

<https://helda.helsinki.fi>

Identity and Intervention : Disciplinarity as Transdisciplinarity in Gender Studies

Pulkkinen, Tuija

2015

Pulkkinen , T 2015 , ' Identity and Intervention : Disciplinarity as Transdisciplinarity in Gender
Studies ' , Theory, Culture & Society , vol. 32 , no. 5-6 , pp. 183-205 . <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276415592683>

<http://hdl.handle.net/10138/228205>

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276415592683>

acceptedVersion

Downloaded from Helda, University of Helsinki institutional repository.

This is an electronic reprint of the original article.

This reprint may differ from the original in pagination and typographic detail.

Please cite the original version.

Transdisciplinarity and Disciplinarity in Gender Studies: Identity and Intervention

Tuija Pulkkinen, University of Helsinki

Inter- multi- and transdisciplinarity are contested terms in the intellectual and political understanding of academic activity. In this article I argue that among the various disciplines and transdisciplines Gender Studies¹ is distinctive as a practice and as an historical event of the 20th and 21st century, and challenges the most obvious understandings of these terms. Even in comparison with other transdisciplinary hybrid fields, such as cultural studies or urban studies, and within the accelerated re-grouping of disciplines within universities in their apparent quest for accountability and innovation, Gender Studies constitutes a unique case: in disciplinary terms, it seems to maintain an identity based on non-identity, and its transdisciplinarity seems to be of its own explicit and stable kind.

It is common to oppose inter-, multi, and transdisciplinarity with disciplinarity and disciplines, where disciplinarity and disciplines are thought as constraining structures which slow down the free flow of knowledge. But the history of transdisciplinary Gender Studies is already beyond this opposition. While the motivation to go beyond disciplinary divisions has been a driving force in Gender Studies since its early days, there has simultaneously been a strong urge within it to develop disciplinary structures of its own. This effort has been successful and has produced what I would call a transdisciplinary discipline.

I begin with the observation that Gender Studies seems obstinately to deny the disciplinary identity it has achieved and commonly presents itself in opposition to all disciplines, that is, almost as having no identity in disciplinary terms. Thus while the claim of transdisciplinarity often operates in Gender Studies in the attempt to distinguish it from all other disciplines, it simultaneously founds its claim for its autonomous place among the disciplines in university structures. In this essay I will investigate this dialectic of disciplinarity and non-disciplinarity and its paradoxes

while asking whether, and if so how, transdisciplinarity in Gender Studies really points beyond the distinction discipline/not discipline.

I will further examine the identity paradox of Gender Studies' transdisciplinarity by comparing it to another understanding of transdisciplinarity: transdisciplinarity as a standard ideal in contemporary governmental and EU research policies.

'Transdisciplinarity' is a key term in the discourse of the production of new knowledge as a policy ideal for enhancing innovation and accountability. I argue that as easy as it would be to see Gender Studies as a successful product of this new mode of knowledge production, the transdisciplinarity of Gender Studies cannot be reduced to what is envisioned in the policies of managing knowledge production for 'problem-solving' ends. The academic form and the history of Gender Studies' entry into the academy through feminist and queer politics requires that we take into account a further dimension which I call 'intervention', and which I here oppose to the idea of knowledge production.

In what follows, I will thus explain how the transdisciplinarity of Gender Studies is different to the corporate style of transdisciplinarity. This involves a defence of both the 'artisanal' form of academic structures and the particular content of the transdisciplinary scholarship in Gender Studies, which I call 'intervention'. I will connect this to a different, but nevertheless comparable, historical project: the creation of an institution for transdisciplinarity, that is, the Collège International de Philosophie in Paris. Jacques Derrida's defence of the new structure of the Collège, a quarter of a century ago now, bears a startling resemblance to the current policy ideals of transdisciplinarity. However, I argue that Derrida's relationship with transdisciplinarity involves a dimension that is not present in the contemporary discussion of knowledge production, and that, in its relation to the tradition of philosophy, has an affinity with the academic ideals animating the history of Gender Studies. This is the ideal of *intervention*.

Finally, in discussing the notion of intervention in Clare Hemmings's recent work and connecting it to Joan Scott's explanation of the 'critical edge' of Gender Studies, I argue that what makes Gender Studies distinctive in terms of transdisciplinarity, what provides transdisciplinarity with a distinctive meaning, and what contributes to its ability to turn an apparent non-identity into an identity, is precisely this dimension of intervention at the heart of Gender Studies. Gender Studies is not the study *of* gender so much as an intervention *into* the prevailing

understanding of gender. Can this account for the distinctiveness of Gender Studies as a paradoxical discipline? I will argue that it can, and that rather than standing opposed to all disciplinary structures, Gender Studies's paradoxical identity in non-identity is based on its essentially critical and politicizing impulse; or in other words, on intervention.

The Identity Paradox of Gender Studies

In the past 40 years Feminist Studies, by whatever name it is called – Gender Studies, Women's Studies or Studies in Gender and Sexuality – has, step by step, established itself globally with a specific disciplinary identity in the universities. Feminist scholarship has gained for itself the status of a quasi-independent field, self-managing its own standards of quality, constructing degree programmes, and exercising its own hierarchy in referencing. In other words, it has become one of those areas of quasi-autonomous artisan-type intellectual practices that, somewhat like medieval guild structures, organize scholarly work in universities. It has been an amazing experience to live through this evolving sense of autonomy in an academic field during the few last decades.

In my recent experience as a teacher of Gender Studies, students now have no difficulty in understanding how to cite the relevant literature in the field. Not so long ago, however, this was not the case. I recall a couple of decades ago that Women's Studies students were constantly alarmed: they worried whether their feminist concerns were a legitimate basis for 'real' research; whether they had enough 'real' disciplinary literature in their theses; whether the 'real' disciplines (sociology, politics, literature, philosophy, anthropology, law, or whatever it was) would recognize their work as properly academic in the literature that it cited and the methods that it used. There was a strong sense of 'disciplining' in early Women's Studies seminars, as if there was a shared fear of punishment: 'what if this does not count?' I no longer sense this fear amongst my gender studies students; on the contrary, they are confident in their disciplinary specificity. I have to say, I do not miss the earlier state of affairs in this respect.

There are now hundreds of university Gender Studies programmes around the world², and although institutions are often vulnerable, there is a growing body of literature which can be referred to as a Gender Studies canon. In universities the world over the curricula in Women's and Gender Studies resemble each other. The

disciplinary core includes the feminist theory of the late 20th century, the history of feminist thought, the history of the feminist movement, representations of gender, as well as a set of concepts central to the history of the field and to contemporary discussions in it, including ‘sex’, ‘gender’, ‘identity’, ‘difference’, ‘the body’, and ‘queer’. There is, further, a central literature in each of the various fields where feminist thought has flourished – in history, politics, and art, for example. There is intersectional analysis; there are queer studies, masculinity studies and postcolonial studies. All of this currently generates similar courses of study across the continents. The classics of feminist thought include writers as diverse as Olympe de Gouge, John Stuart Mill, Simone de Beauvoir, Virginia Woolf and Kate Millet. The contemporary classics include Luce Irigaray, Judith Butler, Elizabeth Grosz, Teresa de Lauretis, Donna Haraway, Gayatri Spivak, Eve Kosovsky-Sedgwick, Carole Pateman, Gayle Rubin, Rosi Braidotti, and bell hooks, to mention just a few. The curricula teach this canon; degrees measure students’ mastery of it; evaluations are carried out; professors and lecturers are recruited; MAs and PhDs graduate; new dissertations are published; a number of specialized journals flourish – all this, and much more that constitutes a discipline.

It is perhaps surprising then, that while there is clearly a sense of a coherent new discipline, in the self-presentations of Gender Studies programmes, the term ‘discipline’ is not used. Although departments of Gender Studies proliferate in the virtual space of the academic community, the term ‘discipline’ is studiously avoided. The websites of programmes, as well as the textbooks in the field, all resolutely avoid calling this a discipline. On the contrary, and often striking an oppositional stance in relation to disciplinarity, the websites and books most commonly associate Gender Studies with ‘interdisciplinarity’, ‘multidisciplinarity’ and ‘transdisciplinarity’. Examples are not hard to find. The Indiana University website states that ‘Gender Studies is a *transdisciplinary* department engaging students in the study of gender and the intersection of gender with other substantive categories of analysis and identity.’³ Northwestern University welcomes potential students to gender and Sexuality Studies with the claim that ‘We are a dynamic *interdisciplinary* program.... Students and faculty at Gender Studies pursue research in history and theory of gender, in feminism and in sexuality studies.’⁴ The European organization for Gender Studies, AtGender, describes itself as ‘a professional association for academics in the *interdisciplinary* field of Women’s and Gender Studies, and the Indian Association for Women’s

Studies: “IAWS is a professional association that aims to further Women’s Studies as an interdisciplinary academic field ...”.⁵ Similarly, in the very textbooks that have, for more than a quarter of a century now, helped to establish a sense of the discipline, the word ‘discipline’ itself is typically replaced with expressions like ‘area of study’ or ‘field’ or ‘area of academic concern’. We find the following, for example, in the Introductions to a selection of recent Gender Studies textbooks:

Firmly *interdisciplinary* in perspective, Women’s Studies initially resided mainly, (if uneasily) within the *disciplines* of English, History and Sociology ... Once Women’s Studies Programs emerged, often gathering together the work of scholars across the *disciplines* into one centre or as a team of a master’s or undergraduate degree, *the area* developed a clearer identity. (Whelan and Pilcher, 2004: xi)⁶

Even though the ‘Women’s Studies’ identity suggests a degree of empowerment for feminist knowledge, it is always pulled in two directions – as a critique that transforms existing *disciplines* and as a specialist, even separatist, *area of academic concern*.” (Davis, Evans and Lorber, 2006: viii)

These extracts refer to other ‘disciplines’, but Women’s Studies/Gender Studies, even when its disciplinary status is clearly described, is instead referred to as an ‘area’ or an ‘area of academic concern.’ The phrases ‘a study of’ or ‘the academic study of’ are also common when the institutional structures of Gender Studies are described:

Whatever label given to *the academic study of gender relations* in the twenty-first century, there are a number of features that have endured. First, *the study of gender* remains resolutely multi- and interdisciplinary and that is its key strength, and has had the most profound impact on contemporary theory and attitudes to the production of knowledge. (Davis, Evans and Lorber, 2006, xiii)

So what is going on here, in this almost phobic relation to the notion of a discipline in Gender Studies? What might this resolute refusal of disciplinary identity imply, when it flies in the face of clear evidence of both disciplinary status and structures, and of an increasingly clearly defined and definable academic tradition?

The extensive history of the discussion of disciplinarity in Gender Studies,⁷ of course, provides answers and, to a degree, explains the peculiar phenomenon of the widespread denial of a disciplinary identity. The field has grown in opposition to ‘the disciplines’ and in the course of its turning into a discipline itself, the notion of its

disciplinarity and disciplinary identity has remained a contested issue. Autonomy, integration and an inherent anti-disciplinarity have been important stakes in this discussion.⁸

However, beyond the explicit discussion in the field, albeit partly taking shape through it, references to transdisciplinarity, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinarity working performatively in *constructing* the disciplinary *identity* of Gender Studies. In other words, inter/multi and transdisciplinarity are invoked to specify the uniqueness and difference of Gender Studies in comparison to other disciplines, such that the construction of an identity through the denial of identity is the constitutive paradox of Gender Studies. One indicator of this is the way that the principle of intersectionality has become the hall mark of Gender Studies in the past few decades. The notion of intersectionality paradoxically downplays gender – the identifying focus of the field – while it simultaneously strengthens the identity of *Gender* Studies as a transdisciplinary discipline. Intersectionality, particularly in its reference to intersecting inequalities of class, race and gender, is a product of Gender Studies that has now been exported but is still proudly presented as part of its core identity, such that even the Wikipedia article on Women’s Studies confirms it:

Women’s Studies, also known as Feminist Studies, is an interdisciplinary academic field which explores politics, society and history from an intersectional, (multicultural women’s) perspective.⁹

Through the notion of intersectionality, the study of class, race and ethnicity and queer and postcolonial studies have been subsumed within the disciplinary identity of transdisciplinary Gender Studies. No doubt there are perfectly good reasons – both historical and contemporary – for why the tradition of feminist thought has resorted to the parallelism of subjection, intertwining the legacy of all exclusionary social injustices. Nevertheless, a remarkable dialectical operation of identity is achieved at a conceptual level through the mobilization of the inherently non-identitarian concept of intersection, into the identity work of an academic (trans)discipline. This is a parallel gesture to the assumption of inter-, multi- and transdisciplinarity as characteristic of a particular discipline, Gender Studies. In short, ‘intersectionality’ and ‘transdisciplinarity’ identify the discipline of Gender Studies by dis-identifying it. And this constant motion of dis-identification, – the defining/constitutive paradox of Gender Studies – is successful in driving the discipline forward. Moreover, the multidisciplinary ambition of Gender Studies also crosses the humanities/sciences

border, and increasingly so in recent years. Studies of the biosciences and biotechnologies, or example, have been an inspiration to and a partner in both feminist theoretical work and in feminist cultural analysis,¹⁰ and there have recently been attempts to institutionalize these intersections.¹¹ Interestingly, this kind of transdisciplinary crossing between the boundaries of the sciences and humanities has been pursued by European science policy for some time.

This all points to Gender Studies appearing to be unique among the disciplines in being firmly and resolutely inter-, multi- and transdisciplinary, and being this on an extremely wide disciplinary basis. Gender Studies is not a combination of earlier established disciplines (as are, say, bio-chemistry, or medical ethics) but works across a large number of disciplinary borders, and also performs transdisciplinarily beyond exact disciplinary combinations. In multidisciplinary encounters, and in conversations between academics who ‘come from’ different disciplines, the gender studies people are often the ‘transdisciplinary’ ones. In other words, the characteristics of being against disciplinary identity (being multi/inter or trans/ discipline) turns, once more, into a marker of a particular disciplinary identity. Far from dissipating or challenging the core disciplinary identity of Gender Studies, the discourse of transdisciplinarity, furnishes the discipline with an identity and is considered to be an asset within academia more broadly, not least within the competition for disciplinary resources in universities.

Within the discipline itself, the discussion of the inter/multi or transdisciplinary nature of Gender Studies has taken place (negatively) through a feminist opposition to old disciplines as rigid structures and hegemonic powers. But as a disciplinary marker, transdisciplinarity has also acquired a positive meaning and has developed as something that differentiates Gender Studies from other disciplines. The question then arises as to whether transdisciplinarity in Gender Studies now points to something beyond the mere negation of disciplinarity in general. What is the message of that ideal of transdisciplinarity that Gender Studies carries? One way to begin the exploration of this question is through the comparison transdisciplinarity in Gender Studies with those goals that are set in the name of transdisciplinarity in another context where the term is frequently used –the context of research funding policies. Many governments and research funding bodies now promote ‘transdisciplinarity’, understood as ‘Mode 2’ knowledge production, to achieve the goals of innovation and accountability in social, industrial and

commercial terms. How does Gender Studies relate to transdisciplinarity as a desired policy objective? Does Gender studies represent the kind of new knowledge production that the research policies promote, or does transdisciplinarity in Gender Studies carry a meaning beyond innovation and accountability, as I would suggest?

Transdisciplinarity as Policy and Politics: Innovation and Accountability and the Feminist Movement

At first sight, Gender Studies seems in many ways to score highly on the scale of values currently widely promoted as ‘Mode 2’ knowledge production in the policies of research assessment and in research funding organizations (Gibbons & al., 1994; Nowotny & al., 2001). The idea of ‘Mode 2’ knowledge production was introduced by Gibbons et al in *New Production of Knowledge* (1994) and was subsequently further specified by Nowotny, Scott & Gibbons *Re-thinking Science: Knowledge and the Public in an Age of Uncertainty* (2001). The key terms and the ideals articulated here are very much alive in the European research funding institutions and are echoed in research assessment practices (Barry & al. 2008, 24).¹² The claim is that Mode 2 knowledge production has replaced the old disciplinary type of knowledge production, particularly in the sciences. Nowotny summarizes the main features of Mode 2 as follows: contemporary research is increasingly carried out in the context of application – that is, problems are formulated in discussion among a large number of different actors and from a variety of different perspectives. Mode 2 knowledge is characterized by loose organizational structures, flat hierarchies, and open-ended chains of command. Universities are the opposite of this. Mode 2 knowledge is also characterized by accountability, quality control and, most importantly, by transdisciplinarity, which in relation to Mode 2 knowledge has a precise meaning: transdisciplinarity means that problems do not develop within disciplinary structures but in the context of application. Nowotny also emphasizes that Mode 2 knowledge does not respect institutional boundaries: it is transgressive.¹³

The key ideals guiding policy-makers who take their cue from the idea of Mode 2 knowledge production in the promotion of inter-, multi and transdisciplinarity are *innovation* and *accountability* (Barry et al. 2008). There is a clear vision of the displacement of the culture of the autonomy of science by a culture of accountability, and more than anything, the funding instruments have been sharpened to promote innovation. From the point of view of EU-sponsored and governmental research

policy, Gender Studies could easily be seen as a successful product: it is multidisciplinary and interdisciplinarity turned into real transdisciplinarity; it is therefore an innovation in itself. If the main idea behind much of the research policy promoting multidisciplinary is that academic fields easily become too stable and repetitive and lose their edge, and that innovative results are achieved when inter-multi- and transdisciplinary environments are created, when researchers from various disciplines are brought together in order to combine their knowledge in a new way, when they act on problem-solving together, and when they create a completely new approach, then the entire field of Gender Studies is an example of exactly this kind of new approach, both as a process and as a result: it is the end product of some decades of intensive inter- and multidisciplinary labour.

Simultaneously, Gender Studies also showcases other of the virtues that Nowotny et al define as integral to Mode 2 (See Griffin, 2004; Liinason & Holm, 2006): problems identified from feminist perspective have called for such research and research has been developed in the context of its application. The research involves investigation of the social problems of gender and sexuality, and it maintains relations with activists, NGOs and with politics more broadly. On the basis of its feminist premises Gender Studies has also cherished the ideal of loose organizational structures and flat hierarchies. In addressing the perpetration of injustices it also promotes accountability.¹⁴ Even better, Gender Studies has been extremely productive in generating innovative thought and theoretical discussions that have spread into other academic fields. Consider Judith Butler's work, notions of performativity, the notion of intersectionality, and also various discussions of the body and of materiality. Gender Studies seems regularly to generate disturbances in many of the fields of the humanities and the social sciences. But Gender Studies is a new 'product' which has nevertheless achieved a certain level of stability, and is effective in its environment – in other words, it is exactly the kind of product that research policy-makers are trying to build their instruments to produce.

However, the innovational strength and high level of accountability of Gender Studies has not been developed through attention to the goals of governmental research policies. The success story of multidisciplinary gender studies is, rather, the direct result of the second wave feminist movement. Thus Gender Studies as a discipline is unique in being able to locate its origin in a large and intensively mobilizing historical event: second wave feminism. It is also true, of course, that in many countries

government funds have been channelled towards Gender Studies and there exist, currently, clear differences in the levels of academic study in the field between those countries and universities in which this has been done (for example, in Australia, Sweden, Norway and Finland, where government funds have supported Gender Studies, or in or Budapest Central European University, with funding by the Soros foundation) and those in which it has not, or which have received resources to a much lesser degree (Italy, Spain, Germany and Denmark, for example). (Griffin, 2005). The research politics do matter, as is the case in many other fields. But although state-sponsored funds have helped at some stages and in some countries in the initial development of the field and in its continuing to thrive, this was never decisive. The decisive factor is more spectacular: the second wave feminist movement and the continuation of feminist political thought and action. The feminist movement accounts for all the 'Mode 2' features of Gender Studies, and most clearly for its multi- inter- and transdisciplinarity.

It was a shared relation to the feminist movement in the universities that, from the late 1960s and early 1970s, brought together people who studied and did research in multiple disciplines. These were people who, were it not for feminism, would not have met as students of different disciplines, let alone started to think through problems together over lengthy periods of time. They were people who might otherwise not have met at all in an academic setting. Moreover, they had enough time and interest to sustain more than just a couple of meetings for multidisciplinary purposes, the time and interest to be together and to begin to understand the different scholarly approaches of each in matters important to feminism. It is hardly surprising that the first wave of feminism, which at the turn of the 19th century also generated significant texts and brought together many learned women, hardly left a mark in academic disciplinary organizational structures of thought and learning, since women were then still excluded from these institutions. But the breaking of the second wave in the 1960s and 1970s affected young women from multiple disciplines in the universities, and brought them together to transform virtually all disciplinary knowledge. Consider that much of the now classic work – for example that of Kate Millet, Monique Wittig or Shulamith Firestone – was written by young university students who intervened with no fear. A significant feature of the second wave of feminism was precisely that it took place in large part in academic settings and quite often also through scholarly work. Much of this research was, of course, initially

marginal, and in an adversarial relation to traditional academia, but was nevertheless originated from strong scholarly ambitions (Millet 1969; Firestone 1970; Irigaray 1974; Rubin 1975). It was clearly academic work, but fearlessly *undisciplined*, intervening within established frameworks. By the late 1980s and early 1990s the feminist and queer movements had already developed a certain density of scholarly work. The finest transdisciplinary work of the period, such as that of de Lauretis (1987), Haraway (1989), Butler (1990), Sedgwick (1990) and Braidotti (1991), was produced out of feminist and queer transdisciplinary legacies, and has had a very considerable impact since. It should be emphasized (and I will return to this point later) that all of this work was *interventionist*. None of it was primarily concerned with the creation of new knowledge *about* gender; instead it *challenged* the prevailing ideas about gender and sexuality.

While early feminist scholars integrated feminist views into their own disciplines, they simultaneously, together, created something new – something that in 40–50 years would become a full-grown discipline. If corporate governmental and EU research policies of innovation and accountability are currently attempting to stimulate something equivalent to the feminist movement in creative potency – a movement forged with passion, hours of un-paid work, strong emotional investments etc. – one can only wish it good luck. This kind of thing happens only rarely, and there is good reason to understand it as an historical event. It involved large numbers of scholars of different types and disciplines, and mobilized them as persons, as individuals with their political, emotional and personal sensibilities, with exceptional intensity.

The sensibilities of this buzzing laboratory, the feeling of the excitement of creating something new, is part of the explanation for why trans-, multi- and interdisciplinarity continue to be evoked with such favour in the self-descriptions of the discipline and why this self-description is not easily abandoned, even in the face of the evidence of disciplinary structures. Thus Gender Studies cannot be viewed, tempting as it is, merely within the framework of the production of Mode 2 knowledge in terms of innovation and accountability, for two reasons. First, because Gender Studies has become an academic discipline – it is not problem-solving co-operation – and as an academic discipline it has justified its institutional structures in terms of their distinctiveness. Second, having grown out of the feminist and lesbian, gay and queer movements, Gender Studies is not about knowledge production, but

politicised intervention. In the next two sections I will attempt to justify these claims.

Pro Discipline and Autonomous Structure

The drawback of multi-disciplinary academic work has often been identified as the danger of the loosening of the quality controls that mediocrity-organized disciplinary structures provide. While multi- and transdisciplinarity is the common productive research ideal of the day, lack of disciplinarity has also come under attack as both an ideal and a practice. From a practical point of view it is claimed that people coming from different disciplines do not necessarily speak the same language, and at its worse, policies which steer us towards multidisciplinary lead to shallow, eclectic research without intellectual strength: thinking is reduced to the lowest common denominator. The controversy around the value of disciplinarity in the organization of academic practices, could be called the Nowotny-Strathern debate, since Marilyn Strathern has been one of the most eloquent critics of the idea of Mode 2 knowledge production in the defence of a disciplinary mode of knowledge (Strathern 2000, 2004, 2006). According to Strathern: ‘Disciplines have an inbuilt accountability of a kind (self-monitoring and epistemological, i.e. knowing how knowledge is made and where it comes from).’ (Strathern 2004, 68) This suggests that the familiar structures of a discipline help build intellectual strength and provide the space for its exercise. Strathern has pointed out that although the Nowotnian Mode 2 concepts of public accountability and social usefulness sound good in comparison with the idea of elite and ivory tower knowledge, the notion of acting in the ‘interest of society’ is hardly unproblematic: who is able to articulate this interest? Whose interest is it we are interested in as the interest of society? Is it the interest of large corporations rather than those who are losing their livelihood to those interests? As there are always multiple candidates, the idea of a neutrally responsive society is extremely weak, as Strathern has argued (Strathern 2004, 89–90). Furthermore, managing research from the point of view of the ‘legitimate’ interests of society runs the risk not only of weakening research intellectually in comparison with scholarly work in the disciplines traditionally understood, but also of placing the control of research in the hands of the powerful, refusing scholars the power of self-reflection about the effects of their research. British researchers subject to the ‘impact agenda’ of successive research assessment exercises are painfully aware of this. Thus, at its most powerful the defence of disciplinary modes of scholarly activity dovetail with the critique of the

corporate managerialism that has taken over in universities in the last few decades. In short, this involves transferring the power to decide what counts from the disciplines as self-organizing structures to those who direct and manage knowledge production. It is, clearly, much easier to govern a university when disciplinary structures have lost their power and when scholars are no longer autonomous with respect to policy makers and corporations.

The defence of disciplinarity evokes the long history of disputes concerning the medieval guild type structures of universities, scholarly self-governance, the Humboldtian ideals of a self-governing republic of scholars, the idea of autonomy, the artisan quality of intellectual work and the self-organization of disciplines as the guarantee of quality control. However, rather than talk of artisans, guilds, masters, and workshops, the dominant image in discussions of scholarly activity today is that of industrial production. The phrase ‘production of knowledge’ is common to the discourses driven by the new managerialism, and both Mode 2 advocates and critics use it as the general name for research. (Griffin, 2005; Lykke, 2010) But a strong case can be made against the policy ideal of ‘useful’ knowledge and knowledge production for corporate interests in defence of the quality and depth of disciplinary research, and autonomous structures governed by those rooted in the scholarly traditions of a particular field, schooled and working in the ‘artisan’ manner. The danger of shallowness in Gender Studies was raised by Wendy Brown in the early 1990s in her infamous article ‘The Impossibility of Women’s Studies’. Brown argues that the proliferation of categories of women (according to race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, and sexual preference) is evidence of the limits of ‘any field organized by social identity rather than *genre of inquiry*.’ (Brown 2008, 23). Brown’s presumption is that Women’s Studies is not a discipline; it is too loose, there is no central literature, its practitioners come from different disciplines and they do different things. Without stating it directly her implicit message is that the result is the loss of intellectual strength: Women’s Studies is messy. (See also Hemmings, 2011, 84–89). But since the publication of Brown’s article in the early 1990s – an article probably written in frustration with the Santa Cruz women’s studies programme and with various disputes over identity politics in US academia – Gender Studies has in fact consolidated as a discipline. What Brown said then could not be said now of any leading Gender Studies programme. The standard curricula today display much more intellectual strength and sophistication. (Wiegman 2002; Griffin 2005; Lykke 2010;

Hemmings 2011) In the last three decades of the 20th century we have witnessed the formation of a new academic discipline, the story of which will be told as we tell the story of the emergence of sociology as an academic discipline (how Durkheim established the first department in Bordeaux 1895, and so on) and many other disciplines. Gender Studies as a discipline has ‘arrived’; it now appears in the list of disciplines in Academies of Science, in publishers’ catalogues, and in all of the other places which mark disciplines as distinct.

Collège International de Philosophie

There are positive elements to this disciplinarity. It allows for the repetition essential to any tradition; there are criteria for standards and the kind of testing, examinations, and degree-awarding that work to secure a certain depth in and quality of inquiry. The establishment of the innovative and the new needs protective structures, as even the original Mode 2 publication, *New Production of Knowledge* (1994) notes, particularly in its section on the humanities: ‘Reflexivity requires rootedness, a context in which one can act.’ (Gibbons et al 1994, 92). And indeed, most scholars in the humanities continue to work in a traditional ‘artisanal’ fashion, aided by the structures of their disciplines.

An good example of the need for institutional structures, for a context on which to act in an ‘artisanal’ scholarly fashion, is the establishment of the Collège International de Philosophie, which was also born under the sign of transdisciplinarity, and which provides an interesting parallel with Gender Studies. The Collège International de Philosophie was founded in 1983 by a group of French philosophers, including, notably, Jacques Derrida.¹⁵ They proposed a new institutional structure for something that, although different in its relationship with the university, was similarly inherently intended to be transdisciplinary. Derrida’s text *Titles (for the Collège International de Philosophie)*, is a defence of this new institution. The text is interesting both for the argument that it makes for funding, and for its vision of philosophy. It offers an example that parallels the argument I have made in relation to gender Studies and suggests a way of thinking about scholarly activity in terms of the attitude of intervention which I see as crucial for Gender Studies in so far as it has grown into an academic discipline from the feminist movement.

Derrida’s *Titles (for the Collège International de Philosophie)* starts with an appeal for support for the envisioned institution: ‘By now justifying the titles of this

new institution, beginning with the name we propose to give it, we want to emphasize its titles to exist.’ (Derrida 2004, 195) Founding a new ‘college’, Derrida et al propose the establishment of another institution for practicing philosophy (195). The college is supposed to reflect on philosophy and to welcome ‘the speculative attitude and traditional [artisanal] experimentation’, (205) as well as making it possible to ‘converge or cross’ disciplines in the style of ‘incisive incentive, speculative or experimental exploration, establishing intercommunications.’ (203) Its traditional name, ‘college’, is justified by its being autonomous and liberal; that is, not accountable to the state or to religion. (215).

Reading Derrida’s text, written over 30 years ago (in 1982), I was struck by its resemblance to a funding application for a new institution, one that could be submitted to a funding body today. In an odd way, Derrida’s argument echoes or prefigures the now absolutely dominant corporate innovation language of both the EU and the policies of the various national research funding institutions that promote the idea of Mode 2 new knowledge. Reading it I could not help but think that under the current regime it would be a very successful research institute proposal. It has all elements required today by the European Research Council, for example, for success in competition. Derrida writes about the ‘transversal intersection of fields’, which, he makes a point of saying, goes beyond mere interdisciplinarity (209–210); he constantly stresses ‘originality’ and ‘innovation’ (203–206); he mentions international collaboration (214), research training (208), and social impact (in form of school curricula) (204); he writes that the college will enhance the creation of research groups (209), and he mentions, several times, the need to take risks – which is a fashionable criterion for top funding instruments these days: ‘We must stress this point, for it no doubt defines one of the most original stakes for the Collège, the high risk and the difficulty of calculation.’ (207)

It is also striking that Derrida frequently uses the word ‘intersections’ – the word which has now become the hallmark of Women’s and Gender Studies – to describe transdisciplinarity. Derrida writes about ‘the necessity of uniting philosophy ... with multiple and active intersections’ (207) and proposes that ‘This motif of intersection or crossing would be a kind of charter for the Collège.’ (210) Still today the Collège describes itself thus: ‘Le concept principal de son dispositif théorique est celui de d’intersection, qui structure le rapport de la philosophie aux autres champs disciplinaires.’¹⁶ But this idea of intersection (in this case the intersection of

philosophy with other disciplines) and transdisciplinarity does not put the discipline of philosophy in doubt, it does not suggest that we need to question the idea of ‘artisanal’ forms of disciplinary institutions in order for this new transdisciplinarity to be realised. Thus, although the emphasis is on intersections, the aim is primarily to found an institution in which this intersecting might take place. This parallels the paradox of identity and non-identity that similarly constitutes Gender Studies. In the act of founding an institution which advocates disciplinary structures, Derrida also approvingly quotes Schelling who ‘objected to the idea of a department of philosophy, since philosophy had to be everywhere, and thus nowhere, in no determinate place.’ (212)

Intervention

So what is it in Derrida’s kind of philosophy and in Gender Studies as feminist endeavour that creates the particular type of transdisciplinarity that is more than accountability and innovation? I have argued that the shared sense of transdisciplinarity in both Gender Studies and the Collège international de philosophie lies in their both being defined by the paradox of disciplinary identity and non-identity and by the attitude of *intervention*. The stakes of this ‘intervention’ are evident in this text-book characterisation of Gender Studies: ‘*feminism* remains a central perspective for the study of gender relations, reminding us that *this discipline* emerged from the identification that women as a group were misrepresented – in both the public sphere and in the conception of their “real” natures.’ (Davis et al, 2006) Here it is explicitly with regard to feminism – the political, interventionist, disruptive approach distinctive to Gender Studies – that the word ‘discipline’ appears. The apparent banality of this point veils its significance: gender studies as a distinctive discipline is not just a study of gender and sexuality and their theorization, it is – as such – feminist and queer intervention. Gender Studies is not in the business of establishing the right account of gender or the correct knowledge of it; it is the intervention into established ‘knowledges’. The metaphor of knowledge ‘production’ is therefore a poor fit for the kind of academic work undertaken in Gender Studies, just as it is for the description of Derrida’s work within philosophy.

In ‘The Life and Times of Academic Feminism’ Claire Hemmings discusses the question of disciplinarity in the field of Gender Studies in terms of what she calls the ‘autonomy/integration debate’. (Davis et al 2006, 13-34) Summarising her article

in the introduction to the collection in which it appears, the editors place ‘discipline’ in inverted commas when referring to Gender Studies, even though Hemmings herself does not. Although the notion of discipline is disputed in the field of Gender Studies, for Hemmings, as for Derrida, there is no contradiction between disciplinary structures and interventionist content. This is also clear in Hemmings’s introduction to *Why Stories Matter* (2011), in which she deals with the disciplinary presence of Gender Studies and the creative power of self-narration in contemporary feminist scholarship. It is no co-incidence that Hemmings also evokes the idea of theory and research as intervention. For intervention, just as much as the form of institutions of study, is crucial for the idea of transdisciplinarity that circulates in Gender Studies. That is, transdisciplinarity, in the case of Gender Studies, crystallizes *in intervention*.

This is perhaps best explained by first evoking its opposite: what would a non-interventionist, non-political, non-contingency-driven approach towards gender be? For there is plenty of that. There is a copious literature in which gender is studied and theorized without any relation to feminist or queer traditions, or any relation to the Gender Studies literature. There are ethnological, anthropological and sociological descriptions of kinship; theories about and generalizations concerning gender roles; medical theories of sex; sexological studies of sexuality; historical studies of gendered phenomena; pedagogical, psychological and psychoanalytical theories of gender and sexuality; all without any connection to feminism or queer or to Gender Studies. These sorts of studies can be found in the arts and social sciences (including theology) and in the medical and natural sciences. What is characteristic in them is not just that they usually study women and men, and therefore tend not to problematize gender from a queer studies’ perspective, but also *how* they study gender: that is, they study gender without challenging it. In other words, there is plenty of ‘knowledge production’ concerning gender in many disciplines – but this is not Gender Studies. Because what singles out the Gender Studies literature is precisely its relation to feminism and queer. And this implies: *critique*.

Joan Scott (2008) identifies critique and self-critique as one of the specific characteristics of Women’s Studies:

Feminists have not only wielded *critique* (against patriarchy, the nation-state, capitalism, socialism, republicanism, science, canons of literature, all the major disciplines) in the name of ending discrimination against women; they have also interrogated the premises of their own beliefs, the foundation of their own movement.

This impulse of *self-critique* has been present from the inception of feminism as a social-political movement. (Scott 2008, 7)

Similarly, Ellen Rooney had earlier (1988) noted that

Women's studies is driven by political concerns that inevitably lead to a critique of the way knowledge is produced. ... The feminist students who choose to major in women's studies construct their choice as a political one. (Rooney 2008, 146)¹

25 years later, in 2013, I would say that this is still true. Gender Studies is not (and nor should it ever be allowed to become) a study of what gender *is*, or what sexuality *is*. It is not a study of women and men or their difference; it is not study of what women or men, or sexual minorities, really are; what gender really is; or what human beings as gendered or sexed are; or even *that* they are gendered and sexed. The aim is not to explain, or to give an overarching account of what is; it is not about the mastery and organization of the accumulated knowledge on topics of gender and sexuality. If there is something distinctive in the transdisciplinary disciplinarity of Gender Studies in relation to the production of knowledge on gender and sexuality, it is close to what Derrida wanted the Collège to privilege as an approach with respect to the tradition of philosophy: *intervention*, and intervention *against* the previous totalizing discourses (particularly pertinent in the case of philosophy). Hemmings exemplifies this attitude of intervention, as opposed to the production of knowledge as totalizing view, in her discussion of the histories that feminists scholars tell about feminist scholarship. She ends her introduction to the book with a section subtitled: 'Interventions' and writes: 'I seek to flesh out the substance of Western feminist stories and to *intervene* by experimenting with how we might tell stories differently rather than telling different stories ... If we can identify the techniques through which dominant stories are secured, through which their status as "common sense" is reproduced, that political grammar may also offer a rigorous *point of intervention* through which Western feminist stories might be *transformed*.' (Hemmings, 2011, 16, 20, emphases added) Thus Hemmings does not merely study the dominant accounts of Gender Studies, she attempts to transform them. Inspired by Hayden White (White, 1992) she professes her refusal to 'marshal corrective efforts to set the story of Western feminist theory straight', not least because it is this impulse to produce the 'correct' account that animates the traditional disciplines.

¹ This point is echoed in the title of Scott's collection on Gender Studies, in which Rooney's article was reprinted: *Critical Edge*.

If Hemmings intention is to transform feminist stories, Derrida's target is the traditional discipline of philosophy in his specific context – that is, the hegemonic intellectual practice of philosophy in France, in its universalistic, humanist and transcendental totalizing form. In the *Collège*, Derrida writes,

a different philosophical practice and a different relation to the philosophical are being sought As an alternative to the philosophical all-or-nothing, to philosophical hegemony *versus* nonphilosophy ... a renunciation of a *classical* recourse to philosophy (a 'radical', fundamentalist, ontological, or transcendental recourse, an always-totalizing recourse.) ... these new incursions compel the philosopher to change styles and rhythms in any case, sometimes languages without, however, renouncing philosophy and without believing that it is invalid (Derrida, 2004, 200–1)¹⁷

The relationship of Gender Studies to much academic study in other disciplines, including the disciplines that study gender, resembles, in its transdisciplinarity, the attitude towards philosophy that Derrida here recommends. There is no reason to delegitimize the traditional 'production of knowledge' about gender; it is just not what Gender Studies does. Consider, for example, Judith Butler, perhaps the best-known Gender Studies theorist today. Clearly Butler does not provide a theory of gender even if, of course, there are repeated attempts to turn her work into such a thing. Rather, Butler disrupts those theories which seek to pin down what gender or sexuality is. The question of gender in Butler's work never concerns the revelation of the truth about humanity in general. For from the omnitemporal issue of human gender, human sexuality, or humanity as such, Butler's work asks: who counts, as a human, here and now, and who does not? (Butler, 2004, 2005, 2009) And in common with much work in Gender Studies, her research is not focused on gender *alone*, but intervenes where there is a call for a critical intellectual to intervene. (Butler, 2005, 2009)

Consider, also, Elizabeth Grosz, who in many ways seems to provide an explanation of gender with her evolutionary accounts. (Grosz, 2004, 2005) But Grosz's Deleuzian project is not driven, finally, by a scientific ambition. Rather, the urge for change is, at least at the outset, the motivation in Grosz's work; just as it is in much other feminist work with the biosciences (for example, Braidotti, Franklin and Lykke). Similarly, Irigaray, Eve Kosovsky-Sedgwick and Drucilla Cornell – to name just three of the most prominent – are all feminist scholars who intervene into existing

knowledges in order to disturb them, according to the impulse not to produce but to *transform*. The temporal horizon of this work is not the eternal but the here-and-now: not repudiating the work which is done within the horizon of eternity, but engaging seriously – critically – with it. As with Derrida’s philosophical project with the Collège, there is a move away from philosophical omnitemporality and the transcendental abstraction of place and time. Philosophical approaches to questions of gender tend, similarly, to eschew totalising aspirations. Philosophy aims in this case, not to explore the limits of the human, or the essence of gender and sexuality or sexual difference; not to provide total explanations, but to *intervene* into currently established ‘truths’. I call this ‘thinking politically’.

Conclusion

I have argued that the constitutive paradox of Gender Studies is that it claims an identity by refusing an identity. Gender Studies has developed into a discipline through a process that, although it might resemble ‘Mode 2 knowledge production’, is substantially different to it. The transdisciplinarity of Gender Studies cannot be reduced to the idea of innovative and accountable knowledge production pitted against disciplinary structures. On the contrary, the transdisciplinarity of Gender Studies operates now within a paradoxical disciplinary identity, which consists of an apparent non-identity. The specific content of the transdisciplinary identity of Gender Studies, I suggest, consists in the fact that it is not the ‘production’ of knowledge about gender, but rather the intervention into existing ‘knowledge’. Its transdisciplinarity does not, therefore, only consist of the fact that these interventions can be ‘applied’ in a broad range of other disciplines, but also in the particular character of the scholarly work that this discipline encourages. In this the approach Gender Studies is similar to the critical, philosophical project of the Collège international de philosophie. The politicizing, challenging, intervening attitude marks this discipline out, and contributes to its name as transdiscipline.

References

- Barad, Karen. (2007). *Meeting the Universe Halfway. Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Barry, Andrew, Born, Georgina, & Weszkalnys. (2008). Logics of Interdisciplinarity. *Economy and Society*, 37(1), 20-49.

- Bowles, Gloria, & Klein, Renate. (1983). *Theories of Women's Studies*. London ; Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Braidotti, Rosi. (2002). *Metamorphoses. Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Braidotti, Rosi. (2006). *Transpositions*. London: Polity.
- Brown, Wendy. (2008). 'The Impossibility of Women's Studies'. In J. Scott (Ed.), *Women's Studies on the Edge* (pp. 17–38). Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Butler, Judith. (1990). *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion on Identity*. London: Routledge.
- Butler, Judith. (2004). *Undoing Gender*. New York: Routledge.
- Butler, Judith. (2005). *Giving an Account of Oneself*. New York: Fordham University Press.
- Butler, Judith. (2009). *Frames of War. When is Life Grievable?* London ; New York: Verso.
- Butler, Judith. (2012). *Parting Ways: Jewishness and the Critique of Zionism*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Cranny-Francis, Anne, Waring, Wendy, Stavropoulos, Pam, & Kirkby, Joan. (2003). *Gender Studies. Terms and Debates*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Davis, Kathy, Evans, Mary, & Lorber, Judith (Eds.). (2006). *Handbook of Gender and Women's Studies* London: Sage.
- Derrida, Jacques. (2004). 'Titles (for the Collège International de Philosophie)' (J. Plug, Trans.) *Eyes of the University, Right to Philosophy II* (pp. 195-215). Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Firestone, Shulamith. (1970). *The Dialectic of Sex. The Case for Feminist Revolution*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Franklin, Sarah, Lury, Celia, & Stacey, Jackie. (2000). *Global Nature, Global Culture*. London: SAGE.
- Gibbons, Michael, Limoges, Camille, Nowotny, Helga, Schwartzman, Simon, Scott, Peter, & Trow, Martin. (1994). *The New Production of Knowledge. The Dynamics of Science and Research in Contemporary Societies*. London: Thousand Oaks: SAGE.
- Griffin, Gabriele. (Ed) (2005). *Doing Women's Studies. Employment Opportunities, Personal Impacts and Social Consequences*. London: Zed Books.
- Griffin, Gabriele and Jalna Hanmer (2001). Case Study: The United Kingdom (2001) Report from ATHENA panel 1 a. In Braidotti, Rosi, Ilse Lazaroms, and Esther Vonk, Esther. (2003). *The Making of European Women's Studies, Vol 3*, 217-30. Utrecht: ATHENA (Advanced Thematic Network in Activities in Women's Studies in Europe).

- Grosz, Elizabeth. (2004). *The Nick of Time. Politics, Evolution, and the Untimely*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Grosz, Elizabeth. (2005). *Time Travels. Feminism, Nature, Power*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Haraway, Donna. (1989). *Primate Visions*. New York: Routledge.
- Haraway, Donna. (1991). *Simians, Cyborgs, Women*. New York: Routledge.
- Haraway, Donna. (2008). *When Species Meet*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Hemmings, Clare. (2006) 'The Life and Times of Academic Feminism'. In K. Davis, M. Evans & J. Lorber (Eds.), *Handbook of Gender and Women's Studies* (pp. 13-34). London: Sage.
- Hemmings, Clare. (2011). *Why Stories Matter. The Political Grammar of Feminist Theory*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Irigaray, Luce. (1992). *Speculum of the Other Woman* (G. C. Gill, Trans.). Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press. (Orig. 1974)
- Millett, Kate. (1977). *Sexual Politics*. London: Virago. (Orig. 1969)
- Liinason Mia & Holm Ulla (2006) PhDs, Women's/Gender Studies and Interdisciplinarity. *Nora: Nordic Journal of Women's Studies*. 14 (2): 115-130.
- Lykke, Nina. (2010). *Feminist Studies. A Guide to Intersectional Theory, Methodology and Writing*. New York: Routledge.
- May, Vivian M. (2002) Disciplinary Desires and Undisciplined Daughters: Negotiating the Politics of Women's Studies Doctoral Education, *NWSA Journal* 1, 134-59
- Nowotny Helga. (n.d.) The potential of Transdisciplinarity: Retrieved 20 March 2013 from www.interdisciplines.org/interdisciplinarity/papers/5
- Nowotny, Helga, Scott, Peter & Gibbons Michael (2001) *Re-thinking Science: Knowledge and the Public in an Age of Uncertainty*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Pilcher, Jane, & Whelehan, Imelda (Eds.). (2004). *50 Key Concepts in Gender Studies*. Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage
- Rooney, Ellen. (2008). 'Discipline and Vanish: Feminism, the Resistance to Theory, and the Politics of Cultural Studies'. In J. Scott (Ed.), *Women's Studies on the Edge* (pp. 139-153). Durham: Duke University Press.
- Rubin, Gayle. (1997). 'The Traffic in Women: Notes on the "Political Economy" of Sex'. In L. Nicholson (Ed.), *The Second Wave. A Reader in Feminist Theory*

- (pp. 27-62). New York: Routledge. (orig 1975)
- Scott, Joan Wallach (Ed.). (2008). *Women's Studies on the Edge*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Scott, Joan Wallach. (1996). *Only Paradoxes to Offer : French Feminists and the Rights of Man*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Segal, Lynne. (2007). *Making Trouble. Life and Politics*. London: Serpent's Tail.
- Strathern, Marilyn (Ed.). (2000). *Audit Cultures: Anthropological Studies in Accountability, Ethics and the Academy*. London: Routledge.
- Strathern, Marilyn (2004). *Commons and Borderlands. Working Papers on Interdisciplinarity, Accountability and the Flow of Knowledge*. Wantage: Sean Kingston.
- Strathern, Marilyn. (2006) Useful Knowledge. Isaiah Berlin Lecture. Read at the Academy 2 December 2005. In *Proceedings of the British Academy 139*, 73-109. The British Academy
- Vasterling, Veronica, Demeny, Eniko, Hemmings, Clare, Holm, Ulla, Korvajärvi, Päivi, & Pavlidou, Theodossia-Soula. (2006). *Practising Interdisciplinarity in Gender Studies*. York: Raw Nerve Books.
- White, Hayden. (1992). *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press.
- Wiegman, Robyn. (2002) 'Introduction: On Location'. In *Women's Studies on Its Own*, edited by Robyn Wiegman. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Wiegman, Robyn, (Ed.) *Women's Studies on Its Own*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002.
- Wiegman, Robyn. (1999/2000). 'Feminism, Institutionalism and the Idiom of Failure'. *Differences*, 11(3), 107-136.
- Whelahan, Imelda and Jane Pilcher (eds) *50 Key Concepts in Gender Studies* (2004), Sage.

¹ Throughout this article I use the different institutional names for the discipline synonymously: Feminist Studies, Women's Studies, Gender Studies and Studies in Gender and Sexuality.

² An independent information website managed by Joan Korenman lists 900 Women's Studies programs, departments and Research Centers worldwide in May 2014.
<http://userpages.umbc.edu/~korenman/wmst/programs.html>

³ <http://www.indiana.edu/~gender/> retrieved 14.3.2013

⁴ <http://www.genderstudies.northwestern.edu/> retrieved 14.3.2013

⁵ <http://www.atgender.eu/index.php/atgendermenu/organization> retrieved 25.2.2013.

<http://iaws.org> retrieved 23.4.2014. Numerous other examples could be given, but Duke University's website is also very representative: 'In the field's first decades, feminist scholarship reoriented traditional disciplines toward the study of women and gender and developed new methodologies and critical vocabularies that have made *interdisciplinarity* a key feature of Women's Studies as an autonomous field. Today, scholars continue to explore the meaning and impact of identity as a primary though by no means transhistorical or universal way of organizing social life by pursuing an *intersectional* analysis of gender, race, sexuality, class, and nationality.'

<http://womenstudies.duke.edu/about> retrieved 14.3.2013

⁶ *50 Key Concepts in Gender Studies* (2004) begins with a chapter entitled: 'Introduction. Everywhere and Somewhere: Gender Studies, Women's Studies, Feminist Perspectives and Interdisciplinarity' (i-xv) All emphases in these quotations are my own.

⁷ See, for example, Bowles and Klein 1983; Wiegman, 2002; May 2002; Griffin and Hanmer 2001; Vasterling et al 2006; Lykke, 2010 and Hemmings, 2011.

⁸ For example, Nina Lykke expresses a wide-spread view in the field: 'I find a compartmentalized, discipline-specific organization of knowledge to be problematic in general and for feminist studies in particular.' On the issue of the disciplinary structures of Gender Studies Lykke argues for the position that 'Feminist Studies can *pass and claim authority as an academic field in its own right*, while at the same time *pointing toward alternative-trans-and postdisciplinary-modes of working and organizing knowledge production*.' (Lykke 2010,18–19)

⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women's_studies. Retrieved 14.3.2013

¹⁰ See, for example, Haraway, 1989 and 1991; Braidotti, 2002; Grosz 2004 and 2005; Franklin & al, 2000; Barad, 2007.

¹¹ For example in Linköping University <http://www.tema.liu.se/tema-g/Posthuman/posthumanities-hub?l=en> and in Uppsala University:

<http://www.genna.gender.uu.se>

¹² Helga Nowotny, one of the editors of the collection, is a founding member of European Research Council (ERC), the major European Research funding organization, and has worked as its president since 2010.

¹³ Nowotny, 'The Potential of Transdisciplinarity', http://helga-nowotny.eu/downloads/helga_nowotny_b59.pdf retrieved 27.2.2013.)

¹⁴ For example, AtGender, the academic organization which promotes academic Gender Studies and the dissemination of the knowledge it produces, includes in its mission statement the objective: 'To foster exchange and cooperation between the academic community and women's organisations, women's documentation centres and libraries, policymakers and NGOs in the field of women's rights, gender equality and diversity, and ambassadors for diversity in profit and non-profit organisations.' (<http://www.atgender.eu/index.php/atgendermenu/mission> 25.2.2013)

¹⁵ The others were François Châtelet, Jean-Pierre Faye and Dominique Lecourt.

¹⁶ <http://www.ciph.org>, retrieved 1.3.2013.

¹⁷ The full claim, with respect to the relationship of the Collège to philosophy traditionally understood is as follows: 'What is being sought now is perhaps a different philosophical style and a different relation of philosophical language to other discourse (a more horizontal relation, without hierarchy, without radical or fundamental recentering, without architectonics, and without imperative totalizations). Will this still be philosophical style? Will philosophy survive the test of these new fields of knowledge, this new topology of limits? This will be the test and the very question of the Collège.'