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Elements in Digital Literary Studies

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ACTUAL FICTIONS

*Literary Representation and
Character Network Analysis*

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Actual Fictions

Literary Representation and Character Network Analysis

Elements in Digital Literary Studies

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Abstract: This Element sheds new light on the ubiquitous yet complex notion of mimesis. By systematically comparing the social dynamics of the Dutch population at a given time with the social dynamics of characters in Dutch literary fiction published in the same period, it aims to pinpoint the ways and the extent to which literary fiction either mirrors or shapes the societal context from which it emerged. While close-reading-based scholarship on this topic has been limited to qualitative interpretations of allegedly exemplary works, the present study uses the data-driven tools of social network analysis to systematically determine the imitative elements of the social dynamics of characters within larger-scale, representative collections of books of literary fiction.

This Element also has a video abstract: www.cambridge.org/smeets

Keywords: Dutch literature, character network analysis, mimesis, digital humanities, social network analysis

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