The Singing Narrators of Fictional Lies

A Close and Distant Reading of Dutch Mendacious Songs

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Introduction

Over the past two decades, a tremendous amount of digital resources have become available in the field of Dutch literary studies. Since 1999, the Digital Library of Dutch Literature (*DLDL*) provides for a constant stream of new online resources, a selection ranging from medieval to contemporary works, including Frisian, Surinam and South-African literature as well as Flemish and Dutch (Van Stipriaan 2009: 76). Moreover, the Huygens Institute of Netherlands History (Huygens ING) publishes most of its scholarly editions electronically, culminating in for instance Vincent van Gogh - The Letters, a critically acclaimed digital collection of the artist's correspondence that was awarded the European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage in 2010 (Textualscholarship.nl 2010). Additionally, the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) has funded numerous digitisation projects for Dutch literature, such as the Emblem Project Utrecht (EPU), a resource encompassing twenty-five Dutch love emblem books, and the Dutch Song Database (DSD) and its extension Dutch Songs on Line through which over a 100,000 transcriptions of Dutch songs will become available in 2013 (Emblem Project Utrecht 2008; Dutch Song Database 2009). In short, we, in the Netherlands, are at the beginning of a flourishing age of digital humanities.

This growing amount of electronic resources suggests not only a vaster, more accessible quantity of both canonical and marginal literary works for scholars to explore, but also a turn towards a digital approach to these literary texts. And indeed, Hinskens and Van Dalen-Oskam signal such a correlation between for instance the publications of the *Cd-rom Middelnederlands* and the Emblem Project Utrecht in 1998 and 2006 respectively, and the increase in the number of applications of quantitative methods in Middle and Early Modern Dutch literary inquiry (Hinskens and Van Dalen-Oskam 2007: 15).

During this on-going Dutch digital turn, textual scholarship so far has revolved around stylistics and authorship recognition – around formal aspects of works that are quantifiable, such as words, parts of speech and rhyme. Van Dalen-Oskam's analysis of authorship attribution in the Middle Dutch *Roman van Walewein* by Penninc and Vosstaert, is an example of such research (Van Dalen-Oskam 2007; Van Dalen-Oskam and Van Zundert 2005). Boot and Stronks have empirically investigated the formal aspects of Jacob Cats's rhetorical framework performed in his seventeenth-century emblem book *Sinne- en minnebeelden* (Boot and Stronks 2003). Another example of this quantitative, formal approach, adding semantics into the picture, is the content analysis of Louwerse and Van Peer, who have applied Latent Semantic Analysis to a corpus of eight canonical works to test if a machine is capable of grouping together works from similar literary periods (Louwerse and Van Peer 2007).

'Going quantitative' is a logical step when computers become tools for literary analysis, as computing is what these machines are particularly good at. The advantage of quantitative methods is, as Van Dalen-Oskam suggests, that intuitions based on close readings can be tested (Hinskens and Van Dalen-Oskam 2007: 15). These close readings have provided for a solid base of our literary histories, for example, but this base seems local: for how do these close readings of often canonical works relate to the growing amount of digital

resources that are obscure or long forgotten? Can we (re)write literary histor(y/ies) when taking as a scope not a few exemplary works, but a whole library?

The question of how to read a million books is one of the most intriguing challenges that mass digitisation poses to textual analysis. Within the digital humanities, two major schools currently experiment with this type of reading: the Cultural Observatory at Harvard, that launched the Google N-gram Viewer in 2010, an instrument designed for culturomics; and the Literary Lab at Stanford that performs macro-analysis or distant reading (Michel et. al. 2011; Allison 2011). This last term, coined by Moretti in 2000, seems to form a juxtaposition with close reading – at first glance. To Moretti, "distance is [...] not an obstacle, but *a specific form of knowledge*: fewer elements, hence a sharper sense of their overall connections" (Moretti 2007: 1). This last part – a sharp sense of connections – is of course a familiar experience for close readers as well. It is mainly the object of study that has changed – instead of reading texts directly, one uses the equivalent of a telescope to read the distance. Visualisations are key to these readings, as they provide for the finding of patterns that can lead to undiscovered phenomena.

A starting point for examining these patterns is formed by genres. In literary history, genres are often used for the interpretation of the intermediate levels governing groups of texts. The fall of one genre gives rise to another, and this process determines the way we write our literary histories. Because genres make out relatively small portions of literary history, an experiment with distant reading on that scale is a good start for testing some of our assumptions on genres, and see if quantitative analysis can indeed attest these.

Within the study of Dutch song culture, genres play an important role in understanding how songs have functioned. When we, in the Low Countries, think of 'Sinterklaasliedjes' for instance, the festive culture surrounding these songs immediately springs to mind, and at least one of its attributes must recur in such songs. However, not all genres are as straight-forward as that. Indeed, the genre that is subject to this thesis – the genre of mendacious songs – seems to escape fixed characteristics entirely. Is it even a genre? In the *DSD*, for instance, different editions of the same songs are sometimes categorised as mendacious, sometimes as children's songs. An example of such a capricious song is ''k Zag twee beren broodjes smeren' that I always considered a children's song until reading the *DSD*'s interpretation of mendacity. Moreover, this particular song stems from a political song composed during the Napoleontic occupation, 'Franse ratten' – another song containing animals, but with a different function. Animals as clue for mendacity?

How can we set up an inquiry testing assumptions about this particular genre? I have chosen to compare and contrast a close and distant reading of mendacious songs to see to what extent these techniques are each other's counterpart, and how they can complement the findings on mendacious songs done so far. Close reading requires a small corpus, but a wider scope of textual and contextual aspects for analysis; distant reading requires a large corpus, processed so that words can indeed be properly counted. In that respect, I have limited the scope of this digital part of the inquiry to the finding of patterns in lemmatised words, parts of speech, and a one-dimensional semantic layer to see if for instance animals indeed have something to do with mendacity. To what extent can the Dutch literary genre of mendacious songs be re-defined in close reading, and when distant reading its lexical and semantic patterns using digital corpora, query languages and visualisation tools? And how do these

electronic quantitative methods challenge the landscape of Dutch literary scholarship? In the first chapter, we will have a look at definitions of mendacious songs from various scholars. These definitions form the hypothesis tested both by a close reading in chapter two, and a distant reading in the third chapter.

Although reading a million books holds the promise of leaving the hermeneutical circle, in this thesis we will not be able to escape it. Instead, we will revisit this circle three times: with no corpus of primary works, with a corpus of 2 mendacious songs, to conclude with a corpus of 59 songs. The aim of this thesis is to experiment with a setup for a larger distant reading project, and to generate new questions that may hold the promise of changing our views on literary genres.

Chapter 1
"The Light and Graceful Side of Lying": Defining and Contesting a Deceitful Genre

1.1 A generic approach to mendacious songs

In the introduction, I have put forward my reservations towards the analysis of literary genres in general, and I shall briefly clarify them here by reproducing a debate on the concept of Romanticism. As Perry pointed out in his critique on the conceptual analysis of Romanticism, defining a genre from a corpus that has already been selected as a corpus of that genre, is circular reasoning (Perry 2001: 3). On the other hand, selecting a corpus from a concept seems impossible, as humans have no access to such abstract and ideal, 'Platonic' realms (Perry 2001: 4). Van den Berg calls this last position the nominal standpoint, the notion that Romanticism is a concept used by researchers to analyse works from a period that historically never actually existed (Van den Berg 1999: 45). He argues that this position is feeble, as there were indeed similarities in literature of that time, and there was an actual Romantic School in Germany. However, the realistic perspective, the notion that Romanticism really existed during a specific period, is also problematic, as it detains the changing discourse in which the term 'Romanticism' was used (Van den Berg 1999: 44). Both Perry and Van den Berg therefore propose to analyse the reception of Romanticism as a concept to find a definition founded in the interpretations of something (Van den Berg 1999: 45).

When we transpose this debate onto mendacious songs, similar arguments can be found against the realistic and nominal standpoints. In 1721, *De nieuwe Harleveense doedel-sak, kweelende Boere-Deunen, Minne-klagten, harders-Zangen, Drinkliederen, en klugten* presents a song as 'Leugenlied: De Droomende Rysiger' – in the eighteenth century, the concept of mendacious songs evidently already existed.[1] At the same time, what a mendacious song is, cannot really be pinpointed as it may have functioned differently now than it did three centuries ago. The alternative of analysing the reception of Dutch mendacious songs is somewhat problematic, as little has been published on the matter over time. This leaves us only with the first option that Perry mentions, finding a definition by collecting definitions of others, and applying them to what we think we know is a mendacious song, to see if the hypothesis holds. This option is by no means ideal, but for the point I want to make in this thesis, it serves as a good illustration of the contrast between analogue and digital techniques in literary inquiry. Digital methods in and beyond my thesis may shine new light on generic inquiry, escaping the afore-mentioned points of critique. So for the sake of the argument, let us tread on this hermeneutical circle in an affirmative and critical manner, and see where this leads us. Finding a preliminary definition for the genre is the aim of this chapter – as far as such a thing is at all possible. What are mendacious songs? What is the genesis of this genre? How is it related to mendacious literature? Before we start exploring these questions,

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[1] *The New Harleveen Bagpipe, Warbling Farmers' Tunes, Lovers' Laments, Shepherds' Songs, Drinking Songs and Farces*. (RB) The song is entitled 'Mendacious Song: The Dreaming Traveller'.

however, let us first turn to the relationship between the genre and the mendacity of fiction. How are lies constructed in fiction? What is lying, for that matter?

1.2 Fictional truth in fiction

1.2.1 The 'lie' of fiction

> What we have to do, what at any rate it is our duty to do, is to revive this old art of lying. Much of course may be done, in the way of educating the public, by amateurs in the domestic circle, at literary lunches, and at afternoon teas. But this is merely the light and graceful side of lying, such as was probably heard at Cretan dinner-parties. There are many other forms. Lying for the sake of gaining some immediate personal advantage, for instance — lying with a moral purpose, as it is usually called [...] Lying for the sake of the improvement of the young, which is the basis of home education [...] Lying for the sake of a monthly salary is of course well known in Fleet Street, and the profession of a political leader-writer is not without its advantages. [...] The only form of lying that is absolutely beyond reproach is lying for its own sake, and the highest development of this is, as we have already pointed out, Lying in Art. (Wilde 1909: 51-53).

In his essay 'The Decay of Lying: An Observation', Oscar Wilde ventilates his anti-mimetic poetics. Lying is positioned in the realm of art, and opposed to truth-telling which is attributed to nature and life. 'Life' and 'nature' are not objective realities, but categories in the human mind that are fashioned after art. Art reveals 'life' and 'nature' to its audience, it enriches these frameworks so that the audience evolves in giving meaning to its own perceptions. Mimetic art obstructs the development of these categories, as lifelike representations do not augment what is viewed of as life. Therefore, facts and truth should be banned from art: "Lying, the telling of beautiful untrue things, is the proper aim of Art" (Wilde 1909: 56).

The lie of art that Wilde here touches upon, pertains also to the lie of fiction. Now, 'the lie of fiction' sounds poetic and encompassing, but is fiction really a lie? Coleridge's classic description of a work of fiction invoking "poetic faith", or a "willing suspension of disbelief", involves an authorial utterance that is assumed to be untrue, but that is all the same voluntarily believed to be true by an audience (Coleridge 1817: 2). In a Dutch introduction to contemporary literary studies, Rigney describes this fictionality as the jest of an author telling untruths, a game inviting an audience to presume those falsehoods true (Rigney 2006: 55). Are these assumed untruths lies, "intentionally false statement[s]", created by lying, "telling a lie or lies" (*OED*)? In the *OED*'s definition, only the liar determines if an utterance is a lie by knowing the truth, and deliberately choosing to tell an untruth. Whether the audience believes the untrue statement or not, is of no consequence to its status as a lie. This contrasts with poetic faith, in which the liar only takes part in establishing a lie when the poetic faith in question is the author's. Liars play no role in lie-designation when the audience considers an assertion, true or false, to be untrue, willingly believes it, and thus turns it into fiction. Here, the lie is an assumption of the public, an assumption that according to the *OED* has no influence on the declaring of a lie. The assumed untrue utterance may as well be uttered by the author as true: a lie is not a necessary condition for fiction from the audience's perspective. Thus, all writers of fiction are liars, intentionally telling falsehoods. Not every

liar is a writer of fiction, though: that depends on the willing suspension of disbelief of the audience. What the audience considers to be fiction, may also follow from assertions of a truth-teller. For example, if we take into account Wilde's notions, both politicians and artists may create fiction. The difference between a politician's fiction and that of an artist, is that the lying of the politician serves a purpose other than lying, while Wilde's proper artist's lie is only meant as a fiction. The audience may interpret the utterances of artist and politician as fiction, attributing them with Wilde's purposes, but it may as well take a politician's truthful statements as its object. Therefore, fiction from the public's perspective is untrue at best.

Regardless of this terminology – if deceit and assumed falsehood are at the core of literary fiction, how can we discern fiction from mendacious songs? What constitutes the effect of a lie in fiction? Let us have a closer look at the mendacious song from the introduction, ''k Zag twee beren broodjes smeren':

> 'k Zag twee beren broodjes smeren.
> O, dat was een wonder!
> 't Was een wonder boven wonder,
> Dat die beren smeren konden.
> Hi, hi, hi, ha, ha, ha,
> 'k Stond erbij en ik keek ernaar (Van Duijse 1905: 1833-1834)[2]

As a reader, you may not believe the assertion of the narrator having witnessed this wondrous scene to be actually true. But you may consider the song anyway, temporarily suspending your disbelief, to be true as a literary fiction. Why, then, are you also able to regard this song as a fictional lie? In 'Make-believe and Make Believe: The Fictionality of the Greek Novels', Morgan, referring to Riffaterre, notes that even realistic fiction contains clues of fictionality. "For the two very good reasons that a novel is a text and exists to give pleasure, novels always offer pleasures which are specifically textual" (Morgan 1993: 215). A fictional lie must then be foregrounded by textual features, or in the words of Van Bork, by internal fictional indications: by textual form or by textual content (Van Bork 2002b).[3] The latter is easiest to find, as text and paratext may explicitly present a work of fiction as a lie, for instance by mentioning mendacity in a title. When it comes to formal foregrounding of a fictional lie, we need to delve deeper into what a fictional lie is, and how it is related to fictional truth.

1.2.2 Epistemologies of fictional truth

As we are dealing with an epistemological issue here, let us explore the notion of fictional truth from the perspective of analytic philosophy, and see how these theories can be combined with literary criticism. Where does fictional truth originate? In 'That's the Fictional Truth, Ruth', Alward discusses four recent theories of truth constitution in fiction, namely those of Lewis, Currie, Byrne, and himself (Alward 2010: 347-363). According to Lewis, fictional

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[2] "I saw two bears making a sandwich./Oh, that was a miracle!/It was a miracle of miracles,/That those bears could make a sandwich./Hi, hi, hi, ha, ha, ha,/I stood by and watched" (RB).
[3] Van Bork notes that fictional indications can also be external: bibliographical features, the author's name, the position in the bookshop, and the genre appeal to a reader's expectations (Van Bork 2002b). When analysing genres, taking into account this last fictional indication is a form of circular reasoning.

truth is what a narrator in fiction claims to be a known fact (Alward 2010: 349-350). The fictional world is formed by the narrator's accounts, and takes over its unaccounted features from the actual world. A fictional assertion is then true when the fictional world in which it is true lies closer to the actual world than the fictional world in which the assertion is not true. Analysing ''k Zag twee beren broodjes smeren' with Lewis's proposal, what the narrator asserts must be true. The world in which what the narrator says is untrue, a world where bears cannot make sandwiches, then lies further from the actual world than the world presented by the narrator, and is therefore a fictional untruth. This may be so for the interpretation of the song as a true fiction, but if the narrator is considered unreliable, that mendacious reading cannot hold ground. What is presented by the narrator as a known fact, constitutes the fictional truth, and in that constitution, the narrator cannot lie. Therefore, Lewis's theory is less suitable for analysing our mendacious literary genre.

In the second theory, proposed by Currie, a fictional assertion is true when an informed reader (a reader who knows the authorial context of a work) has good reason to presume that the fictional author of a work believes that the fictional assertion is true (Alward 2010: 351). In *The Implied Author*, Kindt and Müller describe Currie's fictional author as "the subject possessing the belief system that an informed contemporary recipient would have sensibly believed to be held by a credible mediating entity communicating the world of the text" (Kindt and Müller 2006: 147). Currie's concept of the informed reader thus prevents readers with heterogeneous backgrounds from constituting different fictional authors. In this configuration, the lying of the narrator may be revealed by the truth-telling of the fictional author, who leaves clues of the narrator's unreliability in the text for this informed reader to find. However, authorial contexts and a fictional author, reminiscent of Booth's implied author, are models that Alward and literary critics such as Juhn and Genette prefer to avoid in their analyses. Juhn and Genette stress that the implied author asserts real propositions, and must therefore be the actual author, not an implied subject (Kindt and Müller 2006: 82-83, 118-119). Why would background knowledge of an actual or implied author make a reader more equipped to constitute fictional truth? For example, we do not know anything about the author's context of ''k Zag twee beren broodjes smeren', but we can still interpret this song as a fictional truth or as a fictional lie. Moreover, Alward notes that the fictional author is a slightly dubious invention: he or she takes part both in the author's world and in the fictional world, and speaks with the voice of the narrator, never to reveal him- or herself, as this would turn him or her into a narrator (Alward 2010: 353). If the fictional author can only be deduced from narrative effects, then, I would like to add, let us focus on these effects instead of authors when trying to grasp fictional truths and lies. That, and the notion that a reader believing those effects constitutes a fictional truth, are ideas that we can borrow from Currie.

In the third theory that Alward discusses, Byrne introduces a similar problematic 'phantom' notion of the ideal author and ideal reader: fictional truth is what a reconstructed, ideal author invites an ideal reader to make-believe to be true (Alward 2010: 353). Here, fictionality and Coleridges poetic faith are embedded in the construction of fictional truth, for some textual features draw a reader into playing the epistemological game of the willing suspension of disbelief. Besides arguing against the ideal author as a vague construction, Alward raises objections to Byrne's explicit invitations to make-believe (Alward 2010: 355-356). Firstly, these invitations seem to be "fictive illocutionary actions", an assumption that is

refuted by Searle who notes that illocutionary sentences in fiction do not differ from those in non-fiction.[4] Secondly, from a pragmatic perspective it is not clear how such implicit or explicit fictional invitations function: fictional truth may be constituted through telling what the author believes to be true and/or false, which does not clarify fictional invitations as a speech act. Now, does Alward's critique on invitations to make-believe also contest the notions that we earlier declared to be fictional indications? Let us keep this question in mind and get back to it later.

Alward proposes his alternative to fictional truth construction using a detective metaphor: the narrator is a narrative informant revealing information to an interrogative reader who then tests these assertions against his or her background knowledge (Alward 2010: 357). Such background knowledge consists of information on events inside the fictional world accounted by the narrator, and general knowledge of the type of fictional world that the story is set in: "genre conventions, inter-fictional carryover, […] authorial and critical discussions of story, as well as facts about the actual world and beliefs prevalent among members of the author's community" (Alward 2010: 358, 362).[56] This testing leads to theories, and the reader then decides which theory best fits the story of the narrator and his or her background knowledge, taking into account if the narrator is reliable or not. Now, what is interesting about this concept is that it facilitates multiple fictional truths. A reader's theories may be equally fictionally true, and what background information is most relevant is indeterminate (Alward 2010: 362). At first, Alward expresses his "worry" about this lack of fictional objectivity, and proposes a procedure with which to decide on the relevance of background information. Simultaneously, he admits that from his current "revelation analysis" follows a "fictional relativity wherein fictional truth is relative to decisions about what background information is relevant" (Alward 2010: 362).[7] This conclusion supports contemporary reception theorists' notions of the reader being a historically and culturally bound subject, and of readers interpreting texts from a variety of reader-roles, such as Fetterley's resisting and assenting reader, and Meijer's enrichment of those readers with black and queer, and manipulated and erotic reader-roles respectively (Meijer 1988: 12-13). Such reader-roles not only interpret fictional truths differently, they also construct these differently, as can be expected from a differing amount of background information. Moreover, we can fit in Currie's notions of the narrative effects instigating fictional truth with Alward's accounts of

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[4] Although Searle has a good point here, his analysis of fiction contrasts with modern-day agreements in literary criticism. Searle describes fiction as a set of conventions with which an author breaks serious speech conventions. "[T]he pretended performances of illocutionary acts which constitute the writing of a work of fiction consist in actually performing utterance acts with the intention of invoking the horizontal conventions that suspend the normal illocutionary commitments of the utterances" (Searle 1975: 327) This fixation on the author as fiction-designator would mean that a work of serious speech could not be brandished as fiction, which, I believe, is refuted by the example of the politician's intended or unintended false assertion perceived by the public as fiction. Neither could one determine if a work of an anonymous author is fictional, an implication invalidated by ''k Zag twee beren/broodjes smeren' that invokes fictional worlds despite its unknown author. An author, in conclusion, is not the only agent establishing fiction.

[5] This roughly coincides with Van Bork's external fictional indication of the genre.

[6] Inter-fictional carryover is fictional truth that constitutes from being true in other fictional worlds, such as the ability of dragons to breathe fire (Alward 2010: 351).

[7] Yacobi supports this fictional relativity as she notes that the integration of anomalies, or fictional untruths, occurs through different reader-roles governed by a genetic (authorial), generic, existential (alternative realistic), functional (linguistic-communicative) or perspectivistic (narrative unreliable) principle (Bernaerts 2011: 72-73). The relevance of these principles is related to individual readers.

the narrative informant. Both Currie and Alward argue that the reader ultimately constructs fictional truth from narrative effects, to form a universal and relative theory respectively. These narrative effects and background knowledge also comply with Van Bork's internal and external fictional indications. On these grounds, Alward's analysis seems to be the most relevant theory of fictional truth construction within the scope of these contemporary literary methodologies.

If we want to locate fictional lies, we need to focus on exactly what fictional indications may constitute a doubt of fictional truth in a reader. But before we go further, we first need to reassure that fictional indications are not the fictional invitations that Alward criticised with Searle's critique on fictive illocutions. If all fictional indications are also serious speech acts, then how can you decide whether you deal with fictional or normal speech? Within Alward's theory, this ambiguity does not pose a problem. Each utterance may be read as an account of a narrative informer, whether you deal with a newspaper article or a mendacious song. The truth theory a reader composes may be actual or fictional – the decision on which reading is chosen, depends on the reader's negotiation between the narrative accounts and his or her background knowledge. For example, the set of external fictional indications suggests that the format of a newspaper will probably not contain fiction, but if internal fictional indications are at work in an article, this actual reading may be adjusted and the truth constructed is fictional. In the line of Alward's fictional relativism, how many fictional indications are needed to decide on fact or fiction, and thus on factual or fictional truth, is indeterminate, as the decision depends on a reader's background knowledge, and, I would like to add, on his or her choice for a reader-role. Still, let us keep these matters of quantity and relevance in mind when exploring the fictional indications of mendacious songs.

1.3 Fictional lies in mendacious songs

1.3.1 The generic position of mendacious literature

In the previous section, we have explored how fictional truths are constructed, so that we can locate fictional lies. A fictional lie is a necessary condition for mendacious literature: if it was not, all fictional truth and thus all fiction could be considered mendacious. Then, what is a fictional lie, and how does it function? In the following section, I will give a brief overview of Western mendacious literature and how mendacious songs fit in with this genre. The characteristics that pass by will be analysed using Alward's model of fictional truth constitution to see if and how they create the effect of fictional lies in a work. Finally, we will determine which fictional indications are necessary and sufficient conditions for interpreting a song as mendacious. This classification may sound contradictory to the variety of fictional truths that may be constituted by different readers, but the mechanism of a fictional lie being in conflict with a fictional truth remains the same regardless of the exact constitution of a story world by a reader.[8]

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[8] You may doubt the ontological status of truth, but as a concept, truth and lies have a specific relationship.

Following Van Bork's and Vis's categorisation of genres, mendacious literature, or the tall tale, is a historical genre taking the main genre of epic as its scope, and mendacious songs are a type of mendacious literature that have a scope of the subgenre of songs (Van Bork and Vis 2002). As such, mendacious songs are on the same generic level as 'leugenrefreinen', mendacious literature taking as its scope the subgenre of refrains.[9] Mendacious literature is often taken as a form of fantastic literature or as having a fantastic character (Van Bork 2002c; Bouvier and Mathieu 1978). Roughly speaking, there are two concepts of fantastic literature: in a broader sense, it encompasses all literature recounting unordinary, supernatural, wondrous and impossible events, governing genres such as surrealism and fantasy (Van Bork 2002a). Haakman uses a narrower definition of the genre as literature with a (nineteenth-century) everyday-life setting in which an unbelievable event takes place (Haakman 1997: 13). This more confined scope also pertains to Todorov's definition of the fantastic as "that hesitation experienced by a person who knows only the laws of nature, confronting an apparently supernatural event" (Todorov in Schwenger, 1999: 15). The fantastic then occurs in the hesitation of a character, and/or of the reader, about the reality of the supernatural. In this chapter, we will have a look whether such fantastic events and hesitation actually take place in mendacious songs, and if this categorisation is justified.

1.3.2 Impossibility as a fictional indication for mendacity

According to Van Bork, mendacious literature intentionally twists the actual world, and does not constitute a different reality, like fairy tales, but a world of untrue and impossible events (Van Bork 2002c). This truth-twisting happens in a construction of lying, or in a grotesque exaggeration of reality.[10] Sobel formulates it similarly for the German 'Lügenlieder', namely that they present either "mad pronouncements to be taken as inconceivable fact" or an "absolute lie or impossibility" to confront a reader (Sobel 1967: 201). Here, we see an interesting parallel with Alward's fictional truth construction: the fictional world of mendacious literature contains a fictional truth which is partially hidden by a fictional lie. This lie consists of a narrator that is either lying or madly exaggerating or recounting impossibilities. What do these lies, exaggerations and impossibilities look like? And how exactly do the narrators present them?

Let us start out with collecting examples of the impossibilities. The earliest known trace of a Dutch mendacious motif occurs, according to Kalff, in a verse by the thirteenth- or fourteenth-century poet Hadewijch (Kalff 1906: 173). In this poem, a mill stone floating on the water is used as a simile: "Want niet bat en can 't getoonen mijn sin,/Dan een molensteen ghevloten mach in 't Zwin".[11] That the image of the floating mill stone has been a popular motif in mendacious literature for centuries, is illustrated by its occurrence in a South-African

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[9] A refrain is a poem consisting of at least three stanzas that close with an identical 'stock' verse, and that has an apostrophe to a 'Prince' in its closing stanza (Struik 2002). 'Leugenrefreinen' were introduced by the Rederijkers, members of literary guilds in the Low Lands, that were mostly active during the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century. The Prince was the head of a guild, and it was a custom to address him in each poem.
[10] These exaggerations may also literally depict proverbs (Coigneau 1969-1970: 89).
[11] "For no better can my mind prove it,/Than a mill stone can float in the Zwin" (RB). The Zwin is a river in West-Flanders, but Van Mierlo proposes that "zwin" may also refer to a stream in general (Van Mierlo 1952: 134).

riddle about a lie, and in a song entitled 'Leugenlied' that has been released on cd in the 1990s and 2000s: "Ik zag een molensteen drijven al op een blad papier" (Du Toit 1929: 57; 't Kliekske 2004).[12] In French mendacious songs, or 'chansons des mensonges', motifs often have long lives as well. A fig tree that grows prunes or cherries, and a dog biting a heel after which the ear starts to bleed; these images occur in French mendacious songs from 1594 to (at least) the 1970s (Bouvier and Mathieu 1978: 200-201). Now, these nonsensical images are not ad hoc: there seems to be a particular logic going on. A valid and sound argument would be: 'If something is heavy, it sinks in the water; a mill stone is heavy; therefore, a mill stone sinks in the water'. A crude logical structure of this argument is:

> If x is A, then x is B.
> M is A.
> Therefore, M is B.[13]

In the motif, the conclusion is replaced by 'therefore, a mill stone floats on water', pertaining to the following structure:

> If x is A, then x is B.
> M is A.
> Therefore, M is not B.

This argument is not only unsound having a false conclusion (in the actual world, mill stones cannot float), it is also invalid, as the conclusion cannot be inferred from the premises. Now, what is interesting about unsoundness is that this does not apply to fictional truth: anything might be true in fiction. The invalidity, however, remains when you fill out a fictional argument, for instance: 'If the Wolf is hungry, it always dresses up like Grandmother; The Wolf is hungry; therefore, the Wolf does not dress up like Grandmother'. This argument raises expectations through its premises, or in other words, constitutes fictional truths in a reader about a particular logic governing the fictional world, and the conclusion comes as a surprise as it does not follow from the premises. This is the underlying logic that Van Bork and Sobel call impossibilities, and such impossibilities can be turned into a lie through a narrator intentionally making an invalid argument. I would like to summarise the logical structure of these impossibilities as:

> If x is a, then x is b.
> x is a.
> Therefore, x is not b.

In such a formula, statements are properly ordered. However, how does it work when constructing fictional truth in a mendacious song? Let us go back to ''k Zag twee beren broodjes smeren'. In this verse, "'k Zag twee beren" indicates that in a fictional world of this

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[12] "I saw a mill stone floating on a sheet of paper" (RB).
[13] In this formula, x stands for 'something', A stands for 'heavy', B stands for 'something that sinks in the water', and M stand for 'a mill stone'.

song, 'something is a bear' (x is a) is true: this is the first fictional truth. Seeing bears corresponds to a possibility in the actual world, so that the fictional truth is linked to that experience from reality. A reader may insert the second fictional truth from the actual world, namely that 'if something is a bear, then it is something that cannot make sandwiches' (if x is a, then x is b). The last two words of the verse then contradict this by pointing out that these bears do make sandwiches, or 'a bear is not something that cannot make sandwiches' (therefore, x is not b). As a reader, you can then either revise the second fictional truth ('if something is a bear, it is something that can make sandwiches'), making the argument fictionally sound and logically valid, or you can take the conclusion as an invalidity pointing to an impossible event, or a fictional untruth. In this last interpretation, the conclusion functions as an internal fictional indication for a fictional lie, or, in other words, as a characteristic of a mendacious song. The reader's decision about which fictional truth to construe, may be postponed until more accounts from the narrator are revealed. If a reader hesitates at this point, then this is a fantastic hesitation in Todorovian sense.

Now, with some of these impossibilities, a particular invalidity occurs. In the example of the fig tree, the fig tree not just grows anything that is not a fig, but it grows prunes: the wrong type of fruit. In the case of the dog biting a heel, the ear starts to bleed: the wrong type of bodily part. As we saw in the introduction, the same is true for the variants of the two bears making a sandwich. Two snakes hanging the laundry, two spiders jumping a stream for fun, these animals perform human activities: the wrong type of animal. On an abstract level, 'not b' is related to 'b', but on a more concrete level, it is of the wrong sort. Something similar happens in the German song that Sobel mentions, recounting of a room sitting in people, and a mouse catching boys with a trap (Sobel 1967: 201). These examples go further than asserting a wrong sort of something, as the whole action is reversed. In the actual world, you expect that people may sit in a room, and that boys may catch mice, and not the other way around. In the fictional world of Sobel's song, the characteristics of room and people, of boys and mouse, have completely interchanged. Impossibilities thus seem to be constructed through the incorrect use of classification, and through the reversal of the action of characters in the story world.

Exaggeration may be taken as a third form of impossibility, rather than a different pole of mendacious song, as Van Bork suggests. Let us consider this stanza from 'Leugenlied' ('t Kliekske 2004):

> Ik kwam al langs een straatje gegaan in 't schijnen van de maan.
> Ik zag daar onder een kolenblad tweeduizend soldaten staan.
> En 't regende zo verdoemelijk nijg,
> d'er viel d'er geen druppel op heule lijf.[14]

The fictional truths constituted in this stanza match with assumptions from the actual world: street, moon, cabbage leaf, soldiers, rain are all referential representations. The impossibility occurs in the exaggeration. For the fictional argument to be valid and sound, a fictional truth of either the cabbage leaf being enormous, or the soldiers being very small, must be inserted.

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[14] "I had come along a small street in the shining of the moon./I saw there standing under a cabbage leaf two thousand soldiers./And it was raining so damned heavily,/not a drop was falling on their body" (RB).

The fictional argument may also be read as invalid: the fictional truths inferred from the actual world remain true, and the conclusion that in such a world a huge cabbage leaf or tiny soldiers exist, is a fictional untruth. Whether this is a fictional lie, depends again on the reliability of the narrator. We will discuss the narrator later; let us first have a look at the role of locality in fictional truth construction.

1.3.3 A wonderland as a fictional indication for mendacity

In the examples we have just discussed, the fictional impossibility occurs through a logical invalidity within the setting of a fictional reality that lies close to the actual world. However, as we have seen in the example of the Wolf (not) dressing up like Grandmother if it is hungry, this effect of fictional untruth does not necessarily occur within an ordinary, every-day environment.

According to Kalff, all mendacious songs are set in a wonderland known under different names: Luilekkerland, Cocagne, Kurrelmurre, Schlauraffenland, Engeland and Oostenrijc for example (Kalff 1884: 489). That a mendacious song necessarily must take place in a wonderland, can be contested by our previous examples – most of them are set in a somewhat realistic or at least a neutral environment. Citing a German source, Kalff further argues that in mendacious songs Engeland is to be interpreted as a land of fairies rather than a geographical location (Kalff 1884: 492).[15] Besides mentioning a Dutch connotation of 'angel' in 'Engeland', Kalff does not really support his argument. Remembering Alward's fictional relativity, though, let us incorporate this interpretation anyway as a possible fictional truth constructed by a nineteenth-century reader. Luilekkerland, a land where one does not have to work and can eat anything one likes, is also known in South-Africa as a backdrop for a "leunsprokie", that is somewhat related to "luiaardsrympies", poems in which a person pretends to be ill every day of the week (Du Toit 1929: 58).[16] Gitthée, a contemporary of Kalff, mentions the wonderland of Luilekkerland, also known as Cockaenghen, and the lands of Bommelskont, Tonvreen, Oestland, as well as Kalff's Engeland (Gitthée 1892: 179-180).[17] According to Gitthée, Luilekkerland can be taken as a parody of the Christian paradise, a place where sloth and other vices are celebrated and rewarded. This land differs from the Verkeerde Wereld, a mythical place where subject and object are reversed: "waar o.a. het fruit den boom draagt, de honden door de hazen worden gevangen, de schapen de wolven ophangen, hoenders en ganzen de vossen beloeren en de muizen de katten opvreten" (Gitthée 1892: 181).[18][19] These images from the Verkeerde Wereld correspond to Sobel's motifs that we discussed in the previous section, in other words, impossibilities of the reversed action are related to that specific wonderland. The same can be said for Luilekkerland, a place for impossibilities of exaggeration and impossibilities of the wrong classification: vices are the wrong type of moral behaviour. All these wonderlands express their underlying logical

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[15] "Sailing to England" (RB).
[16] "Mendacious fairy tale" and "lazybones rhymes" respectively (RB).
[17] Oestland and Oostenrijc may also refer to Austria, which is 'Oostenrijk' in Dutch.
[18] The Wrong World, or the World Upside Down.
[19] "Where amongst others the fruit carries the tree, the dogs are caught by the hares, the sheep hang the wolves, poultry and geese sneak on foxes, and the mice eat the cats" (RB).

principles, invalid acts of fictional truth constitution, in their form. They may therefore be interpreted as materialised metaphors in the postmodern sense of Vervaeck: the vehicle of the metaphor literally becomes part of the fictional world, and has the same weight as the tenor, which erases the logic of that imagery (Vervaeck 1999: 85). Not only is the fictionality of the mendacious song as a literary work apparent through this mechanism of the material metaphor, it thus also foregrounds its topic: fictionality itself is under discussion when a reader hesitates in construing fictional truths from strange accounts. Does this also imply postmodern ontological criticism in mendacious songs? We will get back to that question later.

We have just determined that invalid logic is a tenor of the material metaphor of wonderlands. But is it the only tenor behind these images? Kalff, citing Uhland, notes that wonderlands such as Luilekkerland seem to have a moralistic function as well, as they ridicule misdemeanor (Kalff 1972: 491). However, Kalff thinks one should not seek too much behind these mendacious songs: "het volk [heeft] ook weleens onzin *willen* dichten" (Kalff 1972: 491-492).[20] In his German corpus, Sobel distinguishes two types of mendacious songs on the base of the difference between their nonsensical and didactic functions (Sobel 1967: 201). Is such a moralistic function characteristic for wonderlands, or should we side with Kalff and consider those places to be mostly senseless? According to Meder, wonderlands like Luilekkerland have functioned differently throughout the ages (Meder 2012). Before the sixteenth century, Luilekkerland portrayed a land of milk and honey, while between the sixteenth and eighteenth century it was often used as an example of amoral behaviour. From the nineteenth century onwards, 'Verharmlosung', a term coined by Wunderlich, caused Luilekkerland to gradually lose its coarse language and moralistic tendencies to make it fit for children's stories. Therefore, we may expect that early modern mendacious songs set in lands related to impossibilities of exaggeration and the wrong classification, may promote moralistic behaviour. Is the same true for lands related to impossibilities of the reversed action? In his analysis of Middle Dutch festive cultures during the late Middle Ages, Pleij describes the Omgekeerde Wereld as a reversion not of the actual world, but of the desired world (Pleij 2009: vii).[21] The Omgekeerde Wereld plays a central role in medieval festivities that celebrate ironical comments on ordinary life (Pleij 2009: 55). Simultaneously, from its reversed morality, desired conduct can be deduced, as it portrays what would happen if there was no natural order (Pleij 2009: 177, 195). The literary lie temporarily replaces normal communication and thus functions as an adult, heretic provocation at first, expelling fears by ridiculing them, and as a moral warning for the youth from the sixteenth century onwards (Pleij 2009: viii, 55). Like Luilekkerland, wonderlands fashioned after the Omgekeerde or Verkeerde Wereld may echo morality in their impossibilities of the reversed action.

Now, with this in mind, we can answer the question from the previous paragraph: although these wonderlands as material metaphors stress the fictionality of mendacious songs and the fictionality of fictional truth, they do not question the actual world ontologically in a postmodern fashion, but indeed justify reality and the order of society. And are wonderlands

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[20] "The common folk sometimes also *wanted* to write nonsensical poetry" (RB). The emphasis in this utterance shows that an ideology critical analysis of the reception of Dutch mendacious songs would be quite interesting.
[21] Reversed World (RB). Meder describes the Omgekeerde Wereld as the wrong world: its reversal depicts an amoral existence (Meder 2012).

fantastic? In the broader sense of the concept, they obviously form a setting for fantastic impossibilities. In the narrower sense, wonderlands induce less fantastic hesitation, as a reader's background information on inter-fictional carryover junctions knowledge of these wonderlands to the impossibilities presented in mendacious songs. This means that a reader will be probably more inclined to constitute a fictional truth with which to explain these impossibilities, than to keep the option of logical invalidity open and to consider retaining a fictional untruth as a potential fictional lie. As wonderlands fit the three types of impossibilities from the previous section, they are related to fictional indications for fictional untruth and thus for mendacity. However, they are not necessary as a setting for impossibilities – even when it comes to their moralistic function. In her monograph on tall tales, Brown signals a similar property of North-American oral mendacious literature, for "it provides a means of controlling threatening situations by reshaping them into fantasy" (Brown 1987: 33). In short, wonderlands are not a necessary condition for mendacious literature; neither are all works set in wonderlands mendacious. Their mendacity depends on the information revealed to a reader, information with which he or she can determine what is fictionally true in a story. That crucial information is revealed by the narrator.

1.3.4 A lying narrator as a fictional indication for mendacity

In terms of the *OED*'s definition of a lie, we have now established a hypothesis for the working of fictional false statements in mendacious songs. This fictional untruth, however, needs to be intentionally revealed by an entity that has knowledge of the fictional truth, in order for it to turn into a fictional lie. Who is this unreliable entity?

From Alward's revelation analysis of fictional truth follows that this entity is the narrator. In the past, the unreliable narrator has been connected with the implied author. But before going through a brief overview of these two models of unreliable narration, let us first determine whether a fictional lie could also be constructed by a character who is not the narrator. Let us think of a story in which a narrator is being deceived by a character, in other words, a story in which the narrator is naïve. In his analysis of unreliable narrators, Riggan uses *Huckleberry Finn* as an example of a work with an "easily fooled" narrator (Riggan 1981: 152). Huck's narrative revelation instigates dramatic irony as the audience knows that he is being fooled. This implies that in his accounts, Huck has revealed logical invalidities that cause a reader not to adjust previous fictional truths, but to distrust the accountability of the narrator instead. The fictional untruth is upheld, but it is not a fictional lie, as the untruth is caused unintentionally by the naiveté of the narrator. Then, can a fictional lie of a character occur if readers are equally fooled by that character as the narrator? As fictional untruths can only be found by means of a conflicting account, deceit by a character must be revealed by a narrator. If it is not accounted, then for a reader the deceit might as well not exist. Of course, it is possible to reveal accounts through external fictional indications such as a title. The narrator is in that sense only one of the informants a reader interrogates when interpreting a written text. But even then, characters are mediated by the instance of paratext. In conclusion, a character that is not a narrator cannot constitute a fictional lie in a reader, as such a character is not an agent that can reveal information by him- or herself: as soon as this happens, he or she becomes a narrator.

Now that we have fit fictional lies on the level of narration, let us attend some theories that explain unreliable narration in general, and relate them to mendacious narration in particular. In his renowned work from the 1960s, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, Booth states that narrative unreliability is a rhetorical affair between narrator, implied author and reader. These authorities are related through normative discrepancies that create "a community of implied author and reader, making the narrator the butt of obvious satire or of a complex and sustained irony" (Riggan 1981: 36).[22] Booth, cited by Riggan, marks the collaboration of implied author and reader as a moral activity: "To collaborate with the author by providing the source of an allusion or by deciphering a pun is one thing. But to collaborate with him by providing mature moral judgment is a far more exhilarating sport" (Riggan 1981: 36). Textual signals for this ironical game are clues of the actual author, mistakes of the narrator, incongruence in the work or in style, and assumed ethical disagreements between actual author and narrator (Bernaerts 2011:60-61). Riggan notes that the ambiguity of the implied author might pose a problem, as well as an over-interpreting reader.[23] Although we discussed fictional relativity and the critique on the (implied) author earlier in this chapter, how does Booth's model work for a lying narrator? If we apply this theory affirmatively onto mendacious songs, we see that it is the narrator who collaborates with the implied author and plays an ironical game with the reader. The reader is encouraged to participate in the merry mischief of narrator and implied author who together create a lie using obvious rhetorical effects: they both know the fictional truth, and the narrator tells a fictional lie. Here, the ambiguity of the implied author is prominent, for if the implied author is not telling the lie, but is an accomplice of the narrator, is he or she not lying as well? Where does the lie of the author end and that of the narrator begin? An advantage of Booth's model, though, is that it can clarify satirical interpretations of the fictional untruths, that we discussed as a possible property of wonderlands and impossibilities. An implied author with political views would then use the narrator as a puppet telling a lie in which these satirical views are ventilated, and would leave the puzzle for the audience to solve.[24] But do we really need an implied author to understand a satirical reading of a fictional lie? On the grounds of these and Alward's earlier objections, this model seems less suitable to analyse mendacious songs.

In his monography on mad unreliable narrators, Bernaerts suggests an alternative to Booth's model, that coalesces with Alward's revelation analysis of fictional truth. This alternative, proposed by Nünning, is a model of cognitive narratology, a merging of frame theory and natural narratology (Bernaerts 2011: 67). Jahn's application of frame theory explains reading as a process in which a reader chooses mental frames (expectations and frameworks) that seem to best fit understanding a narrative situation. As soon as a frame fails to explain a situation, a reader switches to another frame, which leads to re-interpretations. This mechanism is similar to Alward's model in which an interrogating reader constitutes

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[22] Currie's analysis of fictional truth is closely related to Booth's model of narrative unreliability. Bernaerts summarises Currie's concept of narrative unreliability as a device between implied author an narrator, a device of which the prevalence is determined by the reader's ability to unravel it, and that is related to ambiguous (mystifying) narrative (Bernaerts 2011: 65).

[23] This critique is refuted by Phelan, who notes that the implied author is a precise instrument for analysis as it is a replica of the actual author (Bernaerts 2011: 65).

[24] Riggan calls this type of unreliable narrator a clown, a "truth-teller" establishing a "reversal of convention" (Riggan 1981: 81-82).

fictional truths through the mediation of narrative accounts with his or her background knowledge. A frame is then an aggregation of fictional truths that may be replaced by a different frame when confronted by a logical invalidity, or fictional untruth. Culler's and Fludernik's natural narratology explains this process as a reader using his or her 'experientiality' to compare narrative accounts to his or her experience of 'natural' stories (Bernaerts 2011: 68). This experientiality is the everyday experience that is part of Alward's background information of the reader. Combining these ideas with Booth's rhetoric in his theory, Nünning explains unreliable narration as a reader-role caused by contextual, extratextual and textual elements (Bernaerts 2011: 68). The first two elements are a framework of actual world experience, based in experientiality, and a framework of literary experience, respectively (Bernaerts 2011: 68-69). These frameworks correspond to Alward's background information, and the last one with inter-fictional carryover in particular. Moreover, Nünning, cited by Bernaerts, sums up an extensive list of textual elements that may indicate narrative unreliability: explicit or implicit contradictions of a narrator, contradictions between a narrator's comments and actions, between a narrator's self-image and the image of the narrator portrayed by others, a narrator's accidental self-exposure, contradictions between narrative events and a narrator's comments, correcting comments by other characters, linguistic signals that are expressive and subjective, *skaz*, syntactic expressions of emotion (such as exclamations, ellipsis, and repetitions), self-referential reliability as an explicit motif, confessions of unreliability, amnesia or mental disability, explicit or implicit prejudice, and paratextual signs (such as title and preface) (Bernaerts 2011: 69-70).[25] These textual elements are an extension of Currie's narrative effects, and explain how internal fictional indications move a reader to interpret the accounts of Alward's narrator. To Nünning's list of textual features, we can add Chatman's rhetorical notions that emphasise an unreliable narrator being overt, using vivid descriptions, *skaz* and expressive language (Bernaerts 2011: 64).

Now that we have an idea of the workings of narrative unreliability – a set of textual features that may constitute fictional untruths and thus may cause a reader to doubt the narrator's accountability – we can compare these theories to narrators in mendacious literature and songs. How is the narrator manifested in the text? According to Bouvier and Mathieu, French mendacious songs generally have first-person or homodiegetic narrators (Bouvier and Mathieu 1978: 200).[26] This is also the case in 'Modus florum', a Latin 'mendosam cantilenam' from the eleventh-century *Carmine Cantabrigiensia* manuscript, that is the first known mendacious song (Kalff 1972: 486; Baur and Van Mierlo 1939: 67). Riggan explains the popularity of first-person narration in German mendacious literature by pointing out its "natural credibility" and its "pronounced illusion of reality", in other words, its verisimilitude (Riggan 1981: 19). In mendacious literature, homodiegetic narrators create an effect of realism, which contrasts with the narrated lies and thus foregrounds this mendacity. This is confirmed by Brown for North-American tall tales: "Underlying all types of tall tale comedy is the comic contrast between the pretence of absolute, literal factuality and the outrageousness of the material" (Brown 1987: 28). This effect coalesces with Nünning's textual element of contradictions between narrative events and a narrator's comments. When

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[25] The last of these textual elements corresponds to the other narrative informants I mentioned earlier, namely the paraphernalia.
[26] Besides Bouvier and Mathieu, most researchers agree that a lying narrator is not necessarily homodiegetic.

it comes to outlandishness, Brown notes that narrators of tall tales often use understatements in combination with exaggerations to enhance the comic effect (Brown 1987: 28). Another rhetorical tool for enhancing the outrageousness is the use of awkward names (Brown 1987: 28; Coigneau 1969-1970: 89). How exactly does a first person narrator emphasise the reality of the events? Brown remarks that while enumerating impossibilities, a narrator often takes a dead pan pose, an act as if the impossibilities are true. Kalff, Bouvier and Mathieu, and Coigneau encounter a similar phenomenon: in mendacious songs (and in 'leugenrefreinen') the narrator uses a formula with which he or she either declares that the accounted is entirely true, or that it is lied after all (Kalff 1972: 487; Bouvier and Mathieu 1978: 201; Coigneau 1969-1970: 89).[27] This formula pertains to Nünning's textual elements of the narrator declaring his or her (un)reliability, of contradictions between a narrator's comments and events or his or her actions, and of reliability as a theme. According to Sobel, impossibilities are thus presented as facts (or fiction, in the case of an overt lie), and Brown notes that such factuality is further articulated by using realistic details (Sobel 1967: 201; Brown 1987: 28). The timing of real and impossible events, and of the narrator's (un)truth declaration, eventually cumulates into the "skilful manipulation of the listener's values and beliefs" (Brown 1987: 28). In terms of Alward, the reader constitutes truth by comparing the narrator's accounts and comments with his or her background information, reading fictional untruths as fictional lies, and explaining the logical invalidity by the inference of a lying narrator.

Now, in these descriptions of mendacious narrators, not all of Nünning's and Chatman's textual features of have passed by. Can we extend the analyses of narrators in mendacious literature with some of those? We will test this in the next chapter when we close read two mendacious songs. However, before we go on, let us first examine where the aforementioned textual effects of the lying narrator come from. Brown mostly discusses tall tales that are narrated orally, and indeed, the fact that mendacious songs are sung underpins that we should also address the genre from an oral perspective. Is the rhetoric of the narrator a remains of oral culture?

In a publication on oral principles in Middle Dutch songs, Grijp, referring to Gerritsen and Rubin, explores mnemonic, memorative, and recreative aspects of songs and singers (Grijp 2008: 314). The mnemonic is determined by textual features, the memorative by a singer's memory, and the recreative by a singer's creativity while filling in the gaps of his or her memory. Textual aspects that help the singer to remember a song, are considered to be constraints of his or her memory, keeping it from wandering. Such constraints can be instigated by rhyme schemes and metre, by melody, by the insertion of dialogue, formulas, or 'zwerfstrofen', and by the song's story (Grijp 2008: 314).[28] Together, these aspects form a 'stramien', a blue print of a song that helps the singer memorising the lines, and that also helps creating new lines when gaps occur (Grijp 2008: 322). Signals of recreative reparation can be found in corrupted or unexplicable text, and in gaps in the story (Grijp 2008: 315). Can we find these oral aspects in mendacious songs? Let us have a look again at ''k Zag twee beren broodjes smeren'. In this song, rhyme, metre and melody form a pattern, a repetition

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[27] If the narrator succeeds in fooling the audience, he or she here creates a fantastic hesitation.
[28] Roaming stanzas; identical stanzas that occur in various songs.

that helps a singer memorising the song. This repetition is caused by a formula: each stanza is almost identical, except for the first and fourth verse. These deviant lines are also formed by a formula, namely that of an animal performing a human activity. The third formula pertains to the truth declaration of the homodiegetic narrator, as he or she insists that the impossibility was indeed seen ("'k Zag", and "'k Stond erbij en ik keek ernaar") and that it was a miracle to be true ("'t Was een wonder boven wonder"). The narrator's stressing of telling the truth contrasts with the invalidation of truth by the strange event of the bears making a sandwich and by the narrator's laughter ("Hi, hi, hi, ha, ha, ha"), of which it is not clear if the narrator laughs at the animals, or at the public believing him or her. The formula of the (un)truth declaration may be expected in most mendacious songs. In general, we can also transpose the oral formula onto the logical schemas behind the impossibilities leading to fictional untruth. Impossibilities and exaggerations can be further seen as recreative expansions: we can imagine infinite variations on two bears making a sandwich and two snakes hanging the laundry, and why not a hundred? And can these impossibilities also be interpreted as Grijp's corrupted and inexplicable effects of recreative additions? Because we deal with intentional fictional untruths, if such corruptions take place, then they only contribute to the mendacity of the song – as long as the added fragment leaves the formulas of impossibilities or of the narrator intact. As the impossibilities are often enumerations, a gap in a story is not easily detected, nor is it of great consequence for the mendacious effect.

We now know how some of the textual effects of mendacity are embedded in oral tradition, but why is the construction of a lying narrator so popular? According to Brown, besides providing entertainment tall tales exert an identifying function through the practice of inclusion and exclusion of group members (Brown 1987: 32-33). The values of a group are reinforced and promoted by presenting them in a reversed or distorted form – this is similar to the mechanism of the wonderlands. Outsiders may not have enough contextual knowledge to fully understand the jest, or they may be shocked by the form of the lie, but if an outsider understands the lying narrator, he or she is initiated into the group (Brown 1987: 34-35). Why is a homodiegetic narrator useful for this purpose? The first-person narrator is reminiscent of oral storytellers, as Okpewho exemplifies in his analysis of Nigerian stories (Okpewho 2003: 215-232). Lying is a construction in each tale that he found, and it has the function of switching the audience from an objective into a mythical mode (Okpewho 2003: 216). If a member of the public raises a question about the narrator's accountability, the narrator inserts a truth declaration (Okpewho 2003: 222). This claim of truth is not only fictionally justified – the narrator takes "figurative liberties with truth" – he or she (in Okpewho's stories overall he) enhances the truth claim in his or her performance by means of self-insertion, by inserting the self as an eyewitness, by mimicking characters, and by adding that these characters invited him or her to pass on the story (Okpewho 2003: 225). These four aspects of performance all have an inherent realistic effect, and indeed you can see parallels with the (un)truth formula of the lying narrator, and with the realistic and detailed depiction of impossibilities in mendacious songs. Okpewho further discusses the notion of self-insertion that he explains not just as an artistic lie in the sense of Wilde, but as a means of offering a critical perspective on socio-political aspects of a community (Okpewho 2003: 225-227). The narrator interrogates society on a metaphorical level from a subjective position, and in that sense, the narrator is not lying (Okpewho 2003: 228). Okpewho and Brown both signal a layer of truth-telling in

the construction of a homodiegetic narrator. In mendacious songs, this opens the door to readings that uncover group codes, and even satire. Do mendacious songs really reveal the falseness of actual appearances, or the falseness of actual or fictional discourse – functions that Knight connects to satire (Knight 1992: 27-28)? Or do they cheerfully pun at human folly, a function that Brown highlights (Brown 1987: 26-27)?

Lying in fiction is not the same as a fictional lie: a fictional lie is an incongruent effect in the reader's construction of fictional truths, that follows from logical invalidity. In mendacious songs, these logical invalidities are impossibilities that create logical untruths. Logical untruths turn into fictional lies when a narrator intentionally tells them. This narrator's intention is an effect created by a contrast between factuality – a first-person narrator, vivid details from the actual world and truth declarations – and the fictionality of the illogical events and wonderlands. The narrator is not the only informant of a reader: external fictional indications may reveal mendacity as well. With this preliminary definition in mind, we will examine two mendacious songs and further uncover the light and graceful side of lying.

Chapter 2
Lying with a Friendly Bunch: The Singing Group of Friends of Dutch Song Book *De Reysende Droomer op een Esel Zonder Staart* (17XX)

2.1 An exemplary case of two mendacious songs

Now that we have an impression of the characteristics we can expect to find in mendacious songs, let us continue our excursion along the hermeneutical circle and test our preliminary definitions in a case study of two of our genre's specimens. The selected specimens both occur in a Dutch song book, *De reysende droomer op een esel zonder staart*, that has not yet been subject to research before (Van Overbeke et.al. 17XX).[29] This minuscule publication from the eighteenth century raises questions due to its unknown origin, its anonymous authors, and, above all, its curious content.[30] The song book consists of three songs: 'De reysende droomer op een esel zonder staart', 'Een andere droom', and 'Op het eeten van een kalfskop' (Van Overbeke et.al. 17XX).[31] The last of these songs is a drinking song in which a group of friends toasts extensively while feasting on a veal's head. In Dutch, the connotations of 'kalf' and 'calvinisme' may pertain to a mischievous and slanderous interpretation (Van Overbeke et.al. 17XX: 13-16). Although this drinking song will play a role later in this chapter, I will not elaborate on it further here. The other two songs are the songs we will close read intensively. In both of these songs, a dreamer travels across the world and faces strange events involving animals and human actions ('De reysende droomer op een esel zonder staart'), or travels the bodily parts of a gigantic spider, on which he or she marvels at equally awkward scenes ('Een andere droom') (Van Overbeke et.al. 17XX: 2-12). These songs have been selected on the base of their seemingly exemplary behaviour in terms of mendacity – they account of sufficient impossibilities, to begin with. Seemingly at first glance though, as this exemplarity is of course something we will have a closer look at: the songs may reveal mendacious aspects that we have overlooked in the previous chapter, or may prove not to be that mendacious after all. Besides their apparent exemplarity, these songs are interesting material as they have not yet been inquired extensively. Our nineteenth-century colleague Kalff mentions one of them briefly in his chapter on mendacious songs. He adds after the insertion of a stanza from 'Een andere droom' – his variant is entitled 'De Japansche droom' – that due to their senselessness and uniformity "op kunstwaarde de leugenliederen dan ook

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[29] *The Travelling Dreamer on a Donkey Without a Tail* (RB).
[30] Through Grijp's contrafacture, a method based on the mechanism that lyrics are composed on existing melodies, the author of one of the songs has been traced (Grijp 1991: 23). Aernout van Overbeke published 'Een andere droom' as 'Japansche droom' posthumously in his *Rym-Wercken van wylen den heere en meester Aernout van Overbeke* (*Rhyme-Works of the late lord and master Aernout van Overbeke*) (Amsterdam 1678). The song was first published in the second volume of Willem van Focquenbroch's *Thalia of geurige zang-goddin* in 1673, but the publisher of both Van Overbeke and Focquenbroch stated in the *Afrikaense Thalia* in 1678 that he had removed the song from Focq's anthology as it was not created by this author (Van Focquenbroch 1673; Van Focquenbroch 1986).
[31] 'The Travelling Dreamer on a Donkey Without a Tail'; 'Another Dream'; 'On Eating a Veal's Head' (RB).

geene aanspraak [maken]" (Kalff 1972: 487).[32] Unlike Kalff, we will abstain from judging these songs aesthetically – or at best judge them in the sense of Wilde's aesthetic view on lying. In this chapter, our reading is focussed on the characteristics we have discussed previously, and in the same order. We start with the internal fictional indications that are necessary conditions for mendacious songs, namely the impossibilities creating fictional untruth, and the narrator turning these fictional untruths into fictional lies. The notion of wonderlands is not a required characteristic, but let us explore it anyway and find out more about the mendacious function of for instance the enormous spider as an impossible geographic location. After our close reading, we will turn to external fictional indications of mendacity to analyse the songs within the context of the song book, and within the context of a possible target group. The unknown printer has left us a clue for these mendacious singers on the title page: "Gedrukt al zingende" (Van Overbeke et.al. 17XX: 1).[33] Who was this singing printer? By analysing these songs contextually, we may test the functioning of mendacious songs in a target group to see if it agrees with the notions on truth-telling of Brown and Okpewho. Are these songs nonsensical, or do they have a hidden, satirical, and artistic, fictitious layer?

2.2 Internal fictional indications of mendacity

2.2.1 Impossibilities in *De reysende droomer op een esel zonder staart*

The story of the two songs consists of a realistic narrative layer in which a dream is embedded. On the level of the dream, the dreamer turns into a globetrotter and witnesses extraordinary happenings. Are these dreamed events indeed the impossibilities that we have identified earlier, namely those of the incorrect use of classification, of reversed action, and of exaggeration? Or are they governed by a different invalid logic?

'De reysende droomer op een esel zonder staart' consists of twenty-six stanzas, all of which account of animals performing deviant behaviour for their species. Exceptions occur in the tenth stanza in which two dead Hottentotten, a South-African tribe, are dancing with a Dutch musical instrument, and the last stanza that reveals the story to be a dream. In the case of the awkward conduct of animals, impossibilities of the incorrect classification can have an alienating effect on the appearance of the animal portrayed:

> In Vrankrijk daar zag ik een Tijger
> Die had een bek gelijk een Rijger/
> En vier pooten als een Zwijn/
> Hy fluyte als de blinde Vinken
> Ik zag hem uyt een tobben drinken/
> De alderbeste nieuwe Wijn (Van Overbeke et.al. 17XX: 3).[34]

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[32] 'The Japanese Dream'; "the mendacious songs cannot lay claim on any artistic value" (RB).
[33] "Printed while singing" (RB).
[34] "In France I lay eyes on a Tiger/That had a pecker like a heron/And four paws same as a Swine/It whistled equalling blind finches/I saw it drinking from a barrel/The finest very best new Wine" (RB). In Dutch, 'zingen

The tiger receives attributes of other animals, such as a bird's beak with which it can sing a bird's song, legs like a swine, and thirst like a human.[35] Compared to tigers, herons and finches are animals, but not mammals; hogs are animals and mammals, but not predators; humans are animals, mammals and (partially) predators, but they are not felids. The tiger in the song is thus characterised as an animal, but in terms of the wrong types of animal. This creates the effect of a hybrid, a fictitious creature with the features of two or more animals. Such hybrids occur four more times in this song. In the fifth stanza, a bat is red – the wrong type of colour (Van Overbeke et.al. 17XX: 3). The stork in the eighth stanza has a hundred ears and a hundred eyes (Van Overbeke et.al. 17XX: 4). The nightingale in the fourteenth stanza has a tail of fifty ells and countless legs (Van Overbeke et.al. 17XX: 5). And a reading werewolf is portrayed in the seventeenth stanza - this animal contradicts Van Bork's remark that mendacious literature does not invoke a different reality, but an impossible one (Van Overbeke et.al. 17XX: 6). Werewolves are canine-human hybrids that are part of Alward's inter-fictional carryover. As fictional creatures, werewolves are generally perfectly capable of reading. This account is therefore not logically invalid and fictionally true, which means that this scene does not take part in the mendacious construction. The other hybrids, though, seem to match the example from the French mendacious songs of the fig tree growing prunes, which as a hybrid fruit tree. Apparently, some impossibilities of the incorrect classification result in hybrid entities.

Do hybrid entities occur in 'Een andere droom' as well? In this twelve stanzas long song, the most prominent animal is the gargantuan spider. Its immensity is not expressed in 'cross breeding' with other animals, but rather in terms of being a location where events take place, and in terms of geography – the spider is as big as Britain, and its head is as large as the earth (Van Overbeke et.al. 17XX: 9-10). These are forms of exaggeration that we will discuss later. The impossibility of incorrect classification in this song involves objects rather than creatures. In the eighth stanza, the Spanish Armada fires a cannon with 'rijksdaalders', silver coins, instead of cannonballs – the wrong type of round metal (Van Overbeke et.al. 17XX: 11). Besides this example, impossibilities of this sort do not occur in 'Een andere droom'.

In the example of the tiger, we have seen an impossibility of incorrect classification that is at first glance also an impossibility of reversed action: the action of tiger and human are reversed. In 'De reysende droomer op een esel zonder staart', this is the most common impossibility, occurring thirty-eight times, for example in stanza sixteen:

> Maar wat zag ik in Deenemarken/
> Daar reet een Pan-Aal op een Varken/
> En sloeg het wakker met de Zweep/
> Ik zag een Sprinkhaan Wortels zayen
> Ik zag een Stokvis Kooren mayen/

---

als de blinde vinken' refers to the custom of using finches to attract other birds for hunting, or to participate in finch sport in which the winning finch is the one that sings a tune the most. Blind finches supposedly sing better.
[35] Most similes with 'als' in the song do not literally describe bodily parts of an animal as that of another animal, but indicate the ground of the metaphor, such as size or straightness. The tiger is an exception.

Ik zag een Gans die kookte Zeep (Van Overbeke et.al. 17XX: 6).[36]

The eel riding a pig mimics a human riding a horse. The grasshopper sowing carrots, the stock fish mowing wheat, and the goose cooking soap, mimic labouring humans. But are they really impossibilities of reversed action? Unlike the German examples of the room sitting in people and the mouse catching boys with a trap, subject and object in these actions are not reversed – otherwise, you would expect scenes of a pig riding a human. I would therefore say that these occurrences are a form of impossibility of incorrect classification, that involves a combination of human labour and animals. In this reading, humans and animals are opposed on the base of the degree of civilisation of their species: animals that can sow carrots are replaced by the type of animal that cannot sow carrots. Neither 'De reysende droomer op een esel zonder staart' nor 'Een andere droom' contain any impossibilities of reversed action as described by Sobel.

Or do they? Two strange events seem to differ from hybrid entities and human labour-animal combinations. In 'Een andere droom', the narrator accounts that: "Ik zag drie Spanjaarts zonder hooft/Met Lubben tot haar kin geklooft/Veel mooye Deunen zingen" (Van Overbeke et.al. 17XX: 9).[37] A human singing without a head certainly is an impossibility in the sense of invalid logic: if a human sings, he or she must live; if a human lives, he or she must have a head; a human sings; therefore, he or she does not need a head. This invalidity leads to a fictional untruth. But syntactically speaking, the lack of head is not an incorrect classification (a class of head-or-no-head?), nor is anything reversed or exaggerated causing the invalidity. The same is true for the two dead Hottentotten that dance: if a human is dead, he or she cannot dance; a human is dead; therefore, he or she can dance. These forms of impossibility differ from the ones we have discussed earlier – unless you examine them on a more abstract level. The dead doing things of the living is a reversing of the natural order, and in that sense, dead humans are opposed to living humans. These scenes can be interpreted as impossibilities of the incorrect classification: the dead instead of the living perform human activities. But this is also a case of reversal, for not just any animal or object takes the place of a human, but a dead human. Classification may not be such a good choice for this category: the impossibility is caused by a state of the same being, rather than by the replacement of a being by another being. Therefore, let us call these instances impossibilities of reversed state, a sibling of reversed action.

Finally, impossibilities of exaggeration occur often in both songs. Numerals are used to indicate a quantity, and proportions are exaggerated, which creates a comic and impossible effect in 'Een andere droom':

In zijn Maag/in zijn Maag
Daar weyden alle daag
Wel hondert duysent ossen
Men reder de a la mode Tour

---

[36] "But what did I behold in Denmark/There a pot-eel was riding a pig/And woke it up using the whip/I saw a grasshopper sow carrots/I saw a stockfish mowing the wheat/I saw a goose was cooking soap" (RB).
[37] "I saw three Spaniards without head/With Scrotums chopped up to their chin/Singing many merry Songs" (RB).

Met Jonker Pover en zijn Broer
En duysende karossen (Van Overbeke et.al. 17XX: 10-11).[38]

An amount of a hundred thousand oxen is quite incredible, let alone a stomach so big that it can contain so many animals. The spider in 'Een andere droom' is amplified ridiculously and grotesquely: it is indeed so large that it even sweeps the stars from the sky with its tail (Van Overbeke et.al. 17XX: 12). Such an action is similar to the tailless donkey in 'De reysende droomer op een esel zonder staart', that is said to go around the world in nine days, and, like the tailed spider, thus points to a third type of exaggeration: the overstating of abilities (Van Overbeke et.al. 17XX: 1). Together with impossibilities of the incorrect classification – hybrid entities and human labour-animal combinations – exaggerations are most common indications of fictional untruth in these songs.

2.2.2 Wonderlands in *De reysende droomer op een esel zonder staart*

How can we link these impossibilities to the wonderlands in the song book? For although the wonderlands of Luilekkerland and Cocagne, or the Verkeerde or Omgekeerde Wereld, are not mentioned, the songs indeed greatly emphasise the location where the impossible events take place. In 'De reysende droomer op een esel zonder staart', each stanza, except for the first one, starts with a place name. The dreamer visits geographical locations from the actual world, in Europe, Africa, and the East and West Indies. In 'Een andere droom', locations can be both referential and fictional. First, the dreamer fictitiously ice skates over the moon and the "hollen Oceaan", towards the "Piek van Canarijen", the summit of the volcano Teide on Tenerife, where the spider is located (Van Overbeke et.al. 17XX: 9).[39] The spider is also a location itself, for on its nose, in its throat, its stomach, etcetera, strange scenes are situated. Some of these scenes seem to refer to political stages. The aforementioned Spanish Armada firing coins in the sails of the spider's jaws may be interpreted as a metaphor for the ineffectiveness of eighteenth-century Spanish warfare (Van Overbeke et.al. 17XX: 11). French politicians, depicted as a country that merely drinks and sings, seem idle on the world stage (Van Overbeke et.al. 17XX: 10).[40] England is all the more active:

Zijne Staart/zijne Staart
Die maakte mij vervaart
Door al het Yss'lijk moorden:
Gantsch Engelant was op de been
De Staarten waren al by een/

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[38] "In his Gut/in its Gut/There pastured every day/A hundred thousand oxen/There one took a tour a la mode/With Lord Paltry and his brother/And thousands of carriages" (RB).
[39] "Hollow Ocean"; "Peak of Canary" (RB).
[40] A stanza that is deleted from 'Een andere droom', but that recurs in 'Japansche droom' in the *Rym-wercken* from 1719 adds another political situation to this enumeration, namely the martyrdom of Jan Hus and Laurentius from Antwerp: "In zyn Buyk, in zyn Buyk,/Daer sag ik noch ter sluyk,/'t Antwerps Jesuiten klooster:/Hoe sy de martelaer Jan Hus/Verbranden en Laurentius/Ook brieden op de rooster" (Van Overbeke 1719: 43). "In its Guts, in its Guts/There I could just discern,/The Jesuit Monastery of Antwerp:/How they the martyr of Jan Hus/Burned at the stake and Laurentius/Toasted on the grill as well" (RB).

<center>Geknoopt met Water-koorden (Van Overbeke et.al. 17XX: 11-12).[41]</center>

In Dutch, a 'staart' is a nickname for the English, so the fact that in the same stanza, all of England is marching, all tails are bound together, and the tail of the spider scares the narrator because of its murdering, indicates that the spider and England are one and the same, or that the spider is controlled by the English. Through its proportions, the spider behaves like a wonderland. These proportions symbolise something that is so big that it threatens the natural order, for with its paws it even kills Death (Van Overbeke et.al. 17XX: 12). Is it a metaphor for world domination? The wonderland of this spider is not a land of milk and honey like Luilekkerland, or a land portraying a reversed world, but it does contain a moralistic layer as is custom to the wonderlands we previously discussed. The wonderland of the spider seems to function like a distorted, exaggerated mirror of the actual world – a fiction covering up hidden, referential layers.

How does this work for the geographical locations in 'De reysende droomer op een esel zonder staart'? The location in the second stanza seems to function similarly to the wonderland of the spider, combining referential aspects with fictional untrue scenes:

> Voor eerst zo quam ik binnen Romen/
> Daar zat een Walvis in de boomen/
> Die zong een lietjen in 't Latijn/
> Hij wist zijn stem zoo lief te meng'len/
> Nu als de Klok en dan als Beng'len/
> Dat is te zeggen grof en fijn (Van Overbeke et.al. 17XX: 2).[42]

Rome is an actual location, and the fact that the singing whale, an impossibility of incorrect classification with an animal performing human actions, sings in Latin, appears to be a catholic reference. Moreover, this whale sings "grof en fijn" – 'rooms, grof en fijn' is a Dutch expression for 'catholic, protestant and reformed'. Could this picture depict a reversed world in which religions are professed by the same creature, a justification of society by mocking a reversed state of affairs? Or could this picture also have a satirical layer to it?[43] We will get back to this ironic reading later. What seems to support this argument of the moral wonderland is that the fish in the tree is a common image from the Verkeerde or Omgekeerde Wereld, wonderlands that usually have ethical functions. However, here the definitions of the previous chapter clash, for we decided on the base of our findings in secondary literature that only impossibilities of reversed action could take place in those worlds. At the same time, we have seen that the whale in the tree is not an impossibility of reversed action (or of reversed state for that matter), as that would lead to an image of the sea in the whale. We must then conclude that impossibilities of incorrect classification, such as the wrong habitat of an animal, may also be part of reversed wonderlands.

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[41] "Its tail/its tail/It gave me the chill/All its appalling killing/All of England was on the move/The tails were wholly united/And joined by bonds of water" (RB).

[42] "First of all I arrived thus in Rome/There, a whale was seated in the grove,/That chanted a tune in Latin/It knew to blend its voice so revered/Now as a bell and then as clappers/That is to say austere and fine" (RB).

[43] In a conversation, Arnoud Visser suggested that this whale may be a reference to Ignatius Walvis (1653 – 1714), a Dutch pastor and author of catholic writings (Molhuysen and Blok 1921: 1094-1095).

Although this stanza potentially generates a layer of critical truth-telling in combination with Rome, locations in 'De reysende droomer op een esel zonder staart' for the most part play the role of a mystical backdrop for outlandishness. The dreamer travels all over the world and returns to Holland in the last six stanzas, to wake up when arriving at the Amstel, the river passing Amsterdam. The contrast between dream-reality and exotic-indigenous is thus woven into the story of the dream. That foreignness is related to the Omgekeerde Wereld, further follows from references to Pleij's feasts of reversion: the red bat plays the "vasten avonts gek", and the Hottentotten dance while playing the carnivalesque "Rommelpot" – an instrument also mentioned in 'Een andere droom' (Van Overbeke et.al. 17XX: 3-4; *WNT*).[44]

What we can see in this close reading is that the characteristics of reversed wonderlands are not as restricted as we deduced from the secondary literature. In practice, wonderlands seem to be more intertwined wholes of referential and fictional aspects. The effect of this contrast between actual and fictitious world is part of the construction of mendacity – if it is played out by a lying narrator.

2.2.3 Lying narrators in *De reysende droomer op een esel zonder staart*

Now that we have an idea of the fictional untruths that a reader may constitute from the impossible events, let us have a look at the fictitious authority that can turn them into fictional lies: the narrator. In both songs, the stories are accounted by homodiegetic, first-person narrators, and in that sense they follow the characteristic of mendacious narration as described by Bouvier and Mathieu. The narrators are also the only focalisators in the narratives. In 'De reysende droomer op een esel zonder staart', an 'I' tells the story of his or her dream, but only reveals that it was a dream in the last stanza:

> Doen ik den Amstel quam genaken/
> Begon ik waarlijk te ontwaken/
> En ik dagt wat zotte droom:
> En daarom heb ik dit beschreeven:
> Ik moest het ook te kennen geeven/
> Vaar wel tot dat ik weder koom (Van Overbeke et.al. 17XX: 8-9).[45]

In this stanza, three levels of the narrative come together: the dream is embedded in the frame of the dreamer waking up, which is embedded in an undefined moment in time in which the narrator tells the story. This moment in time is re-enacted each time someone sings the song: with "vaar wel tot dat ik weder koom" the narrator directly addresses his or her public. This direct approach to the listeners happens more often in the song, for instance when the narrator expresses his or her disgust of an onion salad that crocodiles in the dream are making: "Wie lust voor mijn/ik eet niet mee" (Van Overbeke et.al. 17XX: 6).[46] This explicit addressing of

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[44] "Carnival's fool" (RB); a 'rommelpot' is a musical instrument to be played at the Carnival.
[45] When I was approaching the Amstel/I truly started to awaken/And I thought what silly dream:/And for that reason I described this:/Just as well, I might admit it/Farewell until I come again" (RB).
[46] "Who wants my share/I'm not dining" (RB).

the audience, *skaz*, is one of the properties Nünning and Chatman mark for unreliable narration. On the level of the dream, the narrator is an eyewitness, repeating the phrase "ik zag" in almost every stanza. Repetition could be an indicator for Nünning's emotionality, though this is emphasised more through the use of catchphrases and slang such as "bloet" and "snaak", loose conversation that also points to Nünning's and Chatman's subjectivity and expressiveness of the unreliable narrator.[47] This narrator certainly is overt, but is such unreliability enough for a narrator to be mendacious? Does the explanation of the dream not neutralise the mendacity of the fictional untruths, as dreams provide a setting of fictional truth? In this song, mendacity seems to be inferred mostly by the impossible events, and not so much by the lying narrator: from his or her declaration follows that the narrator technically speaks the truth from the dream point of view. This declaration, however, is also a formula of untruth accounting which is a typical property of mendacious narration according to Kalff, Bouvier and Mathieu, and Coigneau. In that sense, 'De reysende droomer op een esel zonder staart' makes use of the mechanism creating fictional lies.

Do we encounter the same difficulty when analysing the dream construction described in 'Een andere droom'? In this song, there are also three narrative levels similar to those of 'De reysende droomer op een esel zonder staart'. On the level of the dream, the narrator is an eyewitness like the narrator previously described, although the phrase "ik zag" occurs less often than in the other song. Furthermore, in the first stanza the narrator reveals that he or she unfortunately got trapped "In vreemde fantasyen", once upon a time (Van Overbeke et.al. 17XX: 9).[48] This introduction is the only textual indication in the song pointing to the third layer in which the narrator implicitly addresses his or her public – there is no *skaz* in this song. In the last stanza, the narrator clarifies what he or she means by being captured by imagination:

> Kort daar naar/kort daar naar/
> Wierd ik wel haast gewaar/
> Dat alles was gelogen:
> Zoo haast als my den slaap ontschoot/
> Lag ik in een bestikte goot
> Bescheeten en bespoogen (Van Overbeke et.al. 17XX: 12).[49]

The narrator first reveals that he or she has lied about the accounts before – a formula of untruth that is typical for mendacious narrators. In terms of Nünning, this narrator explicitly declares his or her unreliability, revealing contradictions between the accounted events and his or her comments, and thus emphasising unreliability as a theme. The next verse reveals that the narrator did not lie on purpose, but that in truth these events took place inside a dream. The construction of the dream weakens the mendacious aspect, as I described before, though the reality of dreams is subjective at best. The narrator then puts in another unreliable aspect, namely that he or she woke up in the gutter, "Bescheeten en bespoogen" – in other

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[47] "Blood"; "sneak" (RB).
[48] "In strange fantasies" (RB).
[49] Afterward/afterward/I soon became aware/It had all been a fiction:/As sleep escaped me utterly/I lay in a choking gutter/Being shit and spat upon" (RB).

words, the dream was probably caused during a blackout after a night of heavy drinking. Such deviant behaviour intensifies the unreliability of the narrator again, as, in terms of Nünning, self-referential unreliability is put forward as an explicit motif, and the events stagger between lie and dream. These iterative confessions of unreliability and reference to temporary amnesia at the same time explain the strange visions of the spider, and hide the truth that is hidden in these hallucinations – but let me get back to this truth-telling later.

Fact and fiction are interwoven in this fragment, which is typical for mendacious narration. Can we find more characteristics for this merging, such as those described by Brown and Coigneau? In 'Een andere droom', exaggerations are usually not accompanied by understatements to emphasise the impossibility. Only the fifth stanza uses this combination in the description of the spider beating the "Oliphant" with its tooth across the globe, ending in "Hitland", a rural region in the Dutch province of Zuid-Holland (Van Overbeke et.al. 17XX: 10). In 'De reysende droomer op een esel zonder staart', this effect is used slightly more often, for instance in the account of two crocodiles preparing an onion as big as the "Zuider-zee", and "'t Was om wat Uyenslaa te smullen/" (Van Overbeke et.al. 17XX: 5-6).[50] The other occurrences are of a flea being cut into a thousand pieces for sausages, and of a cuckoo that is as big as a bull, while an eagle is as small as an ant (Van Overbeke et.al. 17XX: 6, 8). The only awkward names that accentuate impossibility in this song are "Vry" and "Vulkaan", two horses that forge swords (Van Overbeke et.al. 17XX: 7).[51] In 'Een andere droom', strange names such as "Root-neus", "Teeuwis" and "Gredelijne" refer to songs and other literary works, and pertain to inter-fictional carry-over. These cases can be interpreted by readers with background knowledge of that part of literary history, and in those instances, the names do not constitute logical invalidity. Otherwise, such names do instigate fictional untruth, as their ambiguity disturbs the reader in building a coherent set of fictional truths with which to interpret the narrated accounts.

How is factuality brought into this enumeration of impossibilities? In terms of Chatman and Brown, the descriptions of these impossible scenes are vivid and detailed. This realistic effect is created by numerals – accounting exactly how many creatures were witnessed – and by observations that indicate the narrator must have been there, such as the aforementioned actual geographical locations, brief dialogues ("Daar riep een Bok/wie koopt 'er vijgen") and descriptions of signs ("A B bortjes") (Van Overbeke et.al. 17XX: 7).[52] We have already discussed the formula in this respect, placing the accounts into a dream setting so that it is clear that these accounts are untrue in the actual world, and at the same time true in the dream world, partially erasing the effect of the fictional lie. We may also consider the timing of the narrators in this respect. In 'De reysende droomer op een esel zonder staart', the fictional untruths multiply until the narrator indicates they are untrue, taking the edge of the lie. Before that revelation, the fictional lies uphold, which makes this song for the most part mendacious. In a sense, the delay in revealing that declaration is a form of Brown's dead pan pose, a pose of the narrator singing an endless list of impossibilities without commenting on the truth value of the accounts, as if they are true. This postponement is part of the timing that manipulates the reader into believing that the narrator may be lying. The same is true for the

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[50] "'t Was for eating some onion salad" (RB).
[51] "Free"; "Volcano" (RB).
[52] "There a Goat cried/who wants to buy figs"; "A B slates" (RB).

timing of the narrator in 'Een andere droom', as the first stanza indicates that the following enumeration of fantasies will be untrue because they are made up, but indeed they eventually prove to be untrue because the narrator had been on a drinking binge. This timing pertains to the reader constructing different modes of unreliability for the narrator, that turns out to be a mendacious one in the end.

We now have an impression of the interweaving of fact and fiction, but how do they relate to the function of truth-telling as proposed by Brown and Okpewho? Earlier, we have discussed the impossible events in the light of wonderlands and found that some of the impossibilities seem to make metaphorical references to an actuality. In 'De reysende droomer op een esel zonder staart', this is the singing whale in Rome, and in 'Een andere droom' these are the references to Spain, France and England. What seems to be the case is that images from the actual world are combined with literal metaphors and metonyms, such as the silver coins replacing the cannonballs of the Spanish fleet, the whole of France actually being present at a decadent party, and the tails, or the English, being literally bound together to form a strong bond at sea. The singing whale is a different case, for here an image from the reversed world, the whale in the trees, is combined with elements from the actual world, namely Rome and the hymns of different churches. Referentiality thus performs like a literal metaphor in this reversed construction, replacing the expected song of the whale from the vehicle by a tenor. Literal metaphors and metonyms, and the reversed world both signal the reader that there are hidden layers to be discovered, and that he or she should test the accounts against his or her background knowledge, in particular the inter-fictional carryover. This reading-role is further encouraged by the intertextual references that occur in 'Een andere droom' especially. In this manner, the impossible accounts are connected with the actual world through internal fictional indications.

How then does the mendacious construction function in truth-telling, when you may as well use metaphors or wonderlands to express this? Truth foregrounds when the topicality of truth is expressed as a motif. Related to truth is reliability: through the construction of unreliable narration, untruth becomes textually present, begging the question of what is fictionally true, and what truth and reliability mean in the actual world. The narrator turning fictional untruths into fictional lies, is an extra notion of unreliability endangering truth. Can this mode of narration serve as satirical truth-telling? Knight notes that "at the heart of […] satire is a real problem perceived by [an] audience, to which the comic protagonist applies a fantastic solution within which reality appears in symbol, parody, and allusion" (Knight 1992: 25). Satire has a subject outside the text: it either refers to another literary work or refers to an actual situation (Knight 1992: 30). A satirist generally justifies his or her impolite attack on an actuality by articulating hidden values or by accentuating the aesthetics of a work (Knight 1992: 29, 31). This may render the satirist arrogant and self-conscious (Knight 1992: 32). To disguise this, a satirist may resort to the imitation of a genre, although his or her comments on this mimicking may conflict with the narrated accounts (Knight 1992: 29-32). A satiric audience is an accomplice of the satirist when it understands the poke at reality and finds it humorous (Knight 1992: 30). We will discuss this last feature in the next section. Meanwhile, can we find the other satiric features in our songs?

In 'De reysende droomer op een esel zonder staart', the mendacious construction seems to pertain to a comic effect rather than a revealing of actual truths through satire.

References to actuality can hardly be traced, except for the clue in the stanza of the singing whale. This narrator seems to be what Wilde would call a light and graceful liar. In the case of 'Een andere droom', mendacity mirrors truths in the real world, emphasising these by hiding them in a cloth of grotesque fiction. At the same time, this veil conceals the supposed arrogance of the narrator asserting these truths. The narrator further expresses his or her self-consciousness by declaring that the accounts are fantasies, lies, dreams, and hallucinations of a drunkard – a repetition underlining that the opposite is true. The impossibilities themselves are parodies, altered imitations "of the style or structure of an original for the purpose of criticising it", as Nichols defines the technique (Knight 1992: 22). In 'Een andere droom', the mechanism of mendacity is employed satirically, which means that in some cases there is more to mendacious songs than initially meets the eye.

2.3 External fictional indications of mendacity

2.3.1 Whodunnit

Now that we have tested the internal fictional indications of mendacity from our previous chapter, let us have a look at what external fictional indications reveal about our genre in the context of an eighteenth-century community of readers. The titles of the songs and of the song book suggest that a theme of the booklet is the dream. Who would sing these kinds of songs, and why?

As I mentioned before, the printer has left us a clue on the title page: "Gedrukt al zingende". Evidently, this unidentified printer liked to sing the songs he or she printed him- or herself. And probably also with others, enjoying a drink during their chants: jugs of beer, drops of wine, and whiffs of snuff-boxes pass by in all three songs of the song book. The book does not appear to have been printed for commercial purposes, for besides the title and the printer's melodious expression, no further details on the publication are given. Such information usually functions as a publisher's advertising. That the printer wanted to remain anonymous on the base of daring content is unlikely, as we have pointed out before that 'Een andere droom' has already been published in 1678 under Aernout van Overbeke's name. Apparently, the printer did not need to disclose his or her identity, as this information was evident. Moreover, an analysis of the binding, the type setting, the illustrations, and the paper quality of the booklet designates an economical style of printing: the printer made a conscious decision to create a low-cost publication.[53] If the song book was not meant for commercial purposes, but indeed was meant for sharing with friends, choosing an inexpensive form to do so seems a practical choice.

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[53] *De reysende droomer op een esel zonder staart* is a sextodecimo print, consisting of one gathering without signatures or pagination marks. It is unlikely that the gathering has been part of another songbook. This is confirmed by the closing phrase following the last song: "EINDE" ("END") (Van Overbeke 17XX: 16). Furthermore, in the songs the type is set closely in a gothic font, and only titles, tune indications and initials are set in the broader roman font. By choosing this type setting, the printer has saved space, and thus paper. Illustrations are used seldom, too: only the title page is illuminated with a tattered woodcut and two garlands made of type ornaments. Such type adornments also occur after the second song. Finally, the paper is of a poor quality.

Who then was this singing printer? We cannot be sure, but we can try to trace his or her tracks by following internal and external fictional indications in the song book. First, we must find out where the song book was printed. In title song 'De reysende droomer op een esel zonder staart', the series of geographical locations gives us a hint: Den Haag is mentioned twice, and the story ends near the Amstel. Opposed to the strangeness of exotic places, the dreamer wakes up in Amsterdam, which is therefore presumably his or her home town. We may expect that a song celebrating this locality will appear in a song book celebrating the same locale. So we may expect to find the singing printer in Amsterdam, or else in Den Haag.

The questions of when and by whom the song book was printed, are closely related. The first known publications of the title song are from 1743 and 1747, by Isaac van der Putte and Joannes Kannewet II respectively (Anonymous 1743; Anonymous 1747).[54] The first known occurrence of a tune indication with this song is from 1730 by the widow of Jacobus van Egmont (Anonymous 1730). The tune indication of the song itself, 'Ik leg zomtyts geheele nagten', is a song printed by Jacobus van Egmont in 1721 (Anonymous 1721b).[55] It seems that the song was created between 1721 and 1730: since the title of our song book pertains to the first song, the booklet may have been its first publication. The second song, 'Een andere droom', has been published since 1678 in Aernout van Overbeke's *Rym-wercken*. These *Rym-wercken* were also printed by Jan van Heekeren, lastly in 1719. This printer further issued the third drinking song, 'Op het eeten van een kalfskop', for the first time in his *Thirsis Minnewit* from 1721 (Anonymous 1721c). Barbara van Heekeren, the daughter of this printer, was married to the aforementioned Isaac van der Putte (Kleerkooper and Van Stockum 1914: 570). All of these printers lived in the centre of Amsterdam, and, analysing the traces of contrafacture in this song book and in other volumes using the Dutch Songs Database (*DSD*), we can deduce that they constituted a network that was familiar with the songs. It is highly likely that our singing printer is amongst them.

A group of singing printers, then, as the target group of this song book? Before we discuss why a group would want to share mendacious songs, let us first have a look at the composure of this group. With the mechanism of contrafacture, we cannot find any friends of the singing printer that were themselves not printers, leaving clues in their publications. It is, however, likely that also non-printing friends were part of the group. This follows for instance from the eulogies of Jan van Gyzen, a poet from the publishing house of Jacobus van Egmont (Rosseau et. al. 1722). In Rosseau's poem, Van Gyzen is asked about his successor: "Wie denkt gy vangt nu weêr 't Merkuren Schryven aan?/[…]/Den Drukker *z*al het wel aan een zyns Vrinde geven/Ik kender een, twee, drie, wel tot dat werk in staat" (Rosseau et. al. 1722: 18).[56] Poet D.K. remarks: "Zo volgt de tyd, tot hy ter aarde wierd gesteld:/Van Digters,

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[54] Joannes Kannewet II, active as a printer in 1723 and from 1732 to 1782, published a work in 1750 that bears great physical resemblance to our song book, which makes him more suspect to being the singing printer.
[55] In the same year, Jacobus van Egmont published the song 'De droomende rysiger', a song composed on a different tune indication than 'De reysende droomer op een esel zonder staart', in which a dreaming narrator travels the world on an ox (Anonymous 1721a).
[56] "Who do you think will continue th' Mercure's writing?/[...]/The printer shall leave it to one of his companions/I know one, two, three of them capable of that job" (RB).

Drukkers, Vrinde en Looperen verzeld" (Rosseau et. al. 1722: 31).[57] In these verses, printers and authors are presented as comrades rather than colleagues. At least Jacobus van Egmont must have been part of the creative circle of Van Gyzen, printing a farewell gift for and with his house poets. The existence of such a close network supports the assumption that the printer behind "Gedrukt al zingende" was indeed part of the aforementioned company of publishers that can be related to *De reysende droomer op een esel zonder staart*, and that this company probably consisted of befriended colleagues from Amsterdam.

2.3.2 A code of friends

What exactly did these friends share when singing mendacious and drinking songs? Let us examine some motifs in the songs more closely. The friendship theme is extensively repeated by the narrators, and often related to sleep, dreams and intoxication, for instance in 'Op het eeten van een kalfskop': "Nu vrienden/ik wensje een goede nagt/Maar val niet in die kelder" (Van Overbeke et.al. 17XX: 16).[58] This gives the impression that the narrator, who is mimicked by the person singing, does not address an invisible audience, but is telling tall tales to his or her drinking buddies. Other characteristics of such poetry for friends can be defined following Riet Schenkeveld's inquiry of 'vriendenbrieven': lyrical letters that are written for a particular friend of the author, and that are published in print.[59] In this genre, Schenkeveld distinguishes a 'reële lezer', such as the group of friends around the singing printer, and 'lezers over de schouder', an audience with literary expectations.[60] These reader groups are each served differently, according to principles of the epistolary and literary genre respectively (Schenkeveld 2002: 136). According to Schenkeveld, characteristics for epistolarity are a familiar style (colloquial speech), a personal perspective on events, and friendship motives (Schenkeveld 2002: 145-146). This familiarity also affects the 'lezers over de schouder' who participate in the role of a friend and are thus involved in the social life of the poet, as well as in his or her literary qualities (Schenkeveld 2002: 149).

Now, can Schenkeveld's rhetoric of friends be discerned in the songs in *De reysende droomer op een esel zonder staart*? As for the friendship motives, I have just pointed out the friendship theme in the third song. Similar motives are found implicitly throughout the song book: the fellow singers are asked for their opinion explicitly by the narrator in 'De reysende droomer op een esel zonder staart', for instance when accounting of the distasteful onion salad. Moreover, the setting of the dream implies a personal perspective on dreamed events, revealing introspections of the narrator/singer. Colloquial speech appears in abundance in the lyrics, pertaining to its intimate tone. Often, the singers are addressed using 'we' and the Dutch, informal form of 'you', 'je' – a personal pronoun that is rarely used outside the inner circle. A case of such informal speech can be found in 'Op het eeten van een kalfskop': "Wat dunkje van dat kaakebeen/Daar zat de beste knap om heen/Die wy ons leven schransten" (Van

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[57] "Thus comes the time, that he was consigned to his grave:/Accompanied by poets, printers, friends and drifters" (RB).
[58] "Now friends/I bid you good night/But don't fall into that cellar" (RB).
[59] 'Letters for friends' (RB).
[60] 'Actual reader'; 'readers over the shoulder' (RB).

Overbeke et. al. 17XX: 14).[61] In addition, the narrator's catchphrases such as 'snaak' and 'bloet' also point to a loose conversation: "Maar bloet wat had hy raare pooten" (Van Overbeke et. al. 17XX: 4).[62] "Vry" and "Vulkaan" stand for liquor and tobacco, codes that are revealed by the contemporary drinkers and smokers befriended with Jan van Gyzen (Rosseau et. al. 1722: 10, 1). All in all, Schenkeveld's summary of epistolary features seem to match with those of the songs, confirming the tone of confidants.

But what has this tone got to do with a preference for mendacious songs? Remembering Grijp's textual features of oral tradition, we know that a song is built according to a blue print, or 'stramien'. For the mendacious songs in this song book, the 'stramien' of their narrative construction is nearly the same: a homodiegetic, first-person narrator accounts to an audience of the impossibilities that he or she has witnessed on geographical or marvellous locations during a dream, and uses the formula of waking up in the last stanza. Although these songs do not share metre, rhyme or melody, it is apparent that they are related. We know that 'Een andere droom' was published by Aernout van Overbeke about forty or fifty years before 'De reysende droomer op een esel zonder staart' was presumably first published. The title song must therefore be tailored after Van Overbeke's song. What does this entail? Van Overbeke was a burlesque author of anecdotes that were chiefly written to entertain his friends and acquaintances, and that were posthumously released for the general public – a reader situation similar to Schenkeveld's 'vriendenbrieven' (Van Stipriaan, 2007: 206-207). That a burlesque satirising of political affairs is expressed in 'Een andere droom', an argument we have abundantly discussed, further follows from the song's title in another songbook: 'Een Nieuw Liedt van een aerdige Spinne-kop, gesien op de punt van Canarien, ofte oostindisch Politijcq-Lied' (Van Overbeke et. al. 1680).[63] Satire was something that Van Overbeke shared with his friends, and from the following of Van Overbeke's 'stramien' and from the insertion of the blasphemous drinking song can be deduced that the group of friends around the singing printer presumably had the same motifs when compiling and singing this triptych in Van Overbeke style.

How does this style function for Schenkeveld's 'reële lezer' and the 'lezers over de schouder'? Naturally, it is impossible to view inside these readers' heads to study processes of decision making. But *De reysende droomer op een esel zonder staart* does contain codes that may appeal to more general target groups than the group around the singing printer.

The setting of a dream in the first two songs invokes a non-existing world with which chiefly insiders are familiar, initiates and friends with a background knowledge of the actuality that the satire and comedy refers to. For those who cannot decipher the code, the critical layers remain hidden and the songs seem nothing but a joke. Thus, a double audience of 'lezers over de schouder' is conceived: one shares an imagined bond with the 'reële lezers' through solving the riddled verses, the other celebrates their decadent lifestyle. The target group of drinkers, smokers, gamblers and gluttons see their behaviour affirmed in the songs. The intoxication of this hedonism is reflected in the setting of the dream, a place where the laws of logic and reason are absent and where hallucinations rule. Simultaneously, this dream is a framework for staging a reversed world, a place where the referential reality of politics

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[61] "Wat do you think of that jawbone/It had the best meat on the bone/That we gobbled down in our lives" (RB).
[62] "But blood, did it have weird legs" (RB).
[63] 'A New Song of an Agreeable Spider, Seen on the Summit of Canary, or East Indian Political Song' (RB).

and religion can be ridiculed by turning it upside down. Only those who recognise the symbolism, and who know the historical and socio-cultural background of these songs, can come to such interpretations. This second group of readers then consists of intellectuals.

The riddle is key to the song book, and this is personified, or rather animalified, by the figure of the tailless donkey. In the Old Dutch game 'Ezeltje-prik', players are blindfolded and have to pin a tail on a paper donkey. This is an equivalent of the mind game played in *De reysende droomer op een esel zonder staart*, aimed at the blind guessing of hidden meanings. The reference to 'Ezeltje-prik' is cleverly weaved into 'De reysende droomer op een esel zonder staart' especially, in which the word group "Ik zag" occurs a staggering thirty-one times, and in which motifs of sight and blindness often occur in constructions of proverbs and animals, such as "Ik zag een Arent zonder oogen" (Van Overbeke et. al. 17XX: 8).[64] A critical composure towards reality is being concealed in these puzzles, solved while enjoying a drink and a smoke.

The friends of the singing printer may have been attracted to both the political standpoints and the spirituous celebrations of friendship in these songs. This is the community of the 'reële lezers'. But the 'lezers over de schouder' could enter this sphere as well. They would not necessarily need to experience the group codes as their own, but could relate to the satirical views of the world and themselves, or to the ideals of comradery, expressed in a merry, musical culture. Present day 'lezers over de schouder' may lean towards a more literal reading of the songs, as follows from the *DSD*'s cataloguing of some of these songs as "avonturen van een reiziger".[65] For these literal 'lezers over de schouder', the songs present themselves as mendacious songs in which lying prevails over truth-telling.

We have now discerned how internal fictional indications create mendacity, and how mendacity can function as satire in the context of a special target group of friends. But is a satirical reading common for mendacious songs? In other words, are Brown and Okpewho right when assuming that there is a layer of truth-telling in mendacious narratives? Although we have discerned a layer of satire in one of the songs, this may not be representative for the whole genre. In that sense, the songs in this song book may not prove to be exemplary for mendacity after all. Then, what have we learned from this close reading about mendacious songs? And how can we decide on which parts of the preliminary definition are core to the mendacious genre? We will save these questions as cliff hangers for the conclusion, as this 'analogue' part of the analysis draws to a close. In the next chapter, we will engage with these interpretations through the distant reading of a large corpus of mendacious songs.

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[64] "I witnessed an eagle without eyes" (RB).
[65] "Adventures of a traveller" (RB).

Chapter 3
A Closer Look at Mendacious Songs from Afar: Quantitative and Visual Explorations of the Genre

3.1 Towards a quantifiable definition of the genre

In the previous chapters, we have investigated some existing definitions of the mendacious songs genre, and assessed and adjusted these definitions by close reading two of such songs. We have found that the effect of fictional lies – the core of mendacity in fiction – is constituted by one or more logical invalidities or fictional untruths that are intentionally revealed by a narrator. This suggestion of intentionality is achieved by a mixture of realistic and fictitious aspects: first-person narration, *skaz*, references to the actual world and truth formulas pertain to verisimilitude, whereas illogical events, the insertion of wonderlands, and reversed truth formulas contradict this factual effect. In this chapter, we will take another tour around the hermeneutical circle and further test these findings within a large corpus of mendacious songs to see if the characteristics we have found indeed apply to the genre as a whole. To discern such principles in the corpus, we use the equivalents of a telescope, if you like, programmes with which to read the corpus from a distance, that can translate data into visualisations for qualitative interpretation. In order to prepare the songs for this procedure, we need to somehow make our definition quantifiable and machine-readable. But is this possible for all parts of the construction of mendacious narration?

I would like to answer this question with yes, in theory. As set out in the introduction, however, due to the limited scope of this thesis I will only focus on finding textual patterns in lemmatised words, parts of speech, and a one-dimensional semantic layer of lexical items. This excludes the possibility of exploring external indications of fictional lies, as these are related to contextual information. Neither can the internal indications of impossibilities be investigated thoroughly, as that would require a more complex survey of syntactic and semantic structures. As we will see, using the three textual aspects I just mentioned the occurrence of wonderlands and some aspects constituting a mendacious narrative instance can be electronically queried though. Therefore, the major part of the analysis in this chapter will revolve around testing whether a narrator is indeed homodiegetic – an eyewitness or an active participant in the story world – and an intentional teller of tall tales mixing fact with fiction. Satire is an aspect that we can also briefly touch upon: is 'Een andere droom' exceptional in that respect, or is satire core to the genre?

In addition to this examination of the genre's definition formed in the previous chapters, in the second part of the analysis we will have a look at the themes that came up during the close reading, connected to hedonism, sleep, friendship and games. Do these themes also appear in distant readings? Based on their themes, impossibilities may thus still be included indirectly into the inquiry, by means of the interpretational layer of their constituent words. 'De reysende droomer op een ezel zonder staart' and 'Een andere droom' suggest that animals may play an important role in mendacious songs, for instance. To enrich these thematic hypotheses – namely that the themes found so far are common to all

mendacious songs – I would like to test some of the themes that Coigneau mentions in his analysis of 'leugenrefreinen': the setting of the feast, the battle, the journey and the dream (Coigneau 1982: 337) Can we find similar themes in the corpus of mendacious songs, or are these merely characteristic of the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century 'leugenrefreinen' from Coigneau's corpus? And are there thematic developments within the corpus from a diachronic perspective, before and after 1900?

In conclusion, which patterns in lemma, parts of speech, and interpretation support, challenge, enrich, and/or refute the definitions we have found so far, synchronically and diachronically? Before we turn to answering this question, let us first have a look at the selection and preparation of the corpus and discuss the methodologies and techniques used for the analysis.

3.2 The mendacious songs corpus

3.2.1 Selection criteria

Linguistic corpora typically consist of various text types of written and spoken language (Ide 2004). To create an unbiased sample, each text type, word and phrase is represented by a large amount of occurrences – each text type can then be studied in relation to other text types. When translating this setup into an inquiry of literary genres, we could opt to select two sets of text samples so as to scrutinise which aspects are characteristic for a group of mendacious songs in relation to a group representing all literary genres from the same period. Ideally, I would have chosen for this approach: this arrangement enables questions about the connection between mendacious songs and other historical genres, the subgenre of songs, and other mendacious literary genres. To escape the hermeneutical circle entirely, one could even choose to query an enormous amount of songs, and see how computation groups them together. Do such clusters relate to the genres we have found through close reading, for instance to mendacious songs? Or do other genres emerge that we have not yet been able to distinguish? Unfortunately, within the scope of this Master's thesis, such a procedure is not possible – we will therefore keep begging the question a little longer. I have restricted the inquiry to the analysis of one corpus, consisting of predefined mendacious songs, occasionally split in two for a diachronic survey. This analysis then functions as a preliminary investigation towards a more expansive study of song genres in general, and their constellation with mendacious songs in particular.

Where to start looking for such a mendacious songs collection? The Dutch Song Database (*DSD*) provides for over a 140,000 detailed descriptions of songs from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century, in Dutch, Flemish and Frisian, and in other languages if those songs were published in Dutch speaking countries (*DSD* 2012b). The Meertens Institute running this database keeps a record of genres, and has linked together songs based on their text, melody (extracted from tune indications), and stanza forms. Therefore, it formed a reliable platform for collecting and selecting mendacious songs for the corpus.

A query of 'leugenlied' revealed that the *DSD* contains 126 descriptions of mendacious songs, ranging from 1680 to 2004.[66] On inspection of this list, however, I found some irregularities that might distort the results had I taken this list as a base for the corpus: some songs appeared more than once on the list, in different editions, where others did not. This situation begged for the second selection criterion: does one include all mendacious songs, including each variant, or does one select only one of each mendacious song? An advantage of the first option is that it includes the popularity of songs into the corpus, as the more often a song is published, the better its motifs are represented in that corpus. However, such a corpus would contain over 500 songs, and that was a scale I could not accomplish within the time frame of this thesis. Therefore, I decided to strive for the second option. To create a representative sample collection, I included each song only once, a procedure that could be easily carried out by comparing the lists of 'alle liederen met deze tekst' in the *DSD*'s song descriptions with the *DSD* list of mendacious songs.[67] From the multiple song variants, I selected the earliest version for the corpus.

Moreover, I recognised the first song on the list, 'Een Nieuw Liedt van een aerdige Spinne-kop, gesien op de punt van Canarien, ofte oostindisch Politijcq-Lied', as Van Overbeke's 'Japanse droom', a song that I thought should recur in the corpus from an earlier edition than the one mentioned in the *DSD* from 1680. Therefore, I decided to go through 'alle liederen met deze tekst' again and select the earliest version of each list.[68] The consequence of this decision is, that some of the songs in the corpus are not indicated as mendacious song in the *DSD*, but as children's song for instance. However, if the first line, the tune indication, and the number of line groups in the *DSD*'s description of the earliest song were similar to those of the song from the *DSD* mendacious songs list, there was a good chance that this song was indeed the same. I later verified this through close reading: if a song seemed not mendacious after all, I selected the next song from the list of 'alle liederen met deze tekst'. For this decision on mendacity, I used a loose definition based on Van Bork, namely that at least one logical invalidity that could be interpreted as a fictional untruth either through lying or through exaggeration, should occur in the song (Van Bork 2002c). An example of this procedure is the song with the first line "Bij Kees Geizer moet je wezen", a song promoting Kees Geizer as a place where "de mooie meisjes zijn" (Anonymous 1850).[69] This song functions as an advertisement, and, more importantly, it does not include any lie, therefore I have replaced it with the first song from 'alle liederen met deze tekst' that contained an ambiguous phrase that could be read as an impossibility, namely "Klare jenever lust me niet" in 'In 't Fortuintje' (Anonymous 1875).[70]

After these procedures, a corpus of 59 songs was established with an average length of 223 words per song.[71] The songs are not evenly distributed over time: 3 songs were published

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[66] Since March 2012 when I conducted this query, these numbers may have changed.

[67] "All songs with these lyrics" (RB).

[68] This does not mean that each song represents a new song; many of them have been collected from oral culture.

[69] "At Kees Geizer you should be"; "the pretty girls are" (RB).

[70] "Clear jenever does not like me" or "Clear jenever I do not like" (RB). In the mendacious songs I have encountered, informal language is often inserted. Therefore, it is possible to read the object "me" as a subject, rendering this song not mendacious. The fact that a reading of impossibility exists, however, has made me decide to include the song in the corpus.

[71] See Appendix B for the corpus of mendacious songs.

in the seventeenth century, 4 in the eighteenth, 12 in the nineteenth, 39 in the twentieth, and 1 in the twenty-first century. What this selection reflects is a definition of the genre accumulated by a variety of interpreters: publishers who referred to mendacity in the titles of some of the songs; researchers at the Meertens Institute who classified the songs as mendacious, working on the *DSD* and on the Dutch Folksong Archive that the *DSD* is based upon; and myself, using the unconstrained definition that I clarified earlier (*DSD* 2012a). In this chapter, we will compare this partially shared, and for the most part implicit definition to the genre's delineations encountered in the secondary literature and in the close reading of two mendacious songs. We have to keep in mind though, that this is not an unbiased, objective measurement, and that such is not the aim of this particular analysis – computation does not rule out subjectivity. Within the current setup, it is not possible to escape the tautology that we confronted when close reading the genre, and in that respect this digital analysis cannot contribute to a better practice. That does not mean it is not valuable: we can still deduce meaning from a predefined corpus, compare these to our previous findings, and enrich and refute parts of the definitions. These results can form the hypothesis for an inquiry that encompasses a larger, random sample of songs to understand mendacious songs within the context of a broader scope of songs. Such would be an interesting exploration in the future.

3.2.2 Transcription criteria

Although a good part of the songs from the corpus was available as a digital resource, most of them were hosted as a facsimile so that I have transcribed the songs myself. For some songs, however, the *DSD* accommodated a link to an online transcription, either by the Meertens Institute or by another host, such as 'Kwik en Kwak' from the Folksong Archive (Anonymous 1982). I have modified these transcriptions according to the criteria applied to my own transcriptions, aiming for a translation of how the song should be sung according to its textual cues.[72] To accomplish this, transcriptions were diplomatic with regard to spelling (except for depreciated letter forms such as the long s), (supposed) typos, capitalisation, and punctuation. Word divisions, corrections and abbreviations were solved though, as these were not relevant for the intended analysis. Furthermore, I have retained the textual structure of lines and stanzas without the inclusion of page breaks. All stanzas were separated by a blank line, and verses were restored if the layout suggested that one verse encompassed two or more lines. Finally, if the text indicated the repetition of a refrain, either by the insertion of "refrein" or by repeat signs in the music notation, I inserted these refrains in full after each stanza. The consequence of this decision is that songs of which refrains were not reproduced by a publisher are misrepresented in the sample. However, I believe that consciously omitting refrains from a text is an intervention one should avoid, as it deprives the song of a characteristic feature of its 'stramien' as identified by Grijp, namely a repetitive part that helps a singer remembering the lyrics (Grijp 2008: 314, 322). For this reason, I have opted to

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[72] Obviously, transcribing a representation of how a song should be sung is a subjective interpretation of these textual features. As we know from singing songs ourselves, one tends to leave out refrains or stanzas sometimes, and who is to say that is not a rendition of the song? My interpretations of the songs were to render them as complete as possible.

transcribe refrains as given, despite its disadvantage. These transcriptions would form the base of the corpus.

3.2.3 Preparation of the corpus

In order to perform the type of research that we will more thoroughly discuss in the next section, the transcriptions needed additional mark-up to be processed by a machine (Ide 2004). Plain text files could be handled by some of the programmes as we shall see, but in order to generate text files of lemmatised songs, for example, or text files displaying only the songs' parts of speech, we need a more powerful format to store such data so as to avoid the unnecessary labour of writing these text files separately by hand.[73]

I have decided to translate the corpus into the eXtensible Mark-up Language (XML), as XML is a sustainable way of storing data: the files are hardware and software independent, and from such data storage files a variety of formats can be derived, making the data accessible for present and future applications (Text Encoding Initiative Consortium 2004). Another advantageous trait of XML is its flexibility: within the confinements of a limited set of rules, there are numerous ways to express that, for instance, something is a stanza. This means that XML can be configured to express virtually any textual feature, a characteristic making it useful for scholarly practice with its focus on discoveries. Such extensibility is also a disadvantage, however, as lack of regulation bars interoperability between XML files, leading to a Tower of Babel in academic infrastructures.

Since 1987, the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) Consortium has been establishing sets of guidelines for machine-readable texts in the humanities and social sciences; for Standard Generalised Mark-up Language (SGML) at first, later for XML (Text Encoding Initiative Consortium 2012). This standard has been adopted by a large part of the digital humanities and their related communities, so as to improve the exchange of digital scholarly projects and thus enhance the (inter)national collaboration in academia. Therefore, it made sense to comply with this standard in my inquiry as well, so that the corpus of mendacious songs can be easily accessed and verified by others, and incorporated into other projects if necessary.

The corpus of mendacious songs has been set in one XML document that has a TEI corpus (<teiCorpus>) root in which each song is embedded as a separate TEI file. As the focus of the analysis was on text solely, I have included only minimal metadata in the bibliographies of the TEI header (<teiHeader>) of each TEI document. The textual structure of the songs was marked up using line groups (<lg>) for stanzas (@type) and lines (<l>) for verses. Each word has been encoded as a word (<w>) on which lemma (@lemma) and part of speech (@ana) were specified.[74] [75] The semantic layer of lexical items – all nouns, main

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[73] Such manual labour is already involved in the process, as automated lemmatisers and parts of speech taggers are not yet publically available for the Dutch language, so one has to do the mark-up all by hand.

[74] For the determination of the lemmas, I have used the entries of *Van Dale Groot woordenboek hedendaags Nederlands* and the *WNT* (Van Sterkenburg et. al. 2006). In the case of personal pronouns, although they have separate entries in these dictionaries, I have used 'gij' for 'ge' and 'jij' for 'je'.

[75] For the determination of parts of speech, I have used Kerstens and Sturm's *Beknopte grammatica van het Nederlands* (Kerstens and Sturms 2002). The abbreviations used for the parts of speech refer to Dutch grammatical terms. This taxonomy is included in the TEI corpus header.

verbs, adjectives, and adverbial adjectives – has been embedded inside the word tags as an interpretation (<interp>) on which one semantic analysis (@ana) is specified.[76]

Before going through an example of such mark-up, I would like to elaborate more on this semantic aspect of the analysis. As I mentioned in the introduction, encoding meaning is a slippery slope. Ide remarks on linguistic sense-tagging – the encoding of the sense of a word, for instance the sense in which the word 'bank' is used – that despite a predefined sense bank such as WordNet, researchers often cannot decide conclusively on these interpretations (Ide 2004). In literary texts this is especially problematic, as it is exactly the iterative resounding of meaning between words, contexts and readers that is core to literary inquiry: any encoding of meaning would be a limitation of that key aspect foregrounded in literature. On the other hand, in the case of our analysis we throw out the baby with the bath water if we do not have a look at the semantic components that make up the constructions characteristic of mendacious songs. For constructions of fictional untruth form the nucleus of the genre, as without fictional untruth, no fictional lie can be discerned by a reader. The thematic analysis that I suggested at the beginning of this chapter, is linked to these constructions of fictional untruth. If, for instance, we find that in three songs a tailless donkey appears as a motif (which is the case in songs 6, 10, 29) this is an interesting finding on the level of close reading, as it can function as a starting point for inquiry on intertextuality. However, from a more distant point of view, the motif of an animal missing a bodily part (the three-legged ox in song 5 for instance) may be more common in these songs, and may indeed be part of a set of formats for the construction of fictional untruth. If one wants to research that in a large corpus, enriching the texts with at least one semantic layer is of vital importance. The survey of such components in this thesis is the first step towards a more thorough probing of these fictional untruth constructions in future inquiry.

How to decide, then, on a classification of meaning?[77] For this semantic analysis, I have compiled a taxonomy based on the idea of "conceptual hierarchy", as Alexander puts it, a tree representing branches of meaning (Alexander 2012: 82). In his research on visualising this tree – or rather, this forest – for all words in the history of English, a tree derived from the *Historical Thesaurus of English*, each word has inherited a number of meanings from a branch.[78] I have used a similar idea of a conceptual tree, but marked up only one meaning for each word due to the boundaries of this thesis. 'Blauw' would be categorised as 'colour', for instance, and 'kat' as 'animal' and not as 'mammal' or 'feline'.[79] The meanings that I encoded are not all situated on the same level – if sameness of level even exists in conceptual classifications – but rather I chose for a flexible granularity of meaning depending on the implications that a group of words seemed to have for the genre. For example, a close reading of the songs revealed that musical instruments were mentioned quite often, a feature that is of

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[76] In the process of tagging, a procedure for which I used the XML editor Oxygen's Find/Replace function, capitalisation in the transcriptions has been lost. This has no effect on the analysis, as names deriving meaning from capitalisation are marked up as proper names (with the code of 'znen': 'zelfstandig naamwoord eigennaam').

[77] Heuser and Le-Khac from the Literary Lab have developed an automated method for extracting semantic fields from a corpus of British novels, using the Correlator tool (Heuser and Le-Khac 2012: 6).

[78] Alexander's visualisations reveal patches of new words in semantic fields such as 'Physics', 'Chemistry', 'Numbers', and 'Language' (Alexander 2012: 83).

[79] 'Blue'; 'cat' (RB).

special interest for the genre as it is composed on music. So instead of classifying a 'viool' as a 'tool', the category for cutlery, ploughs and the like, it was classified as 'musical instrument'.[80] In an ideal situation, each lexical word would be encoded with *n* meanings, so that a complex web could be queried – but let us deal with meaning in this limited setup for now, and save this issue for the discussion.

To illustrate the structure of a song encoded in TEI XML, here is an example of a stanza from ''k Zag twee beren broodjes smeren' (Van Duijse 1905: 1833-1834)[81]:

```
<lg type="stanza">
   <l>
      <w ana="pvnw" lemma="ik">'k</w>
      <w ana="howw" lemma="zien">
         <interp ana="perception">Zag</interp>
      </w>
      <w ana="bhtw" lemma="twee">twee</w>
      <w ana="znsn" lemma="beer">
         <interp ana="animal">beren</interp>
      </w>
      <w ana="znsn" lemma="brood">
         <interp ana="food">broodjes</interp>
      </w>
      <w ana="howw" lemma="smeren">
         <interp ana="actionhuman">smeren</interp>
      </w>
   </l>
   [...]
</lg>
```

If you are not familiar with XML: what you see here is a stanza (<lg type="stanza">[some verses]</lg>) containing the first verse (<l>[some words]</l>) in which each encoded word has been provided with a part of speech and a lemma (<w ana="[a part of speech code]" lemma="[a lemma]">[a word]</w>) and in which each encoded lexical item also contains an interpretation of the conceptual classification (<interp ana="[a meaning]">[a word]</interp>).

This XML file functions as a storage facility – the document itself does nothing. However, XML-related languages such as eXtensible Stylesheet Language Transformations (XSLT) can extract data from an XML file and transform it into a format such as PDF, XHTML or a Word document. The Mandala Browser, one of the tools that I have used for the analysis, can process XML documents, the other programmes process text files more easily. To allow for an analysis by these tools, I have written stylesheets in XSLT with which I created four types of plain text documents: files that contain only the lemmas; files that contain the lemmas of function words alternated with the interpretations of lexical words; files that contain only parts of speech; and files containing alternations of parts of speech and

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[80] 'Violin' (RB).
[81] The parts of speech codes in this example stand for 'persoonlijk voornaamwoord' ('pvnw'), 'hoofdwerkwoord' ('howw'), 'bepaald hoofdtelwoord' ('bhtw'), and 'zelfstandig naamwoord - soortnaam' ('znsn'): personal pronoun, main verb, numeral, and common noun.

interpretations of lexical items. Finding patterns in these text files that represent different aspects of mendacious songs that are hard to consider through close reading, was the aim of this preparation of the corpus.

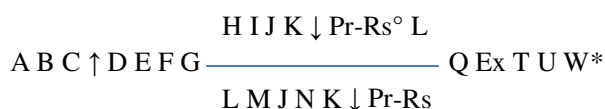## 3.3 Methods, tools and techniques

3.3.1 Distant reading

Now that we have an overview of the corpus of mendacious songs, and of the way these songs have been prepared for the analysis, let us have a look at what it is exactly that we are doing when we run them through electronic tools and programmes. As I mentioned in the introduction, the purpose of this case study of mendacious songs is to perform an analysis of distant reading so as to contrast it with a close reading and find out the benefits and disadvantages of each technique. But what are the claims of distant reading on this behalf?

The term 'distant reading' was first coined by Franco Moretti in 2000, and elaborated upon in his *Graphs, Maps, Trees* in which he poses two ground-breaking questions (Moretti 2007: 1). What can we discover about literature when zooming out of the singular literary work, of the oeuvre, even of the literary canon, and instead take the whole of literary history as a subject of study (Moretti 2007: 4)? And, more importantly, how can we read such a gigantic corpus as literary researchers, who are trained experts in the close reading of unique artefacts? In his monograph, Moretti explores these questions by probing three applications of visualisations borrowed from empirical oriented disciplines such as the social sciences, geography and biology, to literary history: graphs, maps and trees.

Moving away from the event (or the individual book) as a focal point of study, graphs can give us insight into the workings of cycles and the *longue durée* in literary history, a visualisation in which Moretti sees a chance especially for the observation of genres, patterns that function as cyclical, "temporary structures" (Moretti 2007: 13). The genres from Moretti's analysis – a gathering of data on several novelistic genres from a variety of researchers – point out that the "rise and fall" of genres seems to develop according to similar patterns, and that these genres appear and disappear in clusters after an average life-span of about 30 years (Moretti 2007: 18). The discovery of this pattern leads Moretti to refute his intuition about the relationship between the novel and genres, namely that genres are "accidents" and "local", whereas the novel is the form paramount to these subgenres (Moretti 2007: 30). He concludes that, instead, the novel is a "system of its genres", that 'the' novel does not exist, but that it is formed by the multitude of the changing forms that are genres.

Moretti explores this concept of diversity further using a different type of visualisation: the tree, borrowed from Darwin, as an expression of the history of form (Moretti 2007: 67-69). Trees are instruments with which to read more closely the patterns observed in the graphs (Moretti 2007: 77). Divergence is key here, and in literary history trees can render this principle by describing the distance between individual works rendered as branches unfolding diachronically (Moretti 2007: 70). If a genre is translated into such a tree, its "morphospace" becomes visible: a growing variety of formal features that change shape over time or that go "extinct" when they no longer appear in publications (Moretti 2007: 72).

Such trees, however, cannot resemble evolutionary trees in every respect, as a typical aspect of culture is the re-enactment of long lost formal features, a phenomenon that Moretti calls convergence (Moretti 2007: 78-79). Divergence and convergence seem to form an interdependent pair of forces at work in the development of genres, and trees are well-suited instruments to visualise their interplay (Moretti 2007: 80). What divergence, convergence and morphospace challenge, is the widespread assumption that genres can be defined by close reading a few typical examples: as genres are shape shifting entities, no single component can represent it as a whole (Moretti 2007: 76-77). Propp's morphological formula of Afanasjev's folk tales could be seen as an example of a compressed diverging and converging tree, in which the branches are represented by a division mark, and in which time has been erased from the equation (Propp 1997: 133):[82]

$$\text{A B C} \uparrow \text{D E F G} \begin{array}{c} \text{H I J K} \downarrow \text{Pr-Rs}° \text{ L} \\ \rule{6em}{0.4pt} \\ \text{L M J N K} \downarrow \text{Pr-Rs} \end{array} \text{Q Ex T U W*}$$

Propp's scheme visualises what Moretti calls the "synchronic drifting apart" of genres, a moment in time that confers a number of branches in form (Moretti 2007: 91). The temporal is an important aspect of Moretti's trees however: "This perceptual uncertainty of between time and (morpho-)space – this impossibility, in fact, of really seeing them both at once – is the sign of a new conception of literary history, in which literature moves forward *and sideways* at once" (Moretti 2007: 91). The tree, then, functions as a morphed synchronic scheme, an abstraction of form through time.

We have an impression of the discerning of temporal patterns and cycles now, but how can maps help us see hidden aspects of literature? Such visualisations can point us to two principles governing space in literature, namely internal and external forces, ideology and reality (Moretti 2007: 57). An example of such forces at work can be found by comparing space in the nineteenth-century village stories by Mary Mitford: within a decade, the location of these stories shift from a circular centralisation around the village centre to a scattering dispersion far outside the village (Moretti 2007: 57-59). The circle is an expression of an (almost) evenly pulling of forces, as we can observe in for instance the gravitational formation of planetary bodies (Moretti 2007: 39). The emergence of stronger external forces bends this circle out of shape, a process that is being reflected literature. In that respect, Moretti dubs the map, in Thompson's words, a "diagram of forces", a spatial shape that reveals the impact of actual sociological changes onto ideology expressed in narrative form (Moretti 2007: 64). Maps, however, are not necessarily geographical: as they are abstractions of fictional worlds, geometrical is a more appropriate classification (Moretti 2007: 54, 56) Such geometrical abstractions are spatially visualised, and almost any unit can be distributed in this space. Almost, for according to Moretti, non-geographical locations cannot be mapped as they lack

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[82] Each of these letters represent a narrative element in a Russian folk tale from Afanasjev's collection. 'A' stands for misfortune of the hero, for instance, and ↑ stands for the departure of the hero (Propp 1997: 172). Not every narrative element occurs in each folk tale. However, the elements in Afanasjev's folk tales do follow the sequence as expressed in the scheme. Most folk tales either contain a battle with the enemy (H-J), or a difficult task (M-N), or neither of these, and the ones that do contain both are ordered according to the same sequence – this is represented by the division mark (Propp 1997: 132-133).

an identity and therefore a point of reference, the core of the village for instance (Moretti 2007: 52-53). I would like to add that if maps are indeed geometrical rather than geographical, an imaginary map could have the same effect of revelation as its geographical counterpart. Distance is relative to a human's mode of transportation: in the near future the shortest route to Mars will take around the same time as a journey from Holland to the East Indies in the seventeenth century. As we have seen in the first chapter, an array of fictional truths can provide us with an indication of the concept of distance within a fictional world, which makes possible the creation of maps even for imaginary or unnamed territories. We will have a closer look at this when we discuss the Mandala browser and its maps of mendacious songs.

Taking the whole literary history as a focal point, and comparing its morphologies through time and space – these are the objectives of distant reading (Moretti 2007: 90). Making sense of these patterns is not an overthrowing of close readings, but rather a supplement to such readings on another level of abstraction. Moretti speaks of the explanation of such patterns rather than of their interpretation, as that type of understanding is related to individual works. Distant texts are another subject of reading, and require a new reading mode: "Quantification poses the problem, then, and form offers the solution" (Moretti 2007: 26). Such solutions, however, are not always apparent, and this is exactly the fascinating thing about distant reading: if a phenomenon cannot be explained, it is a question pointing to an area in literary theory waiting to be discovered. Harvesting new questions is a side-effect of having a look at literature from afar.

Do we have examples of such inquiry? In the Netherlands, Boot has experimented with visualisations for the correspondence of Hugo Grotius as part of a larger digitisation project involving the letters of seventeenth-century Dutch scholars (Boot 2008: 201, 207). The graphs, maps and trees from Boot's research function as interactive "megascopes", instruments that reveal aspects that are too large to be visible to the naked eye, such as the frequency of correspondence with an acquaintance relative to the total number of letters, or the length of letters per correspondent (Boot 2008: 201-202). Simultaneously, these instruments allow users to view aspects within the visualisations from close by. Grotius's correspondence can thus be situated within the larger context of scholarly epistolarity in the Dutch Republic: an instance of how the machine can support close readings in electronic editions (Boot 2008: 210).

The inquiry on Latent Semantic Analysis (LSA) by Louwerse and Van Peer that I mentioned briefly in the introduction, is in fact another example of distant reading (Louwerse and Van Peer 2007). LSA creates hierarchical clusters of words based on the average distance between them within a corpus. An experiment with author's names reveals that indeed LSA is able to group together names according to period, as they occur in each other's proximity within a corpus (Louwerse and Van Peer 2007: 31). Applied to eight Dutch novels, these literary texts form clusters similarly, grouping together Realist and Naturalist/Modernist works in a chronological tree (Louwerse and Van Peer 2007: 32-33).

This inquiry can be related to the experiments that Jockers, Moretti and their team conduct at Stanford's Literary Lab (Allison et. al. 2011). Their first pamphlet in the Literary Lab series is an exploration of the application of Witmore's Docuscope, a programme developed to cluster Shakespeare's plays, onto a corpus of novels that represent a variety of genres. Docuscope has a categorised dictionary with 101 Language Action Types (LATs) into

which the words of a text are distributed when they are processed: 'I' and 'we' fall under 'FirstPerson', for instance (Allison et. al. 2011: 2). Both Docuscope and Jockers's Most Frequent Word (MFW) method, in which the 44 most frequent words and punctuations are clustered, are capable of reproducing a tree corresponding to the general scholarly assumptions about these genres (Allison et. al. 2011: 5-6). The fact that both the counting of semantic categories and of function words reveal the same results, indicate that a genre is determined by patterns in words such as 'and' and 'the', and that this "mortar" also conveys characteristics of genres, and given the fact that they encompass most of the words in a text, these formal features must define genres for the most part (Allison et. al. 2011: 6, 8). The excavation of this "iceberg" of formal features is the aim of the quantitative formalism performed in the experiment, and the pamphlet is a starting point for further inquiry into that field (Allison et. al. 2011: 25).

Within the scope of this thesis, I will not probe mendacious songs with LSA, Docuscope, or the Most Frequent Words method. Following Moretti and Boot, the idea of finding patterns in quantitative data using visualisations as proposed in *Graphs, Maps, Trees* will be the core reading technique that I will apply here. Before we have a look at these diagrams, however, let us first discuss the tools that have helped generate them.

3.3.2 Concordances and trees: AntConc

AntConc is a free software programme that can create concordances of one or more text files, and formed a key tool in the analysis of mendacious songs (Anthony 2012). But why are concordances important in quantitative inquiry? What is a concordance for that matter?

A concordance is an alphabetical index of each word in a text, often displayed in the context of a sentence (Hockey 2004). The procedure of concordances stems from the monasteries in the Middle Ages, and in that respect it is fitting that since 1949 one of the founding fathers of humanities computing, Father Busa, in collaboration with IBM, experimented with mechanical concordances of Thomas Aquino, breaking ground for future generations of digital humanists (Hockey 2004). Busa set high standards concerning the quality of these concordances, and insisted on a lemmatised concordance rather than an index of words as they appeared in the text – as a consequence, the first volume of his inquiry was published twenty-five years after the initiation of the project. Literary researchers such as Wisbey and Parrish picked up on concordances in the 1960s and 1970s, but due to limited resources lemmatisation and variant spelling remained problematic. When information technology advanced, concordances found their way into the fields of authorship attribution and stylistics (Hockey 2004). The advantage of concordances is that one can derive indexes of word frequencies from them: this procedure has been previously discussed with Jockers MFW method, applied to the recognition of genres. Other applications include Burrow's 150 most frequent words, or common words, that are the greater building blocks of texts, or the least frequent words that form the base of lexical variety inquiry, both of these methods can be used as an indication for authorship recognition (Burrows 2004; Van Dalen-Oskam 2005: 214-215).

For the inquiry of mendacious songs, AntConc provides for concordances, complete word lists, collocations, clusters, n-grams and keyness of the four processed corpora as

discussed in the previous section: the lemmatised corpus, the partially lemmatised, partially interpreted corpus, the corpus only displaying parts of speech, and the corpus displaying the interpretations of lexical words. Although the word list tool has an in-built facility for uploading a stop word list – a list of words that are deemed not important for the type of findings a researcher expects – I have decided to look at the raw data, considering the insights of the Literary Lab on the 'mortar' of genres. Besides computing the frequency of single words, the collocates tool allows for a probing of specific words occurring in each other's proximity, whereas the n-gram function in the clusters tool indexes the frequency of all phrases consisting of *n* (one or more) words (Anthony 2012: 2). Finally, the keyword list tool includes the opportunity of comparing two sets of texts, so that the frequency or infrequency of words in relation to a reference corpus can be measured. In the case of our corpus, two groups of mendacious songs were formed and compared, that consisted of songs published before and after 1900 – this diachronic approach enabled the temporal aspect of distant reading the genre's morphospace. To calculate the keywords for each corpus, I set the tool preference to χ^2 as the results were most conservative using that statistical measure than when using the recommended log-likelihood method. The critical values for significance are as follows (Anthony 2012: 7):

> 95th percentile; 5% level; $p < 0.05$; critical value = 3.84
> 99th percentile; 1% level; $p < 0.01$; critical value = 6.63
> 99.9th percentile; 0.1% level; $p < 0.001$; critical value = 10.83
> 99.99th percentile; 0.01% level; $p < 0.0001$; critical value = 15.13

This implies that any keywords with values above 3.84 are significantly specific for that corpus. The significant results of these keyword lists were translated in SPSS into bar charts – diagrams that can be seen as two-branched trees.

3.3.3 Graphs: Voyant Tools

Voyant (formerly known as Voyeur) Tools is a free online research environment for text analysis developed by the Canadian Hermeneuti.ca project (Sinclair and Rockwell 2009). Voyant offers a growing number of tools in a user-friendly interface, including concordance tools, Cirrus, a word cloud tool, and Word Trend, a tool generating graphs from up to five selected words or phrases in a corpus. TAPoR, the University of Alberta's Web site hosting Voyant, also presents interesting visualisation tools that are still in a testing phase (TAPoR team 2012). Lava, for example, is a three dimensional space in which word frequencies are displayed as an array of colourful wheels around an axis (Figure 1). Word Count Fountain displays word frequencies as interactive fountains (Figure 2). Bubblelines displays each selected word occurrence per text as a circle on a line. Despite their stunning visuals, the first two of these visualisation tools proved to be difficult spectacles for finding patterns in the corpus. And although Bubblelines provided promising visualisations of patterns, unfortunately the function for exporting images for print publications was not yet working.

For these reasons, I decided to use the Word Trend tool for the generation of diachronic visualisations in graphs. After the mendacious songs were named after their year of publication, a historical view of developments in the corpus emerged in these charts.
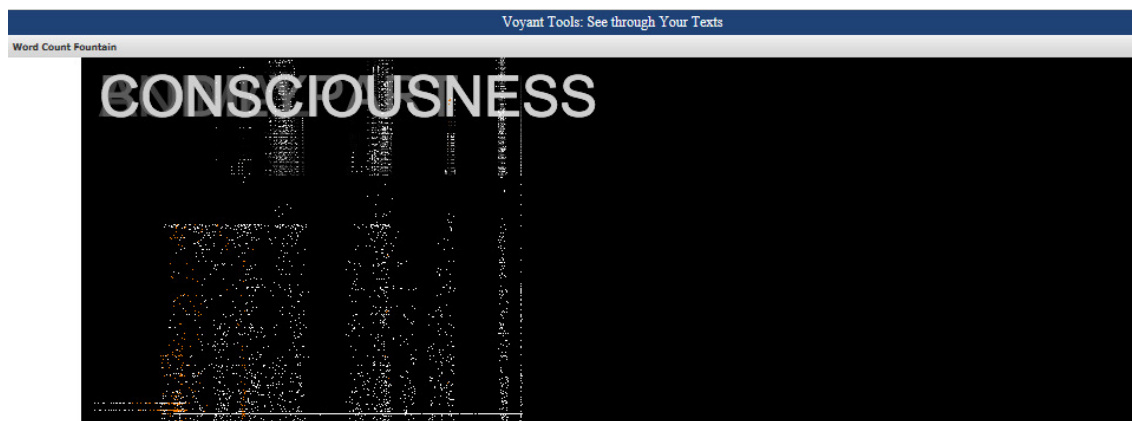

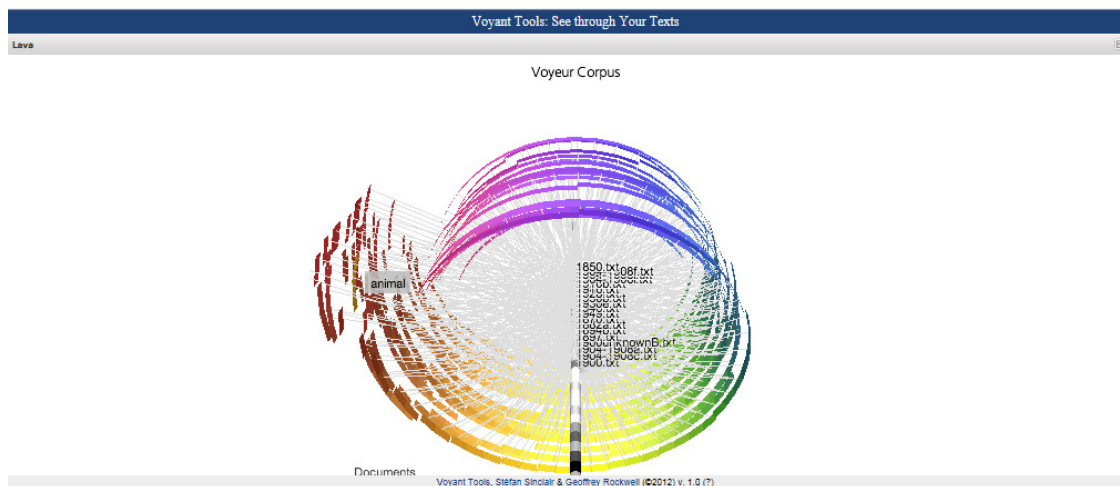Figure 1. The frequency of 'consciousness' per song in Word Count Fountain.

Figure 2. Word frequencies per song in Lava: 'animal' is selected.

3.3.4 Maps: the Mandala Browser

The TAPoR Web site also presents a link to the Mandala Browser, a text analysis tool that is currently being developed by a team of researchers from various Canadian universities (Dobson et. al. 2012a). The Mandala Browser displays the relationship between selected words or other units in one or more texts (Dobson et. al. 2012b: 2). This tool is especially well-suited for visualising the content of XML files, as it recognises tags and attributes once a document is uploaded. For example, <interp ana="animal"> could be displayed by selecting 'interp-ana' in the menu, and by specifying its value as 'animal'. The results are then presented in a mandala as a collection of colourful dots that represent the number of occurrence of one word or value. These dots are being collected from the wider circle of grey

dots on the side and are grouped around a magnet symbolising the selected unit. Dots can stand for a text, for a verse, or for a word – this can be specified upon uploading the XML file (Dobson et. al. 2012b: 5). If more than one unit has been selected, and if these units occur both within the confinement of a dot – in other words, if they occur both in a text, a verse or a word – then another magnet appears in the middle, surrounded by a swirl of combined dots that represent instances of texts, verses or words containing both the units (Figure 3).
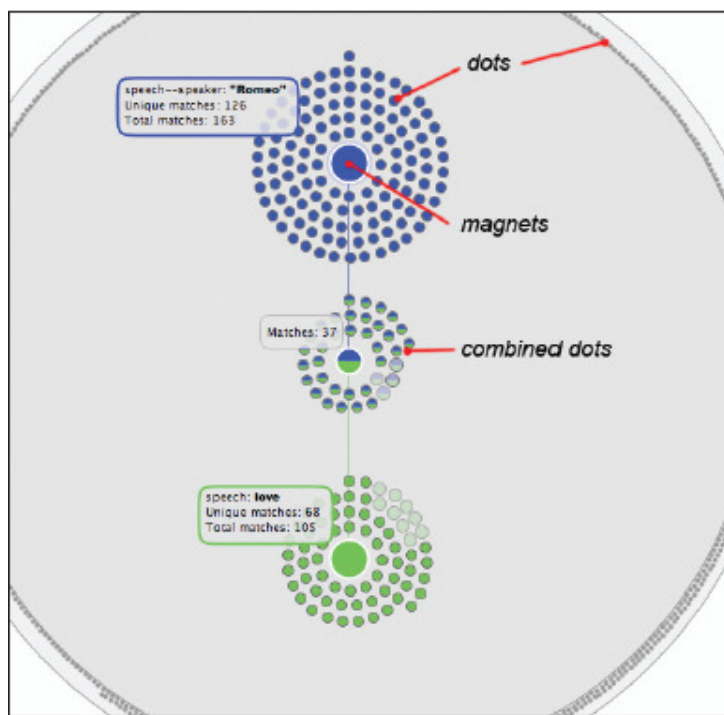

Figure 3. Reading a Mandala visualisation: dots, magnets and combined dots (Dobson et.al. 2012: 3).

The selection of a variety of units leads to mandalas reminiscent of Tibetan artefacts that are capable of conveying a bird's eye view on a corpus.

Are mandalas maps, you may wonder? If we take into account Moretti's concept of the geometrical map, I would say, yes, as the tool is based on geometrical circles. Moreover, although these maps do not confer any geographical information, they are nonetheless spatial in the sense that they are governed by the gravitational forces that are magnets. This gravitational pull is calculated automatically, so that words of little frequency – of little gravity – pull less on magnets of combined dots, that then drift towards the 'bodies' of words of more frequency. That the words or word-like units in these mandalas partially act as planetary bodies or, rather, as galaxies, is one of the greatest assets of this tool: it thus effectively broadens the meaning of the map in textual scholarship. What we can see with these pairs of goggles is how words behave like matter: a true diagram of force.

3.4 Results

3.4.1 First person narrative voice

Now that we have an impression of the types of visualisation used for distant reading the corpus of mendacious songs, let us see how well they perform in testing the first part of the hypothesis, namely that mendacious songs have a narrator intentionally accounting fictional untruths by mixing factual and fictional indications. Recalling the beginning of this chapter, mendacious narrators are generally homodiegetic in the first person. The first question we may ask is, then: does each song contain a personal pronoun or possessive determiner in first person? A mandala reveals that this is not always the case (Figure 4). Of the 59 songs, 45
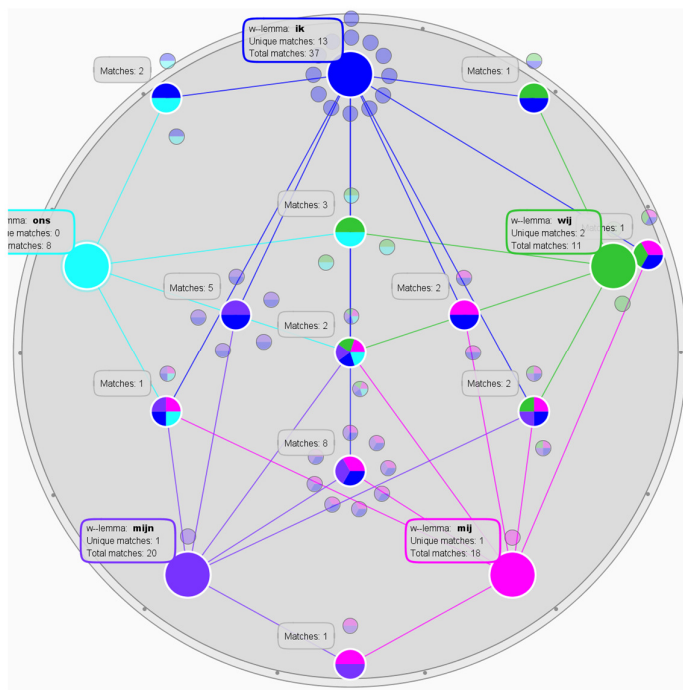

Figure 4. The distribution of lemmatised first person words per song.

contain one or more words related to the first person; 14 grey dots, about a quarter of the songs, remain on the mandala's border. If they do not include a first person, do these grey dots represent songs with heterodiegetic narrators?

A heterodiegetic narrative instance does not participate in the story world: if no first person occurs, then in most cases the narrator is omniscient. In most cases, as we can imagine a narrator using second person from a homodiegetic perspective without speaking of him- or herself in first person. A second mandala displaying all songs occurring with first and/or second person, can rule out this option (Figure 5). Of the 59 songs, 13 have neither first nor second personal pronouns, which means that at least more than a fifth of the mendacious songs in this corpus is heterodiegetic.

This finding is interesting for two reasons. Firstly, our hypothesis has been overruled: we have discovered a considerable part of mendacious songs that is not homodiegetic. This portion may even be greater, as not every instance of first person is used for narration: consider, for instance, dialogue, or a first person narrator that stands outside the story.[83] [84]
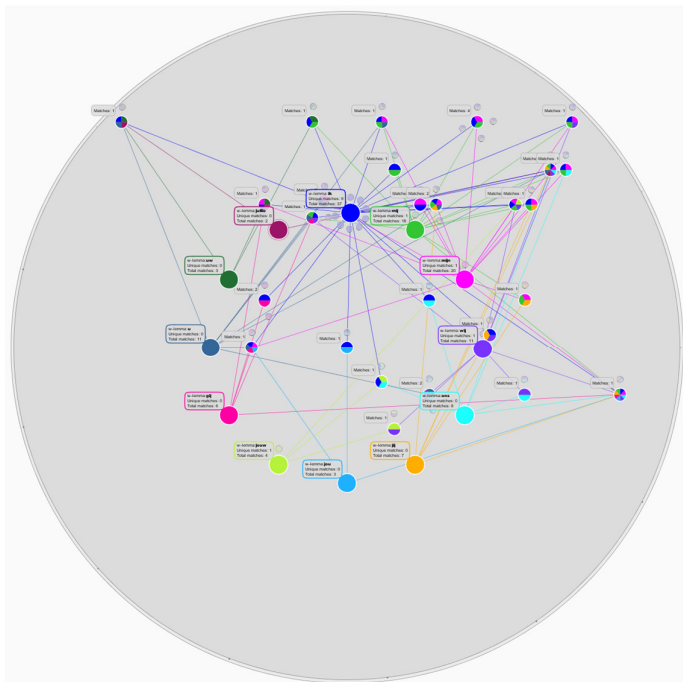

Figure 5. The distribution of lemmatised first and second person words per song.

One can argue that even if not every song contains a first person narrator, this can still be a characteristic of mendacious songs. Here, I have to disagree. What is important about the narrative instance from a theoretical perspective, is that it pertains to a mendacious effect. Mendacity presupposes a fictional untruth and the possibility for a reader to interpret this fictional untruth as intentionally revealed by the narrator. Although it is tempting to say that only first person narrators are capable of revealing their intentions and presenting themselves as liars, apparently intentionality can also be conveyed from a heterodiegetic perspective. How, then, is this effect achieved? We will get back to this question later.

A second interesting point about this finding is a methodological one. What we have just seen is that we can actually say something about (at least) one narrative voice: if a literary text does not contain any words related to first or second person, then that text has a

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[83] A close reading revealed that songs 1, 9, 15, 31 and 44 contain only first person in dialogue, and that songs 4 and 20 contain a first person narrator explicitly placing him- or herself outside the story. The narrators of songs 35 and 56 are not clearly situated inside or outside the story world . It would be interesting to test these proportions in a larger context: is it always the case that around 20% of first person instances in the subgenre of songs is heterodiegetic? Or is this part of the generic 'iceberg' of mendacious songs?

[84] On the level of dialogue, a character speaking may as well be interpreted as a homodiegetic narrator on an intradiegetic level. As long as such levels of narration are not marked up, finding them quantitatively will prove difficult. Automatic reading could only be possible if a computer can recognise shifts in narration – but do such formal cues for diegetic levels exist? That is an assumption worth testing in future research.

heterodiegetic narrator. This is of course stating the obvious, but in this case stating the obvious points out an important starting point for distant narrative analysis in other literary corpora, outside the scope of mendacious songs.

When we turn back to the 45 songs containing first person, it is hard to tell from the diagrams whether their narrators are homo- or heterodiegetic. Dialogue has not been marked up in XML, and besides, standing outside the story world can be a quite complex meaning to compute: in song 20, for instance, this is revealed at the end of the song, when the narrator confesses that this "true story" was not his or her story after all: "Een handschoen daar beneven/Die heeft in dronkenschap/Dit lied geschreven" (Anonymous 1900: 88).[85] Such cases are obviously hard to quantify. So far, we are only capable of excluding some songs from having a homodiegetic narrator.

But is that all we can find on narrative instance? How about the idea of allo- and autodiegetion – narrators participating in the story world as a witness and as an active agent respectively – can visualisations point us to some of these narrators at least?

Here, let us have a look at the lemmatised function words in combination with their semantically classified words. What we would generally associate with homodiegetic witness narration would include at least a first person in collocation with a word related to 'perception', or to 'consciousness'. Such collocations – words occurring in each other's proximity – of witness could be visualised by setting the scope of the dots in the Mandala Browser to represent verses (Figure 6). As we can see, 479 out of 2307 verses, about a fifth of
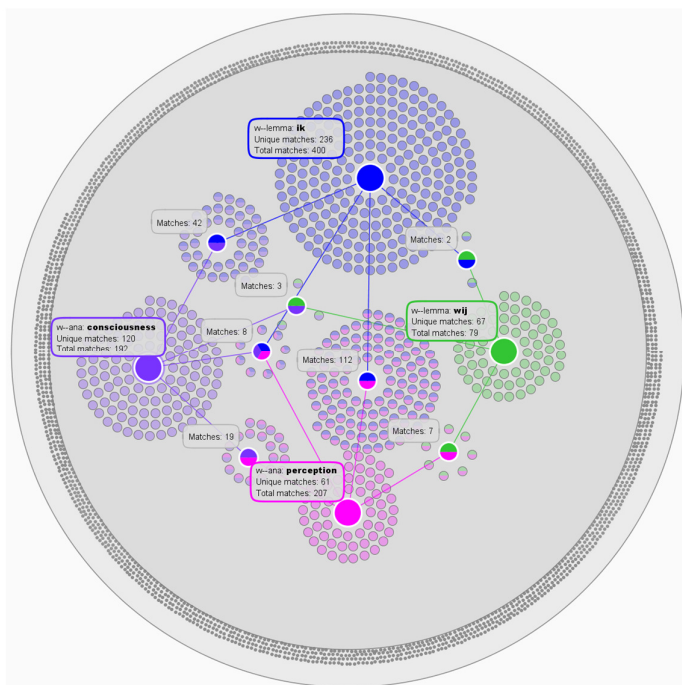

Figure 6. Collocations of lemmatised first person and interpretations of 'perception' and 'consciousness' per verse.

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the total number of verses, contain a first person. In the mandala, we can further observe that more than half of the verses containing words of 'perception' collocate with a first person, and that only a third of the words of 'consciousness' have such collocations. Almost two fifth of the collocations with first person go with one or more words of these categories. Does this mean that most of the songs have an allodiegetic narrative instance?

Let us first have a look at a similar setup for autodiegetion: first person collocates with words of 'action', 'actionhuman', and 'actionanimal' (Figure 7). Of course, some words in other categories also refer to action, but of these categories we are sure that they contain only active verbs, for instance verbs related to labour. This visualisation conveys that first person collocates far less with active categories: apparently, these actions are performed by other
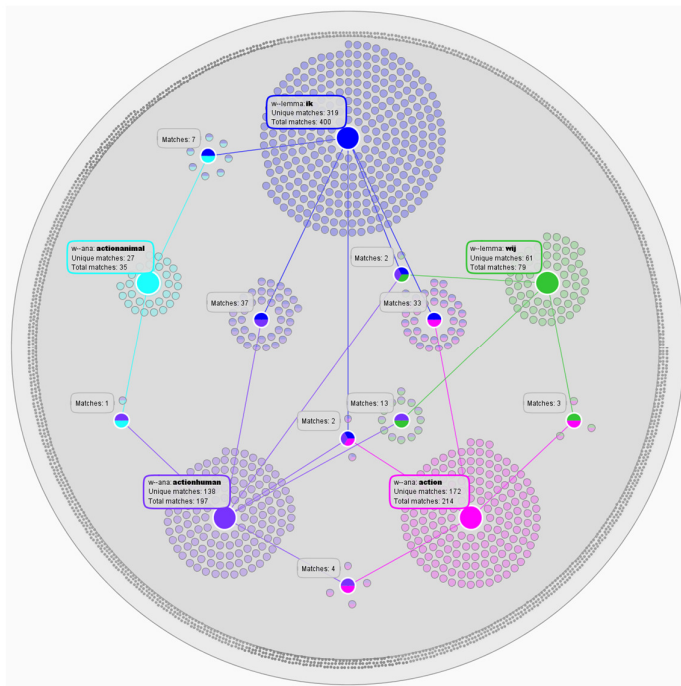

Figure 7. Collocations of lemmatised first person and interpretations of 'action', 'actionhuman', and 'actionanimal' per verse.

agents in the stories. A comparison between Figures 6 and 7 then reveals that witness narration occurs far more often than autodiegetion. Or does it?

Although these mandalas give us insight into the collection of verses as a whole, we cannot distant read the proportions per song in these visualisations when verses are represented by the dots. Let us therefore turn to another type of megascope: the graph. A Voyant Tools Word Trend shows that 18 out of the 45 songs with first person form 2-grams with words of 'perception' or 'consciousness', a relative frequency similar to what we saw in
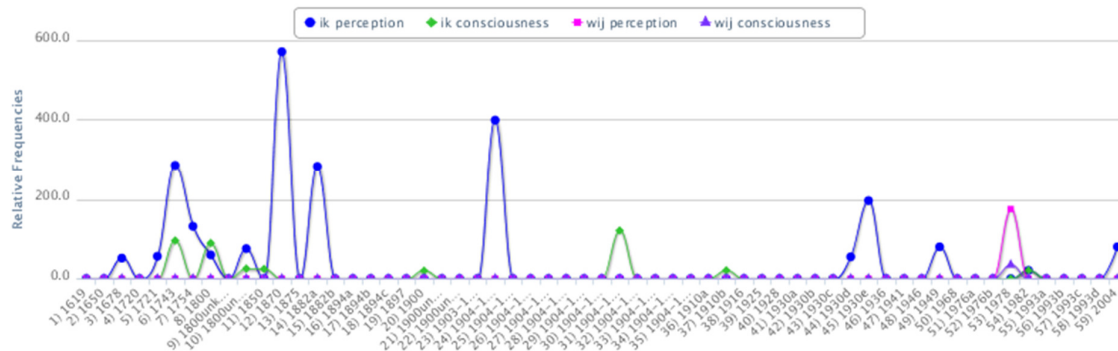
the mandalas (Figure 8).

Figure 8. N-grams of lemmatised first person and interpretations of 'perception' and 'consciousness' per song.
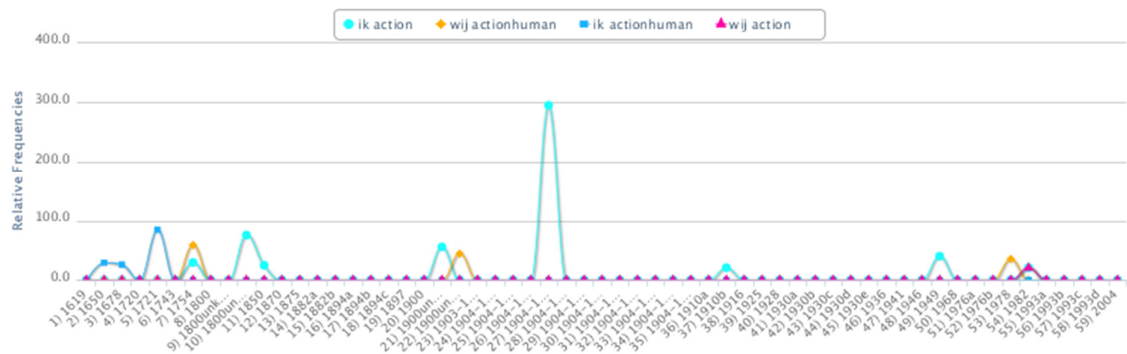

Figure 9. N-grams of lemmatised first person and interpretations of 'action' and 'actionhuman' per song.

The same is true for n-grams connecting first person with active word categories: 13 out of 45 songs amount to the same relative frequency (Figure 9). Does this mean that these songs are allo- or autodiegetic? This is not the case. Some of these songs from Figure 8 and 9 overlap (3, 5, 7, 10, 37, 49, 53, 54), and for those songs it is not possible to decide on their narrative voice. Moreover, when we have a look at the peaks in these graphs, we see that songs 6, 12, 14, and 24 score high on the witness n-grams, and that song 27 contains most active first person n-grams. Upon close reading, three of these songs indeed fall into the allocated categories (12, 24, and 27), but two of these songs appear to have a high number of witness clauses even though the narrator is an active participant of the story (6 and 14). Here we see that the difference between a song like ''k Zag twee beren broodjes smeren' (12), an instance of allodiegetion, and 'De reysende droomer op een esel zonder staart' (6), an example of autodiegetion, does not solely lie in the frequency of active or witness n-grams. In conclusion, from these visualisations we cannot deduce the narrative voice of songs containing first person.

3.4.2 *Skaz*

Skaz, the explicit addressing of an audience by a narrator, is one of the mechanisms a narrative instance can support to create the effect of verisimilitude. In the previous section we

have already briefly discussed second person, a component that is likely to signal *skaz* – although constructions addressing the public do not necessarily contain second person (think about phrases such as 'ladies and gentlemen' for instance). Can we say anything about *skaz* from a distance?

Figure 10 reveals that 23 out of 59 songs contain an instance of second person. Of course this conveys nothing about who is being addressed: the audience or a character? Mark-up of dialogue could shed a light on this, or an automatic dialogue parser for larger corpora – if besides quotation marks formal cues for dialogue exist and if they could be translated into a programme. For these results to make sense, we have to turn to close reading. The distribution of the all the occurrences of second person between addressing the audience and characters is then fairly even, whereas 19 out of 59 songs contain at least one of these occurrences. This is an interesting finding to place within the larger context of songs: are indeed 50% of the instances of second person an addressing of the public in all songs, or in a set of song genres, or is this only the case in mendacious songs? If this is a general outcome, can we build automated *skaz* notifiers based on that assumption?
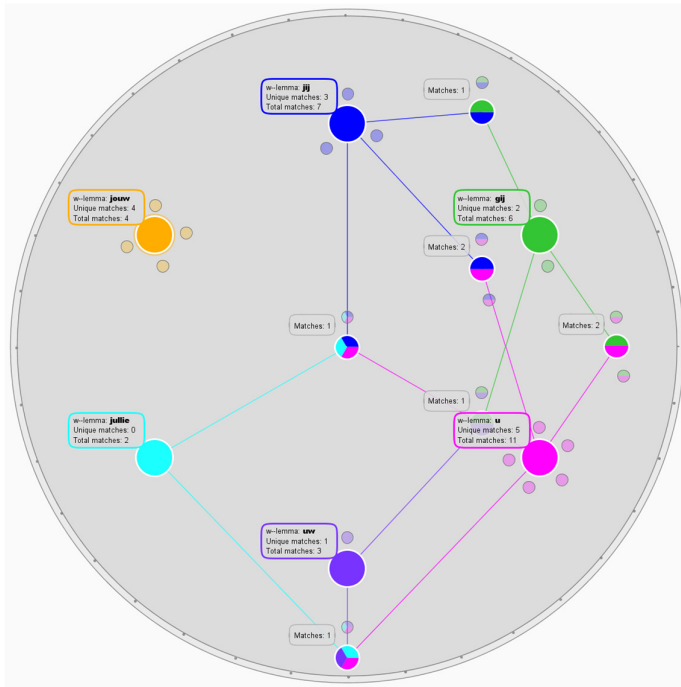

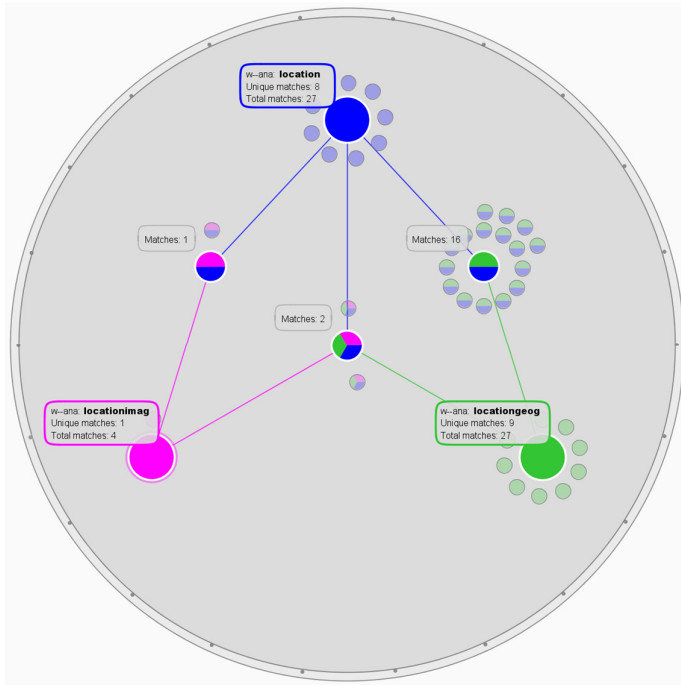Figure 10. *Skaz* expressed in second person per song.

Figure 11. Geographical, imaginary and unidentified locations per song.

3.4.3 Fictional and actual references

What can distant reading reveal about fictional and actual references? In the first chapter we have found that such references can be related to interfictional carry-over such as intertextuality – references to fiction here are not necessarily fictional, as they point to an actual work in reality – as well as specific persons, places or events.

Let us first have a look at how many songs contain imaginary, geographical, and unidentified locations to test the hypothesis (Figure 11). Here, we see that we can immediately refute the proposition that wonderlands are key to mendacious songs, as only 4 out of 59 songs refer to an imaginary location. However, this does not mean that a wonderland excludes a song from being mendacious – merely that it is not a necessary condition. Interestingly enough, the opposite seems true: 27 songs contain references to actual locations, the same amount as references to unidentified locations. Apparently, geografic locations make up a great part of the effect of verisimilitude in these songs – a finding that is well worth testing in a larger context of songs, for this may be a particular characteristic of the mendacious genre. Not only are many geographical locations mentioned, most of these locations are not located far away. In that sense, the idea that distant locations are equivalents of wonderlands does not hold, an assumption we have constructed during the close reading of the previous chapter. Indeed, Figure 12 shows that most locations are set in the Low Countries, in specific cities and even in specific streets. The wondrous, then, seems overly not to be constructed as a space, but space functions as a realistic backdrop for the wondrous,

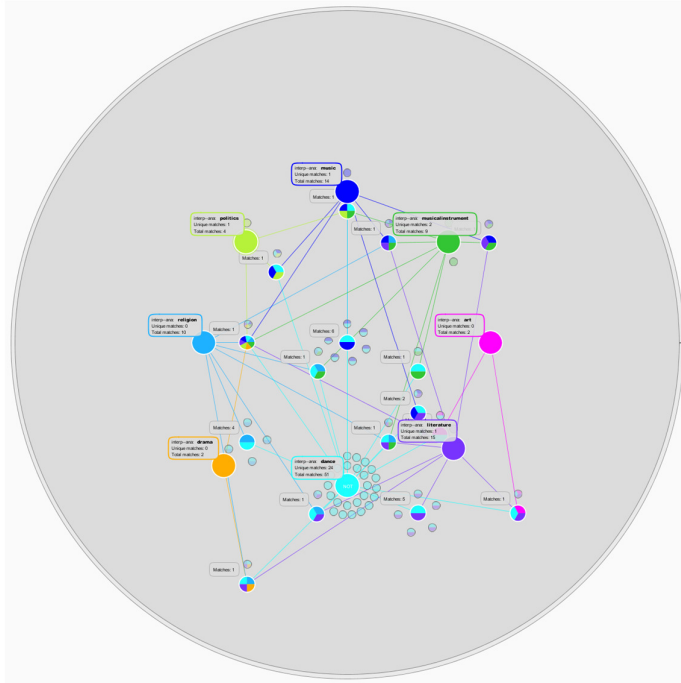| The Low Countries	European countries
Holland	Denemarken
Amstel	Duitsland
Brabant	Beieren
Mokerhei	Westfalen
Zuiderzee	Emden
Amsterdam	Gösen
Dam	Heidelberg
Damrak	Rostok
Nes	Finland
Pieter Jacobstraat	Frankrijk
Reguliersgracht	Parijs
Rokin	Groot-Brittanïe
Assen	Londen
Den Haag	Ierland
Eelde	Noorwegen
Haarlem	Polen
Hitland	Rusland
Hoorn	Spanje
Rijsel	Canarisch eiland
Rotterdam	Alicante
Lombardijen	Turkije
Schiedam	Zwitserland
Slooten	
Utrecht	Rome
t Veen	Wenen
Wijk aan Zee	
Zuidland	
Antwerpen	**Non-European countries**
Bilsen	Afrika
Borgloon	Marokko
Göthem	Kaap de Goede Hoop
Hasselt	
Herenthals	Oost-Indië
Maaseik	China
St. Truiden	Japan
Tongeren	Batavia
Mispelstraat	West
	Amerika
Bronswijk	Canada
Schollenberg	Groenland

Figure 12. Geographical locations.

Figure 13. Intertextual, political and religious references.

which sheds light on the relationship between the components that make up the mix of fictional and factual aspects creating the effect of intentionally telling untruths.

And what can we find on interfictional carry-over and other references to actuality? In Figure 13 we see that except for one song, all other songs contain at least one reference to religion, politics, or cultural activities, and that they especially point to dancing. However, this visualisation is not capable of conveying whether these occurrences involve references to actual people, works or forms of culture. Dances such as the 'menuet' is a common noun just like 'dans' so querying on proper names cannot decide on their level of referentiality. After a close reading, most occurences of dancing appear to be nonconcrete, whereas in two songs specific dances are foregrounded (songs 11 and 19). For a visualisation of intertextuality and actuality, additional mark-up would be required. This implies that satire proves also difficult to be distant read using these settings. We can deduce from the mandala, however, that since only 14 out of 59 songs contain a reference to either politics or religion, satire is not a common aspect of mendacious songs.

3.4.4 Truth formulas

The last part of the hypothesis from the previous chapters that will be testing, is the occurrence of truth formulas. Here, we turn towards collocations and n-grams to explain an interesting shift within the genre before and after 1900. Figure 14 gives a general impression of the distribution of words associated with truth formulas, either reversed, or affirmative. Out of the 59 songs, 39 contain the words 'liegen', 'leugen', and/or 'waar' – this last word has
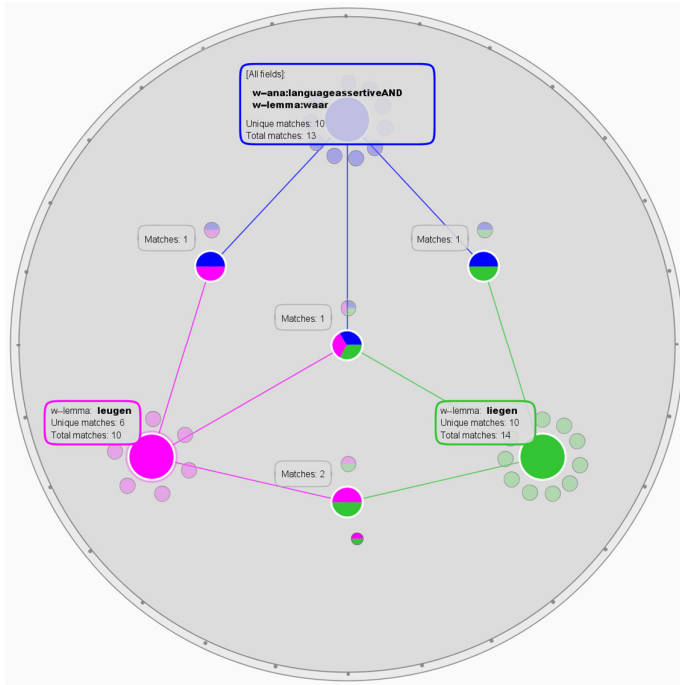
Figure 14. Truth and lies per song.

been selected as an adverbial adjective of the interpretational category 'languageassertive', excluding the locative adverb 'waar'. About two third of these truth formulas are of the reversed kind, about lying. But is that all we can say of these truth formulas?

A diachronic comparison of the collocates of 'liegen' and 'waar' reveals, that not only are there more occurrences of these words in the songs published after 1900 relative to the expected value, there is also a greater variety of collocates, suggesting a more creative application foregrounding these words in the youngest part of the corpus (see Appendix A, Table 1 and 2).[86] In that later period, 'waar' is often connected to 'zijn', 'niet', 'zeker' and 'zuiver', words suggesting either that something is true for sure, or that it is not true. The collocates of 'waar' before 1900 suggest the usage of the word as a locative adverb rather than in its sense of truth assertion. Also after 1900, the collocate of 'ik lieg' appears on the list, which is an explicit indication that these types of truth formulas were gaining ground during the twentieth century probably related to narrative instance. Does this mean that truth formulas were less common in the centuries before in the construction of fictional lies?

Let us have a look at another table containing the 29 most frequent n-grams in the lemmatised and semantically classified corpus before and after 1900 (see Appendix A, Table 3). We see that before 1900 the 2-grams 'ik perception' and 'perception ik' appear on the second and fifth place respectively, whereas the first occurrence of an n-gram with 'ik' in the post-1900 corpus is 'ik possession' on the twenty-sixth place (in the corpus after 1900 'ik

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[86] An in-built probability measure of AntConc using Stubbs's t-score shows, that words with values above 1 in the Prob column of Table 1 and 2 occur more than the expected value that the programme calculated based on the whole of the corpus (Stubbs 1995: 15-19).

perception' appears on the ninety-ninth place, but this is not included in the table). Apparently, in the songs published before 1900 truth formulas were constructed around the idea that a narrator had witnessed something: seeing is believing. We see this illustrated by the song ''k Zag twee beren broodjes smeren', in which the narrator explicitly repeats that he or she stood by and watched the strange spectacles. Could these changes in truth formulas point to a diachronic shift in the concept of epistemology, or in the rhetoric of epistemology, from empirical perception inferring truth towards explicit truth claims? This is an interesting question that begs for further inquiry within a larger context: could this morphological change in the genre be a starting point for a cultoromical hypothesis?

3.4.5 Themes

We have now tested the definitions from the previous chapters, but it seems unsatisfactory that the most important feature, that of the impossibilities responsible for fictional untruth, cannot really be verified. What we can do, as I set out in the beginning of this chapter, is have a closer look at the constituents of these impossibilities by scrutinising the frequencies of semantic interpretations of the lexical words. These constituents are intertwined with what I call themes, but let me get back to that later.
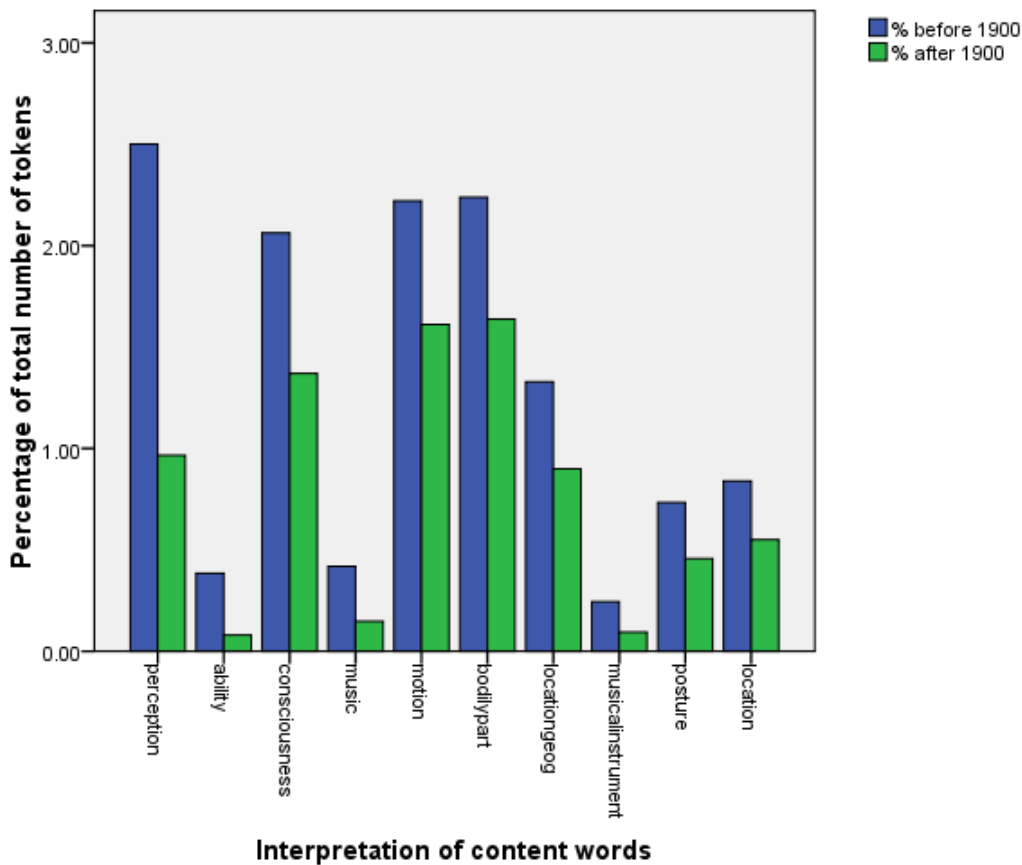

Figure 15. Significant keywords in mendacious songs before 1900 (chi square, P < .05).

For this semantic analysis, the corpus was stripped of function words so that only the interpretations remained, and again split in two portions before and after 1900 to calculate the keywords for each time span, expressed in bar charts, diagrams that as I mentioned earlier, could be viewed of as two-branched trees (Figure 15 and 16). I expected that these corpora would have roughly the same semantic proportions, and that no significant differences would occur – in other words, I tested a synchronic perspective on genres, assuming no diachronic changes.

Figure 15 and 16 reveal that there are actually multiple morphological changes in the semantic fields of the genre, as Moretti pointed out in his *Graphs, Maps, Trees*. Before 1900, motion, (geographic) location and posture occur significantly more frequent than in mendacious songs after 1900. This can be explained by the fact that these early songs often account of a journey, so that movement, contrasted with standing still, and locations naturally play a large role. Here we see a parallel with Coigneau's finding of the journey as a conventional setting for fifteenth- and sixteenth-century 'leugenrefreinen'. This setting can also explain the emphasis on perception, as the point of travelling is to perceive and experience a different environment – recounting such tales implies a reassuring phrase or 'truth certificate' embedding these experiences, especially when impossible events form the core of these journeys. That consciousness scores high in these pre-1900 songs is something I find harder to clarify. Is consciousness here related to perception and the journey? Or is this field connected to a rhetorical form of politeness that embeds assertions in clauses of consciousness (such as 'I think that...')? These questions form again interesting outsets for further research.

The high frequency of music and musical instruments seem to point out that the musical aspect of songs played a more important role in early mendacious songs than in songs published in the twentieth century. What could cause such a shift? Is this due to the arrival of media enabling people to listen to music rather than singing and making music themselves? The reading of such culturomic trends is of course tentative, but an interesting notion nonetheless to explore in future inquiry.

Finally, we see that ability (mostly derived from 'kunnen') and bodily parts score high in mendacious songs before 1900. Now, these themes may seem somewhat awkward at first, but if one remembers the songs from the close readings – a gigantic spider on whose bodily parts strange events occur; an array of animals with the ability of doing non-animalistic things – these categories may very well have been used as building blocks for the construction of impossibility. Impossibilities of reversed bodily parts, for instance, or an impossibility exaggerating an ability. We will get back to this suggestion later.

Which semantic fields are key for the mendacious songs after 1900? First, an adjustment of the results: the high frequency of human is caused by a song in which the name 'Julia' occurs 220 times – a name that I have semantically interpreted as human.

Apart from that, two of Searle's speech acts, assertive and expressive language, seem to form a group together with ontology and evaluation. 'Liegen' and 'waar' are part of the assertive language category, and 'zijn' as main verb is classified as ontology. The rhetoric used in these songs seems to be focussed at making a true or false assertion about the world. For instance, compare 'something is true', 'something is nice', etc. with 'I think that
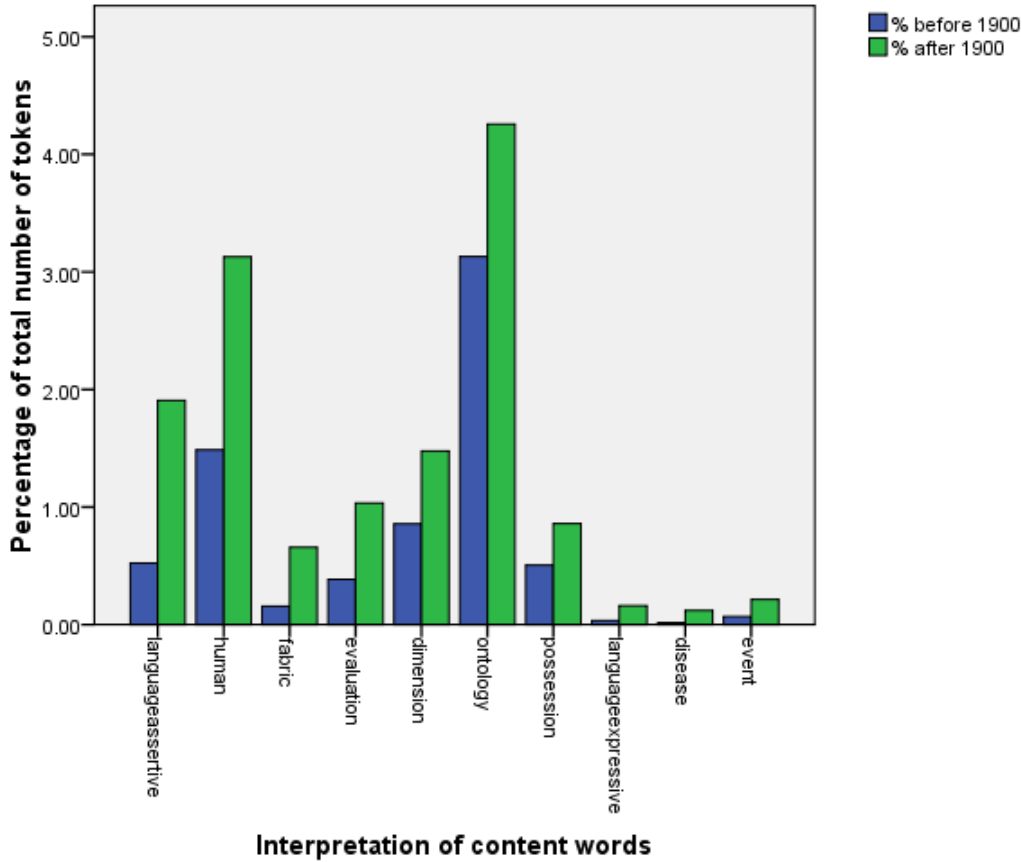
Figure 16. Significant keywords in mendacious songs after 1900 (chi square, P < .05).

something is true/nice'. The first assertion is stronger in making truth claims – an objective stand point – so that clauses such as these are better at creating the effect of verisimilitude.

Finally, dimension, fabric, disease, and possession, are categories that could function as constituents of impossibility. On the one hand, dimension and fabric are ways of expressing realism: one can specify exactly how large or small something is, or give exact details such as a specific fabric. At the other hand, these categories are easily corrupted, in the sense that a blowing up of proportions, or the wrong type of detail can lead to impossibilities of exaggeration and reversal respectively. The emphasis on possession here signifies that in post-1900 mendacious songs those constructions occur more frequently, in which an object is attributed with an impossible feature, using the verb 'hebben'. Disease may be part of an impossibility construction as well, and contributes to an extra sense of strangeness – consider for instance these lines from song 20: "Een driekant hoedje/Met een gescheurde bol/En horrelvoetje" (Anonymous 1900: 88). [87]

Most of what we have found on themes in these corpora have refuted our hypothesis stated in the beginning, namely that hedonism, sleep, friendship and games, as well as Coigneau's themes of the feast, battle, journey and dream should occur often in these songs.

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[87] "A triangle bowler/With a torn top/And clubfoot" (RB).

We have seen that the journey emerged while distant reading between the lines in the pre-1900 corpus of mendacious songs – the significant frequency of the event is a small pointer to the feast as a setting in post-1900 songs. The other themes seem not to match our findings in distant reading, so that we may conclude that distant reading a larger corpus here challenges the close reading of a small selection of mendacious songs.

However, we have not yet touched upon the animals that we suspect play an important role in the genre, based on our findings in the previous chapters. The reason that animals – and the themes just mentioned – have not appeared in the bar charts of keywords, is, that they convey the difference between the corpora, not their similarities. Let us therefore have a look at Table 3 again, and compare it to this final mandala including the themes (Figure 17). The
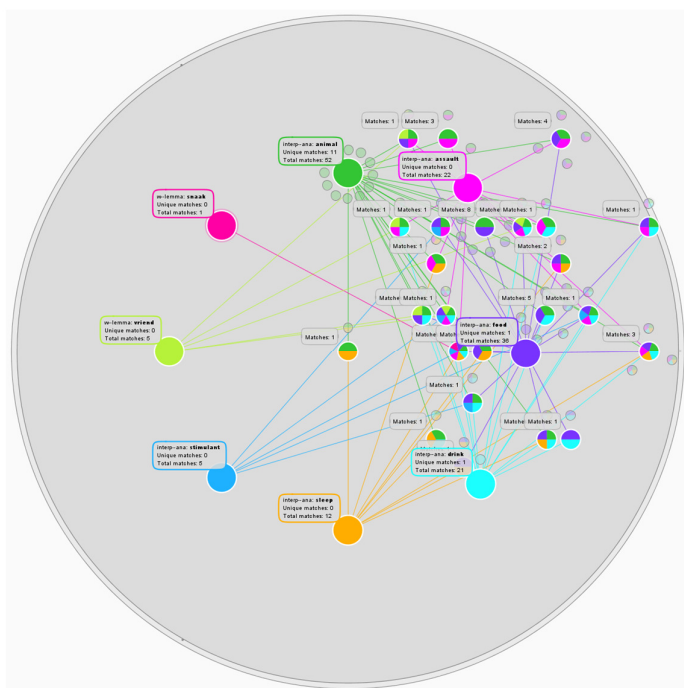
Figure 17. Themes from the hypothesis per song.

categories in this mandala indicate that sleep (12 songs) and friendship (6 songs) indeed occur little in the genre as a whole. Assault, the category related to Coigneau's battle, appears in 22 songs. Food, drink, and stimulant make up for a considerable part of hedonism in 40 out of 59 songs. And, finally, animals occur most often, namely in 52 of the mendacious songs in our corpus. That animals are probably key to mendacious songs follows from Table 3 with the most frequent n-grams as well: 2-grams with the animal category occur in the corpora before and after 1900 on the first and eleventh place, and on the second, eleventh and twenty-sixth place.

But what does that mean: key to mendacious songs? Are these themes characteristic for the genre? These themes are not themes in the sense that they convey direct meaning – the songs are not about animals or battles or heaps of food and drinks. The semantic units that emerge in these results point to their function within the mendacious construction, namely that they are objects taken from everyday life, and given a twist that turns them into

impossibilities or exaggeration. Specific themes seem to be repeatedly chosen for such constructions constituting the effect fictional untruth – why this is the case, and how these constructions are formed, could be another aspect to examine in the future. In that respect, these distant readings have by and large generated more questions than answered them – but this is exactly the aim, for, as Moretti suggests, "problems without a solution are exactly what we need in a field like ours" (Moretti 2007: 26).

Conclusion

In this thesis, we have explored a variety of ways to find definitions of the genre of mendacious songs: through the analysis of secondary and tertiary literature; through a close reading of two mendacious songs; and through distant readings of a larger corpus consisting of one variant of each known mendacious song. What have we harvested so far? Have we found any sufficient or necessary conditions for mendacious songs? The most important feature of mendacity is ubiquitously the occurrence of an impossibility, or logical invalidity, that can be interpreted by a reader or singer as either fictionally true, or fictionally untrue. Only with such a component can a song become mendacious. At the other hand, fictional untruth is not enough: the intentional revealing of fictional untruth by a narrator is necessary for the effect of the fictional lie.

We have seen in the close reading that impossibilities are a diverse and complex construction, and it is all the more a pity that we cannot probe these structures with digital techniques at the present. For such an analysis, the songs should be linked to a semantic database containing all possible and impossible connections for each word – a work reminiscent of Father Busa's project. Another option lies within the semantic analysis of formal features, but for such inquiry a more thorough mark-up of syntactic features is required. Impossibilities seem to remain an area best investigated from close by. Distant readings have, however, revealed some clues as to how to involve the concept of building blocks into the construction of impossibilities, as these seem to be constituted by specific entities from everyday life, especially by animals.

What distant reading has contributed to our view of the mendacious narrator, is that first person narration is indeed common amongst mendacious songs, but it is not a necessary condition for a song to be mendacious. The effect of intention does not need the explicit winking of a narrator using *skaz* or a truth formula or his or her self-referential remarks – omniscient narrators account for about a fifth of mendacious songs. Intentionality in these songs is an effect achieved more concealed: exaggerations may be enough to create fictional untruth – the lying then lies in the performance of the song by a singer as well as in the text. The intentional narrators of fictional lies are not always to be found in texts alone, it seems, and this notion has slipped into the definition of the genre.

In this thesis, we have enacted an example of distant reading – but was this really reading from the distance? The marking up of the corpus as a preparation for the analysis was actually an example of extremely close reading. And I feel that close reading remains a vital component of testing distant reading as well as the other way around. Distant reading serves to find questions that challenge our way of thinking about literature and literary history. But before we can take on reading those millions of books, and leave this hermeneutical circle for the next one, we need to test our programmes as well as our assumptions and keep in touch with that tradition of reading a text with our own eyes. Close reading this distance is what we have to gain.

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List of abbreviations

DLDL – Digital Library of Dutch Literature
DSD – Dutch Songs Database
OED – Oxford English Dictionary
TNTL – Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde
WNT – Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal

Appendix A
Tables and Figures

Table 1

Collocations "liegen" before 1900				Collocations "liegen" after 1900			
Rank	Freq	Prob	Collocate	Rank	Freq	Prob	Collocate
1	11	3.299	nooit	1	142	7.897	liegen
2	11	3.291	zullen	2	16	3.934	doen
3	2	1.403	want	3	13	3.524	zullen
4	1	0.994	oorlof	4	12	2.998	ik
5	1	0.985	vier	5	8	2.706	nooit
6	1	0.97027	doen	6	8	2.661	maar
7	1	0.95541	zonder	7	4	1.926	horen
8	1	0.91380	zo	8	4	1.732	aan
9	1	0.90191	kunnen	9	4	1.696	al
10	1	0.88110	ja	10	2	1.140	komen
11	1	0.75328	met	11	1	0.98953	trommel
12	1	0.24200	zijn	12	1	0.98953	storten
13	1	0.15282	een	13	1	0.98953	pen
14	17	-1	liegen	14	1	0.98953	parijs
				15	1	0.98953	hooi
				16	1	0.98953	hesp
				17	1	0.97905	wieg
				18	1	0.96858	nat
				19	1	0.95811	lijf
				20	1	0.94764	wijn
				21	1	0.92669	dood
				22	1	0.87433	toe
				23	1	0.84291	hond
				24	1	0.83244	nu
				25	1	0.78008	elkaar
				26	1	0.71724	zitten
				27	2	0.63666	dat
				28	1	0.56015	haar
				29	2	0.01462	het

Table 2

Collocations "waar" before 1900 (1L, 0R)				Collocations "waar" after 1900 (1L, 0R)			
Rank	Freq	Prob	Collocate	Rank	Freq	Prob	Collocate
1	5	-1	waar	1	18	3.852	zijn
2	2	3.088	ik	2	9	2.912	niet
3	1	2.165	zijn	3	5	1.777	en
4	1	7.837	stad	4	2	1.406	zeker
5	1	3.989	op	5	1	0.99463	zuiver
6	1	6.837	mee	6	1	0.99463	trippentrappen
7	1	5.301	man	7	1	0.99463	tralie
8	1	4.636	komen	8	1	0.99463	sturen
9	1	3.819	hij	9	1	0.72610	gaan
10	1	7.837	dag	10	1	0.59184	daar
				11	40	-1	waar

Table 3

Clusters of lemma and interpretations				
Before 1900			After 1900	
Rank	Freq	Cluster	Freq	Cluster
1	66	een animal	128	la la
2	61	ik perception	73	een animal
3	50	zijn bodilypart	72	pom pom
4	33	een tool	62	dat ontology
5	33	perception ik	56	human ja
6	27	ontology een	53	human human
7	26	dat ontology	44	ja human
8	25	zijn dress	42	ontology evaluation
9	24	met een	36	daar ontology
10	24	wie zijn	35	van jaho
11	23	animal die	34	de animal
12	23	consciousness wel	33	een tool
13	23	ontology dat	33	het ontology languageassertive
14	22	op een	33	languageassertive
15	19	de location	31	ontology een
16	19	het ontology	27	een quantity
17	19	mijn bodilypart	27	evaluation dat
18	17	ik motion	26	ik possession
19	17	in locationgeog	25	animal die
20	17	op zijn	25	eens een
21	17	perception er	25	met een
22	16	als een	24	in het
23	16	dat wie	23	een dress
24	16	die actionhuman	23	en ik
25	16	motion hij	22	al van
26	16	naar locationaccommodation	22	in de
27	15	action de	22	jaho en
28	15	een time	21	haar bodilypart
29	15	hebben ik	21	op een

Appendix B
The Corpus of Mendacious Songs

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