

Director's Column

by Ranjana Khanna, Margaret Taylor Smith Director of Women's Studies

Though the year of Gender, Race and Visual Studies is behind us and our new theme of **Animals and the Question of Species** has fully taken its place (see page 2), questions still remain: **What's in an image? And why does feminist scholarship concern itself so much with the question of representation?**

This year, Duke University is streamlining its departmental websites, and like everyone else, Women's Studies has gone through the process and tried to develop something more user-friendly. But if you have seen our new look you may be interested to know that we are changing our image again! And we've been struggling with the way in which changing an image implies, well, changing one's image. How much does choosing an image imply that one represents the program in the gesture, and what kind of analyses of the image could be variously described as generous, paranoid, inventive, elitist, or suspicious? Can any single image represent a program? The image I had chosen initially turned out to be less than popular for the website, although people had expressed love of it last spring when we used it for an event. I thought I'd narrate the story because it brings to light how taxing "representation" is.

Some people felt excluded by the image—a concave camera lens looking up at the back view of the Venus de Milo statue, which in turn was being observed and photographed by onlookers. [See womenstudies.duke.edu] Those perturbed



Credit: Magic Surf Bus

expressed the Eurocentrism of the image, its classical rather than modern emphasis, and the whiteness of the Venus. Others felt degraded—that Women's Studies would seek to represent itself through an armless nude. Some felt repulsed by it, given that Venus' torso emerges from a rather phallic stump when seen from

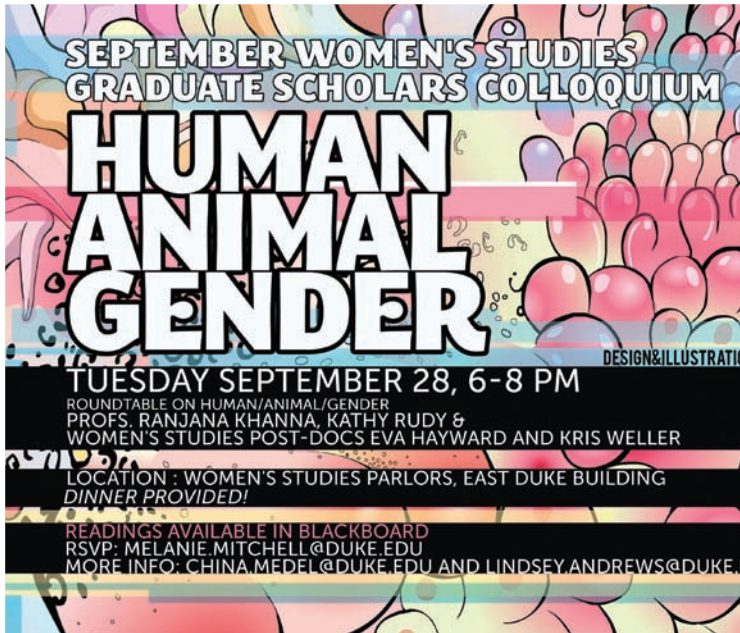
the rear. And some simply felt that it was passé and failed to distinguish us from a department of classical studies.

Others loved it and thought that it was about a fragmented past which was often filled with objectification. It was also an acknowledgment of the influential aesthetics of the Greek and Roman classical periods internationally, and a reflection on what that means photographically today for the viewer (who looks through a lens) and for the audience who take photos. Some saw it as a contemplation of the divine, who is no longer worshipped religiously, but nonetheless carries an aura. Others considered its revealing of the idea of a "phallic mother" and therefore expresses the twentieth-century psychoanalytic discourse of sexual difference and its feminist engagement.

And still others felt that the marble statue of Venus has mistaken race, given the now widely discussed African histories of the world the west calls ancient. Is it right to call her white, or is it anachronistic to do so? Did she become white during the history of racism? And is she still white? Is she still an image of the west, or has she become the property of all? Does she defy the category of ownership, and is she definitely a she? Is it right to call her a woman, and do divinities have sexual difference? Is it a human who observes this scene, or does this fish-eye lens belong to some other creature? **Does an image represent anyone, or is it designed to conjure questions, arouse curiosity, and initiate thought?**

A few years ago, I chose an image by Fatimah Tuggar to shape the design of a poster for an event. That image roused the ire of some who felt it exploited African children to market an event which (it was assumed) dealt only tangentially with the question of race. That was a mistaken view given the content of the event. But it becomes clear that there are so many ways to read figurative images and to feel that they should be representative of something other than themselves and the ideas they generate, that abstraction may be the only way to go. I had thought that all images were an abstraction of something, that artistic and political representation are not the same thing and are dangerously conflated, and I stand by those views in my own understanding of the visual field. Of course there are racist and sexist images, and not willing to risk the image of our program, we're changing our image again. **What this reveals though is how over-determined and varied is the conundrum of feminist studies and how difficult it is to choose how best to represent what we do!**

The Year of Animals and the Question of Species



Kathy Rudy, Associate Professor

Finally, the animals have arrived! The third annual theme for Women's Studies in 2010-11 is **Animals and the Question of Species**. Throughout the coming months the topics we will be taking up revolve around three main points of interest:

- new theoretical formulations in continental philosophy around the question of human exceptionalism;
- the human/animal boundary and connection, and the ethics, politics, and advocacy that flow from those; and
- the role of gender in developing a greater understanding of nonhuman animals

Using the lens of feminism and focusing on concerns related to gender, we are attempting a

conversation across the emerging fields of Posthumanism and Human Animal Studies. While the two fields have much in common (interest in nonhuman subjects, the boundaries of humanity), they also carry with them significant differences (a more theoretical approach on the construction of the human versus explicit advocacy for animals). This year we will put those fields of study in conversation with gender and feminism.

First, we welcome this year's postdocs: Eva Hayward and Kris Weller. You can learn more about them by "listening in" on their conversation (see page 11) but suffice it to say, we are very excited about the broad range of topics that they bring with them to Duke. Eva works primarily on ocean and marine life, and often deals theoretically with a whole host of creatures that are neither plant nor animal, but fall between the cracks of those two worlds. Kris works on questions of rights and the law, and is especially interested in the legal status of animals and differently-abled humans.

WST 360 Human, Animal, and the Question of Gender will be team-taught by myself and Ranji Khanna, on the question of the animal from both the posthumanist and human animal studies perspectives, using the lens of ecofeminism (see right) to broaden the conversation slightly. We will be bringing in several speakers. Our first is **Irene Pepperberg**, a scientist noted for her work in animal cognition, particularly in relation to parrots. Pepperberg is an adjunct Associate Professor at Brandeis and a Research Associate in Psychology at Harvard, and is most noted for her work with African Grey parrot Alex. Alex stands as one of the most successful language acquisition animals in the world, and could correctly identify the color, shape, number, and material of any given set of objects. Alex constructed complete sentences and had an uncanny knack for satire. Pepperberg has authored several books including *The Alex Studies*, and *Alex and Me*, and has appeared on the Discovery Channel, Nova, and many other national media outlets.

In the spring, we will host world-renowned animal behaviorist **Temple Grandin**. Grandin received an honorary PhD from Duke in May of 2010 and we are pleased to bring her back to speak about the psychic life of animals. Grandin is most noted for her work revising the cattle slaughter industry; her contributions

there have set new industry standards in animal welfare. A person with high functioning autism, much of Grandin's advocacy and academic work includes both animals and autism. Indeed, it is autism that allows her to understand the world of animals more deeply, she says, because they and she "think in pictures."

Grandin is a Professor of Animal Science at Colorado State University, and was recently featured in an HBO film, celebrated with seven Emmy Awards in August. She has authored many books including *Thinking in Pictures*; *Animals In Translation: Using the Mysteries of Autism to Decode Animal Behavior*; and *Animals Make Us Human: Creating the Best Life for Animals*. It is a great honor to be hosting both of these scholars in Women's Studies.

Also in the spring we will host a mini-conference entitled "New Voices in Animal Studies," which will feature papers from five young and emerging scholars from around the country. Noted feminist scholar **Donna Haraway**, Professor, History of Consciousness Department, University of California-Santa Cruz, will respond to the papers. Haraway also will deliver a keynote lecture at this year's Fifth Annual Feminist Theory Workshop.

At no point in history have humans used animals the way we are using them in America today. Factory farms crank out almost three pounds of meat per person per day from 10 billion food animals who function literally as flesh machines; thousands of breeders offer inbred, often aggressive, damaged pets for sale on the internet and in pet stores everyday; the black market in exotic animals from chimps to tigers to wolves crosses through zoos, laboratories, and collectors of all sorts. The number of animals maimed and killed for the testing of products and pharmaceuticals is almost double what it was twenty years ago. In terms of sheer numbers alone, the situation for animals in America today has never been more dire. Advocating for animals has come into focus as a new social movement both inside and outside the academy. In scholarly terms, we are challenged to think about the limits of feminism when it cannot think beyond the human species. Philosophically, questions are raised for feminist scholarship concerning the model of rights, ethics, and survival that have previously dominated our terrain of inquiry. We are excited to be taking up these issues here at the Program in Women's Studies at Duke.

What is ECOFEMINISM?

Ecofeminism is a social and political movement which points to the existence of considerable common ground between environmentalism and feminism. Ecofeminists argue that a strong parallel exists between the oppression and subordination of women in families and society and the degradation of nature through the construction of differences into conceptual binaries and ideological hierarchies that allow a systematic, however logically unsound, justification of domination ("power-over power") by subjects classed into higher-ranking categories over objects classed into lower-ranking categories, e.g. man over woman, culture over nature, white over black. [Adapted from online sources.]

As we approach the project of revisiting ecofeminism at Duke this year, we hope to broaden the conversation to include not only nature and environmentalism, but materiality, human and animal bodies, sexual difference, feminist development studies, nature/culture formulations, and science studies. In building bridges between feminism, the natural world, and these related new discourses, we aim to rebuild and reinvigorate a new ecofeminism that takes into serious consideration the complicated ways gender is constructed.

Woman's Best Friend...

Some of you may remember graduating senior Jackie Eisner from the last newsletter. Now a WST "alum," here's an inside look at her post-graduation experiences.



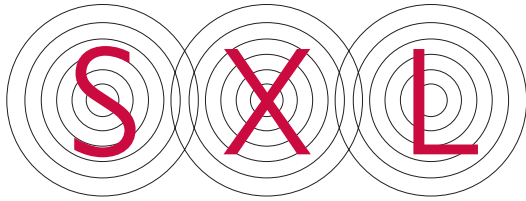
Jackie with her own best friends "Mickey" and "Teddy"

From the time I began my coursework in Women's Studies, I was attracted to the concept of advocacy. I was fascinated by voice, and how each person's voice is made different by his or her race, class, gender, and sexuality. I was even more interested in the voiceless, and I began to hope that my Women's Studies education might someday provide me with a foundation to advocate for those who do not have a voice. In the spring of my junior year, I took a course that utilized theories of post-modern feminism and animal studies, and for the first time I saw how I had been limiting my academic and professional goals by strictly considering human voice. **My education as a Women's Studies major provided me with the tools to appreciate the value of all experience, even nonhuman experience, and the various ways it can be expressed. I began to see that in the same way women can be silenced by lack of education or poverty, animals can be silenced by factory farming and overfishing.** In other words cultures that find ways to dominate women can also find ways to dominate animals, and perhaps then,

cultures who accept what animals have to teach us, can also learn to hear the voices of women. It is this line of thinking that has put me on the path to a career in veterinary medicine, and I was fortunate enough to begin that journey this summer with an internship position at Canine Assistants.

Canine Assistants is a non-profit organization founded by Jennifer Arnold, where service dogs are trained and then matched with individuals who have special needs. One of the requirements for obtaining a dog is that recipients must attend a two-week training camp at the farm in Milton, Georgia. It is during this period that recipients are matched with their dogs and learn the training foundations for building a successful relationship. Training camps are held every other month, and the highlight of my internship was the opportunity to observe the July camp. Before recipients even begin to work with any of the dogs, they are taught the training methodologies that Ms. Arnold has developed and implemented at Canine Assistants. Ms. Arnold's techniques are instantly appealing to an animal lover because they are based on positive reinforcement: a dog is rewarded for a behavior that the trainer wants the dog to repeat, while the dog is neither rewarded nor punished for a behavior that is not working. However, what I personally found most impressive about her approach was her sincere effort to try to understand why dogs expressed various behaviors. In other words, Ms. Arnold's methods are based on her understanding of how dogs navigate their world, rather than forcing them to obey all of the rules of our world. It is this compassionate training approach that sets the stage for a life changing bond between the recipients and their service dogs. Initially I understood Ms. Arnold's training methods to be feminist in that she was teaching methods of compassion rather than the traditional methods of dominance. In her new critically acclaimed New York Times bestseller, *Through a Dog's Eyes*, Ms. Arnold explains: "Dogs are creatures of immense character, and people would do well to emulate their compassion, forgiveness, and caring when living and working with them. We have a clear responsibility, as their human leaders, to educate dogs as to our expectations and personal code of conduct; however, we have no right to do so through the use of fear or force. Dogs are too easily taught using more-compassionate methods. They have set a high standard in their interactions with humans, and it is our responsibility to uphold that standard." I soon realized that by training the Canine Assistants dogs in a way that respects the true essence of what it means to be a dog, Ms. Arnold is allowing her dogs a voice so that they can one day provide a voice for the people they serve.

Jackie Eisner (T'10)



the program in the study of sexualities at duke

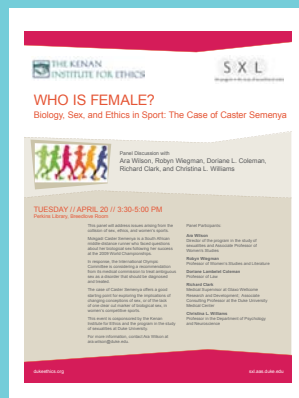


Certificate in the Study of Sexualities Seniors May 2010

From left to right: **Viviana Santiago** (Women's Studies), **Caitlin Fang** (Psychology, Women's Studies), **Erin Bell** (Psychology), **Gina Arevalo** (Cultural Anthropology/ Psychology), Missing: **Cody Lallier** (Psychology, Spanish)

Who is Female? Biology, Sex, and Ethics in Sport: The Case of Caster Semenya

Ara Wilson (Director of the program in the study of sexualities, Associate Professor, Women's Studies) and Robyn Wiegman (Professor of Women's Studies and Literature) joined Doriane Lambelet Coleman (Professor of Law), Richard Clark, (Medical Supervisor, Glaxo Wellcome Research and Development, Associate Consulting Professor Duke University Medical Center) and Christina L. Williams (Professor Psychology and Neuroscience) in a panel discussion on issues arising from the collision of sex, ethics, and women's sports following the case of Semenya, a South African middle-distance runner who faced questions about her biological sex following her success at the 2009 World Championships. The intrigued audience was exposed to the implications of changing conceptions of sex and the lack of one clear-cut marker of biological sex, in women's competitive sports.

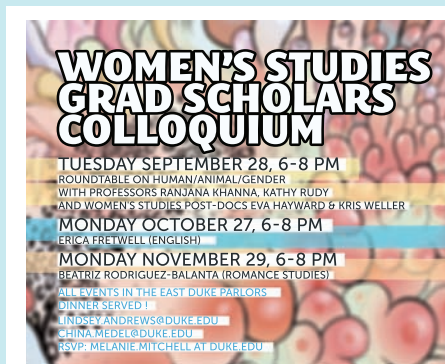


Fall Events

- 9/3 **Duke – UNC Working Group in Feminism & History** “Gender & Material Culture” Katherine French-Fuller (Duke), Josh Davis (UNC-CH) and Joanne Herschfield (UNC-CH) *Co-sponsored by Women's Studies*
- 9/10 **Hal Herzog** Professor, Psychology, Western Carolina University “Why It's So Hard to Think Straight About Animals” *Animals and the Question of Species*
- 9/17 **Nona Willis Aronowitz** “Girldrive” *Co-sponsored by the Women's Center*
- 9/20 **Anna Krylova** Associate Professor, History “A Portrait of a Soviet Woman as Citizen Soldier: Theoretical and Interpretive Challenges” *Pre-Print*
- 10/1 **Duke – UNC Working Group in Feminism & History** Joint meeting with the Triangle Labor & Civil Rights Working Group *Co-sponsored by Women's Studies*
- 10/7 **Anne Allison**, Professor of Cultural Anthropology and Women's Studies *Profiles in Sexuality Research, co-sponsored by the program in the study of sexualities and the Center for LGBT Life*
- 10/21 **Laura Doan**, Professor of Cultural History and Sexuality Studies, University of Manchester “Normal Soap”: Female Sexuality, Morality, and So-called Normality” *Co-sponsored by the program in the study of sexualities*
- 10/28 **Nicole Brossard** French Canadian feminist poet, novelist and essayist *Co-sponsored by the Center for Canadian Studies*
- 11/5 **Duke – UNC Working Group in Feminism & History** “Theory and Practice” *Co-sponsored by Women's Studies*
- 11/30 **Irene Maxine Pepperberg** Adjunct Professor, Psychology, Brandeis University and Research Associate, Harvard University “The Search for King Solomon's Ring: Cognitive and Communication Studies on Grey Parrots” *Animals and the Question of Species*



Please check our website for more information.



FACULTY UPDATES

After successfully overseeing multiple academic events for our themed year on “Gender, Race and Visual Culture” (including a video-linked seminar, lecture series, and a one-day symposium, “Gender, Race and Visuality”) **Tina Campt** is enjoying a well-earned year of leave. She will spend her year living in Brooklyn and teaching in Women’s Studies and Africana Studies at Barnard College. She has just



completed her second book, *Image Matters: Race, Photography and the African Diaspora in Europe*, which will be published in Spring 2011 by Duke University Press. Having finished her book, moved to New York, and orchestrated her own wedding over the summer, she is breathing an enormous sigh of relief, exploring the city, and taking pleasure in life as a newlywed!

This summer, **Ranjana Khanna** travelled to India, the UK, France, and South Africa. In India, France, and the UK she visited family and also worked on her research on “technologies of unbelonging.” In South Africa, she was faculty at the Johannesburg Workshop in Theory and Criticism, and enjoyed her work and her time there very much. This semester, she will be giving talks on her research in Chicago, London, and Newcastle. She is team-teaching **Human, Animal, and the Question of Gender** with Kathy Rudy, and in addition to her roles as Director of the Program in Women’s Studies and Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS), she will be the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) this year while Tina Campt is on leave.

After a productive post-doctoral year, **Kimberly Lamm** is thrilled to begin her first semester as an Assistant Professor in Women’s Studies. Over the summer she revised articles for publication, one of which is entitled “Ready-Made Baroness: The Gendered Language of Dadaist Dress,” which examines the work of the

Dadaist performance artist Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven. Kimberly also made progress on her book manuscript “Inadequacies and Interruptions: Language and Feminist Reading Practices in Contemporary Art,” and discovered a wealth of great material in the Theresa Hak Kyung Cha archives at the Berkeley Art Museum. This fall Kimberly is teaching **Gender and Popular Culture** and **Interpreting Bodies** and will be presenting her work at three conferences: the American Studies Association, the National Women’s Studies Association, and “Affecting Feminisms” at Newcastle University.

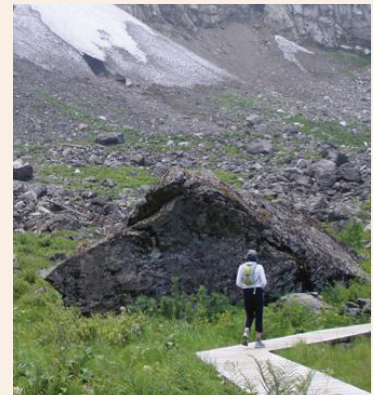
Kathy Rudy attended the Fourth Annual Human Animal Studies Conference in June at Clark University in Massachusetts where she delivered a well-received keynote address and spent the summer copyediting and putting finishing touches on her new book *Animal Affects* (forthcoming from University of Minnesota Press, 2011). She also completed an essay on her interests in local farming entitled “Food, Animals, and Feminism.” This essay will appear in *Journal of American Culture* next year. Along with Charlie Thompson, Kathy received a grant from the Franklin Humanities Institute to start Triangle University Food Studies (TUFS). The inter-institutional group will meet monthly throughout 2010-11 to discuss books and articles on food, plan for the future study of food in the Triangle, along with enjoying a locally produced dinner. Also this summer, Rudy began work on a new project with North Carolina State University biology professor Jenny Campbell; and spent much of the summer conducting interviews with local meat, dairy, and egg farmers. Over the next year, Rudy and Campbell will turn those interviews into an ethnography of local farms; this book project will detail why the shift to free-range pastured meat and animal products is critical for environmental sustainability, human health, and animal welfare. This new project is particularly exciting as it bridges the gap between science and humanities. Rudy again taught her human/animal boundary class this summer in the MALS program, to a very engaged class of students and looks forward to a very exciting animal-themed year for 2010-11.

Frances Hasso is pleased to join the Women's Studies faculty at Duke this fall in a joint appointment with International Comparative Studies. She comes to Duke from Oberlin College and is teaching Comparative Approaches to Global Issues and **Transnational Feminism** during the fall term. She looks forward to the November 2010 publication of her new book, *Consuming Desires: Family Crisis and the State in the Middle East* (Stanford University Press).



Ara Wilson is on sabbatical for Fall 2010 to work on her book project, "Sexual Latitudes: The Erotic Life of Globalization" and will be presenting her work in lectures at University of Michigan, Yale University, Brown University and a conference at the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies in New York. Her next project, on medical tourism to Thailand, received a seed grant from the Duke Global Health Institute. An essay from this new project is published in Aihwa Ong and Nancy Chen's anthology, *Asian Biotech: Ethics and Communities of Fate* (Duke University Press).

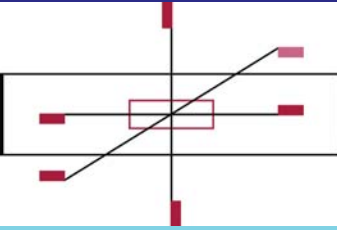
In 2010, **Robyn Wiegman** finished her book, "Object Lessons," and taught two new courses for the program: **Queer Theory**, an undergraduate seminar that served as the capstone for the program in the study of sexualities, and **US Studies After American Exceptionalism**, a graduate course that examined current academic efforts to study nation-formation from an global perspective. She spent her summer in Seattle where she camped in the Cascade Mountains (dwarfed by them in photo!), completed her first ever mountain trail run, and saw some fantastic films at the Seattle International Film Festival. She also was a faculty-in-residence at the Dartmouth Institute on the Futures of American Studies for a week in June. This spring she will teach **Foundations in Feminist Theory, Queer Theory,** and **Thinking Gender**. She recently presented new research in a talk at Yale University.



Fall 2010 Courses

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|-----------------|---|-----------------|--|
| WST 49S | Gender & Sports – Donna Lisker | WST 150S | Difference in Israel/Palestine – Netta van Vliet |
| WST 101 | Animals & Ethics – Kris Weller | WST 161 | Money, Sex, and Power – Kathi Weeks |
| WST 102S | Food, Farming, and Feminism – Kathy Rudy | WST 162S | Gender and Popular Culture – Kimberly Lamm |
| WST 114S | Daily Life in Antiquity – Micaela Janan | WST 163S | Interpreting Bodies – Kimberly Lamm |
| WST 117 | Gender and Culture – Irene Silverblatt | WST 165 | Gender and Political Theory – Kathi Weeks |
| WST 130 | Women and the Political Process –
Nora Hanagan | WST 169S | Transnational Feminism – Frances Hasso |
| WST 137 | African American Women and History –
Thavolia Glymph | WST 183S | The Actress – Beth Holmgren |
| WST 138 | Chinese Prostitution – Carlos Rojas | WST 210S | Topics in Feminist Studies – Toril Moi |
| WST 150 | Medieval Appetites: Sex & Food –
Katharine Dubois | WST 360 | Interdisciplinary Debates: Human, Animal,
and the Question of Gender –
Ranjana Khanna/Kathy Rudy |

gender institute

WOMEN^{DUKE} STUDIES

Shared Desires **The Program in Women's Studies at Duke & The Gender Institute at the London School of Economics and Political Science**

In October 2009 I began my graduate studies at LSE's Gender Institute, a beginning that was highly saturated with contradicting sentiments and expectations to the forthcoming years of studies in an international environment of gender scholars. But soon I was to experience the fruits of my department's strong engagement with another group of gender scholars across a great divide.

The collaboration was sparked by **Clare Hemmings'** previous stays at Duke in Women's Studies as both a teacher and research fellow (now Director of the Gender Institute at LSE). The collaboration built between these two programs has resulted in an informal partnership that has been important for both academic and personal exchanges of experiences.

My first meeting with the Duke's Women's Studies faculty was when **Robyn Wiegman** visited LSE in fall 2009 (see Jenny's Bredull's report, page 10). Robyn's intensive course on the practice of writing informed much of the way I have engaged with my studies and guided my thinking on how to become a productive and creative scholar. Robyn inspired me to prioritize writing as the first thing to do in the morning. Encountering other students' and an experienced scholars' psychic struggle and joy of writing so early in my doctoral studies made me understand some of the many stitches a PhD consists of—a patchwork that is facilitated through an academically promiscuous relationship that reaches farther than one's own institution.

The partnership between LSE's GI and Duke's WS provided an informal collaboration that invites students to cultivate and create bonds across the pond. Attending the annual Feminist Theory workshop in Spring, 2010 together with other LSE GI people (see Maria Pereira's report) was my very first visit to the USA, and offered me the opportunity to stay with a then-unknown family member, Alvaro Reyes, who just happens to live and study in Durham. We had more in common than the family connection; he did his PhD under the guidance of **Wahneema Lubiano**, a Duke Professor in African & African American Studies and Women's Studies!

From the students' perspective, one of the main outcomes of the collaboration is the possibility to receive feedback from scholars other than the faculty members of their 'home' department. Indeed this was the case with the visit of Robyn to the LSE's GI, where students received critical feedback on writing practices in PhD dissertations and as well when Clare held individual tutorials for Duke WS graduate students on their theses in the spring. **This generous exchange of feedback on students' work from faculty outside one's own institution is tremendously important in terms of knowledge and practice sharing.**

At the threshold to my second year, I am once again traveling to Durham/Duke WS, this time supported by another partnership that also has its traces to Duke Women's Studies, namely the research project 'Thought as Action' coordinated by Ellen Mortensen, Women's Studies, University of Bergen, Norway. **Liz Grosz** is one of the main researchers in this project (and a visiting professor and speaker at FTW). I'll end my trip with a conference at Rutgers' WS focusing on the topic I think we all left the Feminist Theory workshop with in our minds: "What does the concept 'Affect' mean for contemporary development and discussions on feminist theories?" With Duke and LSE as the backbone, I have experienced a great interconnectivity between different academic systems and thinking—only made doable through a shared desire to extend our thinking.

In December **Ranjana Khanna** is visiting LSE GI where she will give two lectures: "Asylum" and "Unbelonging." She will also lead a graduate student writing workshop. This visit will be one more piece of a **collaborative relationship** between the two departments, with opportunities both formal and informal, **that is exciting and gratifying for students, and intellectually enriching for all.**

Linda Lund Pedersen is a second-year research student at the Gender Institute-London School of Economics and Political Science. Her dissertation is on the Political/Ethical Philosophies of Hannah Arendt and Luce Irigaray in regard to the question of 'the other' in Modern Liberal Democracies. Some of her great interests are 'Feminist creative text-production' and writing practices.



Maria Periera, Clare Hemmings and Linda Lund Pedersen
at FTW March 2010

From “Thesisland” to the Feminist Theory Workshop 2010

For the past few months, I have been residing in Thesisland, that semi-deserted island where graduate students spend a lot of their time, especially during the last few months before submission of their PhD. I moved to this little island to find the stillness that I need to be able to write the many words, paragraphs and chapters that will form my thesis, an ethnography of the negotiation of the epistemic status of women’s, gender, feminist studies in Portugal. Thesisland can be a lovely place: one of creativity, discovery and inspiration. However, and despite the fact that it is populated by the (more or less benevolent) ghosts of the dead and living authors you are engaging with and the (partly imaginary, partly real) voices of your supervisor(s) and research participants, it can also be quite a lonely place. Therefore, coming straight from Thesisland and into the Feminist Theory Workshop at Duke University (March 19 – 20, 2010) was, initially, a bit of a shock. More faces than I had seen in days! More sun than I had seen in weeks! Issues and debates that were not directly connected to my thesis topic! How wonderfully strange! It was a very enjoyable and productive shock. Thanks to the generous support of the Feminist Theory Workshop Travel Award, I had the privilege of going to Duke to spend a few days not only expanding the boundaries of my Thesisland, but also discovering what other lands lie beyond those boundaries.

Listening to the keynote speakers – **Catherine Mills, Coco Fusco, Robyn Wiegman, Rey Chow** – filled my notebook and my head with new questions to explore in my thesis and in the future. Discussing those questions with the other seminar participants and conference delegates (over extraordinary food!) was a rich lesson in, and reminder of, the enormous value of debate and collective knowledge production. How exciting it is to discover the multitude of ways in which the same paper is heard, read, interpreted, used, questioned by feminist academics coming from different (theoretical, geographical, institutional, political, generational,...) spaces. Certainly no less important and useful was getting to meet many of the Duke graduate students, as well as graduate students from other universities. Our long chats served to show that our different graduate experiences have a lot in common, and that our individual Thesislands are actually not that far from each other. And how helpful it is to know all this, now that the time has come to return to my own (now slightly less deserted and more creative) writing island.

Maria do Mar [Maria of the Sea!] Pereira is a fourth-year PhD student at the Gender Institute-London School of Economics. She is currently putting the finishing touches on her thesis and looking forward to submitting it, so that she can resume two of her favorite activities: teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, and doing feminist activist work, particularly

Save the Date!

**The Fifth Annual
Feminist Theory
Workshop will be held
March 18-19, 2011.**

Confirmed keynote speakers:

- **Annamarie Jagose** – Professor and Head of the School of Literature, Arts and Media, University of Sydney, Australia
- **Donna Haraway** – Professor, History of Consciousness Department, University of California-Santa Cruz
- **Rosalind Morris** – Professor, Anthropology, Columbia University
- **Pheng Cheah** – Professor, Department of Rhetoric, University of California-Berkeley

The FTW is free of charge. Check our website womenstudies.duke.edu for updates!

Procrastination As Process

Tidying up our house, rearranging the order of books on our shelves, and developing a paramount interest in flipping through those which have never ever been opened when a deadline is impending is usually called 'procrastination.' This word choice situates these practices on the far side of the work we should be doing, and which we fail to do, since we... procrastinate. It generates a plethora of negative feelings. Our levels of stress amplify and our vocabularies of self-castigation proliferate in an excess of boundless creativity that our abandoned paper is lacking.

We could also, however, describe many of these routines as an integral part of our writing process, and acknowledge their capacity to inspire a space of mind that allows us to fill the empty page. The word choice of "process" passes into a much more gentle reality of feelings and implies that these routines are actually part of what we do: work.

Words are attached to and attach associations and affects. How we choose them determines the shape of things, by which I refer to both the material and immaterial aspects of our labour. The scope of our dictionary, however, is contingent on the situation in which we consult it. And some situations can make it hard to find words that make it easier. Does this sound mundane to you? Self-evident? It certainly wasn't for any of us.

In November 2009, **Robyn Wiegman**, Professor of Women's Studies at Duke, visited the Gender Institute at the London School of Economics and Political Science. She ran a graduate dissertation workshop in which a group of students at various stages of their research engaged in conversations about their emergent projects. The workshop provided us with a space to reflect, collectively, not only on the material but also the psychic dimension of our labour.

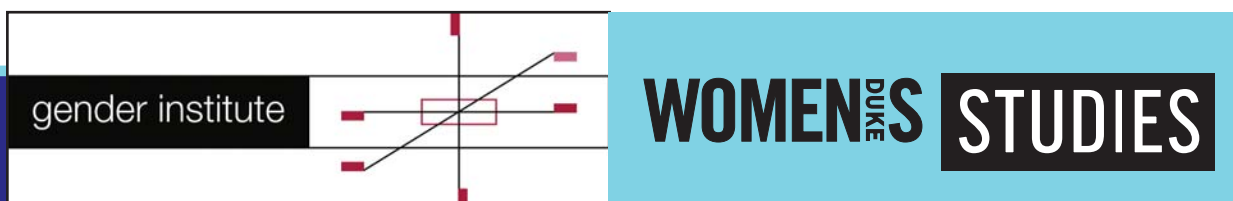
Our scholarly productions profited largely from Robyn's critical insight and the participants' knowledgeable diligence and willingness to share. Diverse educational 'provenances' (including, for example, sociology, philosophy, cultural studies and economics) that in different ways, and to varying degrees, have affected our current work and critical vantage points came together to produce interdisciplinary revelations both minor and major.

At the same time, it offered the rare opportunity to transgress soliloquy and collectively contemplate on the psychic life of our work in an institutional setting. This helped us broaden our vocabularies of thinking about the pleasures and pains of writing. This theoretical and emotional journey was inspiring, and hopefully only one of many to come.

P.S. Since writing this article last spring, I have packed my books into boxes and then taken them out of the boxes again. They are sitting on their new shelves as tidily as before. I am sitting at my desk in a quite similar way too. While nothing much has changed about the joys and frustrations of writing, the way I encounter these is different now. To encounter them consciously is definitely a habit the dissertation workshop has helped me to develop.

"What's at stake?" Robyn liked to ask us. **That this question is just as applicable to the content of our writing as it is to the writing process is an invaluable insight to take with us as we move along. And if we can't always instantly answer it, that is fine.** This too is part—and probably one of the greatest pleasures—of writing.

Jenny Bredull is second-year research student at the Gender Institute-London School of Economics and Political Science. Her research interests lie with feminisms and sexualities, difference and belonging, desire and affect; forms of relating, connections and dissonances. She is currently working on her thesis on "alternative families."



Corals and Spiders and Jellyfish! Oh, my!

A conversation with Dr. Eva Hayward and Dr. Kris Weller

Eva Hayward is a 2010-2011 postdoctoral fellow in Women's Studies, and an Assistant Professor in the Department of Cinematic Arts and Interdisciplinary Film and Digital Media Program at the University of New Mexico. She has lectured and published on animal studies, experimental film, and queer embodiment. Her recently published essays, "More Lessons From A Starfish: Prefixial Flesh and Transspeciesed Selves," "Spider City Sex," and "FingeryEyes: Impressions of Cup Corals" explore the significance of synaesthesia and sexuality in multi-species encounters. She is finishing a book project, "Jellyfish," for Reaktion Books' Animal series.

Kris Weller is a 2010-2011 postdoctoral fellow in Women's Studies. She received a PhD in the History of Consciousness from the University of California-Santa Cruz. Prior to beginning study at UCSC, she completed a joint degree program in Law and Women's Studies at the University of Cincinnati. Her doctoral research focuses on the figure of the human in US law, and was inspired by experiences working for social service organizations and by internships and projects completed in law school as part of a law and psychiatry fellowship. Her postdoctoral project changes focus from the law to the laboratory to examine the assumptions of human species identity that ground research involving nonhuman animal models of human mental difference. [Photo next page.]

KW: Good to see you again, and especially here in Women's Studies at Duke. We were here together briefly during the summer of 2009, when you were my "peer scholar" during my fellowship with the Animals & Society Institute. At that time, I was working on my dissertation, specifically a chapter looking at whether the figure of the human in American law changed in response to civil rights and women's rights litigation, and the consequences of that figure of the human for the subjects of newer social movements, in particular animal rights and psychiatric disability rights. I have since finished that dissertation!

EH: Congratulations!

KW: Thank you! **Now we are both here as postdoctoral fellows working on the "question of species" from a women's studies perspective, and I am wondering what became of your work from that summer and what you're working on now?**

EH: I finished an essay, "FingeryEyes: Impressions of Cup Corals," which will be published this fall in Cultural Anthropology. While attending to sexual selection, coral ecology, and marine conservation, the essay explores the sensuous qualities of cross-species encounters. To write the paper, I did ethnographic research at the Long Marine Laboratory, UCSC's marine research facility. Researchers spoke about how their engagement with the corals produced altered sensory knowledges. The encounters produced transits sensation—not the same for both organisms but some exchanges that were recognizable. Right now, I'm writing about spiders as figures for understanding

bodily relations in space. The spider builds its home from itself, reworking the territory of itself through itself, and to me this is a useful way of understanding bodily modification. Specifically, I've been looking at how transsexual transitioning is shaped by environment, habitation, and space—San Francisco's Tenderloin neighborhood focuses these questions. Rather than reading sex changing as a purely psychic, or social, or even biological process, but without disclaiming these approaches, I am interested in the expressive potential of bodily boundaries and how this corporeal excitation or intensification interacts with space and place. A transsexual emerges from the materialities of the body to rework the body as home or, like the spider web, a new territory, producing new sets of relationships that are always contingent to environments.

But Kris, **I'm curious to hear more about where you're going past the dissertation? What work is starting to emerge for you?**

KW: My postdoctoral project moves my research from the law to the lab. For my dissertation, I examined locations, primarily legal, where humans with psychiatric or cognitive difference were brought together materially or analogically with nonhuman animals, to see what those locations tell us about what we think it means to be human, and specifically the figure of the human in the law. What I proposed is that the liberal subject of law acts also as an "aspirational human," in that we are legally and socially rewarded to the extent that we resemble it, and either neglected or punished for our differences. Some subjects are always going to have a harder time emulating that aspirational legal person than others.

That project was inspired by feminist jurisprudence scholarship critiquing the liberal subject and related notions of human autonomy and independence. My postdoc project continues my analysis of how humans define ourselves as a species by examining nonhuman animal models of human cognitive and psychiatric difference. I expect the aspirational human will emerge here as well, in terms of a rewarded uniformity of thought and experience and the designation of mental difference as something in need of fixing.

EH: How do you see that project shaped or informed by feminist engagements or scholarship?

KW: Great question! The obvious answer is that the questions I ask are directly influenced by feminist theoretical explorations of categorization, difference, and hierarchy, what differences are identified and how, how and why they become meaningful, and who is included or excluded on the basis of them. What does mental difference mean? How do we identify ourselves as human, and what does human species membership buy us? But there are subtler connections as well. When you were talking about your spider project, **I was thinking about the feminist theoretical perspectives that inform both of our work in terms of ideas of lived experience and location and the understanding of the interplay between an environment—whether it be spatial or cultural or familial or legal—and ideas of home and the domestic, who is allowed to be at home in various privileged spaces? For me, and I suspect for you, too, bringing nonhuman animals into the mix raises the stakes for feminist theory to be not just theoretically consistent across this additional dimension of difference, but also ethically consistent in feminist theory and praxis.** Animals are always already present in hierarchies among humans, as a reservoir of meaning for the class of humans designated as less-than. Whether the category is gender, race, sexuality, disability, etc., the devaluation of animals gives meaning to the denigrated human position. In my dissertation I suggest that both human-human and human-animal relations are always already human/human/animal relations, privileged-human/othered-human/animal. **What would it mean, theoretically and politically, for both marginalized humans and nonhumans, to revalue animals? Does any of that resonate with how you think about your work and how you draw from feminist theory?**

EH: The foundations of my scholarship are informed by feminist theory, particularly those in feminist

science studies such as Donna Haraway and Sarah Franklin. I would also say that queer theory also shapes my questions, the work of Sarah Ahmed and Susan Stryker come to mind. For example, since most of my work revolves around invertebrates—jellyfish, octopuses, corals—I'm often playing with the fact that "invert" resonates at multiple etymological registers: an animal without a backbone, but also, historically, a person with inverted gender or sexual desire—a since-abandoned model for homosexuality, but curiously the framework remains in the medical "treatment" of transsexuality, however problematically. I try to weave these subtending stories, which are often about affect or figuration, with the lived realities of the organisms that I'm writing about—many marine invertebrates change sex, are hermaphroditic, asexual, or simply don't have genitals. I want my work to intervene in the absolutism of sexual difference, not to discount difference, but to ask if difference might really be differences, and like the ongoing change of species, sexual categories might be unfinished, ongoing.

EH: One of the questions I have following that and we've talked about it in the past, how do you balance (I know you do!) your scholarship with political practice? Is attention to animals and humans with mental difference a component of the work you do in thinking about feminist praxis and other feminist social justice traditions?

KW: My initial interest in feminist theory was because of what it promised to teach me about why social justice and meaningful equality seem to be such elusive goals; it has always an applied science to me, which is one of the reasons I've tried to stay close to my legal training. Legal mechanisms play an important role in shaping social meaning and either opening up possibilities or placing limits on both relationships and individual lives. It was important to me in my dissertation to maintain an attention to activist discourses and to try to make my scholarship relevant to the people who are doing the very difficult legal work of representing subjects who are neglected or ignored by our social justice institutions. In the dissertation, I was interested in looking at the relational aspects of the aspirational human; beyond its characteristics as an individual, what sorts of relationships does the law reward? Analyzing traditional rights discourses, **I came to the conclusion that the fully human legal subject has what I called a presumed "right of capture" over any creature, human or otherwise, who is not explicitly protected by law. Legal personhood, then, relies on an ability to capture and**

control others, and that sort of behavior is rewarded. There's a serious problem when the ideal subject in a social justice system is one who benefits from ignoring the interests of others! Changing focus, again, from the law to the lab, I am interested in similar questions of whose minds are considered to be aspirational and whose are considered to need correction, and what meanings are created, what relationships are enabled or foreclosed, when we look to nonhumans for fixes to human difference. So, staying in touch with the material practices of law and the material practices of science and medicine, but in their relationship to the production and reinscription of social meaning, is one of the ways I try to stay true to politics and to ethics in my work.

And if I turn that question around to you? (laughter)

EH: A lovely answer. I think for me that what has always been a crucial part of ethical work is an attention to both specificity and materiality. When studying an art object or neighborhood, I want to account for the differences inherent in that work or place, I want to avoid generalized assertions that would elide an ethics of difference. As for materiality, which further anchors my commitment to specificity, I try to make my scholarship attend to the sensual and literal quality of encounter. How do affects and percepts, what we might call sensation, produce the “feel” or texture of relationality? How might these sensations be mobilized as critical reading practices? For example, cup corals solicit a haptic-visuality, “fingeryeyes,” from their researchers. Attention to materiality, which is always also for me about relationality, is an ethical project.

I would add that I'm guided by the question: “Does my work matter in making a difference in the living conditions of the organisms I'm writing about?” This is a kind of obligation to have, dare I say, solidarity with animals. I'm not always able to do justice, but I continue to strive toward responsible relationships between species.

KW: I like your answer, and your reference to solidarity with the animals you write about. Earlier, you mentioned Donna Haraway's scholarship as an important influence. Working with her as a dissertation adviser is another experience you and I share. I suspect that for both of us, her attention to the specificity of encounter, and her insistence on a political responsibility to those whose histories we touch—materially and semiotically, and not just as researchers but as humans—served as a model for the translation of

our feminist commitments into our scholarship. I hear you saying something similar; that it's not only scholarly methodology, but a political commitment with an ethical aspect to it as well.

EH: I strongly agree. **Kris, could you say something about this year at Duke, how you imagine using this time in Women's Studies to continue or extend the work you're engaged in?**

KW: One of the things that excited me so much about the initial call for applications was that the fellowship is housed in Women's Studies, and, as we've been discussing, I do understand my work on species as being informed and feeding back to feminist theory and praxis. I think it is very forward-looking of this program to nurture projects that engage feminist theory in thinking about how humans and animals (and therefore humans and humans) interact with each other. On a practical level, I'm grateful to have the access to the material resources available at Duke. But I'm even more excited about the intellectual resources of this department; I know my work will be shaped in important ways both by informal conversations in the hallways of East Duke, and by the more structured events that are part of this themed year. I do think it's a strength of the department's postdoc program that they've brought two of us here so that we can be in sustained conversation with each other as well as with the participants in **WST 360 Human, Animal, and the Question of Gender**. I've learned so much already in the seminar hearing the perspectives of both Kathy and Ranji, coming as they do from very different intellectual disciplinary backgrounds but speaking to the same issues. So I think in all of the best political and scholarly traditions, we have opportunities here for discussions that couldn't take place elsewhere or at any other time. (And I'm very glad to have this year to work with you again!) **How might you answer that same question?**

EH: Well, you did a beautiful job, I would simply echo your sentiments. The space that this postdoc fellowship offers for continuing and exploring dimensions of work with other scholars is crucial for evolution of my ideas, and I look forward to how my thinking will change throughout these interchanges and interactions.

KW: And I look forward to working with *you* this year, Eva.

Johannesburg Workshop in Theory and Criticism

This summer, thanks to the Women's Studies Program and the Franklin Humanities Institute, I attended the second annual Johannesburg Workshop in Theory and Criticism (JWTC) at the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa. The workshop was organized around the theme of capital, and was inspired by the idea of generating "theory from the south." The workshop's organizers refer to a focus on the study of places in the global south but also to a "reterritorialization of global intellectual production." In addition to the daily lectures and roundtable discussions, the workshop also involved trips to an art gallery, a theatre, downtown, a community center in Soweto, a former permit center during apartheid turned women's shelter today, and a four-hour bus tour to places of historical and political significance in the city.

Trained in cultural anthropology and in Women's Studies, I was excited by both the internationalist and the interdisciplinary potential of the workshop. The most interesting moments for me were those when perspectives from the humanities challenged some of the disciplinary assumptions of the social sciences, while focused on questions specific to South African contexts. It was two such moments that also highlighted the value of feminist theory, and led me to think that perhaps it is inseparable, at least in some of its iterations, from theorizing from the global south.

In their talk, "Identity and Property in Precarious Times," anthropologists John and Jean Comaroff discussed

how—as individuals become property—identity determines the distribution of property. This has implications of this for the concept of the sovereign, liberal subject. While academics might think identity is a problematic concept, the Comaroffs suggested that in the world people act as if it exists. I was reminded of the importance of Joan Scott's intervention in feminist theory in this regard, with her argument that experience, and what is assumed to be "out there," needs to be historicized, interpreted, and understood in terms of representation rather than used as the foundation on which other analysis rests.

Toward the end of the workshop, [Sarah Nuttall](#) spoke on a panel titled "Wreckages of Utopia" about what it might mean to think about a hopeful future for her daughter in South Africa and wanted to be able to offer her generation something other than living beyond the pain of racial, cultural, and economic difference. She suggested looking toward the future by turning away from the past and its wreckages, and she

provocatively added that postcolonial theory should be put in the pile of ruins, explaining that in South Africa "difference" was used to reinforce apartheid and separation. Women Studies Director [Ranjana Khanna](#) offered an alternative perspective when she brought into the discussion an understanding of the concept of difference informed by French feminist theory, postcolonial theory, psychoanalysis and deconstruction, based on an acknowledgement of difference as radical alterity, something she had discussed a few days earlier in her talk. Khanna suggested attending to rather than avoiding wreckages, understanding the waste produced by colonialism and its aftermath and the affective relationship to that waste.

Theory from the south understood in terms of a feminist theory offers insight into the disciplinary assumptions of other fields. The JWTC workshop thus gave me a unique and exciting opportunity to see the power and significance of what feminist theory has to offer in its internationalist and interdisciplinary dimensions, and its radical concept of difference.



At the JWTC, another Duke student, Aude Dieudé discovered "a richness of possibilities in regards to critical, historical and literary perspectives," thanks (in part) to a travel award from Women's Studies.



Congratulations to ... Jean Fox O’Barr, founding director of the Program in Women’s Studies was honored with the **University Medal for Distinguished Meritorious Service** one of Duke’s highest awards, at Founders’ Day Convocation on September 30.

Rebecca Stein who has been awarded tenure and promoted to Associate Professor of Cultural Anthropology and Women’s Studies.

Our 09-10 postdoc **Lindsey Green-Simms** who is now Visiting Assistant Professor of English at the College of Charleston.

Katja Altpeter-Jones (2003 PhD in German Studies and Certificate in Women’s Studies) who was promoted to Associate Professor and awarded tenure at Lewis & Clark in Portland, Oregon.

Our five graduate certificate students: **Alexis Pauline Gumbs** (Founder, Eternal Summer of the Black Feminist Mind, <http://blackfeministmind.wordpress.com>), **Madhumita (Monu) Lahiri** (Postdoc, Center for Indian Studies in Africa, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg), **Shilyh Warren** (Adjunct Instructor, Film Program, North Carolina State University and Visiting Research Scholar, Women’s Studies, Duke), **Kadji Amin** (Assistant Professor of Cultural Studies, Humanities and French, Columbia College, Chicago), and **Kinohi Nishikawa** (Postdoc, Department of African American Studies, Northwestern University) in May.



EDITOR’S NOTE

For some reason, this summer flew by and once again, we’re knee-deep in all things Women’s Studies! In fact, you could say, not only knee-deep, but bursting at the seams. In addition to the hiring of **Kimberly Lamm** and **Frances Hasso**, and new postdocs **Eva Hayward** and **Kris Weller** (you read about on page 11), another postdoc, **Miles Grier**, has joined us for the next two years, courtesy of the Office of the Provost, and will be profiled in the spring issue. And we are pleased to introduce **Marialana Weitzel**, our new (well, already with us since January!) staff assistant. You will hear her cheerful voice if you call or see her smiling face if you visit—and we are smiling to have her as part of our team.

As has occurred in the past, we have more news than can possibly fit in these pages so we’ve developed a new feature on our website called “Staying Connected.” Here you’ll easily be able to sign up for our newsletter or listserv announcements and get a digital look at what our current students are doing in the world, as well as our alumnae, in “Where Are They Now?” We hope YOU will make a short video clip to let us know what you’re doing and HOW you’re doing. Our audience would love to know how Women’s Studies has influenced your life and/or how it’s impacting your work. To get an idea and catch the first glimpse of our students and alums, visit our website at womenstudies.duke.edu under Stay Connected. And when you have your video ready for posting, upload to Youtube or iTunes and send an email with the link to let me know!

It goes without saying that all we do would not be possible without your help. With this newsletter we stay in contact with over 5000 individuals however, less than 2% of those individuals are donors. Your gift of \$50 or more makes it possible to publish this newsletter or fund our teaching, research, and student support. Please consider supporting our continued outreach to alumnae/i by becoming a Friend of Women’s Studies and enjoy the months ahead!

melanie mitchell

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Juanita Morris Kreps (1921-2010)

Juanita M. Kreps, a member of the Duke faculty since 1955, died on July 5th in Durham, NC. After receiving a Duke master's degree and doctorate in economics, Kreps later returned to Duke and became dean of the Woman's College, associate provost, and vice president. In 1972 she became the first woman to hold the James B. Duke professor of economics, and the first woman to be named a director of the New York Stock Exchange. From 1977 to 1979, she was President Jimmy Carter's secretary of commerce, the first woman and the first economist to hold this post. Always a strong advocate for women, Kreps was a supporter of the Program in Women's Studies throughout the 1980s and was influential in securing our current "home" in the East Duke Building. She will be deeply missed.

Owing to the generosity of our donors, the following award recipients were selected and announced in May:

Women's Studies 2010-2011 Dissertation Fellowships

- **Ka Man Calvin Hui** (Program in Literature)
- **Ignacio Adriasola Munoz** (Art, Art History & Visual Studies)

Graduate Scholars Colloquium 2010-2011 Leaders

- **Lindsey Andrews** (English)
- **China Medel** (Program in Literature)

Gender and Race Research Awards given to undergraduate and graduate students whose projects promote scholarly exploration and research on topics of gender and race.

- **Lindsey Andrews** (English) for "Experimental Treatment: Art and Alternatives to the Pathologization of Race and Gender in American Medicine"
- **Erica Fretwell** (English) for "Senses of Belonging: The Syn/aesthetics of Citizenship in Post-bellum American Literature"

Ernestine Friedl Research Awards given to an advanced graduate student whose dissertation explores the cultural, social, and biological construction of gender.

- **Kathleen Antonioli** (Romance Studies) for "L'amateur est devenue professionnelle": Colette, Professionalism and Gendered Literary Production"
- **Cristina Ruiz** (Romance Studies) for "Bad Girls on Stage: the Representation of Music Hall Artists in Popular Culture in Spain (1900-1936)"
- **Johanna Schuster-Craig** (Germanic Languages and Literatures) for "Gender and Representation in Contemporary Turkish-German Identity Politics"

Dora Anne Little Award given to a student at the undergraduate or graduate level who has excelled in service to the campus and community which extends beyond the classroom.

- **Song Kim** (2011/ Women's Studies & Chemistry) for "Intimate Citizenship" in the Transnation: Filipina Migrants in South Korea"