

# An end...

## ...has a start; incipits & the Complete Works of Willem Frederik Hermans

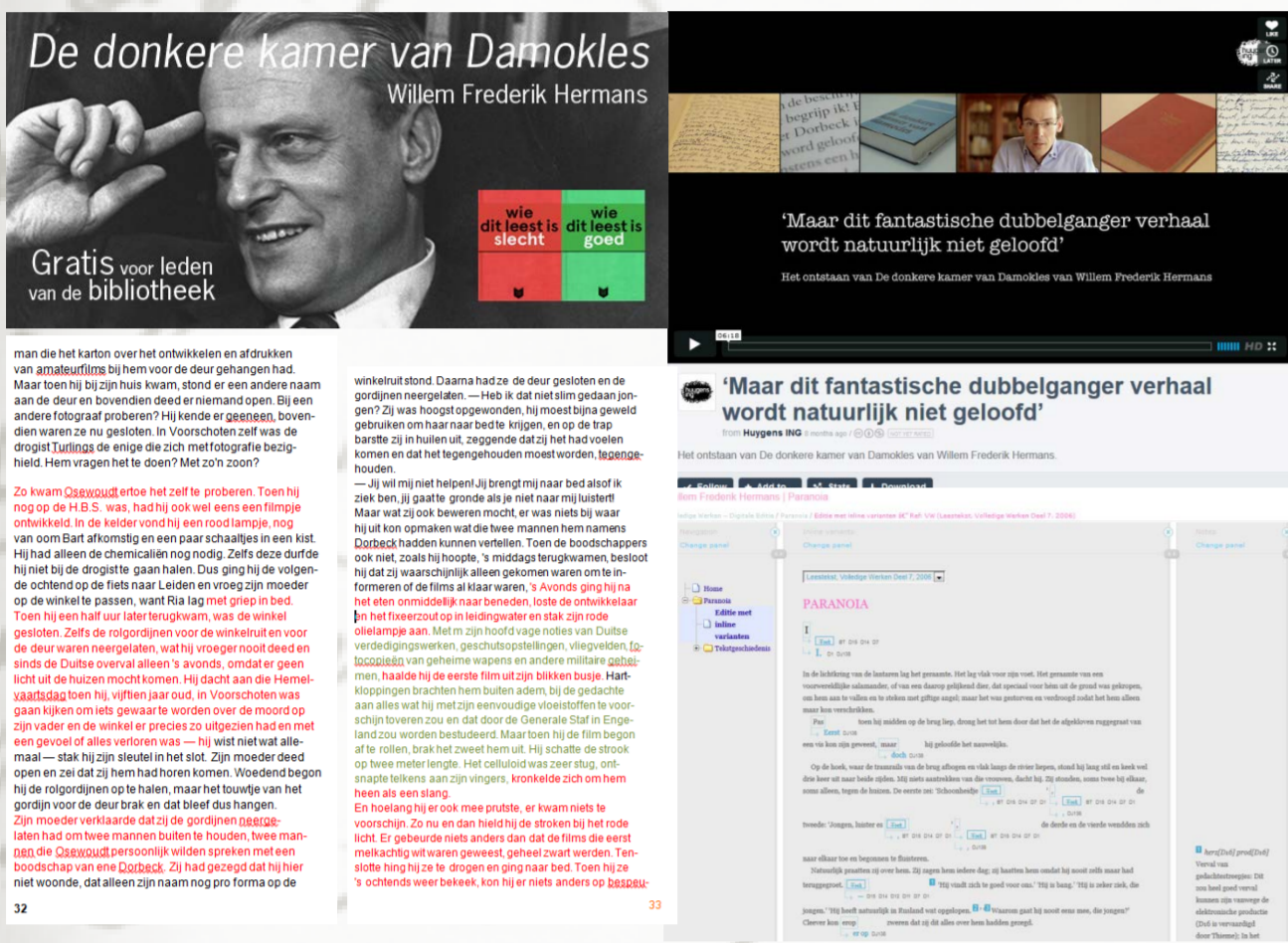
Peter Kegel / Jan Gielkens  
www.huygens.knaw.nl

'definitive texts' – editorial commentary – 24 volumes – 800-1000 pages each – dedicated website [www.wfhermansvolledigewerken.nl](http://www.wfhermansvolledigewerken.nl)

'I wish that all previous editions of books which have been reprinted in an improved version would crumble to dust as if by magic, even if the change only involves a comma.' (WFH, 1972)

### Tailored accessibility, by example

National book campaign ('Nederland leest') – provenance – 'fluidity' for literary interpretation – CollateX (transpositions)



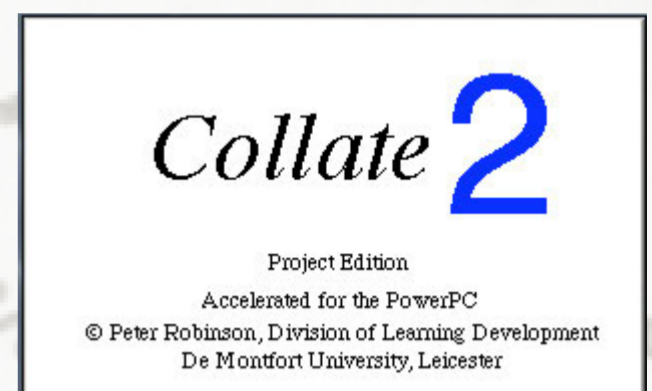
'map out the variation, chart paths from one version to another, and enable users to lead themselves along those paths' (Bryant 2002)

'modular', 'connectable', 'extendable' (Shillingsburg 2009)

'The idea of the active involvement of a computer-literate and critical community with a knowledge site built around a modern Dutch or Flemish text is but an idle fantasy.' (Vanhoutte 2010)

'Each version implies the work in a different way; in juxtaposition, the versions imply the work in a more complex way.' (Shillingsburg 2010)

One out of three printings revised – over 50,000 book pages – OCR – automated tekst comparison



### Recontextualization towards the melodramatic:

'mode of excess': overemphasizing of postures, gestures and scent... descriptions of abnormalities, especially in face expressions... a portraying more focused on traits instead of psychological complexity ... an ongoing play with notions of innocence and virtue (Brooks 1989)

### Incipit

provenance – contextualization – set against public case: trial of a notorious Dutch war criminal – reversed settings in story on public judgments and on the concepts of guilt and innocence.

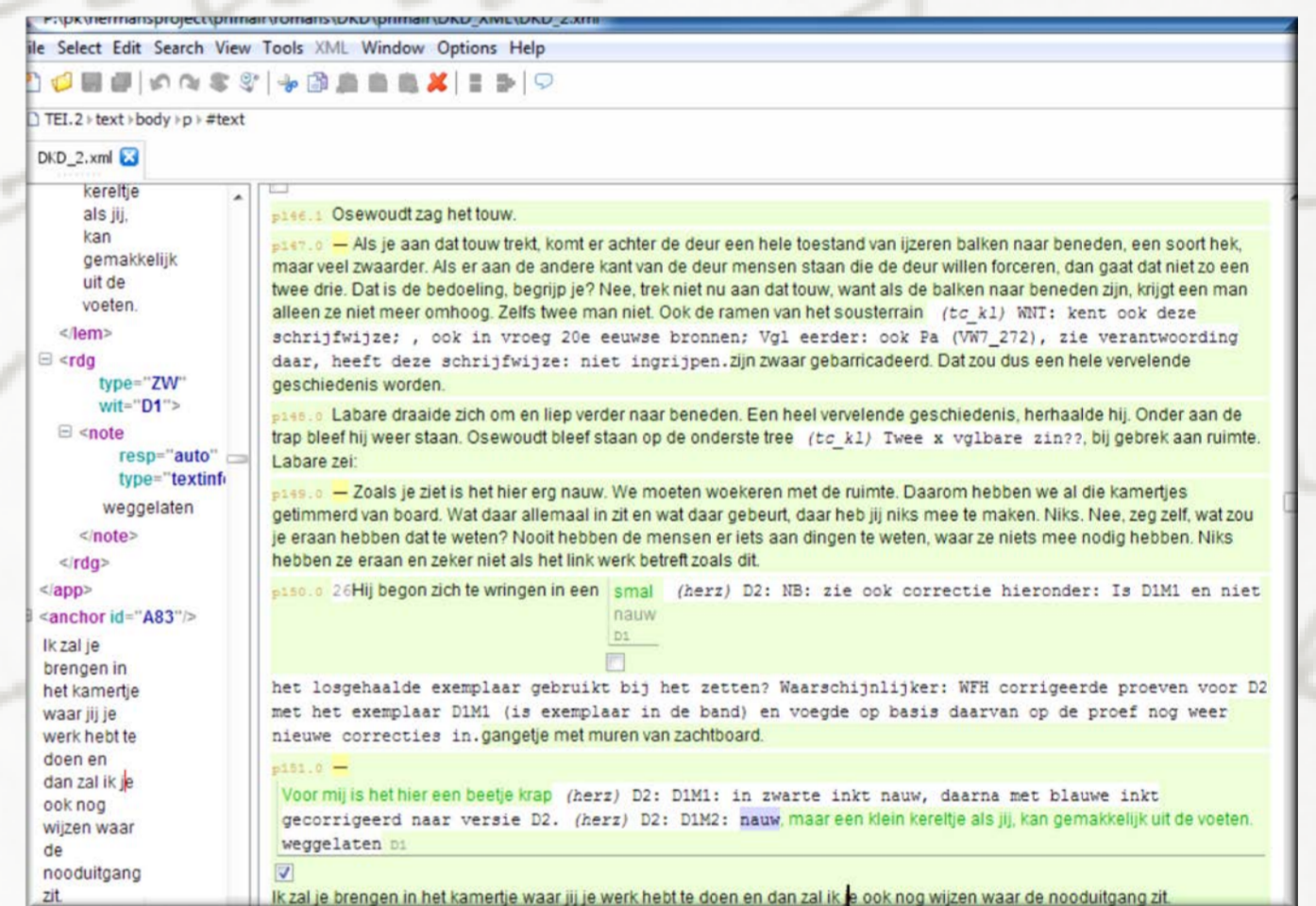
'The new book will be highly sensational. The main character is a kid, born prematurely, after seven months, and in a chamber pot. Afterwards he advises his mother how to kill his father. With father dead, he follows him into his cigar store. During the occupation, his role is a highly bloodthirsty and sometimes questionable one.' (WFH, letter to the publisher, 1954)

'... textual invention... meaningful variation' (Deppman 2004)

'The very nature of writing, the creative process, and shifting intentionality, as well as the powerful social forces that occasion translation, adaptation, and censorship among readers – in short, the facts of revision, publication, and reception – urge us to recognize that the only "definitive text" is a multiplicity of texts, or rather, the fluid text.' (Bryant 2002)

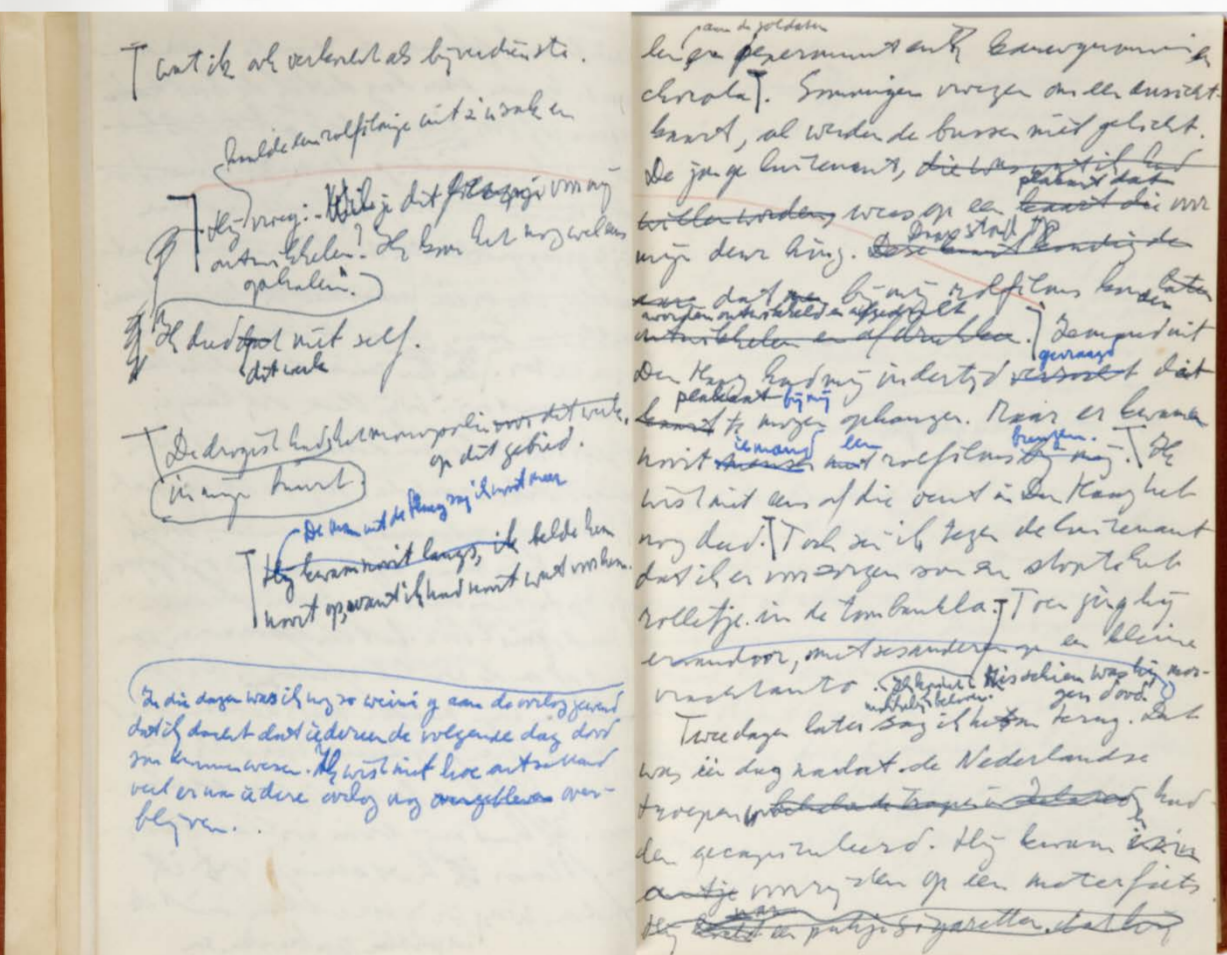
### XML-TEI textual laboratory

documentation on editorial research – authorial revision encoded – XML copy for publisher



### Digital edition

all relevant witnessess (books) – 'baseless inline variant edition' – authorial revision – textual history – additional editorial comments



'The definitive text of a published work is [...] the result of a process [...] The literary work [...] remains the mediated product of its own genesis.' (De Biasi 2004)

'an improbably rich novel' (Milan Kundera on *The Dark room of Damocles*)

'a comedy of worldly disengagement trembling on the edge of tragedy, all the more hilarious for being related in Hermans' best poker-faced manner' (J.M. Coetzee on *Beyond Sleep*)

