

## Summaries

*Justitiële verkenningen* (Judicial explorations) is published nine times a year by the Research and Documentation Centre of the Dutch Ministry of Justice in cooperation with Boom Juridische uitgevers. Each issue focuses on a central theme related to judicial policy. The section *Summaries* contains abstracts of the internationally most relevant articles of each issue. The central theme of this issue (vol. 31, nr. 4, 2005) is *The expressive thinking in criminology*.

### **The cultural heritage of Don Corleone**

*F. Bovenkerk and M. Husken*

The globalisation of organized crime is effected by the dissemination of American gangster images and especially mafia movies throughout the world. Script writers and filmmakers produce criminal stereotypes as is demonstrated in the two Dutch true crime movies *Bella Bettien* and *De dominee*. Career criminals (especially of the first underworld generation) copy cinematographic examples in their life-styles. It has virtually become impossible to separate fiction from reality.

### **The Sopranos; narrativity as dislocation**

*B. Hoogenboom*

The article is written like a play, staged in a nightclub called the Bada Bing. Tony Soprano sits at a table stacked with Italian food and discusses 'organized' crime. His guests are: the criminologists William Chambliss, Edwin Sutherland, Patrick van Calster, Serge Gutwirth, Gary T. Marx, Maurice Punchand mister Soprano's psychiatrist Dr. Melfi. Topics of conversation are: fear and anxiety of 'organized' crime figures (Tony is on Prozac); the irrational behaviour of 'organized' crime figures; the fact that chance, luck and improvisation is a constant factor in 'organized' crime; the imitation of Hollywood gangster movies by 'organized' crime figures ('we all wanne be Marlon Brando') and the structural nature of corruption in all social processes. As opposed to theories and stereotypes of 'organized' crime in terms of 'alien conspiracies'. The idea for the play comes from the concept of narrative knowledge ('story telling') which states that rational thinking can and must be complemented with arts and literature for empathic reasons and to develop new ideas and hypotheses.

### **The militarizing of public space; on the influence of videogames on our reality**

*M. Schuilenburg and A. de Jong*

Videogames are no trivial entertainment. They show criminologists that the 'virtual' reality bulges out into the 'objective' reality. The battle of heavily armed soldiers against foreign troops, drug criminals or armed terrorists is not just a popular topic for gamers. Also the US Army is involved in multiplayer and joystick technologies. The first one to acknowledge that 'only high-score men should be selected for tasks which require quick learning or rapid adjustments,' was the former President of the United States, Ronald Reagan. With game technologies the US Army is creating environments in which the difference between a virtual and 'real' reality is rapidly diminishing. War videogames train players how to function in a military 'city-scape' in which the boundaries of interior spaces are temporary and flexible. By playing, gamers are developing a military self-consciousness. The war videogames also announce the arrival of a regime of rules and punishments that works on basis of points systems and high-scores. How strong is this perspective influencing our physical environment? Maybe the architectonic figure of the 'Urban Container' proves that the militarising of our public space is becoming more real than we think it is.

### **Gangsta rap; beyond controversy**

*E van Gemert*

Gangsta rap is a very controversial music style. Violent and sexist images, as well as songs on aggression against the police have led to repeated acts trying to ban specific albums or songs. In spite of, or maybe because of, this negative attention gangsta rap has become known and it is widely appreciated by youth all over the world. The genre now is part of mainstream pop music. Gangsta rap portrays it's heroes as pimps, dealers and hustlers: as criminals. It puts a strong emphasis on the ego, that bases the reputation on street credibility. This leads to an attitude of not backing down and rivalry, that, through humiliation, can easily lead to frustration and aggression. Moreover, these controversial aspects are not restricted to the world of gangsta rap. In looking at society through a gangsta rap perspective, the conclusion must be that we are beyond controversy.

**Only swamps are fertile; on the links between criminology and literature**

*Herman Franke*

This article deals with various relations between literature and criminology. History shows that time and again writers fought for a humane treatment of criminals, starting with Victor Hugo and Charles Dickens in the nineteenth century. Literature has contributed to the deepening of our knowledge on crime and punishment by imagination and psychological insight. Writers committed crimes and, especially in The Netherlands, a lot of criminologists have become writers. The author, a criminologist turned novelist, describes and tries to clarify the relationships mentioned above within a historical context. Writers ignore and challenge the boundaries between good and evil. The author asserts that in that sense they are like criminals.