

ELL welcomes Dr. William Rasch, professor and Chair of the Department of Germanic Studies, at Indiana University to present on: "Enlightenment As Religion: On Being European -- and Human."

In an interview with a Spanish newspaper in 2006, the German Nobel Prize winning novelist, Günter Grass, said the following about Europe: "We have the luck to have had the Renaissance and the Enlightenment and therefore have undergone a painful process that has brought us a series of freedoms that are still threatened. The Islamic world has not undergone this process; they find themselves at a different stage of development." What does it mean to identify European (and, by extension, North American) culture with the Enlightenment and with secularization, which values not only individual freedom but also magnanimous tolerance of difference, while at the same time assuming that European culture is the culmination of cultural progress? Is what we call the Enlightenment the medium by which and through which differences can be mediated, or is the Enlightenment itself the mark of a certain type of unbridgeable cultural difference? This talk will examine some of the ways "the West" currently describes itself and its relationship with what it describes as the "fanaticism" of the non-European world.

Thursday, April 24, 2008

5 p.m. Reception and Lecture

Sturm Hall 151

Students, faculty and guests are welcome to attend

For further information or questions, please contact Wilfried Wilms at wwilms@du.edu or Susan Walter at swalter@du.edu

Join ELL and Dr. William Rasch, professor and Chair of the Department of Germanic Studies, at Indiana University as we explore Max Weber's "Science as a Vocation"

To the existential questions "What should we do?" and "How shall we live?" reason can give us no definitive answer. This assertion is the starting point of Max Weber's mature reflections on the nature of Western modernity. Perhaps paradoxically, Weber's own response to the modern predicament was to advocate the passionate pursuit of reason, that is, of science (Wissenschaft) and scholarship. By treating the scholarly life as a calling Weber emulates the Puritan ethos he examined in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Living the life of reason leads not to truth but to the indirect cultivation of an ethos that is itself the answer to the problem reason cannot solve. If latter-day believers in pre-modern, substantive reason cannot accept such a non-rational grounding for the reasonable life of the mind, it nevertheless may still inspire those who wish to think their way through a distinctly modern "crisis" in the human sciences and the purpose of the contemporary university in general.

Friday, April 25, 2008

11 a.m. until 2 p.m.

Sturm Hall 286

Lunch will be served and a Reception is to follow

RSVP to Wilfried Wilms at wwilms@du.edu or Susan Walter at swalter@du.edu
The first 20 persons to RSVP will receive a complimentary copy of Max Weber's The Vocation
Lectures, (Hackett Publishing Company, 2004)