

# Summaries

*Nadia Lie*

## Latino-culture between high and low

*Gender-patterns in The Mask of Zorro*

This article sets *The Mask of Zorro* (Martin Campbell, 1998) against the background of the rise of a Latino-culture in the United States and concentrates on the way in which gender-relations are rewritten within the more general Zorro-myth. On the one hand, the impact of the Latino-culture on Zorro seems to have led to an enhanced eroticization of the character; on the other hand, Zorro is relocated as a responsible father, now able to orient his sensuality into the appropriate marital direction. Correspondingly, a new importance is given to the female charac-

ter in the story, who, in spite of cultural and social differences, feels sexually attracted to Zorro and eventually marries him. This marriage acquires a symbolic dimension within the overall theme of Californian identity in the movie, and in this way the plot-structure of *The Mask of Zorro* recalls the intimate relationship between erotic love and myths of nation-building that characterized late 19<sup>th</sup>-century Latin American literary canonical works.

*Judit Gera*

## De stem van Kirke

*Een feministische lezing van Karel van de Woestijnes verhaal 'De zwijnen van Kirkè'*

We know Circe basically from Homer's *Odyssey*, where she is portrayed as an equal partner to Odysseus. Circe became a frightening and cruel sorceress in later reworkings of the myth, due to the dominant patriarchal cultural tradition in Europe. Karel van de Woestijne (1878-1929), the Flemish symbolist poet, prose writer and journalist, also adapted her story in one of his short stories, 'De zwijnen van Kirkè' (The Swine of Circe), published in 1904. This article explores the transformations of Circe in his work, and

seeks to answer the questions to what extent she is an emancipated character, and whether we can consider this story as the first feminist manifest in Flemish literature, as some scholars have argued. Although Circe has a visionary dream which is liberating for women, the narratological analysis of the story shows that structurally she has a less powerful position.

*Tetty Havinga*

## A man or a woman?

*Preferences of employers equal opportunities legislation*

Havinga summarizes empirical research based on interviews with 17 personnel managers of welfare organizations and 17 intermediaries on the role of gender in recruitment and selection of personnel. It turns out that the job segregation between men and women is rather traditional in almost all organisations included in the research. For the respondents, adherence to the general principle

of equality does not contradict with the widely accepted practice to prefer a man or a woman for a particular vacancy. Often, common 'knowledge' about the characteristics and qualities of men and women is referred to, resulting in a desire for a well-balanced gender composition of the team.

Liesbet van Zoonen

## Oudkerk revisited

*Why the personal should be political, and the political personal*

Through the increased focus on politicians instead of parties as the main actors in politics, 'celebrity politics' has become a steady feature of Dutch democracy. In this article I use a specific case to explore two articulations of the personal with the political in celebrity politics. One is 'impersonal politics' in which the politician takes the main stage solely with his political track record and actions, the other is 'personal

politics' in which both the political and the private track records of the politician inform his performance and the way citizens perceive him. Based on a discussion of a recent scandal involving an alderman of the city of Amsterdam visiting prostitutes in a controversial red district, I show that celebrity politics is and should be built on the composite performance of political and private capacities and moralities.

Odile Verhaar

## Polarisation in the Dutch debate on female circumcision

Verhaar analyses the current debate in the Netherlands about the policies that aim at the protection of immigrant girls who come from countries practicing female circumcision, and evaluates the different policy options presented. Two strategies can be distinguished in this debate, the first aiming at gradual cultural reform, prioritising education and empowerment, the second aiming at juridical intervention, prioritising legal punishment. In this debate, each strategy is linked to a distinct normative position, respectively a 'cultural relativist', and a 'human rights activist' one. According to Verhaar, this is a false opposition that conflates the categories of morality and policy. This very opposition is, however, being re-activated by a member of Parliament of Somalian origin, Ayaan Hirsi Ali. Hirsi Ali argues that taking a principled stand

against cultural practices that violate the basic rights of citizens, implies to discontinue current 'educational' policies which eventually 'tolerate' female circumcision, being motivated by a misplaced respect for other cultures and fear for stigmatisation. A principled governmental stand would mean choosing a 'severe' strategy for enforcing the Dutch law that prohibits female circumcision. She pleads for a compulsory medical check of girls coming from countries practicing circumcision, and a duty for doctors to report circumcision to the police. Verhaar argues that this 'severe' policy is a poor alternative for educational policies, even if there is no evidence for the latter's efficacy. The 'severe' strategy can neither be justified with respect to the liberal principles and rights it wishes to uphold, nor on the basis of the greater efficacy it claims.

Amade M'charek

## Kinship in a biotechnological era

In her discussion of Dorien Pessers' *Verdwaalde seksen. Over sperminators, metroseksuelen and autocopieën* (2003) Amade M'charek argues that Pessers' plea for a re-symbolisation of family relation contributes to the reproduction of the traditional and the reduction of kinship. This is a move that fits well in a discourse in which 'kinship' seems to figure as a means to produce social cohesion in society. Furthermore, so M'charek argues, by naturalising and biologising

family relation, Pessers reduces the complexity of kinship to straightforward and alleged biological patterns of inheritance. Even though M'charek shares Pessers' problems with the ever growing range of reproductive technologies, however simplified in the book of Pessers, she argues against the solutions presented. Therein the complexities of lineage are being erased and the self performed as homogeneous.