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Lezen met een roomse bril: opvattingen over literatuuronderwijs in katholieke scholen 1868-1924

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In the 1960s, K. Schippers wrote this two-line verse:

Bij Loosdrecht	Near Loosdrecht
Als dit Ierland was	If this were Ireland
Zou ik beter kijken	I would look harder

This verse is about the way we see things if we try looking in ways other than those to which we are accustomed. Our perception is determined by the way we look at things, and what we see in turn depends to a large extent on our conventions. To Schippers, poetry was a question of observation in which the known was translated into the unknown. In his view, poetry can be created when something humdrum and ordinary is placed in a new context.

Appraising and appreciating literature from the present and the past is no different. Literary appreciation is bound by conventions. This applies not only to the appraisal of literature in schoolbooks from the twenty-first century, but also to literature textbooks and collections from 150 years ago, in which the writers aimed to sketch a true picture of historical and modern literature for the school pupils of the day. Catholic authors of schoolbooks in the nineteenth and early twentieth century had to take account of literary opinions that were in part influenced by Catholic doctrine. Their view was coloured by 'Rome-tinted' spectacles. For a researcher in the twenty-first century, these spectacles can prove valuable in gaining better insight into the literary opinions that prevailed more than one hundred years ago. Those opinions were coloured by an approach to literature which differs from what we are used to now. Why, for example, were writers such as Multatuli and Couperus suppressed or sharply criticised in literature textbooks around 1900, while now long-forgotten Catholic writers had their praises sung?

Opinions on contemporary literature in the nineteenth century were strongly influenced by the discussion in cultural journals on the dangers of morally corrupt writings and the values of morally uplifting literature. In the eyes of teachers, the subject of reading was extremely well-suited to conveying the articles of faith of the Catholic church and to promoting Catholic literature. The teaching of literature in Catholic secondary education in the period between 1850 and 1920 therefore played an important role in the process of confessionation and pillarisation.

Given the organised hierarchy of the Catholic church, one might expect that the guidelines for a good Catholic education would be determined by the church authorities. Yet a rigid canonical framework within which ideas on the teaching of reading could be developed did not exist at the start of the nineteenth century. The history of primary education in the Netherlands shows that from the end of the eighteenth century, there was a development from privately organised education towards a nationally organised, neutral education for people of all persuasions, and then from national education to freedom for all persuasions to decide what 'flavour' to give their education, be that religious or ideological. Before the proclamation of the Batavian Republic in 1795, education was a matter

for local authorities and private initiatives. Parents from the well-to-do middle classes sent their children to the French school, which was funded entirely from the compulsory school fees. The other types of school – the German and the Latin schools – were funded by the municipal authorities.

Centralised control and inspection of the various school types was non-existent, and standards therefore varied. At this time, teachers did not undergo specialist teacher training courses and were scarcely qualified to teach. National control through education legislation only became possible in 1795 when the Netherlands became a unified state as the Batavian Republic.

Organising themselves in societies in the late eighteenth century, enlightened citizens agreed that education could contribute to achieving an orderly society in which the happiness of the individual would be assured. Most initiatives to improve education were initiated by the *Maatschappij tot Nut van 't Algemeen* (Society for the General Good), established in 1784. The 'Nut', as it is known, wrote a report entitled *Algemene denkbeelden over het nationaal onderwijs*, or 'General Concepts of a National Education'. The report formed the basis of the 1806 Primary Education Act (*lager onderwijswet*), which prescribed that education must no longer be based on a particular faith. From the Reformation to this time, education had always followed the guidelines of the New Reformed Church (Gereformeerde Kerk). The government wanted to enhance the unity of the new state by proclaiming that education should have a general Christian character, but should not in any way be doctrinal. In practice, however, education still had an unmistakably Protestant character. Catholics, who believed that little would come of Catholic education in a public school with enlightened Protestant ideas, would have to wait until the new Constitution of 1848. It was this new Constitution that finally established the separation of church and state. Catholics and orthodox Protestants now had the opportunity to establish confessional schools without requiring the permission of the local or national authorities.

The school struggle

Through the Schools Act (*schoolwet*) of 1857, the government placed tougher demands on the quality of education. A result of this was that confessional or ideological schools could scarcely raise the funding they needed to comply with the law. While the freedom of education had been achieved in name, there was little real progress for Catholics in their efforts towards providing their own Catholic education as long as they had to pay for it from their own pockets. The financial problem became increasingly serious as the demand for Catholic education grew. For the time being, there was no solution in sight for the financial dire straits of new Catholic schools. This situation did nothing to benefit the quality of the education.

The founding of Catholic schools also meant that more teachers were needed. This demand could be met by new religious orders which, since the restoration of the Episcopal hierarchy in 1853, were sprouting like mushrooms. In Tilburg, bishop Joannes Zwijsen founded orders which not only engaged in charitable work, but were particularly active in education. However, the training of the friars and, therefore, the quality of the schools was far from good. Catholic parents were therefore often tempted to send their children to a neutral school that offered better

quality. The church authorities, who were worried by this development, decided to warn the parents with a letter from the bishop about the damaging effects of a faithless school. Dating from 1868, this missive from the bishops about education was regarded until well into the twentieth century as the constitution for Catholic education. The most important message in the bishop's missive was that religious principles must be discernable in all school subjects.

Because orthodox Protestants also had great difficulty with public schools that put a diluted form of Christianity in the place of orthodox doctrine, a form of cooperation emerged for the first time between the Catholics and Protestants. Together they led the school struggle for equal treatment of public and confessional education. This struggle came to an end in 1917, when it was established in the Constitution that neutral and confessional schools would be funded on an equal footing. Protestants and Catholics were then able to provide education in the way they saw fit.

The school struggle was largely fought on the equal treatment of public and confessional education. Schools providing an extended elementary education (ULO (*uitgebreid lager onderwijs*) and MULO (*meer uitgebreid lager onderwijs*) were also regulated by the Primary Education Act. In the first half of the nineteenth century, secondary education was regarded as an education for the well-to-do classes and was initially unregulated by the state. The foundation of French schools and gymnasia and the salaries of the teaching staff were funded through the school fees that parents had to pay. From 1848, the government wanted more control of education and, in 1862, passed the Secondary Education Act (*wet op het middelbaar onderwijs*). The state also introduced new types of schools, such as the *Hogere Burgerschool* (HBS) (higher civil school) and the *Middelbare School voor Meisjes* (secondary school for girls). Catholic HBS schools were quickly founded in various places throughout the Netherlands. The first Catholic secondary school for girls, Marienbosch, was founded in Nijmegen in 1924.

Catholic pedagogy

After the school struggle had been won, the Protestants and the Catholics could then achieve their educational objectives. While around 1920, the objectives of a Catholic education had been fairly clearly defined, any sense of Catholic pedagogy was still largely elusive in the nineteenth century. The teachers of that period had to make do with advice on education written by priests and head teachers, who in turn relied on works translated mainly from German. The handbooks often descended into religious treatises and offered teachers little help for their day-to-day teaching practice. Learning the Catholic doctrine was often considered more important in these writings than the imparting of knowledge. The fact that a focus on knowledge was considered by Catholics to be less important than religious teachings was in part due to their resistance to the beliefs of enlightened pedagogues, who believed that knowledge and insight would lead to good behaviour. The Catholic church followed this cultural renewal and enlightened thinking with great concern and suspicion, because believers needed to be convinced that a life of virtue would not be possible without the light of divine revelation. For Catholics, the sacraments of the Church were essential for true

happiness on earth and in life everlasting. Teaching was an essential part of this according to Catholic education principles.

Pedagogy handbooks for Dutch Catholics which were more focused on the practice of teaching started to appear from the early twentieth century. Around that time, a large number of Catholic teacher training colleges were established, and the training courses created a great demand for useful text books on teaching and pedagogy. Two authors, A. Vincent and J.J. Verbeeten, who wanted to develop a Catholic school teaching method based on their own teaching experiences, published their handbook entitled *Opvoeding en Onderwijs* (Upbringing and Education) in 1907. In their book, they devote a great deal of attention to literary education because, in their view, there was no subject better suited to religious and moral education than reading. For this reason, they declared reading to be the most important subject.

The explosive growth in the number of Catholic teachers from 1900 led to a demand for regular specialist journals. This demand was met by the Catholic pedagogy journals *Opvoeding en Onderwijs* from 1908 and *Ons Eigen Blad* (Our Own Journal) from 1913. In the latter, describing itself as a “journal for friars giving instruction”, most articles on the teaching of literature were written by friar S. Rombouts and friar J.L. Horsten, who also wrote textbooks for the teaching of literature. The authors were resolutely convinced that school pupils would become better people through the teaching of aesthetically appealing, but devoutly Catholic literature.

Teaching literature

The prime place which the subject of reading took would have to be supported by good Catholic reading books, anthologies and literature textbooks. The missive on education from 1868 stresses that it was the teacher’s duty in all school subjects to be alert to “instilling good principles”. Literature textbooks and anthologies compiled according to these guidelines were in short supply at the time of the bishop’s missive. Anthologies and literature textbooks were compiled by Catholic authors who intended to distribute their works more widely than just among Catholic schools. There was no explicit mention in the title or the foreword that the anthology was intended for Catholic education.

The first literature textbook with a clear Catholic identity, but according to the author also suitable for non-Catholic schools, was written in 1868 by W. Everts, head teacher of the minor seminary at Rolduc. His commentary on literary works shows that Everts did not at all feel bound by any strict Catholic guidelines that there might be. For Everts, the presence or absence of a chain of thoughts that might be displeasing to Catholics in the works of poetry or prose was not a decisive factor in his aesthetic value judgements. He admired, for example, the style of the Protestant writer Bosboom-Toussaint and he welcomed the “anti-Enlighteners” Bilderdijk and Da Costa into the Catholic camp. The Catholic identity of Everts’ text book was demonstrated by his great appreciation for the Middle Ages, a period in which Everts believed that the Church and the arts were one. He linked the Renaissance to the Reformation, and regarded it therefore as a period of regression.

A literary journal entitled *Bloemkrans* (Anthology) was published fifteen years after Everts' literary textbook first appeared. The journal, which ran for 13 volumes from 1883 to 1895, was intended for aspiring Catholic teachers. The idea of its editor, B. Ghijben, was for *Bloemkrans* to help Catholic students with their study of language, style and literature. In this regard, *Bloemkrans* was typical of a form of literary teaching that was applied in the first half of the nineteenth century, in which literary anthologies were used to teach language, style and writing. Ghijben, who also penned the bishop's letter on education, was not as strict in his choice of authors for his anthologies as might be expected given the text of the bishop's missive. For his journal, he selected almost as many non-Catholic writers as he did Catholics. Ghijben was clearly influenced by the views on poetry and prose which were commonplace in his time, and he reflects the dominant views on Dutch literature in the nineteenth century up to 1880. He makes absolutely no mention of the Tachtigers, who published their *De Nieuwe Gids* (The New Guide) from 1885.

The Tachtigers were also missing from the 1891 anthology entitled *Zuid en Noord* (South and North) by the Jesuit priest E. Bauwens, who wanted to acquaint the Flemish youth with Northern Dutch literature. Bauwens did not censor, but he did place a "note" in the table of contents warning against certain books that "should not be read by young Catholics".

When, from around 1900, attention was given to the innovations of the Tachtigers in journals such as *De Katholiek* (The Catholic) – albeit with great reserve – and in *Van Onzen Tijd* (Of Our Time) – with great admiration – these writers and poets could no longer be ignored in the anthologies.

Intended for Catholics, the anthology *Van Onzen Tijd. Proza en Poezie uit Noord en Zuid* (Of Our Time. Prose and Poetry from North and South) (1905) by Flemish writer Jaak Boonen included writers and poets such as Kloos, Gorter, Emants, Couperus, Coenen and Heyermans, but their work was accompanied by a warning that, while modern literature can be cast in a beautiful and enjoyable form, it is at the same time dangerous and therefore reprehensible. These warnings about modern literature can be found in the introduction that Boonen asked the well-known publicist A.M.J.I. Binnewiertz to write for him. A priest and a poet, Binnewiertz endeavoured to write articles that combined the newly acquired aesthetic insights of the Tachtigers with Catholic teachings.

A number of writers of Catholic literature text books – Everts, Bauwens, De Brouwer, Vromans, Horsten and De Jager – consulted neutral sources to gain the necessary knowledge and information about the authors and periods. This involved consulting sizeable literary histories that had appeared since 1881, and they referred mainly to the handbooks of Jonckbloet, Te Winkel and Ten Brink. The idealistic, Catholic literary opinions were derived from articles on literature that had appeared in Catholic journals.

Views on dangerous and healthy modern literature in Catholic journals and literature text books

From 1900, Catholic publicists and teachers were looking for a response to the aesthetic innovations that had become commonplace in neutral literary circles. The most important proponents in the debate on the place of modern literature in Catholic circles were Binnewiertz, M.A.P.C. Poelhekke and B.H. Molkenboer. They wrote on this subject in the journals *De Katholiek* (The Catholic), *Van Onzen Tijd* (Of Our Time) and *De Beiaard* (The Bell-Ringer). The same publicists furnished authors of Catholic literature schoolbooks with their advice, or sometimes wrote an introduction. In this sense, there was a relationship between the opinions on modern literature in Catholic journals and those in literature textbooks. In the view of the progressive publicists in these journals, modern literature written in the new style of the Tachtigers was not by definition amoral literature. Although Catholics were no longer isolating themselves from innovations from neutral circles, they did want to profile themselves with their own Catholic art. They often used typically Catholic phrases in the discussion of poetry and novels. For instance, M.A.P.C. Poelhekke spoke of “The true, great Catholic art, the most radiant glorification of our faith”, and B.H. Molkenboer wrote: “Art for the congregation, yes, that is what we Catholics desire with our hearts and souls”. In relation to literature, Horsten used the words “purity of spirit and mind, of reason and heart, of body and soul; virtue and piety”. This phraseology also formed a guideline for him in his literature textbook entitled *Stemmen van verre en dichtbij* (Voices from Far and Near) when appraising literary works.

Around 1900, however, there was no literature textbook that intended to acquaint pupils with the modern writers. Two teachers of the Catholic gymnasium established in Tilburg in 1899 believed that there was a gap, and their publication of the *Letterkundige Bibliotheek voor Katholieken* (Literary Library for Catholics) (1903-1905) was intended to fill it. In this series of twenty-three parts, teacher C. Vromans devoted much attention to the “new writers”, whose new literary views he commented on. In Vromans’ view, the realism of the novels degenerated in the work of many writers into unhealthy and negativistic art. In his view, healthy realism could only come about if writers allowed themselves to be inspired by the Catholic faith.

As the Catholic pillar gained more influence in all areas of society from 1900, the need to strengthen the Catholic identity could be seen among a number of authors of anthologies and literature textbooks. From 1914 to 1924, one of these authors, friar Horsten, wrote a six-part anthology and literary history entitled *Stemmen van verre en dichtbij* (Voices from Far and Near). In Horsten’s view, Catholic schools needed to use Catholic schoolbooks in accordance with the motto “Roman Catholic education in the Roman Catholic school”. He searched through all periods of history for as many Catholic authors as possible. Vondel, a convert to Catholicism, was given a separate section in his anthology. He regarded Vondel as the champion of Catholic literature, one who could serve as a literary example for many generations of writers. Horsten was convinced that the devout inspiration of Catholic literature had more to offer than the literature of neutral circles.

The extent to which an author can go in offering exclusively Catholic literature was demonstrated by Thomas de Jager in his anthology entitled *Roomsche Keur* (Rome's Choice) (1915-1917), in which he practiced extremely consistently the preaching of the motto "Roman Catholic education in the Roman Catholic school". The book covers the Middle Ages to the then present day, and exclusively includes the literary works of Catholic authors. De Jager explained his choice by noting that the Catholic faith was in a better position than any other to bring forth great art. De Jager's rigorous selection of exclusively Catholic writers and poets formed an exception. Other Catholic compilers of anthologies and literary histories also dealt with non-Catholic authors.

Catholic and non-Catholic literature textbooks

Stemmen van verre en dichtebij and *Roomsche Keur* are two literature text books than can be regarded as typically Catholic works and are, accordingly, exponents of Catholic pillarisation. A comparison with non-Catholic textbooks which, in turn, form part of the pillarisation in other literary circles can demonstrate the extent to which one of these text books, *Stemmen van verre en dichtebij*, can be seen as typically Catholic.

The materials compared include the Protestant textbook *Neerlandia* (1917) by D. Wouters and the neutral textbook *Een Nieuwe Bundel* (1914) by K.H. de Raaf and J.J. Griss. The differences between the three literature textbooks comes, in part, from the reading culture to which the four authors belonged. Between 1900 and 1920, there was a Catholic, a Protestant and a neutral reading culture. Horsten's ideas on Catholic teaching of literature had their roots in the order he belonged to, but they were also influenced by the debate in critical literary discourse. In generalist, cultural journals such as *De Katholiek* and *Van Onzen Tijd*, articles were written that got the debate on modern literature moving, and that were particularly oriented towards the literary views of the Tachtigers.

The author of *Neerlandia*, D. Wouters, derived his literary views from the discussions of modern literature in the New Reformed literary circles. In his views of literature for secondary schools, he was inspired by the pedagogical ideas from the New Reformed perspective. This is borne out, for example, in his words of thanks in *Neerlandia* directed to H. Bavinck, an important proponent of pedagogy based on New Reformed principles. Since the split in 1886, in which the New Reformed churches separated from the Dutch Reformed Church (NHK), the New Reformed were in need of clear guidelines in the field of art. The leader of the New Reformed, Abraham Kuypers, argued as early as 1888 that there was a place for art within the life and world view of Calvinists, because it could be regarded as a gift from God. However, he rejected modernism because this non-orthodox view of life could open the door to heathen art. In practice, this resulted in isolation from the latest developments in literature. The journal that showed the New Reformed the way in their search for responsible Christian literature, *Ons Tijdschrift* (from 1896), initially focused one-sidedly on the aesthetic function of art. Yet the younger members of the editorial committee, who joined from 1904, were impressed by the aesthetic innovations of the Tachtigers. They tried to work their modern ideas on literature into their own brand of Christian literature.

The philosophical direction of literary education in secondary schools was also discussed in pedagogy publications, such as *Het Paedagogisch Tijdschrift voor het Christelijk Onderwijs* (The Pedagogical Journal for Christian Education), which had been founded in 1909. The publications in these journals do not give an impression that the New Reformed represented a closed, inward-looking pillar of education. In fact, the New Reformed tried to connect new developments in the fields of science, technology and the arts with God's intentions. Preachers also involved themselves in the discussion on the dangers of modern literature, pointing out the dangers of pessimism in modern literature and the anti-Christian tendencies of the Tachtigers. The New Reformed and the Catholics wrestled with the same problems of, on the one hand, rejecting the atheist body of thought of the Tachtigers and, on the other hand, accepting the new literary norms and modern literature that fitted in with a Christian view of life. Despite all the similarities, there were also differences in the ways Catholics and Protestants appraised literature. Protestants were less inclined to isolate themselves and to barricade themselves behind views of art determined by their beliefs. There was also no question of strict censorship imposed from above; each teacher had the individual responsibility to assess literature for compatibility with Christian principles.

The ideas of Wouters on the appreciation of literary works pointed in the direction of the Tachtigers. In the foreword to *Neerlandia*, he argued, on the one hand, that aesthetics were an important principle in the appraisal of literature, but, on the other hand, that art could never be neutral. The condition that Wouters attached to the new forms of literature was that ethical aspects should be given more weight than the aesthetic. Innovations in forms of art would then not need to be contrary to the Christian faith, but could in fact be an expression of the divine.

The reading culture in neutral circles was less clear and less shielded than in confessional circles. Despite this, there were also non-believers who were in search of a guiding principle in their appreciation of art. In the neutral journals, which primarily debated the role of art, the proponents chose varying directions. The journal *De nieuwe tijd* (The New Age) (1897-1921), for example, regarded socialism as a driving force in society and in the arts. Socialist ideas initially had great appeal for a writer such as Frederik van Eeden, but he rejected the materialism and the rationalism of the socialists. With a Christian-tinted moralism, he called for an ethical revival. The authors of *Een Nieuwe Bundel* (A New Collection) and *Stroomingen en Gestalten* (Literary Schools and Gestalt), intended for public education, proclaimed in the foreword of their literature textbooks the view that "art with an important message and an aesthetic form evokes a moral consciousness". In their textbook for all persuasions, they appear to be consistent with the call made by Van Eeden.

The comparison of three anthologies – neutral, Protestant and Catholic – shows that the confessional authors have most in common, with their positive appraisal of the Middle Ages and with their reserve towards the Tachtigers. Both rejected the motto of *art for the sake of art* on religious grounds. The neutral authors of *Een Nieuwe Bundel*, on the other hand, regarded the literary products of the Middle Ages as expressions of an immature spirit, and regarded the Tachtigers movement as the pinnacle in a process of literary innovation from the Romantic period.

Central question of this thesis

The central question I have endeavoured to answer in this thesis is: what role was apportioned to Catholic literature education in the process of confessionation and increasing pillarisation? I have also examined the extent to which the textbooks used in Catholic literature education offer a Catholic view. I also wanted to investigate whether a conflict could be identified among the textbook authors between the established canon for literature education and the use of this in Catholic schools.

The comparison of Catholic literature textbooks in the period from 1900 to 1920 shows that there was a vague consensus in the thought on literature education for Catholic schools, but that schoolbook writers did not have clear guidelines to adhere to from the church authorities or from Catholic specialist journals or cultural magazines. The only document from the bishops concerning education dates from 1868 and is primarily concerned with primary education. The few sentences in the bishop's missive dedicated to secondary education related to the "the healthy food of the Catholic truth" which always ran the risk of being exposed to "the poison of a harmful doctrine". This represents a warning that can be broadly interpreted, and often led to the censoring of modern novels which were considered to have a morally corrupting effect.

There are scarcely any appraisal criteria to be found that make it possible to describe a literary work from the early twentieth century as the purest Catholic anthology. The anthology and the textbook of De Jager and Horsten, *Roomsche Keur* and *Stemmen van verre en dichtebij*, did claim that, through Catholic literature, they would be morally and aesthetically uplifting for pupils at Catholic secondary schools.

In order to identify which Catholic aspects typify *Stemmen van verre en dichtebij*, I analysed in detail Horsten's textbook and compared it with another Catholic literature textbook. The author of this other textbook, P.A. Kerstens, wrote in his foreword to his *Leerboek met bloemlezing* (Schoolbook and Anthology) (1923) that, in his view, a good schoolbook of Dutch literature was needed for Catholic extended elementary education (MULO), for teacher training colleges, for HBS secondary schools, and for gymnasia and lyceums. Just like Horsten, Kerstens wanted to serve the whole of Catholic secondary education. An important difference emerges in the same foreword by Kerstens: More so than Horsten, Kerstens wanted to take account of national examination criteria. He had assumed that the Catholic pupils using his textbooks would be examined by neutral teachers, and that might mean dealing with books that conflicted with Catholic views on literature. His introductions to writers therefore complied to a greater extent with what was accepted in neutral literary circles, while Horsten primarily selected and appraised authors on the basis of their compliance with Catholic thinking. A second difference emerges from the discussion of literary works. Novels and poetry, including those by Catholic authors, rated as having a great literary value could be ultimately rejected by Horsten if they did not meet the criteria he set for Catholic art. For Kerstens, the literary component was more important, and the Catholic guidelines were not an absolute principle. Horsten was principled and unwavering in his rejection of poetry, dramatic art and novels that were in conflict with the Catholic truth.

The comparison of two Catholic textbooks for literature education shows that *Stemmen van verre en dichtebij* goes further in its application of Catholic principles than the *Leerboek met bloemlezing*, but that, based on this comparison in a period of increasing pillarisation in the early twentieth century, it cannot be said that there are major differences. Furthermore, it can be concluded that there is no unanimity between these two textbooks in the way they deal with the Catholic articles of faith in relation to their appraisal of modern literature.

The Catholic identity of Horsten's anthology becomes increasingly clear in the section that describes the nineteenth century. Ten of the sixteen authors discussed wrote on the basis of their Catholic faith. In his commentary on modern literature from the period 1880 to 1920, Horsten continually sought religious reflection. He found little inspiration in non-Catholic modern literature, and considered it morally low. Horsten believed that the devout inspiration of Catholic literature offered better prospects. He was convinced that the Catholic principle could add value to art. In this context, Horsten's *Stemmen van verre en dichtebij* formed the final stage in a development process in between 1868 and 1924, which started from a general consensus among all faiths on what constituted an acceptable literary canon in literature textbooks, and moved towards a more specific anthology and literary history suitable for Catholics.

In contrast to the Catholic cultural magazines which, as Sanders shows, offered scope for a diversity of opinions on modern literature and on the position of Catholic literature in neutral circles, a different tendency can be detected in literature textbooks such as *Roomsche Keur* and *Stemmen*. Through their selection of authors and literary works and, in particular, the reasoning they provide for this, the authors of these textbooks show that they fit better in a closed and strictly regulated Catholic circle. Horsten speaks of the added value of Catholic art, which might even serve as an example for other art. According to this view, the ideas of Horsten on the function of literature education match with what Rogier and Luykx called the awakening of Catholicism. By this, they mean the view that Catholicism may be able to influence society and perhaps even re-Christianise it. Catholic literature could play an important role in this. Furthermore, Horsten, De Jager and the authors of the *Letterkundige Bibliotheek voor Katholieken* also aim to protect: any literature which they consider to be morally corrupting was excluded from their anthologies. The fact that the authors of schoolbooks were less divided in their views of modern literature than the contributors to Catholic magazines was probably attributable to their educational motives. Pupils who did not yet have the necessary intellectual wherewithal had to be protected from the outside world, where without help "unhealthy" literature would be difficult to distinguish from "healthy" literature.

Following a period from 1880, when the authors of Catholic literature textbooks were still finding their way, and were endeavouring to find a response that would be acceptable to all Catholics to the liberal reading culture and the new ideas of the Tachtigers, the first quarter of the twentieth century saw an increasingly self-confident and almost triumphant Catholicism in literature education.