

Amazonen en volksmoeders: overeenkomsten in representaties van vrouwen in Zuid-Afrikaanse en Poolse nationale mythologieën

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Abstract: This paper discusses similarities in the working of mechanisms responsible for the creation of idealized representations of women in South African (or Afrikaner) and Polish national mythologies. It is argued that in both cases two realisations of a patriotic attitude can be observed. The first of them, South African *volksmoeder* or Polish *Matka Polka*, is perceived as the dominant and neutral one. It defines the embodiment of female virtues as prescribed by social norms. The other one, the Amazon, refers to a rebellious woman warrior who constitutes a disturbing mixture of both stereotypically female and male features. The attention is drawn to the role of literature in the forming and preserving of these models. Furthermore, the discussion focuses on the question whether the Amazon can be perceived as a model of a proto-feminist.

Keywords: South Africa; Anglo-Boer war; national mythology; stereotypes; volksmoeder; woman warrior; gender; life writing; Polish romantic poetry

Ondanks de geografische afstand tussen Zuid-Afrika en Polen bestaan er verrassende overeenkomsten tussen de nationale mythologieën van deze twee landen. In beide gevallen is er sprake van geïdealiseerde representaties die zich op twee tegenovergestelde polen positioneren. Aan de ene kant bevindt zich de Zuid-Afrikaanse volksmoeder en haar Poolse equivalent, *Matka Polka* (wat zich in het Nederlands gebrekkig als “Poolse moeder,” of eventueel als “de Moeder