
SUMMARIES

► *Christine Delphy*

Antisexism or antiracism? A false dilemma

The article discusses the relations between oppression and the struggle against these oppressions at the theoretical, practical and political level. Whereas the principles that are at the centre of these struggles are always the same: the refusal of oppression – in a particular and general way – these struggles are often perceived as opposite or even contradictory. An exemplary case to examine these questions is the French headscarf debate that occurred in French society in 2003-2004 and lead to the law on *laïcité* – generally known as the headscarf ban. Many French progressive feminists have been undecided regarding the ban. In discussing the motives and arguments behind this position, the author argues that, similar to the feminist advocates of the headscarf ban, these feminists consider women wearing a headscarf as victims of sexism. However, they also recognize that the law has stigmatising consequences for the migrant population. Delphy analyses this dilemma between antisexism and antiracism as a false one, for it presupposes that these women are only subject to sexism and not to racism. The author further criticises feminists like Elizabeth Badinter who seem to suggest that men from ‘racialized’ groups are extremely sexist and violent, and that western women nowadays hardly suffer from oppression or patriarchy.

► *Sanne Derks en Meike Hesseels*

A vengeful Mary

Bolivian women on suffering and rage through domestic violence

Scholarly research on domestic violence in Latin America often relates to dominant notions of masculinity and femininity: *machismo* and *marianismo*. Within this gender paradigm women are said to embrace the values of the Virgin Mary as a passive submissive role model. Up to this moment, these studies ignored the question whether women indeed refer to Mary as a symbol that encourages them to endure gender-related suffering. Therefore, this article analyses Bolivian women’s experiences of domestic violence in relation to their interpretations of the Virgin of Urkupiña in Quillacollo, Bolivia. Although the stories of these female pilgrims are full of suffering, we argue that they do not merely accept their suffering in marianistic terms. Rather, rage, or *rabia*, seems to be a central concept in their religious experiences. Women approach the Virgin of Urkupiña to transfer their rage and to ask for intervention in situations of domestic violence. The Virgin of Urkupiña is thus not only venerated for her capacity to endure suffering, but is also perceived as a powerful and vicious goddess of vengeance.

► Anne-Marie Korte

**Spirituality and social commitment as a
'modern' opposition**

Today spirituality and social commitment are often perceived as two oppositional orientations: inwards versus outwards, private versus public, religious versus secular. In this article this opposition is critically analyzed from the perspective of genderstudies in theology and religious studies. Firstly the emergence of an opposition between spirituality and social commitment is traced in cultural historical perspective. It is shown that this concerns a modern opposition, that has become manifest and influential in twentieth century religious and political thought. Secondly the role of feminist reflection and feminist theology in the upholding and affirmation of this opposition is discussed. It is shown that the idea that religion primarily is an inward orientation and a cultivation of dependency of self sacrifice, that withholds women from claiming equality and performing (public) roles outside the private sphere, still dominates contemporary debates on religion and emancipation. The origins of these debates are related to early twentieth century Max Weber's sociological analyses of religion, modernity and women's emancipation. This article points to the importance of research in the field of gender and religion that is not framed in terms of individual and inward religious orientation versus social participation and public involvement. It recommends to study women's religious interests and activities (more) in relation to their performance as promoters and sustainers of familial, intergenerational, informal and local bonds and relationships.

► Lieke Stelling

'T is not in man/To change or alter me'

Conversion, sex and gender in Philip Massinger's *The renegado* (1624) and William Shakespeare's *The merchant of Venice* (1596-7)

This article investigates the role of gender in the representation of religious conversion in two early modern English plays: Philip Massinger's *The Renegado* (1624) and William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* (1596-7). It seeks to demonstrate that these plays respond both to the rise of capitalism and to the religious upheavals in early modern England that gave the idea of conversion an unprecedented urgency. Consistently drawing parallels between changes of faith and proto-capitalist commerce, the two plays depict conversion as an undermining of Christian identity. Both comedies also attempt to solve this problem by drawing an analogy between conversion and gender-related transformations. That is, they link changes of faith to castration and deflowering (in the case of *The renegado*), and to marriage. They present marriage as the strict condition under which a Christianization can be a clear triumph, and it is only the female characters who convert to the faith of their spouse. For the male characters, both Christian and non-Christian, conversion always entails a loss of masculinity or identity. Both plays attempt to rescue Christian identity from the destabilizing effects of exchange by investing it with an absoluteness that they find in the domain of gender.

► *Bibi Straatman***Something new comes out of a repetition**

Agency in the discourse of Teresa of Avila

In this contribution, the spiritual and textual innovations in the work of Teresa of Avila are questioned. If we are not to consider Teresa as a revolutionary writer, nor as a cultural dupe, disciplined by the patriarchal power of the catholic orthodoxy, what is it, that can make her texts of interest for nowadays readers? The author uses the concept of iterability (Butler, 2000; and Derrida, 1972) and that of repetition as a productive source (Lacan, 1976) to re-open the discussion on mystical texts. She argues that Teresa's discursive agency can be found in the re-appropriation of certain rhetorical tropes such as the 'mystical experience', and the '(inner) conversation' as methods in a new configuration of science. The mystical movement of the 16-th century is mostly regarded as a literary genre, or at best as an unfortunately disqualified form of knowledge. With Mignolo (2000), Foucault (1976) and De Certeau (1986) however, Teresa's texts are diagnosed as a new locus of enunciation, and as a particular local, regional knowledge, incapable of unanimity, not open for the procedures of falsification, but still interesting. Teresa's texts can be seen as a testimony of non-hegemonic experience, but moreover they can provide inspiration for the actual epistemological debate in social science, post colonial studies and cultural studies, where agency is to be re-interpreted (Mahmood, 2005) and new methods such as 'conversation' (Mignolo, 2000) are discussed.

► *Robert Teune***New Dutch male Muslims**

Motives for the adoption of Islam by autochthonous men

This article is the outcome of a research on an actual phenomenon in the Dutch modern society: native Dutch men embracing Islam, to which I will refer as New Muslims. Islam is one of the topics of growing interest in Western countries in both media and social science over the past decades. Most research has been conducted on women. Therefore questions on motives, expectations and consequences of *men* embracing Islam remain unanswered. Based on data from fieldwork I distinguish three categories of motives for the adoption of Islam: rational, relational and religious motifs. In relation with gender research reveals that part of the participants are attracted to Islam because of traditional points of view regarding male and female gender roles. Although some of these new Muslims do not consent with this. Because opinions on male and female (religious) behavior in Islam differ, changes in relation to gender for the New Muslim also vary. Thus, insight into processes of religious transition to Islam among Dutch men and the relation to gender will add to the scientific and social relevance of this article.

► *Karen Vintges*

Is Western feminism a colonialism?

The legacy of Simone de Beauvoir

The recent claiming of Simone de Beauvoir's legacy by French feminists for a policy of assimilation of Muslim women to the dominant Western liberal models of self and society, affects the complexity and richness of Beauvoir's views. Paradigmatic as her thinking is for contemporary Western feminism it is important to realize that her feminist ideals of (access for all to) 'true freedom' and of an egalitarian society surpass the dominant forms of Western liberalism in substantial ways. Her positive concept of 'true freedom' or 'ethical freedom' does not correspond to Western liberalism's 'negative' concept of freedom as the absence of constraints. Nor does her egalitarian concept of society resemble Western liberalism's model of society in its dichotomous organization of labor and care.

► *Marjan Wijers*

Rights are not liberal

On victims of the trade in women and emancipated sex workers

A central theme in the debates leading to the decriminalisation of the sex industry in the Netherlands was the improvement of the legal and social position of prostitutes and the protection of their rights. Eight years after the abolition of the ban on brothels, evaluations show that their position is still weak and has hardly improved. A major cause is the fact that the authorities continued to concentrate on what they have always done – regulation, repression and public order –, while failing to take into account the needs and interests of sex workers and actively invest in their (labour) emancipation. Still, this is a key factor to a successful implementation of the new law. Without the willingness to invest in the rights of sex workers, combating violence and abuse in prostitution as well as the effective regulation of the industry is doomed to fail.
