

International Conference, 11–12 December 2009

## **Das Geschlecht der Anderen – The Gender of Others**

Narrations and Epistemes in Ethnology, Criminology, Psychiatry, and  
Zoology  
of the 19th and 20th Century

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The formation of gendered positions and metaphors has especially since the 19th century been linked to diverse constructions of The Other. This observation is the initial point of the conference “The Gender of Others”. Such “othering” constructions work through definitions and ascriptions of binarisms like rational/psychotic, culturally developed/primitive, normal/deviant and human/animal. These gendered forms of the Other generate frames of knowledge concentrating on discourses of psychiatry, ethnology, zoology and criminology as well as on artistic and literary forms.

The conference aims to analyze these historical processes of condensation and transfer between scientific disciplines in an interdisciplinary and intersectional mode. The common denominator of such an approach is derived from gender studies, focusing especially on poetologic and narratological aspects. How do the mentioned formations of knowledge reproduce categories of gender through poetic structures?

Theoretic approaches that combine the history of knowledge with aesthetic research are booming these days and are at the same time controversially discussed. Moreover, there is a tendency in gender studies to combine knowledge research and poetology. Against this background, the conference focuses on current approaches of gender-theoretical histories of knowledge and narratology, and on the concept of the “Poetologie des Wissens” (*Poetologies of Knowledge*) enabling the discussion of the circulation of

gendered configurations between art and science.

The question will be how the poetic, – that is, in a broad sense, (re-)presentative components – of scientific knowledge and the production of gendered images relate.

Is there a transfer of gendered metaphors between science and literature/arts? In which way are gendered subject positions and classifications inscribed into the production of knowledge? Are there not only assertions but also forms of (re-)presentation that operate in scientific as well as in literary and artistic techniques and representations?

At the conference, these configurations shall be consulted in reference to forms of representation (e.g. exhibition, photography, travelog) and presentational techniques (hermeneutics, observation, metaphorization): How do such configurations create and authorize the nexus between gender and psychotics/aliens/criminals/animals? How do they circulate between psychiatry, ethnology, and zoology on the one hand, science and arts on the other? And is there an end to this form of configuration? Does it still operate in current discourses – for example, in the supposedly gender- and poetry-free space of neuroscience or postcolonial studies that claim to deconstruct cultural inscriptions?

In addition to keynote lectures we are planning four panels that correspond with the fields of knowledge of criminology, psychiatry, ethnology and zoology. Since the processes of transfer and the interdependencies *between* those fields of knowledge and their forms of (re-)presentation are the main focus of our conference, we are especially looking forward to papers that can be to various panels.

## **I. Sex/Crime: Poetologies of Sex and Crime as Knowledge Transfer**

In this panel we will focus on the transfer between literatures and fields of knowledge in which the categories of *sex* and *crime* interact in a productive way. Crime, Sexuality, and Gender correlate in manifold ways in the archives of knowledge of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century and (especially around 1900) increasingly refer to one another within the discourses of criminology and literature. Until today, a poeology of gender-coded criminology has been inscribed into literature, film and journalism. The historic as well as current discourse on criminals is tied back to gender-motivated ascriptions in the arts and fields of knowledge. Moreover, actions that are classified as criminal are analyzed in relation to deviant behaviour and thus correspond with other fields of knowledge; ethnology (criminals and the foreign), zoology (bestial connotation), and psychiatry (pathology of criminals). Accordingly, three questions arise regarding these considerations: How are criminals produced as specifically gendered objects of knowledge of the discourse? How do the forms of representation of the correlation between gender and crime interact intersectionally and transdisciplinarily within the arts and discourses of knowledge (knowledge about criminology and gender)? What roles do classifications of criminals as deviant in the meaning of foreign, bestial, diseased play in that context?

## **II. Ethnologies of Gender**

This panel focuses on gendered productions of knowledge within postcolonial contexts. Against the backdrop of implicitly gendered and racialized images of the colonized Other – that can be traced back to the times of European colonization –, we will take a postcolonial, critically-white and critically-occidental look on representations and narratives in which those images are being reproduced (e.g. Gender and Nation, gendered and racialized images of countries, regions, nations, cultures, and modes of exhibition). Those images can often be found at the interfaces of criminological, psychiatric, biological, and zoological discourses (e.g. metaphors of the naturalization of colonized regions as for example in

Humboldt, narratives of violence, Mafia, prostitution, drug traffic, arms trade, corruption). A special focus will be placed on theories from former Spanish colonies (Middle- and South America) that have been paid little attention to within postcolonial discourse.

### **III. Poetic Delusion**

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century a configuration in which the arts - or rather artists - emerged as closely connected to madness gained meaning within the Western context of psychiatric knowledge production. On the one hand, delusion was declared as pre-requisite for artistic production and psychiatric knowledge entered art theory. On the other hand, the arts became a pre-requisition for psychiatric – and by no means only psychoanalytical – knowledge that referred ever more often to aesthetic products and itself started applying aesthetic techniques of knowledge production about insanity. At the same time, concepts of diseased souls became analogized with images of other cultures and non-human populations (e.g. by Ernst Kretschmer or Emil Kraepelin), the psychiatric forms of categorization were realigned with zoology (e.g. by Auguste Forel and Emil Kraepelin) and psychiatric theorems were connected with ethnographic studies. Insanity thus correlated with other forms of deviancy such as “race”, gender and bestiality. An interesting question from today’s perspective is if this occidentalist boom of highly gendered pathological poetics and poetic pathologies has been disintegrated or transformed since the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – e.g. by the interventions of women’s and anti-psychiatry movements or the new dominance of neurological approaches in psychiatry and by now also in literary studies. Behind this backdrop, the panel discusses the historical forms and techniques of (re-)presentation of artistic products and scientific and humanist knowledge about delusion and reconstructs their immanent gender constructions and the intersections with further fields of knowledge.

### **IV Animalities: Queer Animals**

In the course of 19<sup>th</sup> century industrialization and urbanization, animals were on the one hand more and more displaced from everyday life. On the other hand, animals were increasingly exhibited in zoos, animal shows and museums. Animals – that since the ancient times have inhabited imaginary worlds – were consequently framed by entirely new figurations such as Edgar Allen Poe's *Black Cat* (1843), Hermann Melville's *Moby Dick* (1851) or later Merian Cooper's King-Kong movies (1933). The historical conflict between Brehm's anthropomorphism and Darwin's evolutionary theory indicates how differently animals have been imagined also in scientific discourses. The transdisciplinary and transnational *Critical Animal Studies*, established in the 21<sup>st</sup> century at US-American universities, tie in with this tradition, at the same time relating figurations of animals to other categories of hierarchization and power such as gender, race, class, sexuality and nation with a hegemony critical aim.

Via these new approaches, *Critical Animal Studies* call for a paradigm shift within post-modern cultural studies' treatment of animals. Influenced by theories of performativity, *Critical Animal Studies* focuses on the presence of animal bodies rather than on constructions of the animal body as used to be common in modernity. Resorting to the methods of *Critical Animal Studies*, the panel will take a look at a variety of highly diverse cultural context (e.g. the humanities, zoology, psychiatry, medicine, show business, animal and "freak" shows) and discuss above all the gendered knowledge formations of their animal figurations.

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### ***CALL FOR PAPERS***

**International Conference** "The Gender of Others. Narrations and Epistemes in Ethnology, Criminology, Psychiatry, and Zoology of the 19th and 20th Century"

**When/Where:** 11–12 December 2009 at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

**Organizer:** DFG-Postgraduate Programme Gender as a Category of Knowledge (Humboldt University Berlin), Florian Kappeler, Julia Roth, Anne Stähr, Vojin Saša Vukadinović in cooperation with Sophia Könemann, Dr.

des. Julie Miess, Susann Neuenfeldt

It is our pleasure to announce the conference “The Gender of Others. Narrations and Epistemes in Ethnology, Criminology, Psychiatry, and Zoology of the 19th and 20th Century” that will take place 11–12 December 2009 at the Institute for Critical Inquiry ICI, Berlin. We invite students, scholars and scientists to hand in a short abstract (no more than 3000 characters). In addition to this abstract please also send us a cv (one page only) as well as all the necessary information about the technical equipment needed for your presentation. Talks can be held either in German or in English and should be no longer than 20-30 minutes.

Deadline for abstracts: 20 June 2009

Please send your abstract to the following email address: poetologie-tagung@gmx.de

We will inform you if your paper has been accepted until July 15, 2009. Travel and accommodation expenses can partly be repaid.

**We are looking forward to your ideas and projects!**