

## Editorial

Ulrich Tiedau

It gives me great pleasure to open this issue of *Dutch Crossing* by expressing our gratitude to one of the longest standing co-editors this journal ever had, my colleague Jane Fenoulhet, who after her well-deserved retirement from University College London after the academic season 2016/2017, also decided to step down from the editorship. At the same time I would also like to welcome Raingard Esser from the University of Groningen, familiar to our esteemed readership as a long-standing member of the editorial board, who has kindly offered to step up to the editorship. There will be more changes that we will be announcing in one of the next editorials of *Dutch Crossing*.

On to the contributions of this issue: Stijn Bussels (Leiden) and Bram van Oostveldt (Amsterdam) open the issue with their reflections on Joost van den Vondel's choice of Lucifer as the leading character of his eponymous play from 1654, one of the most discussed works in Dutch literary history. Using a contemporary interpretation of Aristotle's concept of *catharsis*, the authors demonstrate how by representing Lucifer's harrowing doubts about God's plans, Vondel sought to educate his audience on how to deal with their own problems with divine inscrutability. By highlighting religious doubts in the tragedy, Vondel, according to Bussels and Van Oostveldt, aimed to cleanse the audience from these uncertainties because the genesis of the devil is the ideal subject matter for a tragedy to reinforce the audience's faith.

Bram De Ridder (Leuven) looks at political and legal connotations of traditions, customs and common practice in the diplomacy of the Eighty Years War. Whereas the growing differences between the United Provinces and the Southern Netherlands over the course of the hostilities have been widely researched and explain the emergence of two separate political cultures, both governments continued to rely on similar notions of tradition, custom and common practice, enshrined in a juridical language that also offered a point of convergence. These shared claims to history, as De Ridder shows, provided a common repertoire that diplomats from both sides deployed in their arguments.

Jonas Roelens (Ghent) devotes his attention to the issue of 'sodomy' in the Southern Netherlands. As in other early modern territories, sodomy was often regarded as a predominantly foreign phenomenon that threatened the home society. Immigrants therefore were subjected to local distrust and defamations, which is illustrated by the high numbers of foreign defendants in early modern court records in Southern Europe. Systematically analysing the bailiff accounts of the cities of Flanders and Brabant, Roelens shows that this was also the case in the Southern Netherlands but that important modifications need to be made to understand the phenomenon here. Foreigners were indeed vulnerable for sodomy accusations, but because of their fragile social position that complicated a successful integration in urban society, rather than because of their origin.

Nico Koedam, Farid Dahdouh-Guebas, Roberto Limas Barcellos (Brussels) and Tom Van der Stocken (Recife) look at the intersection of arts and science in Dutch Brazil. Unfamiliar landscapes and foreign fauna and flora inspired both artists and scientists and their curiosity for the exotic often developed into observation and documentation. While usually geared towards functional (mercantile, political or strategic) aspects, the depictions of mangroves, a very characteristic tropical vegetation, by the Dutch landscape painter Frans Post's during his

seven year long stay in Dutch Brazil in the 17th century, are an exemption to this rule, as they were of only very limited interest in the context of colonial economy.

Timothy Baycroft (Sheffield) investigates the French city of Lille, in the Low Countries also known under its Flemish name Rijssel, as a point of cultural, economic, social and political exchange between the Low Countries and France. His analysis focuses particularly on the effects of the industrial revolution and the occupation of the region during both world wars, in terms of changing patterns of migration, trade, social exchange, and cultural and linguistic practice, as well as on the influence of political thinking, involvement, and practice and their relationship to and influence upon cultural development and the formation of local and national identities.

Last but not least Cidney Sturgess (Sheffield) presents a novel reading of Harry Mulisch's *Twee vrouwen* (1975). A narration of both a physical and metaphorical journey, Mulisch's text centres on the lesbian affair of his protagonist and the tragic trajectory of this relationship. Despite the novel's continued critical acclaim, however, many early feminist contentions with Mulisch's representation of lesbian sexuality continue to remain unresolved. In her paper Sturgess offers a new perspective on the significance of same-sex love within the novel by analysing the protagonist's relationship with her lover within a post-Jungian framework that charts the protagonist's journey towards self-realisation.

As always best wishes for good reading.