On Saturday, November 2, 2019, Duke Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies hosted an all-day transdisciplinary event on “Intimate Economies of the Nonhuman”. The workshop brought together six scholars from a range of institutions and disciplines to present works-in-progress around the question of “care” as it relates to various nonhuman actors.

At the intersection of feminist scholarship on political “care” economies and posthuman scholarship on nonhuman actors, the following framing questions were posed: “Does the intimate economy of care look differently when the objects of care are more than human? Are nonhuman care workers significant to emerging economies of care as well as global infrastructures of capital and labor”? The workshop was divided into three panels with two speakers per panel; following each speaker was a thoughtful response often leading into a larger discussion where connections were often drawn across speakers and panels.

In the first panel, Ingrid Meintjes presented an essay juxtaposing human and robot care; this question, she explained, came out of a decade of working alongside unpaid HIV/AIDS care workers in South Africa where care work is highly feminized. continued on page 5
We are living in an exciting and terrifying time for Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies. On the one hand, feminism and feminist activism are as vibrant as they’ve ever been: new forms of feminist thought flourish around the world, international “women’s strikes” have galvanized younger generations to mobilize against gender violence and sexual entitlement; and gender and sexual diversity have gained widespread acceptance. On the other, gender studies programs are under attack as political leaders from Budapest to São Paulo blame “gender ideology” for social upheaval; reproductive freedoms once taken for granted now face both de jure and de facto elimination; and digital forums and social media — so valuable to organizing movements such as #MeToo and #NiUnaMenos — have also amplified the voices of misogyny, homophobia, and transphobia. Every day seems to bring new, sometimes painful reminders of both the necessity and the vitality of our research and teaching. It’s a daunting but inspiring moment to take up the directorship of one of the world’s best gender studies programs.

The beginning of my tenure as GSF director coincides with initiating a project that takes up a foundational question in feminist thought: how do we ascribe value to the vast amounts of physical, intellectual, and emotional labor that allow for the provision of care? It’s a question that has animated feminist scholarship across disciplines for decades and effectively created fields such as feminist economics and gender and development. In particular, the undervaluing of care labor — performed overwhelmingly by women and mostly non-white women — has contributed significantly to enduring inequalities along lines of sex, race, and class.

There is widespread agreement — evident not only across disciplines and areas of study but also in media, opinion polls, and election results — that we have reached a “crisis of care.” The keyword “sustainability” has emerged because so many practices are currently unsustainable, whether ecologically, socially, or economically. Scholars have increasingly come to see this crisis in a holistic way, identifying the ways that, for example, dependent and household care are connected to ecological and cultural care.

For the past several decades, scholars and policymakers have sought to address this problem through technological and market solutions. While these approaches must form part of the toolkit, it is by now evident that we need to consider further-reaching approaches that encompass social, cultural, and political elements and that draw from a broad array of perspectives. Solutions to this crisis of care must recognize that this is a fundamentally transnational issue both in its ecological aspects (chronic droughts, soil degradation, species extinction, etc.) and in its more social aspects (increasing dependence on migrant care laborers, globalization of cultures, refugee crises, etc.).

The approach we have adopted in “Rethinking Economies of Care” reflects the fact that some of the more creative ways of addressing this issue have come from places where there is deep suspicion about technological and market solutions. While these approaches must form part of the toolkit, it is by now evident that we need to consider further-reaching approaches that encompass social, cultural, and political elements and that draw from a broad array of perspectives. Solutions to this crisis of care must recognize that this is a fundamentally transnational issue both in its ecological aspects (chronic droughts, soil degradation, species extinction, etc.) and in its more social aspects (increasing dependence on migrant care laborers, globalization of cultures, refugee crises, etc.).

The GSF faculty have organized several events in conjunction with this year’s thematic emphasis on “Rethinking Economies of Care”, including Gabriel Meintjes and Riikka Prattes, and two legal scholars, Pedro Nicolli and Marcelo Ramos, who are on sabatical from the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. The result has been a vibrant exchange of ideas and perspectives among researchers with diverse backgrounds and at different career stages.

This Fall, we have started a Bass Connections team that brings together undergraduates, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and faculty to investigate these research questions, coordinating with members of the international research network. We are also running a faculty-graduate readings seminar to delve into the most recent scholarship on care, particularly as it imbirates social and ecological concerns. Joining us for these endeavors are two postdoctoral fellows, Ingrid Meintjes and Riikka Prattes, and two legal scholars, Pedro Nicolli and Marcelo Ramos, who are on sabatical from the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. The result has been a vibrant exchange of ideas and perspectives among researchers with diverse backgrounds and at different career stages.

The Bass Connections team will continue in the Spring semester, which we plan to conclude with a follow-up conference of international network members.

The GSF faculty have organized several events in conjunction with this year’s thematic emphasis on “Rethinking Economies of Care”, including Gabriel Rosenberg’s November workshop on “Intimate Economies of the Nonhuman” and Frances Hasso’s January session of Duke on Gender, which will explore the concept of care.

It is difficult to imagine a better launchpad for this project than Duke’s Program in Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies. The Program’s critically engaged, interdisciplinary faculty and the University’s commitment to global engagement have allowed us to make a promising start to tackle this urgent concern.
I learned to pray through my fingertips. These poignant words Dr. Yona Harvey shared from her poem “Communion with Mary Lou Williams” during her talk. Harvey's poem presents prayer as a productive process. These words assert that the production of Black feminist art and knowledge is a spiritual act. Therefore, it is fitting to describe the Gender Colloquium: Diasporic Legacies and Black Feminist Sonic Visualities featuring Drs. Yona Harvey (assistant professor at The University of Pittsburgh Writing Program), Meta DuEwa Jones (associate professor at UNC-Chapel Hill's Department of English and Comparative Literature), and Daphne Brooks (professor of African American Studies at Yale University) as a Black Feminist communion.

Each presentation delivered by these Black women professors seemingly stood on the foundation that had been given by the preceding talk, providing a live example of the through line themes at the center of their respective analyses: repetition, renovation, and temporality. During Harvey’s talk she reads poems that contain a significant amount of repetition. She communicates to her audience that its usage can be a way of accessing and expressing discomfort and rage. Harvey uses repetition as a string to weave together a way of accessing and expressing discomfort and rage.

Harvey’s poem presents prayer as a productive process. She argues that “contemporary Black poets thread strings of poetic grace”, grace notes, to connect the old with the new. Jones calls on Harvey to help her illustrate the renovative work of grace notes in Black musical poetics. She has Harvey read her poem “Sound Part II” which renovates Yusuf Komunyakaa’s “Ode to the Drum”; more specifically she takes the violent repetition of the kadoom of a drum and claims it for a Black woman’s maternal experience. Brooks continues along a similar line of analysis. She centers contemporary Jazz artist Cecile McLorin Salvant’s sonic curation of Jelly Roll Morton's “The Murder Ballad” (1938), an explicit song about a “blues heroine” who murders the woman who slept with her lover. The heroine finds love in queer Black female intimacy in prison. Salvant performs a “hust” when she sings Morton’s song. Through the hyperbolic pronunciation of lyrics, the execution of high and low notes, Salvant embodies the pain and nuances of this imprisoned Black woman and others like her. Together these scholars provide an analysis of Black Feminist Time, the ever present past.

and deeply impoverishing. Here, she thinks seriously about interventions promised by rapidly growing populations of care robots in the context of care itself becoming a major problem or crisis. Correspondingly, Alex Blachette considers nonhuman care in the form of corporations. In “Off-Animals”, he follows the life and death cycles of “off-specification” hogs used in semi-automated slaughter plants to ask “what are the politics and limits of care work — and caring for animals — in a context where 99% of U.S. hog life has been monopolized by corporations?”

In the second panel, Harris Solomon offered an explication of “Last Stop”, a chapter from his current manuscript which tells the story of traumatic injuries from traffic accidents. Based on five years of fieldwork in Mumba’s biggest public hospital trauma ward, he aims to conceptualize relations between subjects and power through relations between medicine and movement. Also situated in India, Radhika Govindrajan’s fieldwork moves us out of the urban landscape of Mumbai into rural villages of the central Himalayas with her essay on political lives of cows, rivers, and mountains. She offers a nuanced critique of a right-wing Hindu nationalist organization’s dedication to protecting cows from slaughter as a means to justify slaughtering those who consume beef in India, including Muslims, Christians, and Dalits, demonstrating human-nonhuman alliances are not always ethically motivated.

In the third panel, Juno Parrenas provided a feminist comparative ethnography of a lion sanctuary in South Africa with two sites in South Asia, one corporatizing conservation of Bornean orangutan and another corporate rescue mission for a protected species that would drown to death in the Bakun Dam. Parrenas argued how each case highlights relations of private property held up by conservation goals are often to the detriment of human and nonhuman others. Maura Finkelstein’s “The Work of Horsemanship” similarly draws attention to the kinds of invisible work nonhuman laborers—horses—perform in equine therapy through her interspecies ethnography at a facility in Eastern Pennsylvania called True Hearts.
2019 Feminist Theory Workshop

IMPRESSIONS

by: Elena Maria Gallardo Nieto
PhD Candidate
University of Granada, Spain

Attending Feminist Theory Workshop has been a complete honor for me, especially coming from a popular Spanish University where material resources are not enough to make this possible. For this reason, I want to acknowledge and thank everyone who made it possible and who worked to enrich my academic doctoral training with such complex and challenging talks and discussions. The variety in training, research interests, origins and learnings in the group of awardee students has made my participation more theoretically and philosophically demanding.

After having some time to think about my learnings out of the Workshop and discussions, I will map the most relevant challenges to Feminist theory and politics I have identified coming from the four Keynote speakers’ talks. Posthumanism and New Materialism(s) compose philosophical currents that nowadays are reifying feminist theory as challenging cultural conventions on what matters, questioning boundaries between living and non-living matter. These thoughts have let us re-register the Transfeminist and Queer Project, proposing new ways of understanding reality, rethinking the category “subject” for questioning power hierarchies which conform and determine human and non-human existence. C. Riley Snorton’s study on the swamps and blackness draws upon these thoughts, analyzing how the swamp might have composed these “other modes of existing” –physical and metaphysically meaning- as well as mapping how political grammars of ethical violence are configured and naturalized against the invisible and inhabitable “other”. Otherwise, Lauren Berlant pointed out the resistance between sex-polarity and erotophobia in feminist discussions. Over this questioning, she argued on sex, consent, jokes, trauma, pleasure, and the event of happiness through Affect theory. Additionally, Jocelyn Cicolli raised questions about the care system and the need of reconceptualization of neoliberal and extreme precarious labor context worldwide. And, lastly, Kim Tallchief brought up possibilities on how to entangle feminist politics and queer existences inspired by Ecosexuality. Indigenous thoughts, sustainability, and ethics for sex and human relations.

These complex contributions have given me the chance to reconsider theory as a central ax in my PhD research by realizing stress in the dichotomy theory-practice. This ethical dilemma in my academic career –theory as a central ax- in my PhD research by realizing stress in the dichotomy theory-practice. This ethical dilemma in my academic career by realizing stress in the dichotomy theory-practice.
It was while working for the Treatment Action Campaign that I first witnessed something extraordinary, a ‘something’ that I’m still trying to figure out 15 years later. The activists working in the informal and low-income communities to raise awareness among South Africans that they had a right to AIDS care, treatment and support, transformed into a cadre of women who took it upon themselves to care for those who were sent home from over-burdened and under-resourced hospitals to die.

Community-care workers, as they are known, were absorbing the impacts of a country struggling to sync up with a global political economy while trying to address the massive inequality produced by colonialism and apartheid. Over time, it became clear to me that care workers were not only first responders to the crisis, but were also mobilizing a national campaign aimed at calling attention to the dire circumstances of, and problematic government reliance on, unpaid HIV/AIDS care work. This experience, however, left me with more questions. As my work was at the intersection of AIDS science and the material realities of women’s care experiences, my PhD used Feminist Science and Technology Studies (FSTS) to ‘ask different questions’ about care by placing indigenous responses to South Africa’s care crisis in conversation with global public health interventions and HIV/AIDS bioscience.

Presently, I am expanding this decolonial FSTS analysis to think about the plethora of technologies that circulate around us in the name of care yet leave the crisis unmitigated. It is an extraordinary opportunity to pursue these questions alongside a transnational and multi-disciplinary network of local and international experts, led by Prof. Jocelyn Olcott. I am co-teaching a vertically integrated Bass Connection project this year with undergraduate and graduate students, and multi-disciplinary network of local and international experts, led by Prof. Jocelyn Olcott and Ara Wilson, as well as working on grant applications for the RGEC. I am also co-organizing a meeting of the RGEC with international partner networks at Duke in April 2020.

I have just presented a paper at this year’s FEAST conference and will soon discuss my work in the Pre-Print series at GSF. In my previous work on the outsourcing of social reproduction – particularly domestic cleaning, I investigate the practices of men (and women) in Viennese, opposite-sex couple households that pay for domestic services in the international division of reproductive labor (IDRL). These questions informed my Masters’s research, and in partnership with community-based care organizations, I was able to use my research process to mobilize a national campaign aimed at calling attention to the dire circumstances of, and problematic government reliance on, unpaid HIV/AIDS care work. This experience, however, left me with more questions. As my work was at the intersection of AIDS science and the material realities of women’s care experiences, my PhD used Feminist Science and Technology Studies (FSTS) to ‘ask different questions’ about care by placing indigenous responses to South Africa’s care crisis in conversation with global public health interventions and HIV/AIDS bioscience. Presently, I am expanding this decolonial FSTS analysis to think about the plethora of technologies that circulate around us in the name of care yet leave the crisis unmitigated. It is an extraordinary opportunity to pursue these questions alongside a transnational and multi-disciplinary network of local and international experts, led by Prof. Jocelyn Olcott. I am co-teaching a vertically integrated Bass Connection project this year with undergraduate and graduate students, and participating in a graduate seminar led by Jocelyn Olcott and Ara Wilson, as well as working on grant applications for the RGEC. I am also co-organizing a meeting of the RGEC with international partner networks at Duke in April 2020.

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Faculty Updates

September

Patrice Douglass
Patrice D. Douglass continued work on her first book project, which explores death at the intersections of Blackness, gender, and sexual violence. She also wrote a forthcoming article which critically engages Assata: An Autobiography, by Assata Shakur as a text that demonstrates the vexed nature of theorizing the experience of gender violence through structural analyses of antiblackness. In addition, she has authored articles, book reviews, and bibliography entries currently under review. Furthermore, she gave invited talks at the University of California, Berkeley and the University of Michigan, as well as presented papers at several national conferences.

Kimberly Lamm
Kimberly Lamm recently published two articles: “A Queer Poetics of the Normal: Joe Brainard, Clothing, and Girlish Femininity,” in the collection Joe Brainard’s Art, “I Want to Wear It: Fashioning Black Feminism in Mahogany (1975),” in Australian Feminist Studies. In March 2019, she participated in a conversation with Laura Mulvey at Birbeck College London about feminism and the essay film. Kimberley is hard at work on her book devoted to literary portrayals of fashion and clothing in African-American literature and visual culture and has an article related to that project coming out in 2020. “Words and Clothes: Sartorial Self Fashioning in the Harlem Renaissance.” She will pursue this project as a fellow at Cornell University’s Humanities Center for the 2020-2021 academic year.

October

Feminist Connections: “What is the Value of a Degree in Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies?” GSF faculty. The event allowed undergraduates to learn more about Duke Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies Department’s classes and programs.


November

Graduate Scholars Colloquium: “The Conversation that Never Was: Septima Clark, Elza Freire, and the Problem of Liberation Pedagogy in the Americas” (Duke)

Graduate Scholars Colloquium: “The Third Shift: The Moralization and Making of American Beauty Culture” with Julie Morris, PhD candidate, Duke Divinity School, Duke University. Respondent: Aleena Cucupala, Literature Department, Duke University. Morris explores how the culture and industry of beauty has become obligatory, less of a place of independence or agency, its history remains complicated.

December

Fernandes, Glenda Dickerson Colligate Professor of Women’s Studies and Professor of Political Science and Sociology, University of Michigan.

Gabriel Rosenberg
Gabriel Rosenberg was promoted to Associate Professor in July. He spent the summer at work on a book on the history of livestock breeding as a Visiting Fellow of the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin. In addition to writing several essays, he delivered lectures at the University of Virginia and the California Institute of Technology. He continues to serve as the Program’s Director of Undergraduate Studies, and he enjoyed co-teaching the graduate “Foundations of Feminist Theory” course with Ara Wilson in the Spring.

Kathy Rudy
Kathy Rudy is focusing her interests now on the intersection of medicine and music. She’s following on the work of Oliver Sacks and studying different ways in which music supports physical healing. She is teaching classes and writing on the subject now. She continues to teach ethics and women’s health, reproduction, surrogacy, etc. Her wish is that these classes equip young people for any battles in front of them.

Kathi Weeks
Kathi Weeks has continued to work on her book project that proposes and explores a counter-archive of U.S. Marxist feminist theory. She will be presenting a chapter from that project on family abolitionism in the Spring. As a separate line of research, she has completed an article-length manuscript that presents a feminist defense of a guaranteed basic income.

Ara Wilson
Ara Wilson is participating in the GSF-based project on “care economies,” including co-teaching a graduate seminar with Jolie Olcott and presenting at conferences in Brazil and the Netherlands. Her work for this project focuses on the construction of measurements around gender and labor. Her own primary research re-evaluates the history of the concept of gender. Wilson directs the Graduate Certificate program in Feminist Studies and serves as a Social Science representative for the Academic Council.
## Spring 2020 COURSES

**GSF 101.01**  
Gender and Everyday Life  
Kimberly K. Lamm

**GSF 199S.01**  
Thinking Gender  
Patrice D. Douglass

**GSF 202S.01**  
LGBTQ Studies  
Gabriel N. Rosenberg

**GSF 290S.02**  
Selected Topics: Sexuality and The Law  
Juliette Duara

**GSF 290S.03**  
Selected Topics: Race Gender Sexuality In Music  
Mary K. Rudy

**GSF 295S.01**  
Sex Work: Politics of SXL Labor  
Kathi Weeks

**GSF 362S.01**  
Gender and Popular Culture  
Kimberly K. Lamm

**GSF 366S.01**  
Nature, Culture, and Gender  
Saskia C. Corones

**GSF 367.01**  
Feminist Ethics  
Mary K. Rudy

**GSF 376S.01**  
Black Feminist Theory  
Patrice D. Douglass

**GSF 386S.01**  
Politics of Sexuality  
Gabriel N. Rosenberg

**GSF 390S.01**  
Selected Topics: Economies of Care  
Ulrike Prattes, Ingrid Meintjes, Jocelyn H. Olcott

**GSF 499S.01**  
Senior Seminar  
Frances S. Hasso

**GSF 701S.01**  
Foundations in Feminist Theory  
Ara A. Wilson

**GSF 740S.01**  
Critical Genealogies Topic: US Marxist Feminism  
Kathi Weeks

**GSF 860S.01**  
Major Figures/Feminist Thought Topic: Jacques Derrida: Geschlecht  
Ranjana Khanna

**GSF 890S.01**  
Advanced Topics: Economies of Care  
Ulrike Prattes, Ingrid Meintjes, Jocelyn H. Olcott

**GSF 890S.02**  
Advanced Topics Governing Race Sex & Reproduction  
Frances S. Hasso