

Centre for Gender and Diversity at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences of Maastricht University

Yearly scientific report 2008

a. Research profile

Research conducted by the Center focuses both on the dynamics and interaction of crucial differences (such as gender, ethnicity, class, age and sexuality) in history, contemporary culture and science. By analyzing historical and contemporary interactions of gender, sexuality and other categories of difference, this program wishes to gain insight into the dynamics and the continuity as well as the discontinuity of societal transformations, in which both inclusion and exclusion mechanisms and inequality and discrimination are the focal points. In 2008 the program was carried by the professors Meijer and Bosch.

M. Meijer's research has as its focus the critical analysis of literary texts, images, and non-literary cultural products such as songs, from a gender -and diversity perspective. Furthermore the theory and methodology of life-writing have become important interests, as well as lyrical theory and methods of poetic analysis. In 2008 Meijer worked on a biography of the Dutch poet M. Vasalis, which will be published in 2009. She supervised three PhD students and one post-doctorate student, who were respectively working on (a) Gothic fiction in Dutch literature (A. Andeweg); (b) The "dark" sides of parenthood (J. Weusten); (c) Dominant mothers, queer sons (R. van den Oever); and (d) The cultural representation of old age (A. Swinnen). There was one external PhD student: H. Havens (Cultural Dynamics in Dutch Theatre). Furthermore Meijer served as second promotor for a dissertation by Annemarie Doornbos (Uva) on the writer Truitje Bosboom Toussaint.

Professor M. Bosch is an expert in the field of gender history with an emphasis on gender and science research and biographical theory. Bosch's research on the historical, as well as current links, between gender and science have a strong link with the research of dr. Ineke Klinge who also runs the project of the Caphri research programme: *Gender and Diversity in Health and Health Care Research*. Her knowledge of the integration of the dimensions of sex and gender in the field of the biomedical and health related research is combined with the CGD expertise that extends across other aspects of diversity, such as ethnicity, social economic status, age, sexual orientation. The colleague on the special chair Opzij, professor Ineke Boerefijn, worked on human rights and the United Nations Women's Treaty. Together these nine researchers form a creative group with international ambitions.

b. Developments

Several colleagues have left us, new colleagues joined. On the first of December 2008 prof. Bosch left the Centre for a professorship Modern History in Groningen. Bosch and Meijer will continue to collaborate, especially in the field of the study of biography. I. Klinge was appointed as a guest-professor at the University of Gottingen in Germany until April 2009. I. Boerefijns period of two and a half year Opzij chair was concluded in

May 2008. Dr. Piet Mooren came in as a new colleague to work with Wesseling from FaSOS and Meijer from CGD on an application for N.W.O on Children's literature in a multicultural context. Drs. Louis van den Hengel came in to work on a Rubicon and VENI-project.

Research applications in 2008 -no hits so far:

- VICI preproposal 'Scientific Selves. Understanding scientists' (auto)biographies as a resource for the scientific persona', M. Bosch

- FP7 application for a Support Action in the Capacities Work Programme Science and Society: 'Understanding and Improving Gender Management in Research Organisations' (GEMARO). In collaboration with University of Hamburg, University of Jönköping, Oxford Brookes University and University of Fribourg: the Centre was one of the partners.

- N.W.O.-Rubicon proposal by Louis van de Hengel, '*Cutting Edge? The Use of Skin in Contemporary Art*' in december 2008

N.W.O.-Rubicon proposal by Edyta Just, december 2008

The Centre for Gender and Diversity has worked on its integration in the Faculty FaSOS in 2008. To begin this process it co-developed with the FaSOS-branch Science and Culture: Texts and Contexts the research focal point 'Cultural Memory and Diversity' led by M. Meijer and sponsored by the CvB with the task to generate more research. The facts et gestes of this research focal point are documented elsewhere (Patrick is dat zo of zullen we het hieronder bij 'activities' doen?) The Centre joined the genderstudies-networks Aiofe and Athena – and acted as co-organisator of the large 7th European Feminist Research Conference to be held in Utrecht in June 2009. Meijer was a member of several N.W.O committees (Wetenschappelijk Adviescollege Geesteswetenschappen and Programmacommissie Culturele Dynamiek).

c. Activities

A monthly research colloquium, commonly referred to as the 'research lunch', provides interaction and inspiration to the researchers connected to this programme. In 2008 the following meetings took place:

23 januari

Roel van den Oever, *Dominant Mothers, Queer Sons*

27 februari

Josje Weusten, *Een door hormonen geplaagde Medea. Fataal ouderschap als een onontkoombaar noodlot?*

26 maart

Ineke Klinge, *Bringing Gender expertise to biomedical and health-related research*

23 april

Agnes Andeweg, *Feminisme en gotiek: de sterke verhalen van Renate Dorrestein*

21 mei

Aagje Swinnen, *Performance en Performativity als analytische conceptenei*

17 september

Arjan van Dixhoorn, Master *Crucial Differences*

15 oktober

Mineke Bosch, paper on Biography for a special issue of the *Journal of Women's History*

10 december

Josje Weusten, *Het sprookje voorbij?* Articulaties van (adoptief)ouderschap in Vonne van der Meers *De reis naar het kind*

On 21st of November a one-day Symposium 'Parade of Feminist Men' was held at De Groote Societeit, as a scientific good-bye to Mineke Bosch. Historians and genderstudies scholars from all over the country participated with papers.

Researchers at the Center also participate in the FdCMW researchproject 'Science and Culture: Texts and Contexts', and its regular colloquium called 'Marks'.

[HERHALING: In 2008, the Center, together with a number of 'Marks' colleagues, formulated the research focal point 'Cultural Memory and Diversity' which was funded by the University Board with 290.000 euro's. This subsidy is 'seed money', to be at least doubled in the following three years. The purpose of this focal point is to stimulate more cooperation between gender and Diversity and the researchers in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

d. Tweede en derde geldstroomprojecten

In 2008 one Veni-project in the field of age-studies – 'The study of the literary imagination of reminiscence in the Vollendungsroman/Reifungsroman from a genre and genderperspective (2006-2010) took its course as planned, executed by Dr. A Swinnen. She has contributed to numerous international conferences in 2008 in order to build a research network in age-studies. She has also been preparing a many-sided event, organized for the elderly of the Belgian province of Limburg in 2009. The organization is the result of a collaboration between the Dienst Ouderen (the Belgian province of Limburg), The Center for Gender and Diversity (Maastricht University) and the research institute ArcK (Provinciale Hogeschool Limburg).

e. Expectations for 2009: Points of Exit

On 19-20th of March an international symposium – with 5 keynote-speakers of fame and 40 panelists from abroad - will be held at Vaeshartelt. The conference theme reflects the Centre as it is now:

Points of exit: (Un)conventional Representations of Age, Parenting, and Sexuality

When analyzing representations of different life phases, when writing a biography, when interpreting processes of cultural remembrance, one quite soon encounters the rather rigid moulds of narrative conventions that usually accompany depictions of Youth and Old Age, of Parenting, of Sexuality. Certain representational forms are so often repeated that they appear to be natural. Think for example of conventions of chronology, of development and progress, of the autonomous individual, of the overvaluation of the masculine vis-à-vis the feminine. Perhaps above all, think of the convention to make visible and problematize the non-normative (femininity, homosexuality, lower class, color), while leaving unmarked the normative (masculinity, heterosexuality, middle class, whiteness). Pointing out and analyzing these conventions is of importance, but also raises the question: Can we represent age, parenting, and sexuality outside of these conventions, and if so, how? The conference is divided in five sections, each presided by a member of the researchgroup 'Crucial Differences' :

1. Biographies on the move [Meijer]
2. Gothic Escapes? [Andeweg]
3. (Un)conventional parenthood: [Weusten]
4. New Directions in Age Studies [Swinnen]
5. Queering Queer Texts [Van den Oever]

One of the results of this conference will be a special issue of the European Journal of Cultural Studies.

We hope to reap the benefits of the partial integration of the Centre in the Faculty. We will continue to work on speerpunt 'Cultural memory and Diversity' with successful applications for funds. We shall participate in the large 7th European Feminist Research Conference to be held in Utrecht in June 2009.