

SUMMARIES

► *Rosemarie Buikema*
Theft and flight in the arts

Buikema proposes new coalitions between various traditions of textual analysis in order to delve deeper into the connections between art, culture and diversity. In this context, diversity not so much refers to a politically correct concept that pays lip service to the experiences of women, migrants, blacks and other politically, socially and culturally marginalised people, but rather to the consequence of the fundamental singularity of visual and discursive works of art. Buikema underlines the political and aesthetic merits of in-depth intertextual analysis by way of a thorough discussion of two great literary works, published in a period of political transition in South Africa: *Disgrace* by J.M. Coetzee and *Agaat* by Marlene Van Niekerk.

► *Elsbeth Etty*
Not a woman, but not a brother either
The political volunteering of Henriette Roland Holst

The author argues that historians researching women's political careers should take the personal ambitions of their subjects as their starting point. The author and political activist Henriette Roland Holst's ideal was to develop her literary talent while serving a not always clearly defined cause. To be accepted by her male heroes, she needed to deemphasise her sex; acceptance of male norms was the best strategy to gain autonomy and personal freedom. Roland Holst probably never saw this 'male' orientation as problematic. She

did not sympathise with the movement for women's suffrage and actively discouraged feminists because she was of the opinion that feminism was detrimental to the worker's struggle. Marxism and, later on, religious socialism provided ample opportunities for her poetry, her writing and her impressive oratory ability. While men of her class needed to acquire a position and to earn a living, a woman could lead a satisfying life volunteering.

► *Hanneke Hoekstra*
The right party
Sex, class and the power of Nancy Astor

Female pathways to power do not always follow the meritocratic routes of education and talent. In 1918, Nancy Astor wrote history when she became the first female member of the House of Commons. Her political success was, however, in many respects not at all a logical consequence of the feminist fight for political rights. Nancy Astor was an American nouveau riche who had campaigned for the British Conservative Party, the traditional party of the British aristocracy. Employing a biographical method, the author argues that the political culture of the old order was instrumental for women in gaining influence on the level of party elites, often privileging the distinctions of class and of birth over gender. The Conservative Party looked backward rather than forward; its depended on the informal mechanisms of networks of friends and family and the intense social life of the British elite. Within these circles, women had a distinctive though gendered role legitimized by the position of their husbands or families.

They could exercise significant social power as hostesses to political social occasions. Nancy Astor was a well-connected political hostess with impressive extra-parliamentary powers. She was able to continue and expand her role within the House of Commons, the moment women were granted the vote.

► *Christianne Smit*

'Thou couple, full of virtue'

Marriage and social work around 1900

Also in the Netherlands, the last quarter of the nineteenth century saw the rise of the so-called 'social question'. Reformers developed initiatives to solve the various problems of the working class caused by industrialisation and urbanisation. Plans and activities to educate and civilise the workers in social and cultural respect formed an important aspect of these initiatives. This social work was considered to be especially suitable for women because of their presumed feminine capacities. In this article the questions are raised how a married status influenced women who carried out social work and whether specific gender characteristics can be traced within their activities. Three socially engaged married couples are portrayed whose activities enveloped various forms of social work. Their cases prove that a married status did not restrict women's social activities. It could even be a stimulant to start social work, in some cases in harmonious cooperation with their spouse. Besides that, the specific female characteristics did not seem a constraint for social activities by women in general, as the growing importance of the work did allow them to carry out their work in a broader setting and in a much more public way and to enter fields that had been restricted to men before as well.

► *Marja van Tilburg*

Sex and sovereignty

Gender in the political career of Elizabeth I

Elizabeth Tudor became monarch of England at the very moment that sovereignty became considered the prerogative of males. Throughout her reign (1558-1603) she had to address issues of authority, engendered by her sex. In this article, Elizabeth's problems are discussed from an anthropological point of view. It addresses how patriarchy worked within European aristocratic culture and how authority became synonymous with masculinity. Her public gender politics can only be properly understood in the context of the dynamics of the dynastic policies of the early modern era and the specific role of women. To highlight Elizabeth's political skills, her addresses to the general public are compared to her debates with Parliament. In the former she presents herself as a monarch and a woman, by referring to the mediaeval political theory of the king's two bodies. In the latter she names herself 'prince'. The proverbial exceptions can only be found in the debates on marriage. In these instances she does acknowledge her femininity, all the while referring to her opponents' prejudices. In doing so Elizabeth addresses her various subjects differently – or rather, their notions on womanhood. She does so systematically and consistently. This indicates she is able to make use of her sex in a strategic way rather than being victimised.

► *Henk te Velde*

Women, salons and the evolution of parliament

Forgotten beginnings in the French 19th century

The French Revolution has often been considered to be the great watershed in the development of modern politics. The end of the Ancient Regime also seemed to spell the end of the political influence of women that was connected with the aristocratic culture of the salons. This article demonstrates, however, that aristocratic women enjoyed much political influence at the beginning of the 19th century, when they contributed to the establishment of a new political institution: a modern parliament. Modern parliaments have been built upon the agreement to disagree. In the 19th century this agreement presupposed the development of a common culture, and common standards to measure the achievements of parliamentarians. The culture of the salons, that were hosted by women, provided a common ground where parliamentary adversaries could meet. The hostesses participated in political discussions, arranged some political appointments, and contributed to a 'civilized' culture that prevented parliamentary fights from turning into civil war. Parliaments also needed an audience, and women partly constituted that audience. They sat in the galleries and admired the orators. To make institutions work and give them legitimacy is an important type of political power. To a large extent women had that power.