

International Academic Congress

**Re-Visioning the Future: Perspectives in Gender Studies**

May 4–6, 2006 at the TU of Braunschweig, Germany

Genders studies present a productive interdisciplinary field of research that is gaining influence both nationally and internationally, not only in the humanities and social and cultural sciences, but also within the areas of medicine, the natural sciences, and the technological sciences. At the same time, issues of gender are also relevant on all levels of political and social participation, cultural representation, allocation of economic resources, and political power relations. Particularly with regard to recent developments in the technological sciences, which break up the boundaries between the political sciences, the humanities and the natural sciences (Bruno Latour, 2005), we believe it is now necessary to reflect on the future role of gender studies within the new interdisciplinary fields currently installed.

The international congress "Re-Visioning the Future: Perspectives in Gender Studies," which will take place in the spring 2006 in Lower Saxony, Germany, therefore aims at "re-visioning" central results of research, methods of investigation, as well as different theoretical approaches in international feminist academia to discuss them critically within an international dialogue and to concretize different desiderata of investigation. Thus, on the one hand we would like to ask what potential gender studies offer for shaping our future: What kinds of visions do we have today while trying to bring gender perspectives into both academia and society? Furthermore, do we have to reformulate our scientific concepts and analytical perspectives so that new impulses for social and political agency emerge? On the other hand, the congress will take up the changing structures of academia itself and discuss the institutional consequences: How shall we integrate gender studies into future fields of knowledge and the university landscape?

The two-and-a-half-day international congress will include contributions from the humanities, social sciences, cultural sciences, and arts, as well as from medicine, natural sciences, and technological/life sciences. The program provides for keynote lectures, panel discussions, commentaries and various round tables. Time will be generously allotted to discussions as well as presentations from the areas of both practice and academic research. The event will take place in English as well as German. In mixed sections we will strive to provide translations.

### **Congress Topics**

The discussion will take place along four central and topical issues of research that reflect the interdisciplinary spectrum of gender research as well as the epistemological implications of gender as an academic category:

#### **1. Technologies of Knowledge: Re-Visioning the Living Body**

Based on the ongoing controversy concerning a) the temporal and conceptual localization of the "one-sex-model," and b) the very scope of historical approaches of the body in gender research, a discussion has to take place regarding the methodological scope of the current criticism of dualism: Do new scientific-technological concepts of the hybrid body make dualisms obsolete or adore they reproduce them?

## **2. Gender, Class, Ethnicity: Inequalities Within Social Processes of Transformation**

For several years now there has been an ongoing discussion under the keyword of “intersectionality” over a paradigmatic enhancement of gender research with regard to the theoretical clarification and empirical investigation of the intersection of social inequality among the genders with other structurers of inequality. In the American debate, the focus is on ‘race’ and ‘ethnicity.’ Indeed, concentration on the reciprocity and interplay of differently constituted categories of social structuring represents an enormous challenge not only to Women’s and Gender Studies, but also to the research on social inequality and for social theory in general. Under the conditions of social transformation (i.e. the European integration process, globalization, migratory mobility), the development of an integrated view on the notion of inequality has the utmost priority.

## **3. Visions and Visibility – A Dialogue Between Social and Media Sciences**

At the center of this topic we would like to debate different forms of staging and performing gender in the media. In view of the large extent to which different kinds of media permeate everyday life, the issue of gender in representation is acute. Thus, the third section intends to continue the debate on ‘representation’ and to fathom its dimensions with respect to media and gender performance. We will make a particular attempt to correlate both the cultural and social sciences and their respective research findings. In the first instance, we will do this with the objective of specifying in which way the different modes of gender performance in the media are capable of functioning.

## **4. Academic Culture, Gender and Profession**

Based on current theoretical discourses on the specific relation between profession and gender, and in keeping with recent research studies, this section will analyze academia and academic contexts of professionalizing as spaces for the generation and negotiation of the various dynamics of gendering within academic cultures and academic careers. The focus here will be on the mathematic/scientific/technological disciplines. At the same time, we would like to explore different strategies and effects of gender policy and gender-related intervention within academia as well as in selected professions.

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