers in class (cf. Verboord 2005), kept a close watch on academic literary histories in order to make the appropriate curriculum selections according to the literary hierarchy prevalent in the field. However, the socially constructed nature of literary (cultural) valorization – at the heart of all symbolic production processes – implies that both the content of critics' literary hierarchy and the belief in critics' expertise can evolve over time. As for literary education, opinions on which literary knowledge is worthy of transmitting to students have been increasingly integrated in more generic views on the function and content of the curriculum produced in the educational field – introducing actors from other institutional domains as reference points.

Neo-institutional perspective on the curriculum

Research into worldwide curriculum trends suggesting curriculum content is increasingly taken-for-granted and changes occur in routinized ways (cf. Benavot et al. 1991), is strongly grounded in sociological neo-institutional theory. This approach emphasizes cultural-cognitive rather than regulative, normative or efficiency-based elements to explain institutional practices (Powell and DiMaggio 1991; Scott 2001). In the perspective of neo-institutionalism, institutions are viewed as

‘multifaceted, durable social structures, made up of symbolic elements, social activities, and material resources’ (Scott 2001:49) in which actors are largely led by routines and constitutive schemata. Routines and schemata are employed both to cope with uncertainty in decision-making (due to uncertain contexts or limited knowledge of technology) and to legitimize these decisions. As a result, institutional actors tend to mimic choice behavior by other decision makers who, at an earlier stage, dealt with similar selection problems (DiMaggio and Powell 1991:69). The routinized way organizations thus operate, produces a logic of behaving inherent to the specific institutional domain (“institutional logics”), which can be defined as “sets of material practices and symbolic constructions” which legitimize formalized organizational structures (Friedland and Alford 1991:248; DiMaggio and Mullen 2000).

Along two lines of argumentation, institutional logics help us to understand curricular changes in literary education – that is, in the selections they make – being an educational institution tied to the cultural domain. First, within the cultural domain knowledge production is more open to interpretation and debate due to a less ‘exact’ scientific foundation and a less clear application in vocational training than for instance mathematics or medical training. In that sense, the absence of univocal criteria to determine the artistic value of cultural products allegedly based on intrinsic attributes (Bourdieu 1977; Herrnstein Smith 1984) can be interpreted as a lack of “technology”. It is important to note how neo-institutional theory in this respect shows resemblance to Bourdieu’s ideas on the cultural field, stressing the importance of the shared, constructed *belief* in artistic reputations and disfavoring the traditional view of the (inborn) *expertise* to recognize intrinsic qualities (Bourdieu 1983). Thus, the task of selecting major literary authors, works and concepts in literary education can be described as highly dependent on institutional or, in Bourdieuan terms, fields logics. Not per se those of literary critics, but of any

institutional actor who offers at that time and place the argumentations and practices deemed most worthwhile in the field of literary education.

Second, there is the market or audience argument. Organizations in the cultural field often deploy taken-for-granted models of production. As costly production processes have to be arranged to meet (instable) consumer demands, product development in cultural organizations tends to follow reputations, genres, themes or strategies which proved commercially successful before (cf. Hirsch 1972; Bielby and Bielby 1994). In the educational field, orientation on audiences takes a more subtle turn, in which organizations and actors try to integrate their interests with the transitory ideas and values in terms of which influential agents in the political and public domain frame their arguments. Recent research on multiculturalism in literary studies in the United States (Bryson 2000) and on Afrocentrism and creationism in American public schools (Binder 2002) give examples of how practices and usages of socially debated issues by educational organizations are affected by their position in the broader institutional context (consisting, e.g., of competitive schools, students, social movement actors). In the same vein, literary education has to keep pace with the demands and expectations of relevant audiences – most specifically their core audience: students (and their representatives, i.e. students' parents, didacticians striving for optimal teaching environments).

Hence, we argue textbook editors, the institutional actors shaping literary education in our analysis, will rely on other institutional actors in legitimizing their selections, as they stand at the intersection of the literary and the educational fields. Arguably, it is critics (traditionally the most influential actors from the literary field) and students (as the core audience) who are employed as the most relevant legitimizing resources. Other institutional actors are regarded as less influential (e.g. publishers – since the Dutch textbook publishing industry generally adheres to trends in the

educational field) or rather mediating (e.g. didacticians – who tend to stress students’ point of view). We will outline the dynamics of institutional influence on curriculum content in the section “Changes in institutional contexts” but first, we will introduce the framework for empirical analysis of selections in curriculum content by mapping the properties of classification practices.

PROPERTIES OF CLASSIFICATIONS

From studies on the cultural and literary fields (e.g. DiMaggio 1987; Shrum 1991), we learn that classification practices move between the micro level of individual actors and organizations, and the meso and macro levels of institutions and society. Individual actors and organizations act according to their core tasks and responsibilities, aiming for an optimal position in the field (Bourdieu 1977). Differences in value attribution between individual critics exist but, as was discussed earlier, are at the same time mediated by institutional logics. Literary critics have three important classification instruments at their disposal: *selection* (what do they chose to discuss), *evaluation* (how do they judge selected objects), and *renewal* (how do they use their selection and evaluation practices to be original and distinguish themselves from others). Institutional or field logics press actors towards similar results. As critics learn about each other’s selections, evaluations and attempts at renewal, their opinions increasingly converge (Van Rees 1987; Van Rees and Vermunt 1996). Whereas at the group level institutional actors strive to sustain the institutional myth of their literary expertise in order to increase their job legitimacy, at an individual level each has also to look after his/her own reputation within the institution (Bourdieu 1983; De Nooy 1991).

Consequently, on a meso and macro level classifications and selections function as relatively homogeneous expressions of value attribution, mostly varying by time, place and type of society (cf. DiMaggio 1987 on classification *systems*). Although classifications at this level are more aggregated and abstract, they are still very much linked to the level of actors: they comprise the systematic comparison of selections, evaluations and renewals by individual institutional actors within a certain socio-cultural context. Based on this relationship with the micro level we can distinguish three properties of classification and selection: consensus, hierarchical order and innovation.²

First, selections and cultural classifications are produced by institutional actors through consensus, or the extent to which they agree to emphasize certain works or author in publications (e.g. newspapers, literary studies, encyclopedias). Given the enormous supply of published works and the limited amount of space for reviewing and anthologizing, they can deal only with a small proportion of works (Ohmann 1983). Selection of new titles by reviewers is heavily biased. An analysis of all new fiction titles published in the Netherlands in the years 1978 and 1991 showed that only 54% and 36% were selected for review, respectively (Janssen 1997: 282). Also, in 1978, 10% of new fiction titles were featured in 40% of all reviews. In 1991, 10% of new fiction titles accounted for no less than 60% of all reviews (Janssen 1997: 283). Not being taken into account by critics and relevant audiences may be considered a negative evaluation. Conversely, the larger the group of institutional actors paying attention to an author, the greater the consensus about his or her literary value.

The second feature concerns the hierarchical position with which an author is associated.

² Note that indicators for ‘diversity’ and ‘innovation’ have been used quite frequently in cultural sociology (e.g. Peterson and Berger 1975; Dowd 2004), though from an organizational instead of a classification perspective.

Within the group of publicly evaluated authors, critical attention strongly varies in amount and tone (Janssen 1997). The larger the amount of attention given to the author, and the more positive the tone, the higher the author stands in the hierarchy. Climbing the hierarchical ladder takes time, though, due to critics' limited "room to move" discussed earlier. That is, at the beginning of authors' careers critics are usually careful not to rank them in too extreme positions, because they lack the touchstone of other critics' opinions (Van Rees 1987).

Third, classifications and selections vary to the extent that they are innovative. From the ever increasing supply of new cultural products, selections need to be made for various target audiences. Over time, selections constituting a repertoire (e.g. that of textbook editors; a famous poetry anthology that is renewed from time to time) tend to expand, as an increasing number of new artists' works tend to be included. Yet, changing ideas on what makes good literature or aims to find new or larger audiences, may also lead textbook editors to exclude previously present authors. Since originality and renewal are considered important criteria for evaluating arts and literature (Anheier and Gerhards 1991), innovation is considered a third basic property of classification.

In sum, from the viewpoint of literary field theory, consensus, hierarchical order, and innovation represent three basic properties of literary classifications. On these dimensions, critics' classifications may differ among each other and from those of literary education, because of variation in the selected works and authors, in amount of attention given to an author, or in willingness to include new authors. This framework can be used to analyze selection in literary education. To this end, we will (1) analyze the structure of classifications, in our case author selections in textbooks, using degree of consensus and hierarchical order as the main measures, (2) establish a criterion for innovation and (3) dynamically compare selection hierarchies over

time with regard to these dimensions.

CHANGES IN INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXTS

Since the 1960s, a number of significant socio-cultural changes have occurred in Western societies, which had implications for the literary curriculum. In the 1950s and early 1960s, traditional views on literature and literary education were still largely dominant, because of the relatively strong consensus among critics and scholars about literary values and the ensuing prestige these institutions held in society (Gorak 1991; Graff 1987). However, for many people profiting from the rise in affluence and permissiveness during the 1960s, the difference between “high-brow” and “low-brow” art lost much of its boundary function, and by the same token, critics’ evaluations on which this classification used to be based, lost much of their weight (cf. DiMaggio 1991; Janssen and Verboord 2006).

This gradual loss of belief in cultural authorities was coupled with related developments. First of all, authorities and their traditional viewpoints were being debased in general, while more democratic and emancipatory viewpoints were being propagated (Marwick 1998). In the literary field in Western Europe and North America, “minority voices” such as women authors, authors with non-western roots and gay authors were increasingly considered to be artificially excluded from literary hierarchies (Lauter 1991; Van Alphen and Meijer 1991; Chiellino 2000; Gorak 2001). Second, the literary field experienced a loss of consensus on literary norms, values and hierarchies. A period of over forty years during which an autonomist conception of literature (claiming that a literary work ought to be judged on its own terms) had dominated criticism and scholarship came to an end, while new approaches such as reader-response criticism, deconstructionism, semiotics, sociology of literature and reception esthetics, began claiming a

large share of theoretical attention (Abrams 1993). The traditional model of writing about the “classics” (Graff 1987) was faced with a new competing industry of multicultural literature or the literatures of ethnic and other minorities (cf. Johnson 1991; Berkers 2006). Whereas this development prompted strong debates on issues concerning cultural relativism and the content of the “canon” in the United States (e.g. Bloom 1988), in Western European countries the transition of literary studies led to less extreme reactions (e.g. Duell 2000 for the comparison of France and the U.S.) – both in terms of multiculturalism, and in terms of traditionalism.

Third, production, distribution and marketing practices in cultural consumer markets became more globalized and professionalized, which led to an acceleration of the turnover of products, artists and performers (Held et al. 1999:341ff; Caves 2000:152-159; 203-208). In the literary field, bestselling books have considerably shorter spans of consumer attention (Feldman 2003). At the same time, institutional indicators of literary value such as literary prizes are increasingly used as marketing instruments (English 2006) and classical literary authors’ function as reference points in literary criticism appears to be declining (Rosengren 1998).

A fourth and last development is the gradual cultural-political shift of art towards an independent, but only marginal position in society. In Western societies (but not only there), a mass market orientation became the hallmark of the entertainment industry at large. Over the past decades, the decline in rates of participation in cultural practices, especially those traditionally associated with “high” or “legitimate” art such as the reading of literature, suggests that the importance attached to them has decreased (e.g. DiMaggio and Mukhtar 2004; Knulst and Van den Broek 2003). In the educational field, the literature and arts curriculum has shifted its emphasis to implementing practical abilities and applicable knowledge instead of the encyclopedic knowledge taught in the heyday of the cultural authorities (McEneaney and Meyer

2000). Due to processes of social mobility, vocational specialization, and globalization, many societies have followed the trend of de-emphasizing the arts and promoting practically applicable knowledge. Bringing the argument back to Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction (cf. Bourdieu and Passeron 1970; Bourdieu 1979), it appears that since the 1960s the growth in the student population has been associated with increased diversity. Many of these students lacked sufficient cultural socialization at home to successfully engage with the traditional literature and arts curricula. The problem of maintaining their interest in classroom content could only be solved by turning the curriculum away from the "high" arts and towards the more familiar "popular" arts. With the rhetorical backing of pedagogues and didacticians, who in their studies stressed the importance of individually fitted curricula (cf. Roelofs and Terwel 1999) and who were increasingly gaining power in educational policy issues, this redirection was implemented rather straightforwardly.

Hypotheses

It is expected that, conjointly, these trends have had a considerable bearing on the literary curriculum. Literary education had to settle for a less prominent position, while its content has been directed away from literary criticism and towards the needs and preferences of students. The *general hypothesis* concerning the first research question follows the thesis put forward in earlier studies (cf. McEneaney and Meyer 2000): It is expected that *the curriculum in literary education has become more student-oriented and less criticism-oriented*, that is, textbooks will offer less space to traditionally highly acclaimed authors, and more space to authors favored by students. This main hypothesis is broken down into four hypotheses, three of which address the three core theoretical properties of classification: consensus, hierarchical order and innovation, respectively.

Each of these hypotheses is formulated both for authors purely representing themselves (i.e. individual reputations) and representing “minority” categories (women, non-natives, writers of semi-literary genres). The fourth hypothesis concerns the second research question about textbooks’ orientation on institutional contexts.

Consensus. Due to processes of diversification and declining legitimacy of literary criticism, textbooks of later time periods are expected to show a smaller degree of consensus with respect to the selection of individual authors. In terms of the types of authors who are selected, textbooks are expected to become more differentiated over time in terms of authors’ gender, cultural roots and literary genres. Women, non-native writers and writers in semi-literary genres should comprise a larger proportion of the population of textbook selections.

Hypothesis 1: The more recent the publication year of the textbook, (a) the lesser the consensus about individual authors selected and (b) the lesser the consensus about the gender, ethnicity and genre of the authors selected.

Hierarchical order. Diversification in approaches to literature has led literary criticism to rank authors in less clear-cut ways than before, diminishing the stability of the hierarchical order. In literary education, traditional views on teaching literature have been gradually replaced by more student-oriented ones (cf. Verboord 2003; Manesse and Grellet 1994). Consequently, textbooks are expected to contain less hierarchical selections. That is, they are likely to show less extreme differences in the values attributed to individual authors within the selections. Extending this perspective to the types of authors selected, we expect the hierarchical differences between women, non-native writers and writers in semi-literary genres on the one hand, and their

counterparts on the other, to have declined.

Hypothesis 2: The more recent the publication year of the textbook, (a) the smaller the hierarchical differences between individual authors within the selection, and (b) the smaller the hierarchical differences between types of authors within the selection, in terms of gender, ethnicity and genre.

Innovation. The increasing acceleration of demand and supply in the cultural field has made classification processes in the literary field more innovative. In literary education, a growing awareness of student preferences has prompted textbook editors to keep an eye on recent developments. Therefore, authors are introduced in textbooks earlier in their career in an effort to make textbook selections more innovative.

Hypothesis 3: The more recent the publication year of the textbook, (a) the more new authors are being selected, and (b) the more value is attributed to new authors.

Orientation on institutional contexts. Due to a declining consensus among critics, ensuing loss of legitimacy suffered by the institution of criticism, a growing attention to students' needs in the educational field and the rise of a market or audience orientation in the cultural field, the institutional logics of textbooks compilers are expected to have turned away from critics towards students. Consequently, we expect textbooks selections to show weaker resemblances with preceding literary criticism selections over time, and stronger resemblances with preceding students' reading preferences.

Hypothesis 4: The more recent the publication year of the textbook, (a) the weaker the resemblance with literary criticism's selections and (b) the stronger the resemblance with

students' reading preferences.

METHOD

Data

Data were gathered on 34 textbooks published between 1968 and 2000, which were used in literary education in grades 12 to 14 of Dutch secondary schools. Drawing on earlier inventories of textbooks published in the Netherlands (Moerbeek 1998:195-223), an inventory was made of as many textbooks as possible, either devoted to literary history or containing at least one section on literary history.³ Despite the rise in the number of available textbooks during the last 20 years, at any moment since 1968, four to five books – though not necessarily the same ones – had a 70 to 80 percent share of the total market. In this period, no textbook had managed to obtain more than one third of the market share. Although the sample does not contain all literary history textbooks, it comprises all frequently used ones in the period under investigation.

In general, the first print of each textbook was analyzed, as authorial or editorial decisions in the first print best reflect the contemporary institutional thought. Reprints are usually made for commercial reasons, while the content may have dated (even according to the editors). An exception was made for books published originally before 1968 that continued to hold an important share of the market, and books that were drastically revised and updated. Three books were selected twice, the second time in their revised and updated editions (see Appendix A for a complete overview).

In all sampled books, the amount of attention paid to individual authors was inventoried by

³ In the Netherlands, anthologies are hardly used by teachers in secondary education, so it seems justified to leave them out of the sample.

counting the number of words devoted to them. When an author's name was mentioned without additional information, a standard number of five words was used. All scores were weighted by the number of pages and the physical size of the book. Only Dutch-writing authors born after 1800, and authors from the (former) Dutch colonies (Surinam, Indonesia, Netherlands Antilles) were taken into account.⁴ The measure of attention was confined to literary history sections, excluding literary theory sections, literature lists and indexes.

A data file was constructed containing information on 937 authors, the attention they received in textbooks and the following background characteristics: gender, year of birth, year of debut, ethnicity and main genre.⁵ Of all authors in the sample, 84.2% were male. Three-quarters of the authors were born between 1875 and 1949 (76.7%). Of all the authors, 71.7% were Dutch, 25.0% Flemish and 3.2% ethnic minority. Most authors were writers of (literary) prose (39.5%) or poetry (35.3%) (see Appendix B for full descriptions).

The 34 books were clustered by period of publication. Four categories were distinguished: the 1970s (starting in 1968, the year Dutch secondary education was revised), the 1980s, the 1990s (ending in 1997) and the Second Phase period (1998-2000, in which a second revision of the educational system was introduced). The 1970s consist of 13 books, the 1980s of 10 books, the 1990s of 6 books and the Second Phase period of 5 books.

⁴ This includes Flemish authors (as they use Flemish, the Germanic language of the Flemish which is close to Dutch and as much of their work is brought on the market by Dutch publishing houses), but excludes South-African authors because of the differences between Dutch and Afrikaans (one of the Germanic languages spoken in South Africa). Some authors from the (former) colonies wrote part of their oeuvre in a native language. Note that the teaching of literature focuses on the national heritage.

⁵ Information on these background characteristics was found in literary lexicons on Dutch literature. Authors were labelled 'ethnic minority' when they or their parents were born in a non-western country. In the Netherlands, the most often noted ethnic minorities concern the former Dutch colonies Indonesia, Surinam, and Netherlands Antilles, and the migration countries Turkey and Morocco.

Indicators

For each of the three key properties of classifications (consensus, hierarchical order, innovation), several indicators were developed.

Consensus. First, we operationalize the relative consensus per period, or the extent to which textbooks in the same period select the same authors, irrespective of the authors' characteristics. For each author, we counted the number of textbooks per period in which s/he had an entry. This score was divided by the total number of books available in this period (and multiplied by 100), resulting in a relative frequency score per period. (Note that since this calculation was done for every period independently, individual authors were counted again when mentioned in other periods.) The mean score in each period expresses the amount of consensus regarding author selection contained in textbooks from that period. The higher the mean, the more often the same authors were selected in different books of that period.

The relative consensus per period was also measured for the top 20th percentile (as an indicator of being a top ranking author). The ranking of authors was based on the number of words each received per book, divided over five equally distributed percentile groups. For each author, we counted the number of textbooks in which s/he was placed in the 20th percentile – that is, the 20 per cent of authors receiving the most attention. Similar to the overall relative consensus score, this score was divided by the total number of books available in this period (and multiplied by 100), resulting in a relative frequency score for each period. (For the calculation of these mean values, individual authors were counted again when mentioned in other periods.) The mean score in each period expresses the amount of consensus regarding top author selection contained in books from that period. The higher the mean, the more often the same authors were selected for the top positions in different books in that period.

The third indicator was the selection of high-frequency authors per period: the extent to which textbooks of the same period select high-frequency authors. This time, for every author, the relative frequency for the whole period 1968-2000 was calculated, controlling for the year of debut. Each author received a score for the number of books in which s/he was featured, which was divided by the number of books in which s/he could have been featured. The relative frequency scale ranges from 0 (in none of the books – does not occur) to 100 (in all the books sampled). Then, for each book we calculated the mean score of the relative frequencies of all authors mentioned. This gives an indication of the degree to which a book contains authors who are also in other books: the higher the score, the more high frequency the authors, the higher the consensus. In contrast to the first indicator, this indicator results in an individual score per book.

The last consensus indicators concern the background characteristics (gender, ethnic background, main genre) of the selected authors. Here, we examine the proportions of women, ethnic minorities and writers of semi-literary work (e.g., thrillers, children's literature, cabaret, travelling books) in each period's population of selected authors.

Hierarchical order. First, we operationalize the concentration of attention, that is, the proportion of the total number of words devoted to all authors that pertains specifically to top ranking authors. We first divided the author population into quintiles, as described above. Then, for each textbook, the mean number of words per quintile was divided by the total number of words in the textbook, which yielded the relative number of words per quintile. Using the Herfindahl-index, we determined the degree of concentration, as well as the mean concentration for each period. The higher the mean, the more concentrated the attention of textbooks is on top ranking authors and the more hierarchical the distribution of authors.

As a second indicator, we present the percentage of words devoted to authors in the top 20th percentile. Drawing on the same calculations used for the Herfindahl-index score, we used the mean percentage of words devoted to upper-quintile authors in each period. The higher the mean, the more attention is given to the top ranking authors and the more hierarchical the distribution of authors.

Classifying the author population in quintiles takes account of each textbook's particular distribution of authors while disregarding the absolute time constraints teachers face in using textbooks and discussing authors in class. It can be argued that due to these constraints only a limited number of (top-ranking) authors mentioned in textbooks will actually be discussed in class, regardless of the total number of authors mentioned. Therefore, as a third indicator, we calculated the percentage of words devoted to the 35 top ranking authors. This number is chosen for being exactly the median and mode, and almost the mean (37.3), of the number of authors in the first quintile of the total textbook population. The higher the percentage of words devoted to the first 35 authors, the more hierarchical the distribution of authors.

The last group of indicators of hierarchical order again concerns the background characteristics (gender, ethnic background, main genre) of the selected authors. Whereas the consensus in composition was measured using the amount of authors represented in the population, the hierarchical order is measured using the amount of words dedicated to each author. The proportion of attention to women, ethnic minorities and writers of semi-literary genres expresses their position in the hierarchy. The higher their percentage score, the smaller the hierarchical order in terms of background characteristics.

Innovation. Innovation is measured as the proportion of new authors, defined as authors who

made their debut during the 10 years preceding the textbook's publication. This proportion was measured both for the number of authors and for the number of words devoted to them.

Author selection by criticism. For all authors in the 34 textbooks, information was gathered about the artistic value attributed by critics in the literary field. Critic's value attribution was operationalized as the volume of entries in literary lexicons and encyclopedias. Entries in these reference books indicate a moderate to large literary reputation. In general, only authors about whom critics and literary scholars have reached a consensus over a long period of time are included in lexicons. For every author in the textbook population, we counted the number of words devoted to him/her in 15 lexicons and encyclopedias (see Appendix C for the list of reference works used). Both independent entries on an author and attention within Dutch, Flemish, Dutch-Caribbean and Dutch-Indonesian literature entries were taken into account. Selection of the 15 reference books was based on time of publication, country of origin and availability.

The main hypothesis states that choices in literary education draw on those made earlier by other institutions in the literary field, notably criticism. Therefore, indicators of reputation among critics in the literary field need to predate choices in literary education. To that end, each textbook period was compared with literary field indicators from the foregoing time periods. Reference books from the period preceding that in which the textbook was published served as a benchmark: reference books from the 1960s were used for textbooks of the 1970s, etcetera.

For each period, except the 1960s, it was possible to track down four international reference manuals (see Appendix C). Reference books were clustered to make one indicator for every period. This clustering was based on the results of reliability analyses (Cronbach's alphas of .74,

.84, .88 and .84). The four indicators, representing the mean number of words dedicated to authors in each decade, were transformed to variables with values ranging from 0 to 100 (dividing the raw values by the maximum). Before clustering, the reference books were weighted by their page length, as was the case for textbooks.

Students' reading preferences. Information on students' preferences over time is harder to track down. Estimates of authors' hierarchies for students had to be based on a secondary analysis of existing survey data which were not originally intended to measure trends. Therefore, only a rough approximation of the actual changes is possible. The surveys available for analysis examined the reading behavior of secondary school students in the Netherlands in 1962, 1978, 1986, 1989, 1993 and 1997.

In some respects the surveys differ from one another, especially the 1962 wave compared with the later ones. The 1962 survey sampled a specific population (Catholic secondary school students) and measured reading preferences using several questions (e.g. "which was the last book that you finished reading"; "which author you once read would you like [to read] more of"). The frequency with which specific authors are mentioned in the responses is used to compile the hierarchy. In contrast with the 1962 survey, the other waves were non-academic (initiated by an opinion magazine (1978) and a literary magazine (1986 to 1997)), and students were simply asked to name the books and authors they had selected for their "reading list" in final exams. Although the number of books students have to read is usually fixed (10 to 15 books), students are generally free to make their own choices from Dutch literature, as long as the chosen works meet their teachers' literary standards. Throughout the period 1975-2000, a steady 90% of all teachers practiced this policy.⁶ Again, the frequency with which authors are mentioned, for each

⁶ Based on figures from the LISO 2001 data (Literary Socialization 2001 – Survey data collected among

year published as top 100 (top 60 in 1978) in the initiating magazines, is used to compile a hierarchy. Bias towards teachers' literary standards cannot be completely ruled out, but if it exists, it is constant for all five surveys and is confined within the borders of the literary domain. More importantly, research on teachers' practices has shown that teachers' criteria for the reading list did not change significantly between 1975 and 2000.⁷

Another reason why, despite methodological differences (see also Appendix D), these lists are of interest as indicators of the institutional context of students' preferences, is the sheer fact that they were published. To decide on curricular content, literary-educational agents are supposed to draw upon literary criticism via perceptible products or outlets (here operationalized as reference books). Similarly, to be able to accommodate students' tastes, these agents need to take account of perceptible expressions of those tastes. Indeed, publication of the lists continues to draw attention in the Dutch media, as audiences follow which authors are liked and which are not.⁸ Still, when interpreting the results of these surveys, their methodological drawbacks should be kept in mind. As in the case of reference books, the original measure of students' preferences (percentage of students' reading the particular author) is divided by its maximum value to yield a score ranging from 0 to 100.

RESULTS

almost 200 Dutch teachers who reported on the period 1975-2000) (see Verboord 2003).

⁷ In the period 1975-79, for about 68% of the teachers, genres other than literature were not allowed on the reading list. In the 1990s, teachers had not become more tolerant, as the percentage even slightly grew to 80% (LISO 2001).

⁸ E.g. *de Volkskrant* (Bart Jungmann), 2002. "Wolker's positie loopt gevaar." [Wolker's position is at risk.] November 1, page 10. Of course, besides influencing textbook editors or teachers, the lists can (and in all likelihood will) also influence future students' preferences, becoming a force of their own in the field of literary education. As long as no alternative (more low-profile) measures of students' preferences exist, it is impossible to disentangle its functions.

Hypotheses concerning changes in the curriculum are tested at the textbook level. Initially, three general textbook characteristics are examined. Table 1 reports changes in the number of pages, the number of words devoted to authors, the number of authors mentioned, and the number of authors per page in textbooks over the four chosen periods. The mean number of pages peaked in the 1980s, after which it decreased by half and even dropped below its starting level in the 1970s. Parallel to this development, the mean number of words devoted to authors increased between the 1970s and 1980s, and then decreased in the 1990s. In the Second Phase (1998-2000), this decline continued, while the number of pages increased. Apparently, within the space available, words were increasingly devoted to other subjects than literary authors. This interpretation is confirmed by figures in the third and fourth column of Table 1, representing trends in the mean number of authors discussed in textbooks and the mean number of authors per page per textbook. In the 1980s there was a small decline in the number of authors discussed in textbooks. In the 1990s and Second Phase, this development became even more pronounced.

Table 1 about here

Trends in selections

Tables 2 to 4 present the results of a series of univariate Anova analyses of trends in consensus, hierarchical order and innovation of textbooks. The first column of Table 2 shows that the relative consensus in selections increased significantly between the 1970s and the 1990s and leveled off in the period following the introduction of the Second Phase (1998). Selections of high-frequency positions – those in the upper 20th percentile – within the same period also show

an increasing convergence. Hence, since the 1970s, the literary education curriculum has been characterized by a growing consensus about which authors should be given the most attention. Textbooks have also increasingly focused on “high-frequency” authors, as can be seen in the fourth column. Here, we also notice a difference between the 1990s and the period between 1998 and 2000: while overlap in the selected authors was constant across the periods, in the latter period the authors chosen were more often those in the upper 20th percentile.

Table 2 about here

Diminishing consensus in the selection of authors is only perceived when we examine the authors’ characteristics. Clearly, the percentage of women writers in the school canon has considerably increased during the last decades, from 11% to almost 18%. The share of semi-literary genres has also risen, though not significantly. The proportion of ethnic minority authors increased only in the 1998-2000 period, but again not significantly.

Table 3 reports trends in the hierarchical order of authors, ranked by the amount of attention they receive. The first column shows the concentration of attention devoted to authors, using quintiles of the Herfindahl-index. Concentration of attention displays no linear development over time. In the 1990s, attention to authors is most highly concentrated in the upper quintile, but in 1998-2000 the distribution is more uniform, resembling the results for the 1970s and 1980s. The second column of Table 3 describes the upper part of this distribution in more detail. In the 1990s, more than 70% of all words in textbooks focused on the upper quintile of top-ranking authors, while in the other periods it drops to around 60%. However, because the number of authors in textbooks

declined over time, this upper quintile represents different numbers of authors in each period. Furthermore, classroom time dedicated to discussing authors mentioned in textbooks is limited (Verboord 2003:125-129). Therefore, the third column shows the percentages of textbook words devoted to top-ranking authors in absolute terms (we focus on the top thirty-five authors, which is the median of the upper quintile). Here, a different story emerges. Over time, the attention paid to top-ranking authors grew quickly. Whereas in the 1970s the top 35 authors received almost 59% of all attention, their share of attention increased to 75% in the 1990s and almost 80% in the last period. This result should be interpreted with the numbers from Table 1 in mind: since the number of authors declined in the last two periods, the share of the upper thirty-five authors will be larger by definition. Although the distribution of attention may have stayed equal over the different periods, in absolute terms, top-ranking authors have increasingly dominated literary textbooks.

Table 3 about here

Distinguishing authors' background characteristics revealed a small reduction of the hierarchical order. Again, women made headway in all periods, while authors of semi-literary genres progressed only slightly between the 1970s and the 1980s. The number of words devoted to ethnic minority authors remained very small in each period. Thus, although the selection of authors became increasingly heterogeneous (Table 2), the hierarchical position of these more often included minority writers was low.

The third and last selection characteristic, innovation, is described in Table 4. Textbook

selections increasingly include authors who made their debut in the recent past; in addition, the number of words devoted to this group changes over time. In the 1970s, almost 4% of all mentioned authors had made their debut in the ten years preceding publication of the textbook, whereas in the period 1998-2000 the number increased to 8%. Similarly, the percentage of textbook words dedicated to recent debutants rose from 1.8% to 4.6%.

Table 4 about here

The hypotheses about changes in textbook selections received only limited support in our data. After a peak in the 1980s, literary textbooks shrank drastically both in size and in number of selections. In the 1980s, literary education became more receptive to new teaching methods, but it was not yet willing or able to give up its traditional focus on the “canon” – authors believed to be part of the cultural heritage. Consequently, textbooks in the 1980s contained large amounts of information. In the 1990s, however, textbooks slimmed down, in terms of the number of pages, words and authors. This development took a slightly different turn in the Second Phase (1998-2000), as the number of pages stabilized, while the other downward trends continued. As can be seen in Appendix A, by this time, literary textbooks no longer focused primarily on literary history, but increasingly shifted their attention to literary theory and literary terms. This led to a decline in the number of authors discussed. As a consequence, the population of authors selected from the pool identified by critics and historians of literature showed considerably more consensus. Within this population, attention focused on a select subgroup of authors, which increased the overall hierarchical differences between the selections. In terms of the composition of authors, textbook selections became more diverse, as they increasingly included female, semi-

literary and ethnic minority authors, as well as authors who had recently made their debut. However, this trend is not as strong as the others discussed above.

The influence of institutional contexts

The influence of institutional contexts on textbook selections is examined at the author level. As we lack explicit information on motivations of textbook editors, turning to this level of analysis gives us an alternative way to examine how choices in one institution are related to those in other, theoretically relevant, institutions. Performing these relational analyses has two implications. First, instead of being broken down into classification characteristics, textbook selections have to be analyzed at the author level, so that textbooks' attention to specific authors can be related to the preferences of critics and students. Therefore, we chose the number of words devoted to authors in textbooks as the dependent variable. Second, we confine our analysis to (semi-)literary authors of primary fiction only. Cabaret authors and performers as well as authors mentioned only briefly as side figures (like editors of literary magazines) are excluded, as they are generally not acknowledged in literary lexicons and/or students' reading preferences. Including them would lead to biases. This leaves us with a sample of 876 authors.

Table 5 about here

Table 5 shows correlations of the number of words dedicated to specific authors in textbook selections with the number of words devoted to them in literary lexicons (of the preceding decade) on the one hand, and the popularity of those authors among students (in the preceding decade) on the other hand. The extent to which author selections in textbooks resemble selections

in lexicons clearly diminishes over time: from 0.73 in the 1970s, to 0.67, 0.63 and finally 0.59 in the 1998-2000 period. Conversely, correlations of textbook selections and student preferences increase over time. Textbooks from the 1970s had a correlation of 0.42 with the preferences of students in the 1960s. In the 1980s and 1990s this correlation increased to 0.51 and 0.48, respectively. Textbooks published since the start of the Second Phase period in 1998 followed students' choices even more closely ($r=.54$).

Table 6 about here

Next, we perform OLS multiple regression analyses to test whether the same results hold when both institutional contexts are considered at the same time. The dependent variable in the regression analyses is the natural logarithm of the number of words devoted to authors in textbooks in each period. This log-transformation is performed because of the skewed distribution of the original variable (small numbers of authors receiving disproportional amounts of words). The results are shown in Table 6. Clearly, they display the same pattern as those from the correlation analyses: ever since the 1970s, textbook selections have been gradually influenced less by choices in the field of literary criticism and more by students' reading preferences. Both variables show positive effects on the number of words contained in literary textbooks, implying that the amount of attention paid to authors in both institutional contexts contributes to the amount of attention paid to them in textbooks. In general, literary lexicons have a stronger impact on textbooks than students' preferences. However, over time, the effect of lexicons clearly declines: it decreases from 0.663 for 1970s textbooks to 0.511 for 1998-2000 textbooks. At the same time, the impact of students' preferences on the attention paid to authors in textbooks

becomes more pronounced in the period 1970-2000. Whereas textbooks of the 1970s consider students' choices only to a limited extent ($b=.067$), the attention paid to individual authors in most recent textbooks corresponds much closer to students' reading tastes ($b=.272$). These results are in line with hypothesis 4.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This research set out to investigate the changes that have occurred in the literary education curriculum in the past decades, and the extent to which these changes could be explained by the subject's institutional embeddedness. We contributed to prior research on selection and legitimization of curriculum content by relating the practices of institutional actors from various relevant fields empirically. Also, our study focused on the meso level rather than the macro level. The case-study of the development of textbook selections of literary authors in the Netherlands between 1968 and 2000 supports earlier contentions that literary education in Western societies has been increasingly marginalized. Its content has become more student-oriented, at the expense of the traditional "canon"-oriented approach to literary teaching.

The analysis of textbook selections shows that key developments in the literary field – decreasing consensus and hierarchical order, and increasing innovation – are, to some extent, also at play in the content of the literary curriculum. For instance, certain groups of authors have gained stronger positions in textbooks. In 1998-2000, female authors and ethnic minority authors were selected more often, and the former also had more words devoted to them, than they had been in earlier time periods. Textbooks have also become more innovative, dedicating larger proportions of their content to authors who have recently made their debut. However, as book size and number of selected authors declined over time, textbooks have also come to focus on a

more limited group of authors, raising the overall levels of consensus and hierarchical order.

The second part of our analysis focused on the relation between literary textbooks and two relevant influential contexts: literary criticism and students' preferences. To this end, we compared the amount of attention paid in textbooks to specific authors with the authors' presence in lexicons and students' reading lists. The results offered support for the hypothesis that selection processes in literary education are highly influenced by choices made earlier by literary criticism. Author selection in literature textbooks largely resembled those made by literary critics a decade before. In line with earlier curriculum research findings, however, these resemblances grew weaker over time. At the same time, author selection in textbooks was affected by student preferences, again measured a decade before. This time, resemblances grew stronger over time, suggesting that students' consumption patterns gained importance for textbook editors.

In general, the results show, in more detail than before, the institutional logics at work in literary education, and how these have changed over time. What is considered important for students to learn evolves – even in the last few decades – in ways that can be explained by studying the contexts in which textbook editors operate. Textbook editors have had to adapt to new circumstances in which schools have become more alert to students' needs. School officials and teachers had to do so, since the educational reform of 1968 has led to an increased educational participation of students, particularly from families with lower levels of economical and cultural capital (Dronkers 1993; De Graaf, De Graaf and Kraaykamp 2000). Apparently, traditional views on literature were more difficult to transfer to increasingly heterogeneous cohorts of students, leading to a less “canon”-oriented curriculum. An earlier analysis of the use of teaching models by teachers in the Dutch literary education between 1975-1998 shows that all kinds of teachers – irrespective of their education level of teaching, gender, age, first year of

teaching, or type of vocational training – have contributed to this decline (Verboord 2003:96-97).

Although this research provides empirical support for several theoretical claims put forward in earlier studies, it is still exploratory due to a number of limitations. First, our analyses are confined to a minor segment of the curriculum: literary education which is part of the Dutch language subject. Additional studies into other school subjects are necessary before we can generalize our findings to the entire curriculum. Even so, studying selections in textbooks has the major advantage of lending itself to a longitudinal design, as these kinds of data can be gathered retrospectively. It also makes possible the collection of additional information on books and author selections in other institutions. Of course, our knowledge of how these materials are actually used by teachers is inevitably incomplete.

Second, as was reported in the method section, data on students' preferences have several methodological limitations and hence should be used for heuristic purposes. In future studies data could be collected from teachers or schools (e.g., reading lists, student surveys). The shift towards a more student-friendly curriculum will in all likelihood generate more information on student preferences than had been available in earlier decades.

Third, our results do not exhaustively demonstrate the institutional effects. While theoretically grounded and empirically significant relationships have been found between classifications and selections in literary education on the one hand, and reference works and student preferences on the other, these results are not documented at the level of individual decision makers. For instance, no information was available on the criteria or motivations of textbook editors. In contrast with earlier institutional research, however, relationships at the level of curricular content were observed. Clearly, more research is needed both on the practices of

textbook editors and on textbook selection and usage by teachers.

This shift in research focus might be even more urgent in light of events that have occurred in Dutch society over the past few years. Although the educational front has been relatively peaceful since the last reform of 1998, events such as 9/11 and the murders of right-wing politician Pim Fortuyn (2002) and film director Theo van Gogh (2004) have dramatically changed the socio-cultural climate. At the time of writing, in a period of growing awareness that the Netherlands – along with larger neighboring countries like Great Britain, France and Germany – has become a multicultural society, public debates have shifted their focus once again to the urgent need to introduce topical canons (in history, literature, and the arts) as integral part of a reforms to both the senior high school and academic curricula. Enhancing awareness of Dutch cultural identity and helping immigrants acquaint themselves with Dutch culture and become integrated into Dutch society are among the goals put forward in these debates. On September 1, 2005, the Dutch Department of Education, Culture and Science created a commission, ‘Ontwikkeling Nederlandse Canon’ [‘Development Dutch Canon’], to concretize these educational canons (www.canonvannederland.nl). Fall 2006, they will report on their findings. To what extent their selections will guide curriculum content away from students’ picks, back towards more traditional interpretations of the Dutch literary inheritance, has to be awaited.

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Table 1: General characteristics literary textbooks, results ANOVA (N=34)

	Mean number of pages per textbook	Mean number of words per textbook	Mean number of authors per textbook	Mean number of authors per page
1970s	286.6	38,958	229.4	1.28
1980s	341.9	45,005	200.3	1.21
1990s	162.0	35,217	155.5	0.94
1998-2000	176.4	25,352	104.8	0.69
F-value period	1.12	2.02	2.53	0.54
linear contrast estimate	-114.2	-11,3216.02*	-93.59*	-0.46

Significance levels: * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001

Table 2: Trends in consensus on author selections for literary textbooks, 1968-2000 (N=34)

	Relative consensus Total ^a	Relative consensus 20 th percentile ^a	Consensus high-freq. authors (0-100)	% amount female authors	% amount semi-literary genres	% amount ethnic-minority authors
1970s	33.3	6.7	53.5	11.0 %	0.6 %	1.1 %
1980s	39.0	7.7	59.6	12.0 %	3.2 %	1.6 %
1990s	46.6	9.5	63.7	14.1 %	2.0 %	1.2 %
1998-2000	46.4	9.2	67.3	17.6 %	3.0 %	3.1 %
F-value period	19.34***	2.11	2.29	7.27***	2.55	2.87
Linear contrast estimate	10.47***	2.09*	10.14*	4.98***	1.39	1.29**

Results ANOVA, significance levels: * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001

^a Due to measuring procedure, significance testing is done with cumulative N of 1735 authors.

Table 3: Trends in hierarchical order of author attention in literary textbooks, 1968-2000 (N=34)

	Concentration words over quintiles	% words 20 th percentile	% words 35 top ranking authors	% words female authors	% words semi-literary genres	% words ethnic minority authors
1970s	0.47	61.9 %	58.5 %	6.9 %	0.1 %	0.7 %
1980s	0.43	56.5 %	56.2 %	7.9 %	1.3 %	0.6 %
1990s	0.55	70.7 %	75.2 %	8.3 %	1.7 %	0.6 %
1998-2000	0.44	59.3 %	79.7 %	10.5 %	1.4 %	0.5 %
F-value period	1.04	1.36	2.81	1.21	0.47*	0.16
Linear contrast estimate	0.01	1.39	18.49*	2.57	0.50*	-0.15

Results ANOVA, significance levels: * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001

Table 4: Trends in innovation in author selection and author attention for literary textbooks, 1968-2000 (N=34)

	% debut <10 year: (authors)	% debut <10 year: (words)
1970s	3.9%	1.8%
1980s	4.2%	2.6%
1990s	5.0%	3.0%
1998-2000	7.8%	4.6%
F-value period	279	188
Linear contrast estimate	2.76**	1.94*

Results ANOVA, significance levels: * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001

Table 5: Correlations number of words in literary textbooks and institutional contexts, author level (N=876)

	Textbooks 1970s	Textbooks 1980s	Textbooks 1990s	Textbooks 1998-2000
Lexicons 1960s	.73***			
Lexicons 1970s		.67***		
Lexicons 1980s			.63***	
Lexicons 1990s				.59***
Students 1960s	.42***			
Students 1970s		.51***		
Students 1980s			.48***	
Students 1990s				.54***

Significance levels: * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001

Table 6: OLS Multiple Regression analyses of log-transformed number of words in literary textbooks (N=876)

	Textbooks 1970s	Textbooks 1980s	Textbooks 1990s	Textbooks 1998-2000
Lexicons preceding decennium	.663 *** (20.8)	.639 *** (22.0)	.594 *** (21.4)	.511 *** (18.6)
Students preceding decennium	.067 * (2.2)	.173 *** (6.3)	.232 *** (8.7)	.272 *** (10.0)
Adj. R ²	46.3 %	45.0 %	43.2 %	41.4 %
Df	644	804	852	868

Standardized coefficients, T-values between brackets.

Significance levels: * p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

All analyses controlled for gender author and year of birth author.

Appendix A. Description of textbooks in the sample

Year	Title textbook (Author textbook)	Used print	Type of book	Number of pages	Number of authors (% in sample)
1968	<i>Korte Nederlandse Literatuurgeschiedenis</i> (Rijpma)	1	1	137	224 (24%)
1969	<i>Facetten en figuren</i> (Van Ham & Verkerk)	3	1	190	232 (24%)
1970	<i>Letterkundig kontakt</i> (Ornee & Wijngaards)	6	1	196	175 (19%)
1970	<i>Raamwerk</i> (Drop e.a.)	2	1	108	62 (7%)
1971	<i>Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse Letterkunde in vogelvlucht</i> (Kelk & Meijers)	5	1	137	113 (12%)
1971	<i>Schets geschiedenis Nederlandse letterkunde</i> (Knuvelde)	36	1	219	287 (30%)
1971	<i>Schets van de Nederlandse letterkunde</i> (Vooijs & Stuiveling)	31	1	275	389 (41%)
1972	<i>Nederlands literatuuroverzicht</i> (Brandt Corstius & Praas)	4	1	46	189 (20%)
1973	<i>Het spel en de knikers 1 & 2</i> (Calis e.a.)	1	1	668	224 (24%)
1976	<i>Literatuur. Geschiedenis en bloemlezing 1 & 2</i> (Lodewick)	30/35	1	815	296 (31%)
1976	<i>Spectrum 1 & 2</i> (Huygens e.a.)	5	1	590	180 (19%)
1978	<i>Perspectief</i> (Van Campen)	7	1	194	174 (18%)
1979	<i>Acht eeuwen Nederlandse letteren</i> (Rens)	3	1	156	337 (46%)
1980	<i>Balans 1 & 2</i> (Kees)	1	1	195	162 (17%)
1983	<i>Onze literatuur 1 & 2</i> (Calis)	1	1	320	284 (30%)
1984	<i>Het spel en de knikers 1 & 2</i> (Calis e.a.)	3	1	700	230 (24%)
1985	<i>Literatuur. Geschiedenis en bloemlezing 1 & 2</i> (Lodewick e.a.)	36	1	930	443 (47%)
1985	<i>In een ommezien</i> (Kreuzen & Verdoorn)	1	1	40	111 (12%)
1985	<i>Scala</i> (Hollaardt e.a.)	1	2	195 ^a	86 (9%)
1986	<i>Nederlands literatuuroverzicht</i> (Praas)	8	1	61	235 (25%)
1987	<i>Script</i> (Smulders)	1	1	393	126 (13%)
1989	<i>Nederlandse literatuur</i> (Dautzenberg)	1	1	491	151 (16%)
1989	<i>Taalwijzer 4/5 havo</i> (Jonkers e.a.)	1	2	94 ^a	175 (18%)
1990	<i>Optiek 4/5 havo</i> (Van Wijk e.a.)	1	2	106 ^a	70 (7%)
1991	<i>Galerij van de Nederlandse literatuur</i> (Van Klink)	1	1	193	219 (23%)
1991	<i>Literatuurgeschiedenis in 40 lessen</i> (Adriaansen-Busch e.a.)	1	1	172	175 (18%)
1991	<i>Fraaie historie</i> (Croes e.a.)	1	1	200	140 (15%)
1992	<i>Met zoveel woorden</i> (Lubberts e.a.)	1	1	167	242 (25%)
1995	<i>Op niveau literair 5/6 vwo</i> (Jager e.a.)	1	2	221 ^a	87 (9%)
1998	<i>Literatuur zonder grenzen</i> (Coenen e.a.)	1	4	236 ^a	90 (9%)
1998	<i>Eldorado vwo</i> (Schilleman e.a.)	1	3	154 ^a	161 (17%)
1998	<i>Laagland vwo</i> (Van der Meulen e.a.)	1	3	146 ^a	96 (10%)
1999	<i>Literatuur. Geschiedenis en leesdossier</i> (Dautzenberg)	1	3	276 ^a	107 (11%)
1999	<i>Metropool havo/vwo</i> (Joosten e.a.)	1	3	70 ^a	70 (7%)

Type of book: 1=literary history, 2=all language aspects, 3=literary history + literary theory, 4=literary history, literary theory and international literary history.

^a Limited to the part on (Dutch) literary history (literary theory etc. excluded)

Appendix B. Description of authors in the sample

Year of birth	Frequency	Main genre	Frequency	
1800-1824	43 (4,6%)	More than one main genre	11	1,2%
1825-1849	33 (3,5%)	Literary prose	370	39,5%
1850-1874	83 (8,9%)	Poetry	331	35,3%
1875-1899	182 (19,4%)	Essay	65	6,9%
1900-1924	256 (27,3%)	Drama	38	4,1%
1925-1949	281 (30,0%)	Criticism	2	0,2%
1950-1974	51 (5,4%)	Thrillers / crime fiction	20	2,1%
1975-2000	1 (0,1%)	Youth literature	7	0,7%
no information	7 (0,7%)	(Literary) studies	25	2,7%
		Travel literature & columns	7	0,7%
		Cabaret	45	4,8%
		Else	16	1,7%

Appendix C. Literary lexicons and encyclopedias used

Explanatory notes: As reference books are less homogeneous than textbooks (in size, goal, selection criteria, etc.), comparability was sought by selecting similar lexicons for all periods. Four similar Dutch lexicons were selected, as well as one German lexicon and one American encyclopedia that ran (revised or updated) reprints in each period. For the last three periods, three additional lexicons were selected. When authors had not yet made their debut in the year a lexicon was published, they were regarded as missing on that variable. The same applies to authors who did not enter lexicons on 20th century or modern literature because they published their work in the 19th century. The scores of these authors were necessarily based on a smaller sample of lexicons. The following reference works were used:

1960s: *Encyclopedia of World Literature in the 20th Century. Second Printing* (New York, 1969-1971); *Lexikon der Weltliteratur*; *Biographisch-bibliographisches Handwörterbuch nach Autoren und anonymen Werken* (Stuttgart, 1963); *Auteurs van de 20e eeuw. Oosthoek Lexicon* (Utrecht, 1966).

1970s: *Encyclopedia of World Literature in the 20th Century* (New York, 1974-76); *Lexikon der Weltliteratur. Band 1: Biographisch-bibliographisches Handwörterbuch nach Autoren und anonymen Werken. Zweite, erweiterte Auflage* (Stuttgart, 1975); *Lexicon van de moderne Nederlandse Literatuur. Biografische en bibliografische gegevens van bijna 500 auteurs uit België, Friesland en Nederland* (Amsterdam, 1978); *Cassell's Encyclopaedia of World Literature. Second Edition plus supplement* (London, 1973).

1980s: *Encyclopedia of World Literature in the 20th Century. Revised Edition* (New York, 1981-1984); *Lexikon der Weltliteratur. Band 1: Biographisch-bibliographisches Handwörterbuch nach Autoren und anonymen Werken. Zweite, erweiterte Auflage* (Stuttgart, 1988); *Winkler Prins Lexicon van de Nederlandse Letterkunde. Auteurs, anonieme werken, periodieken. Tweede druk* (Amsterdam, 1986); *Columbia Dictionary of Modern*

European Literature. Second Edition, fully revised and enlarged (New York, 1980).

1990s: *Encyclopedia of World Literature in the 20th Century. Third Edition* (Farmington Hills, 1999); *Lexikon der Weltliteratur. Band 1 & 2: Biographisch-bibliographisches Handwörterbuch nach Autoren und anonymen Werken* (München, 1997); *Oosthoek Lexicon Nederlandse & Vlaamse literatuur* (Utrecht, 1996); *Merriam Webster's Encyclopedia of Literature* (Springfield, Mass., 1995).

Appendix D. Sources reading behaviour students

Hoogveld Institute (1962). Survey, initiated by the research institute *Hoogveld Instituut*, among 900 students in the grades 11 to 14 in 16 Catholic secondary schools, located in different parts of the Netherlands. The sample is not representative for the school population in two aspects. First, only Catholic students are interviewed. Second, higher school levels are overrepresented. The popularity of authors was established on the base of 15 questions, all asking students to mention books and authors read during the period of secondary school. In total, 2755 different titles of 1324 different authors were mentioned. The highest ranking author was mentioned by 38% of all students. Examples of questions/tasks are: “Name some books, the type of which you would like to read more of”, “What is your favorite author?” and “Name a book that made you learn a lot about yourself”. The authors mentioned for separate questions were already clustered by the primal researchers; the original data were not available for recoding. The frequencies by which authors were mentioned by the total student population were not reported, but had to be calculated by using the chi-square scores that were given in the research report to analyze reading differences in gender, age, grade and social class. Source: *De lektuur van de middelbare schooljeugd. Deel B: De analyse der kwalitatieve gegevens, band I* (Nijmegen, 1967).

Vrij Nederland (1978). Survey, initiated by one of Netherlands’ leading opinion magazines *Vrij Nederland*, comprising data on 578 students, who were asked to name the books they read for their reading list. All students came from higher levels of education, since in the lower levels the literary book list is not compulsory. In total, 650 different titles were mentioned. However, only 60 titles were mentioned in the publication which was available for this research. The highest ranking title was mentioned by 43% of all students. Per author, percentages on all top 60 titles were added up to an author score. Source: *Vrij Nederland*, July 15, 1978.

Diepzee (1986, 1989, 1993, 1997). Surveys initiated by the literary magazine for students and teachers *Diepzee*. The surveys were held among subscribers of the magazine (although students can subscribe for free via school, it is likely frequent readers are overrepresented). Details on the composition of the sample are missing, except for the participation rate, which varies between 1400 and 1600 students. Each survey was reported via a top 100 of titles. Per author, percentages on all top 100 titles were added up to an author score. Source: *Diepzee* 4 (5), 1987; *Diepzee* 7 (5), 1990; *Diepzee* 11 (3), 1994; *Diepzee* 15 (1), 1997.