

# Summaries

*Helma Lutz*

## Without blushing. Multiperspectivity in feminist research

The debate about the multicultural society and the so-called drama it has become, was prominent in the Netherlands in 2001. In this debate a well known feminist stated that it was against emancipation of women to allow them to wear a headscarf. Others reacted on this statement by arguing that her point of view originates from a white-feministic stereotype. Helma Lutz in her article, that was based on the lecture she gave at the conference 'Multiculturalism and feminism' (October 2001), states that the difficult relation between black and white feminism is not new. In the history of theory about gender and ethnicity

three paradigms can be described: 1. from sex to gender, 2. from gender to gender and diversity, and 3. from diversity to intersectionality. The last paradigm change is necessary to be able to analyse the complexity of societal positions and identities. Lutz presents a model of 14 lines or parameters of differentiation. Each line presents a form of social positioning or identity. Lutz illustrates her model by analysing the film 'A Polish Bride' by Karim Traïda (1998). Intersectional analysis urges to state other questions, and allows to reconsider the way feminists react to multicultural questions, such as wearing a headscarf.

*Sawitri Saharso*

## A woman with two missions. Reaction to Helma Lutz

Lutz is critical about the idea, suggested by Okin and others, that the cultural traditions of minority groups can be harmful to women. Okin demonises cultural minorities, she argues, and thereby contributes to the representation of racial and cultural minorities as inferior Others. Next, Lutz makes a case for intersectionality as a theoretical approach that able to overcome the dichotomous thinking on which this process of exclusion rests. Contra Okin I argue that multiculturalism and feminism are not necessarily each others enemies, but contra Lutz I recognise that sometimes there is a tension between the two as some minority practices do infringe on the

rights of women. Yet, even in these cases multicultural measures may best serve the interest of the women concerned.

Intersectionality seems to me primarily to be a theory of social representation of identities. As identity theory it focusses on the social construction of identities, but fails in my opinion to recognise individual agency.

While I sometimes envy the position of either Okin or Lutz, my own position is that I am committed to both feminism and multiculturalism. The task for me is to find ways of speaking that allows us to be both critical and solidary.

*Gloria Wekker*

## 'Building nests in a windy place'

The inaugural lecture of Gloria Wekker, the first professor of gender and ethnicity in the Netherlands, carries the name of a phrase in the poem 'Portrait' by Audre Lorde. Lorde for Gloria Wekker is one of the initiators of intersectional theory. Wekker aims at using her chair to develop a strong analytical frame to understand (the) Dutch reality along the lines of gender, ethnicity, class and sexuality. Social opinions about masculinity and femininity, about race and ethnicity influence the organization and the content of science and disciplines in academy. While gender is studied in

several disciplines, most research is colour blind. It seems that where gender is studied, race and ethnicity is excluded. Intersectional analysis instead enables to see parallels in the ways in which white women on the one hand, and people of colour on the other, have been constructed and positioned by science. For Wekker gender and ethnicity co-construct each other, and act simultaneously: gender has always already a ethnic connotation and ethnicity is always already gendered. This requires to construct methods to deconstruct the complex questions we are confronted with.

*Saskia Poldervaart*

## The plurality of 'the other'. Multiculturalism, feminism and the affinity politics of 'the' (protest) movement

This article focuses on two points of critique on the relationship between multiculturalism and feminism. The first is that in the present discussion on multiculturalism it is not recognized that the Netherlands have always been a multicultural society even before coloured people and Moslems were living here. Connecting multiculturalism only with non-white or Islam people ignores the existence of diversity of white cultures in the Netherlands. Feminism also falls in this trap. The second point is that white as well as black feminism is directed at negotiations with the government and have moved away from their broad movement aspects. By doing so 'the' present protest movement, in which resistance against racism and sexism plays an important role, falls outside the feminist point of view. This ignoring

of contemporary movements is strengthened by narrowing multiculturalism to difference in colour and Islam. Therefore feminism does not recognize that for example 'the otherness' of protest movements has to be a part of the multiculturalism debate. The first part of this article shows some cultural differences (religion and class) within the white Dutch society and touches briefly upon the resemblances with some coloured and Moslim cultures. The second part concentrates on the feminist and anti-racist struggle of 'the' protest movement. In the conclusions the author argues for a feminism that includes 'a resistance state of mind'. In this way feminism can show an affinity politics: working together with all kinds of groups and cultures who aim at for-reaching societal changes.

*Anne-Claire Mulder*

## Speaking (of) God in a multicultural society

This opinion-article departs from the thesis that the so-called antithesis of feminism and religion has become a stumbling-block for the multicultural, feminist dialogue on the future and direction of feminism. This antithesis belongs to the heritage of the Enlightenment with its emphasis on the autonomy and the rationality of the subject and its rationalist epistemology. In this tradition religion is seen as irrational, because based on faith claims and the religious subject as heteronomous, because subject(ed) to God; a view which is still part of the feminist critiques on religion. In the article the author argues, however, that this critique is no longer valid, because post-modern feminists have made short work of enlightenment

view on the subject as autonomous and rational. They have illuminated that subjectivity and identity are constituted in a process of subjection to and transformation of cultural traditions. It is also overtaken by the developments within theology and philosophy of religion, in which it is emphasized that religion is principally open to change as well as contextual and multiform in its truth-claims. This brings the author to the conclusion that both the acknowledgement of this latter view of religion and the recognition of religious traditions as one of the cultural traditions which form the identity of human subjects, is a necessary first step for a successful feminist, multicultural dialogue on the direction of feminism.

*Conny Roggeband*

## The politisation of sexual violence. The struggle of the women's movement in the Netherlands and Spain.

This article discusses the relation between the state and the battered women's movement in two European countries with important differences in political structure, democratic tradition and culture: the Netherlands and Spain. According to social movement theory, so-called national political opportunities structures determine the chance of facilitation, repression or reform with respect to the rise or fall of social movements. This opportunity structure consists of four basic elements: the existing configuration of political cleavages, the openness or closedness of the formal institutional structure of the state, the informal strategy used by authorities towards challengers and the possible alliances for social movements. The Netherlands and Spain differ in almost all of these elements. This explains the important differences in the timing of mobilisation and in mobilisation strength between the Dutch and Spanish battered women's movement. Also the differences in

results can, in part, be explained by differences in the political opportunity structures, but for a better understanding we should broaden the political opportunities model and include political culture, cross-national learning processes and international political opportunities. Contrary to what can be expected on the basis of the model, there are important similarities in the strategies of the movements. The cases discussed show that movement ideas to a large extent determine if and how movements make use of political opportunities. Moreover, the political opportunities model fails to see that social movements transcend both national and political boundaries. In addition social movements challenge the political realm by redefining the domain of traditional politics and permissible state intervention. Social movements do not just seize opportunities, they often create new opportunities and change politics.