

Director's Column

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



One of my colleagues jokes that Duke seems to have a biannual national sex scandal, and each time Women's Studies has a teachable moment supplied to it! Duke is by no means unusual in terms of the broad issues that have an impact on university campuses, for example the dynamics and context of interracial

sexual violence; new media, social media, and the parody and production of public sexual commentary; erotic labor of various sorts and its link to university campuses through the recruitment of college age men and (mostly) women. But the media seems to love us.

This year, Women's Studies as a name appeared as a trope from the beginning of the "Belle Knox" scandal. While first year students do not usually declare a major, Belle, within the pornography she produced as well as in her public appearances and writing, has identified herself as a Women's Studies student or major. In the pornography, her status as a Women's Studies student becomes the occasion for the staging of some abuse, and is linked to some masochistic fantasy, which partially includes slut shaming and a simultaneous idea of sexual empowerment. In her writing in the *Duke Chronicle*, Women's Studies and the feminist scholarship and activism that emerged as a debate in the late 1970's and early 1980's, becomes the occasion for responding to slut shaming through the language of so-called pro-sex or sex-positive feminists. As we look back on the anti-pornography works of that moment—for example, those by Andrea Dworkin or Catherine MacKinnon, one realizes that the accusations of sexual puritanism by pro-sex feminists were perhaps overstated, and the work feminists did against the pornography industry are ones that many sex workers benefit from today. The anti-pornography civil rights ordinance, indeed has major limitations. But it also allowed women harmed in pornography production to seek damages through civil courts. Dworkin and MacKinnon did not entertain the possibilities of sexual pleasure for women or by women in pornography, nor the question of

agency in masochistic pornography in which contractual violence may be staged. Pro-sex feminists quite rightly criticized them for the way in which they provided an anti-sex position, particularly in the moment in which they allied themselves with social and religious conservatives. However, they did not participate in slut shaming or moral indignation against sex workers, even if they lobbied for an understanding of pornography as a civil rights violation.

Run of the mill slut shaming, which is part of a sexist culture in which consumers of pornography condemn its actors, needs to be understood as distinct from arguments made by anti-pornography feminists of a certain era. Similarly, pro-sex attitudes need to be understood as distinct conceptually from marketing strategies even if these overlap inevitably in actuality.

Much of the work that has been done on masochistic production (for example, Isaac Julien's short film *The Attendant*, or Gilles Deleuze's essay *Coldness and Cruelty*—the introduction to Sacher Masoch's novel *Venus in Furs*) addresses how masochistic desire emerges partly from the art and historical context in which we live. *The Attendant* stages the complicated history of masochistic imagery in the context of the art gallery (and of

continued on page 2

OUR GRADUATING SENIORS



Sunny Frothingham, Danielle Nelson, Katie Jones, Cara Peterson, Colleen O'Connor, Melissa Miller, Nupur Gulati, Yunyi Li

Spring Events

Wilberforce's home) to think of the lasch as an erotic object of fantasy in interracial gay sex. *The Attendant* would fall under some notion of high art but plays with the problem of such a category for thinking about masochistic sexual fantasy in the art museum, which has aestheticized slavery such that masochistic fantasy is produced. Sacher Masoch's novel similarly stages a relationship to a Renaissance painting and the aristocratic male's masochistic fantasy that emerges, such that an inversion of the marriage contract is produced to parody the masochism implicit in that contract. Truth and lies, self-promotion and private fantasy, public and private are all turned on their head, as is violation and pleasure, in sexual fantasy.

Today, in trying to think through the production of pornography and masochistic desire, we need to move forward from a discourse stuck in anti-pornography or pro-sex debate to understand how the pornography industry is just like any other, and also how it may be distinct. We need to understand too how such fetishized ideas of consent and contract have themselves produced certain sexualities. And we also need to be able to understand desire as a potentiality and a fulfillment as well as a marketing production that produces pleasures that may be destructive and dangerous and productive of violation. Today these seeming opposites cannot be seen in opposition because the markets saturate sexual desire like anything else. The intimate and the public are no longer adequate oppositions through which to understand sex. And choice is a problematic synonym for empowerment.

I want to thank Pete Sigal for organizing a panel to open up a conversation about sex work, and for inviting the co-sponsorship of Women's Studies. We are planning further panels to try to understand this complex issue of erotic labor and the manner in which university students (not only at Duke) have demands made on their bodies as sexed and sexual objects.

1/27	Graduate Scholars Colloquium , Stephanie Rytlahti (History) "Radical Congregants: Protestant Churches in North Carolina's Feminist and Gay Liberation Movements"
2/24	Graduate Scholars Colloquium , Calina Ciobanu (English and Women's Studies) "Rewriting the Human at the End of the Anthropocene"
3/3	Pre Print with Yvonne Welbon, Humanities Writ Large Visiting Faculty Fellow. A forum to review literary works-in-progress by Women's Studies Faculty
3/5	In Print: A Celebration of Gender-Related Publications by Duke Faculty (see page 10)
3/21-22	Eighth Annual Feminist Theory Workshop Keynote Speakers: Karen Barad (University of California, Santa Cruz), Penelope Deutscher (Northwestern University), Karen Engle (University of Texas, Austin), and Alondra Nelson (Columbia University)
3/31	Graduate Scholars Colloquium , Katherine Costello (Literature) "Traveling History: French Feminism and the French Women's Liberation Movement"
4/1	Martha Kenney, 2013-14 WST Postdoctoral Associate , "Epigenetic Metamorphoses: Daphnia Magna and Apollo"
4/4	Discussion by Caren Kaplan , (UC Davis) "The Balloon Prospect: Aerostatic Observation and the Emergence of Militarised Aeromobility"
4/7	Lecture by Ruth Mueller , (Lund University) "Critical Care: Care, Critique, and the Normative Structure of Science"
4/8	Gender and Science Panel Discussion: Careers in Science: Identifying Current Challenges, Imagining Different Futures, with Cassandra Fraser (Chemistry, University of Virginia), Ruth Müller (Research Policy Group, Lund University), and Irene Liu (Biology, Duke University)
4/9	Panel Discussion: Sex and Sex Work
4/14	Pre Print with Stephanie Clare, 2013-14 WST Postdoctoral Associate: A forum to review literary works-in-progress by Women's Studies Faculty
4/15	Gloria Steinem Talk , part of the Jean Fox O'Barr Distinguished Speaker Series
4/16	Annual Queer Theory lecture with Heather Love , (University of Pennsylvania) "The natural history of queer"
4/17	Freedom Means Everybody: A lecture by Mab Segrest (Connecticut College)
4/23 - 27	Breaking Out Exhibit: Bryan Center
4/24	Women's Studies Graduation with Distinction Presentations and Celebration
5/9	Women's Studies Graduation Recognition Ceremony and Reception
5/11	Commencement

*Please check our website for more information:
<http://womenstudies.duke.edu>*

by Layla Aldousany



“In addition to being the first Black person to receive a Ph.D from Duke, Owens was also the first woman to earn a doctorate in biochemistry and physiology.”



“I just happened to be in the right place at the right time.” So said Dr. Ida Stephens Owens of her doctoral work at Duke in the recent documentary “The Education of Ida Owens: Science, Civil Rights, and the Integration of Duke University.” Produced by the Graduate School at Duke University and screened this past month at the Nasher Museum of Art, the documentary focuses on Dr. Owens’s remarkable life as well as her many achievements both at Duke and beyond.

A North Carolina native, Ida Owens grew up on a farm in Whiteville, NC. When she began her undergraduate work at North Carolina Central University in Durham, NC, it was during a time when, in Owen’s own words, “segregated schools were ... a way of life ... you thought you couldn’t change.” During her undergraduate career at NCCU, she worked with molecular biologist Dr. Mary Townes, an African-American woman with a Ph.D. in zoology from the University of Michigan, whom Dr. Owens quickly adopted as a role model. When Dr. Owens was recruited by Dr. Daniel Tosteson to join Department of Physiology at Duke University in the early 1962, Duke had only very recently voted to integrate its graduate and professional schools. That same year, the Board of Trustees voted to desegregate Duke’s undergraduate programs as well; in the fall of 1963, the first African-American undergraduate students enrolled at Duke.

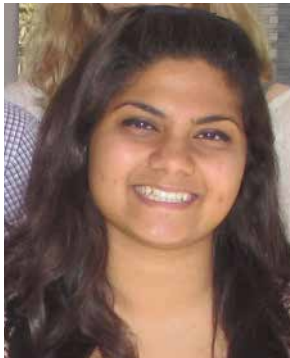
With regards to her decision to attend Duke, Dr. Owens remembers thinking, “This is an opportunity. Just see where it goes.” At Duke, Dr. Owens worked with Dr. Jacob J. Blum, and upon her graduation in 1967, she became the first African-American woman to receive her doctorate from Duke University, earning a Ph.D. in Physiology.

After graduating from Duke University, Dr. Owens completed postdoctoral training and established a career at the National Institute of Health in Bethesda, Maryland. Here, she completed groundbreaking research on drug detoxifying enzymes. In addition to this, Dr. Owens has made important contributions to the field through uncovering the genetic basis of diseases such as Crigler-Najjar syndrome, a disorder that affects the metabolism of bilirubin. Dr. Owens has been lauded for her many accomplishments; for example, in 1992, she received the NIH-Director’s Award for her work on UGT, and in addition to being widely published, was recognized by the American Asthma Foundation as in the top 5% of cited authors for journals in pharmacology. In 2013, she was the recipient of the Graduate School’s Distinguished Alumni Award. Indeed, as the documentary about Owens states, “What she did in terms of trailblazing was foundational.”

When discussing Dr. Owens’s accomplishments in the documentary, “The Education of Ida Owens,” Dr. Raymond Gavins commented that, “She would probably balk at being considered an activist, but for the example she was setting? For what her achievement would mean for African-American students who would be applying behind her?”

In addition to these achievements during her time at Duke, though, Dr. Owens would continue to set an example through her expert work as a physiologist at the National Institute of Health where she currently serves as the head of the Section on Genetic Disorders of Drug Metabolism, a position she has held since its formation in 1988.

Senior Stories



Nupur Gulati

Through the demanding yet extremely rewarding last four years of college, I have learned firsthand that life is everything that happens to you while you are busy making other plans. I arrived at Duke in the fall of 2010 absolutely sure of two things: that I would major in biology and that I would attend medical school after graduation. I did not even attempt to entertain any other options. The summer after my first year, I worked for three months in a small fishing village in rural Kenya, teaching math and science to girls in a school made entirely of mud and straw, and I conducted research on the need for sanitary pads for women in the area. In that environment, I experienced my first real-world exposure to the injustice of gender disparity and the domino effect of issues such as health and education disparity that follow. The culturally accepted

norm was that a girl is only worth the amount she fetches for her dowry. This mindset affected a girl's ability to get an education as well as her ability to access healthcare, neither of which many of the girls I worked with were able to do.

I still distinctly remember the anger and indignation I felt then. At the time, the injustice of being a woman in Kenya seemed to be a "Kenya problem," and upon completion of my project, I looked forward to returning home to "equality." However, I was horrified to find that there were many issues at home regarding injustices based on sex, but I had just been too ignorant to realize them before. I realized I could not suppress my need for answers and potential solutions, so I decided to declare a second major in women's studies, in addition to biology. The engaging academic dialogues as well as the supportive faculty have been key to my success in this discipline. I have much more to learn about the discipline, but I can say with confidence that I have learned more about myself than I ever thought to ask. Women's Studies has become the lens through which I understand the world as well as the one through which I rationalize the decisions I make.

My future plans still include medical school within the next two years, after which I plan to learn how to use my skills as a physician as well as my unique background in women's studies, biology, and international development to create new ways to empower women and change their health and education outcomes globally. In my two years before medical school, I will participate in either the Peace Corps or in the Blue Engine Fellowship. Regardless of the opportunity I choose, I plan to emphasize mentoring and empowering young women, specifically those from disadvantaged backgrounds.



Danielle K. Nelson

I wrote my way into feminism. Sophomore year, I began writing for a feminist blog on campus and little by little, my feminist consciousness was sparked. But even though I was "doing" feminism, I still felt ambivalent about labels. I had neither a solid grasp of the history of feminism nor an understanding of the rich theoretical frameworks that comprise feminist thought. I ended one of my pieces in December of 2011 with the shameful fear-ridden, "I'm not an angry feminist, but..." The thing is, I most surely was an angry feminist. I was beginning to take note of instances of sexism, racism, and classism on our campus after taking Intro to Latino Studies. That class jolted my sense of self as our readings and class discussion delved into the intricacies of identity politics. Throughout that semester, I felt a shift in my thinking and I replaced my lulled

complacency with the hunger for more theory, more concepts, more words. I needed a space and a language to work through these new questions. I felt isolated and silenced in my own head until I stumbled into Women's Studies.

I like to think that Women's Studies taught me how to speak a new language. The following semester I took Gender and Language with Edna Andrews and Queer Theory with Antonio Viego. In Queer Theory, I was exposed to theory for the first time and although I struggled with the difficulty posed in the texts, what that class did was open my eyes – I began to feel an affinity for the theoretical ideas and the way in which these scholars articulated their

arguments. The summer after my sophomore year, I took a stab at a reading list of core feminist texts and I haven't stopped reading ever since.

My feminist awakening was sharp and quick. In these past two years, I have entirely redefined my conceptualization of the self, defixing the socially conditioned categories of identity that I had internalized as fact. I thought I knew who "I" was, but each of my Women's Studies courses has further deepened my understanding of just what informs cultural perceptions of race, gender, class, and sexuality. Being a Women's Studies major has empowered me in unthinkable ways and each of my courses – Kimberly Lamm's Gender and Popular Culture, Kathi Weeks' Money, Sex, and Power, Diane Nelson's Gender and Sexuality in Latin America, and Ranjana Khanna's Thinking Gender – has in its own way prompted my little epiphanies. These aha moments, as it were, have left an indelible mark on not only my scholarship, but also my life as a woman, a feminist, a writer, and a critical thinker. From travel grants for a summer internship at Ms. Magazine to the Sylvia Plath Archive in the Mortimer Rare Book Room at Smith College for senior thesis research, Women's Studies has provided me with so many wonderful opportunities for which I am very grateful. In the next few years, I hope to pursue a PhD in English, Literature, or Women's Studies so that I can continue to learn and explore the nuanced workings of the language that shapes us.



Colleen O'Connor

"It is in the recognition of the genuine conditions of our lives that we gain the strength to act and our motivation to change" --Simone de Beauvoir

I knew from the ripe age of four that gender played an important part of my life. A boy in my kindergarten class grabbed a block from my hand and told me that only boys played with blocks. Growing up with two brothers and a plethora of toys to choose from, I felt a tension with the gendered restriction in my actions. The block incident exemplifies just one piece to the jigsaw puzzle that describes my feminism. Due to Women's Studies, my feminist ideology has grown beyond equal rights for women and men to considering the intersectionalities of identity. Women's Studies has provided me

with an understanding of systemic identity politics. It has expanded my feminist work—I now find myself working towards a movement to end a sexist oppression that encompasses racism, classism, and sexism.

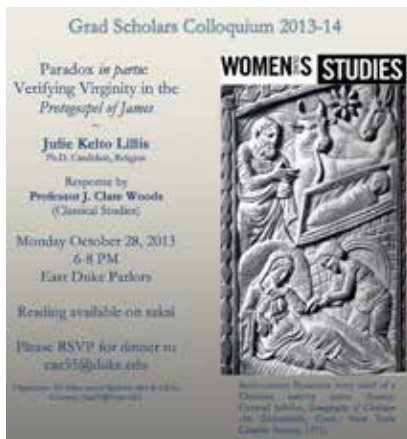
Women's Studies has been an integral part of my personhood, with my mother and grandmother intimately involved in the Women's Studies Program at Duke as I was growing up. It seems fitting that I too would take on this path since feminism is so personal and integral to our everyday lives. Feminism is the lens through which I analyze and interpret my world. My first Women's Studies course was "Feminist Art in the 1970s" taught by Professor Kimberly Lamm. Her revolutionary course prompted me not to be afraid to continually question and challenge my surroundings—from art and media to campus constructions of race, sexuality, and gender. Through my Senior Seminar with Professor Gabriel Rosenberg I also feel a pulse of connection to my roots as a third generation female Dukie, which has engaged me to trace through documents of the Woman's College and the Women's Studies Program at the Sallie Bingham Center. I am so thankful for Women's Studies in allowing me to foster and bloom into a confident, independent academic and leader.

Women's Studies allowed me to explore multiple perspectives on feminism, from gender bias in language to the concept of heteronormativity. It has provided me with the analytical tools to deeply understand power and privilege dynamics. Women's Studies has instilled in me the passion to do anti-sexist and anti-racist work. Through Women's Studies I became involved in the Women's Center both through DukeEngage in New York and as a Community Building and Organizing Intern. The activism is in perfect harmony to my theoretical knowledge that has been fostered in my Women's Studies courses. I seek to continue feminist work in the legal realm as well as in my daily interactions.

Words cannot describe my thanks to everyone who has contributed pieces to my feminist puzzle. I would like to give a special thanks to my family, Dr. Jean O'Barr, Dr. Janie Long, and my advisor Professor Kimberly Lamm. Thank you for your constant support and for challenging me both personally and academically.

2013-14 Graduate Scholars Colloquium Report

Now in its tenth year, the Women's Studies Graduate Scholars Colloquium continues to offer a forum for graduate students and faculty to discuss their work. We kicked off the year with a panel discussion titled "Women's Studies Across the Disciplines," featuring presentations by Duke Professors Jessica Namakkal (International Comparative Studies), Gabriel Rosenberg (Women's Studies), and Ara Wilson (Women's Studies and Cultural Anthropology). The discussion was based on Ann Laura Stoler's essay, "Tense and Tender Ties: The Politics of Comparison in North American History and (Post) Colonial Studies." In this sweeping essay, Stoler examines the "dense transfer points" between intimacy and empire in order to identify the limitations of nation-based analytical models and to outline the utility of transnational methods. Our panelists discussed the importance of interdisciplinary analysis, but also the challenges it poses. They pointed out that this mode of analysis presupposes material privileges not shared by all scholars and institutions. They suggested that rigorous interdisciplinary research requires a mapping of institutional practices and the political economy of academic knowledge production. Nonetheless, the panelists appreciated Stoler's intervention, which filled a lacuna in studies of colonialism and empire by examining the American context. By focusing on intimacy and the gendering of the ordinary, Stoler reveals links between various formations of power and systems of social organization. In the lively conversation that ensued, we discussed the implications of interdisciplinarity and comparative analysis for feminist studies. Professor Ranjana Khanna mentioned alternative methodological approaches as well, including recent experiments in literary studies that blend methods from the social sciences and the humanities.



At our October meeting, Julie Kelto Lillis (Ph.D. Candidate in Religion) presented her work-in-progress, "Paradox in partu: Verifying Virginity in the Protogospel of James." For Julie, the established scholarship on the second-century text, Protogospel of James, has largely relied on androcentric assumptions about the meaning of virginity and childbirth. In her revisionist account, Julie argued that this text puts forth multiple understandings of virginity, which give us variegated accounts of Mary's corporeality and her relation to divinity. In her comments, Professor J. Clare Woods (Classical Studies) emphasized the importance of Julie's work, which joined other feminist-informed studies of Early Christianity to map out the points of overlap between the evolution of Christology and Maryology. In the discussion, Julie answered questions about what it means to translate terms from Late Ancient times for contemporary readings informed by feminist theory. She also addressed the methodological challenges associated with taking the figure of Mary as an object

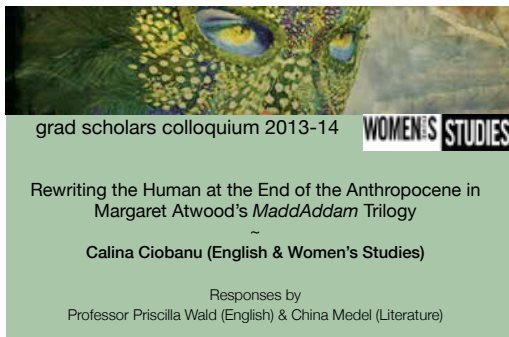
of study, and reflected on the multiple dimensions involved in revising the historiographical account of Mary given the limitations of Early Christian archives.

Our November meeting featured Erin Arizzi (Ph.D. Candidate in Communication Studies at UNC), who presented from a dissertation chapter titled "Joan Didion: 1968-1979: 'Finding a Female Way of Being Serious.'" Erin's paper took up femininity as a genre that "structures the way contemporary women understand themselves and their identities," using the life and work of Joan Didion as a case study. Stephanie Rytlahti (Ph.D. Candidate in History) and Katherine Costello (Ph.D. Candidate in Literature) offered responses to Erin's work. While Stephanie drew our attention to the significance of Erin's argument that today's "new domesticity" does away with the dividing line between the public (wage-earning) and private (domestic) spheres, Katherine asked us to think about what it might mean to recuperate Joan Didion for feminist

Thanks to a very generous gift from Mary Jones matched by the Mary Duke Biddle Foundation, we will be refurbishing the East Duke parlors this summer. We will discretely be updating them to make them more technologically suitable for today's university. They will retain their original charm but will be more usable. Our current budget only allows us to put technology in place for one parlor. However, our desire is to make them both technology-ready. You will see updates in subsequent newsletters.

thought. This opened onto a discussion of the relation between femininity as a genre and femininity as a norm; if femininity is a genre, Katherine asked, what is it a genre of? From there, the group went on to consider the question of exemplarity and the case study form, closing with a discussion of the blog as a new type of communication technology that does away with the line between public and private; for this, we took Ree Drummond's blog, "The Pioneer Woman," as our reference point.

In January, Stephanie Rytilahti (Ph.D. Candidate in History) presented a chapter-in-progress titled "Radical Congregants: Reshaping Religion and Re-Imagining Gay Liberation in 1980s North Carolina," with Amey Victoria Adkins (Ph.D. Candidate in Religion) and Georgia Paige Welch (Ph.D. Candidate in History) responding. Drawing on interviews with gay-rights activists, Stephanie's work offered up a historical account of the relation between the gay liberation movement and liberal churches in the Research Triangle, arguing for a revision of historical accounts that portray the movement as hyper-secular and divorced from religion. Amey opened up our discussion by asking how we might begin to unpack the relation between the gay liberation movement and the Black Church, while Paige focused our attention on the question of what it means for the church to become a battleground for various forms of social and political recognition and inclusion. Finally, Professor Ara Wilson asked whether, in light of the religious right's deployment of homophobia for political ends, the "secularization hypothesis" accurately reflected the lived experience of those who participated in the gay liberation movement.



In February, Calina Ciobanu (Ph.D. Candidate in English) presented from a dissertation chapter titled "Rewriting the Human at the End of the Anthropocene in Margaret Atwood's MaddAddam Trilogy." The piece examined Atwood's recent post-apocalyptic series in order to argue that any possibility of remaking the world at the end of the Anthropocene requires not just an overhaul of mankind's relation to other species, but also a radical retooling of the relation between "man" and "woman" as well. The two responses came from Professor Priscilla Wald (English) and China Medel (Ph.D. Candidate in Literature). Professor Wald drew out the connections between Calina's work and Dipesh Chakrabarty's "The Climate of History,"

focusing especially on the links between theorizations of the Anthropocene and the domain of biopolitics (as per Michel Foucault's *Society Must be Defended*). China, meanwhile, emphasized the connection between Calina's work on disposable life and neoliberal regimes of production and consumption. The ensuing conversation opened up onto a discussion of sexual difference, *écriture féminine*, and the significance of literary figuration within the larger dissertation project.

Photo Credit: Catherine Deudon, October 6th, 1979



At our March meeting, Katherine Costello (Ph.D. Candidate in Literature) discussed her dissertation chapter titled "Traveling History: 'French Feminism' and the French Women's Liberation Movement." Katherine's larger project examines the invention of "French Feminism" in the American academy. By revising the historiography of this discursive construct, and analyzing it in conversation with feminist formations in France, such as the Women's Liberation Movement, Katherine argues that the American academic construction of "French Feminism" dislodged this body of thought from its history. In her response, Leah Allen (Ph.D. Candidate in Literature) pointed out the significance of Katherine's dissertation project, which allows us to understand "French Feminism" not only as a theoretical formation, but also a historiographical

problematic. Leah also asked what it might mean to engage with a historiography of feminism that incorporates figures such as Antoinette Fouque and Andrea Dworkin. The group's discussion considered the methodological, theoretical, and political implications of Katherine's revisionist account of the invention of "French Feminism" in the American academy.

MELLON PROJECT, SCIENCE STUDIES AS AREA STUDIES

By Ara Wilson, Associate Professor of
Women's Studies and Cultural Anthropology

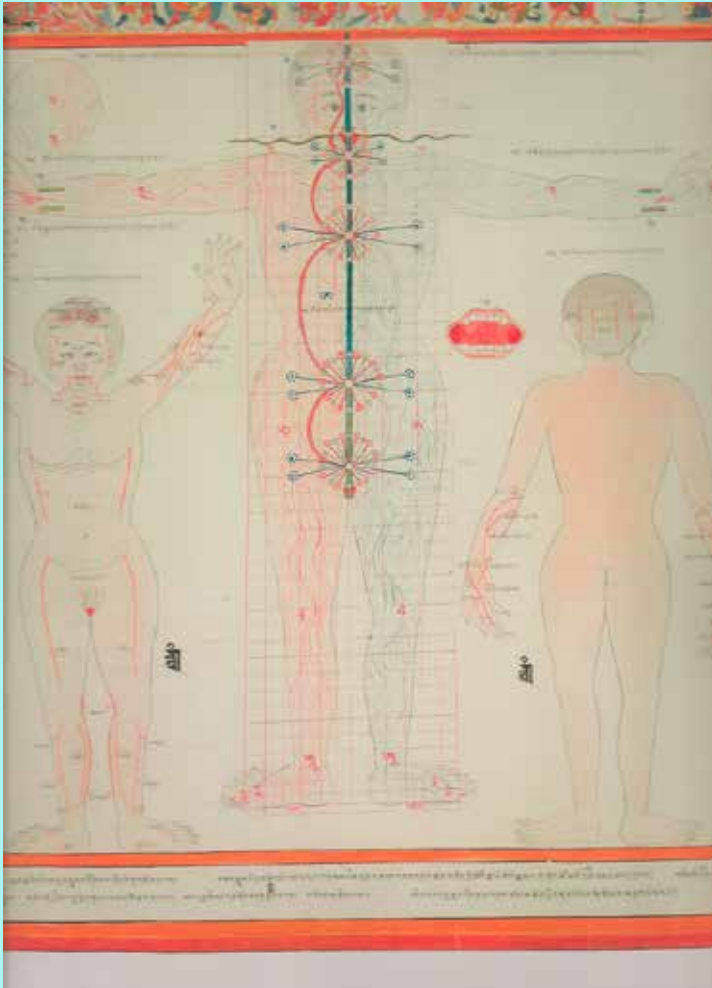


Photo credit: Tibetan Medical Paintings by Serindia Publications

As Asia emerges as a leader in global biotechnology and medicine, scholars are studying what the location of Asia means for scientific modernity. How does location matter for science? What part did medicine play in colonialism in Asia? How do Asian and Western healing practices relate to each other? How are Asian projects defining directions of biomedical research? Many of the leading scholars exploring these questions engage gender scholarship particularly around such topics as embodiment, reproduction, or hysteria. Several Duke Women's Studies faculty and graduate students were involved in a 2013-2014 project on these questions that involved lectures, a day long workshop, and linked courses. The project's name, *Science Studies as Area Studies*, highlights the interchange between the

two interdisciplinary fields of Science and Technology Studies (STS) and Asian Studies. Funded by a grant from the Mellon Foundation Partnership in a Global Age program, the project was directed by Ara Wilson (Women's Studies) and Harris Solomon (Cultural Anthropology), and coordinated by Women's Studies Certificate student Ali Mian.

In Fall 2014, the Mellon Asian Science Studies project was connected to a Women's Studies graduate seminar on Feminist Science Studies, which included lectures by medical anthropologists and STS scholars. A day-long workshop in February featured discussion of papers by leading feminist anthropologists and a historian that tackled the intersection of Asia and STS in different ways. Ahwa Ong's (UC-Berkeley) work examined Singaporean scientists' understanding of bioethics in their work in Malaysia, Africa, and Singapore; the paper by Naveeda Khan (Johns Hopkins University) offered a textured portrait of precarious lifeways in Bangladesh that modeled ways to explore STS theory and environmental-studies questions through ethnography; Vincanne Adams (UC-San Francisco), Mei Zhan (UC-Irvine) and historian Judith Farquhar (Chicago) provide in-depth portraits of examples of "traditional" Asian medicine in Tibet (Adams) and China (Zhan and Farquhar).

Introducing the workshop, Dean of Arts and Sciences Laurie Patton drew on examples from her research on women Sanskritists in India, making links between the gendered nature of STEM and humanistic "traditional" fields of study. Several of the papers outlined a complex view of "traditional" Asian medicine, showing long-term interaction with Western science while also analyzing the different epistemological orientations to causality and entities, for example, in gynecological treatment in Tibet. The papers provide a different portrait of scientific modernity in Asia, one that replaces a vision of scientific modernity as a wholesale import from the West with a more interactive and layered history. Revising the Western-centric story of scientific modernization in Asia in turn changes perspectives on how bioethics are codified, what counts as tradition, and the cross-cultural nature of biomedical innovation. The participants at the workshop had read presenters' papers and engaged in a cross-cutting dialogue about each piece and the broader themes.

At this February workshop, Naveeda Khan's paper presented a beautifully rendered depiction of life in the midst of erosion with a portrait of the gendered modes of making sense of living on river islands that erode and reform in Bangladesh. A subsequent event extended the project's attention to South Asia. The author of *Where There is No Midwife: Birth and Loss in Rural India*,

Photo credit: Diagnosis by touch and observation in the Mentsikhang. From Technologies, Love and Misrecognition: Science in Tibet by Vincanne Adams



Professor Sarah Pinto is also incoming director of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Tufts University. We discussed both her recent ethnographic work on women in mental institutions in India and a new project tracing the long history of hysteria, by its many names, in flows between South Asian, Persian, and Mediterranean since antiquity.

This one-year project meshed with the Duke Women's Studies theme year on Feminist Science Studies. It exemplifies the way that Women's Studies provides a cutting-edge platform for the interdisciplinary exploration of questions relevant to conversations in area studies, science studies, colonial and post-colonial studies.

For more information, see <http://sites.duke.edu/stsasla/>.

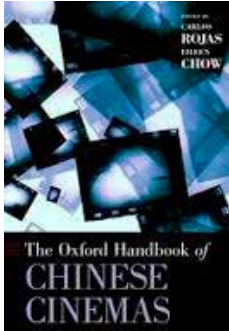
“The Tibetan Image of ‘subtle energies,’ is also translated as ‘biofields’ in Western medical vocabulary.”

- WST 278 Nature/Nuture Sex Gender Course**
– Ara Wilson
- WST 890S Feminism, Visuality & Space/Grad**
– Elizabeth Grosz
- WST 199S Thinking Gender**
– Elizabeth Grosz
- WST 740S Critical Genealogies Of Middle East Studies**
– Frances Hasso
- WST 275 Food, Farming, Feminism**
– Gabriel Rosenberg
- WST 202S Introduction To Sexuality Studies**
– Gabriel Rosenberg
- WST 295S Sex Work**
– Kathi Weeks
- WST 361 Money, Sex And Power**
– Kathi Weeks
- WST 270 Animals And Ethics**
– Kathy Rudy
- WST 366S Nature, Culture, And Gender**
– Kathy Rudy
- WST 89S First Year Seminar: Girls Going Global**
– Kimberly Lamm
- WST 362 Gender And Poplular Culture**
– Kimberly Lamm
- WST 960S Interdisciplinary Debates: psychoanalysis**
– Ranjana Khanna
- WST 363S Interpreting Bodies**
– TBD
- WST 385S Women in the Public Sphere**
– Rachel Seidman

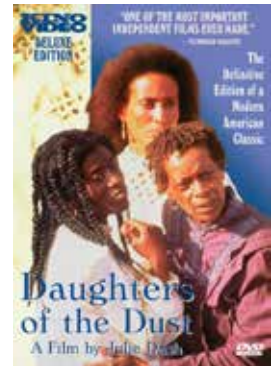
Check out our cross-listed courses listed on our website at:

<http://womenstudies.duke.edu/undergraduate/courses>

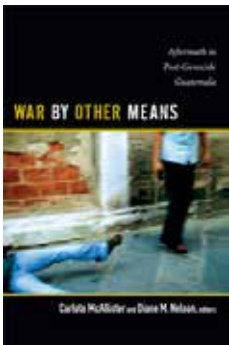
In Print was held in March and we were delighted to hear from our Duke colleagues as they read from their recent publications highlighting gender related works.



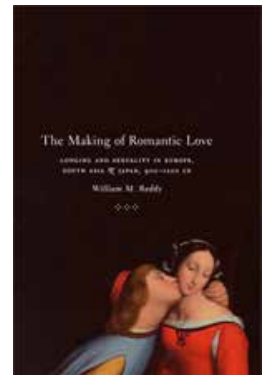
Carlos Rojas, Associate Professor of Chinese Cultural Studies, Women's Studies, & Arts of the Moving Image. He read from his article **"Along the Riverrun: Cinematic Encounters in the Work of Tsai Ming-liang,"** which appeared in *The Oxford Handbook of Chinese Cinemas*, co-edited with Eileen Cheng-yin Chow (also here at Duke).



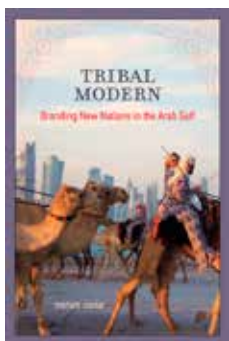
Yvonne Welbon, Associate Professor of Journalism and Media Studies at Bennett College for Women in Greensboro, NC and Humanities Writ Large visiting faculty fellow in Women's Studies at Duke University, read from **"Behind the Screen: The Making, Marketing and Distribution of Daughters of the Dust."**



Diane Nelson, Professor of Cultural Anthropology, Latin American and Caribbean Studies, & Women's Studies shared her co-edited book titled, *War by Other Means: Aftermath in Post Genocide Guatemala*. Co-edited with Carlota McAllister.



William Reddy, William T. Laprade Professor of History and Professor of Cultural Anthropology. *The Making of Romantic Love*, which was awarded the Pinkney Prize for the best 2012 book in French history by a North American scholar by the society for French Historical Studies.



miriam cooke, Professor of Arab cultures presented a piece from *Tribal Modern: Branding New Nations in the Arab Gulf*. *Tribal Modern* explodes the idea that the tribal is primitive, archaic and static.



Stephanie Clare, Postdoctoral Associate in Women's Studies read **"Feeling Cold"** an article she wrote for *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*

A collection of abstracts from Women's Studies Graduates with Distinction



Danielle K. Nelson

“Maker of Myself?” Unveiling the Critical Reception of Sylvia Plath and her Biographies

This project is the Winner of Duke University's 2014 Bascom Palmer Literary Prize. Congratulations to Danielle! This is a great honor for you and for our program.

*In this project, I take into account the expanse of Plath's archive in three separate chapters. Each will pertain to Plath's one novel, collections of poetry, and unabridged journals, respectively. The first chapter, “The Plathian Mystique” unpacks the complexity with which Plath writes (her)self into *The Bell Jar* – a psycho-social hybrid work that draws its fiction, in part, from the author's own biography. In a series of close readings of the packaging of *The Bell Jar*, I focus my attention on various images and explanatory textual material that appear on the dust jackets – from its early publication in 1966 to Faber and Faber's fiftieth anniversary edition in 2013 – I argue that the packaging, working in concert with the biographical treatment, cements a bullying narrative that chains Plath's art to the facts of her biography. At stake in this chapter is the question of whether or not it is possible to detach Plath's semi-autobiographical work from the insistence of the biographical treatment. With that being said, a guiding and perhaps unanswerable question for this chapter is: What does a reader, literary-critical or otherwise, make of a work that has always already been coded as biographical? In Chapter Two, “The Blood Jet Is Poetry,” Who Is Stopping It?, I engage with Plath's posthumous poetry collection,*

*Ariel, reading both Ted Hughes' and Plath's respective arrangements, one against the other. At stake for me in this chapter is the way in which the contrast reflected by these two different arrangements then enacts two radically different narratives with each arrangement roughly oriented around either the thematic notion of rebirth or transcendence. The final chapter, “The Blond One”: “I” Am “Her,” conceptualizes Plath's defiant “I” in the *Journals* as it resists the very life story that the biographical prescribes – fixed and constrained in its veneer of wholeness and singularity. In this way, I situate Plath's biographically contentious “I” within the critical frame offered in Adam Phillips' “The Death of Freud” where he writes of Freud's hostile antagonism toward his future biographers. In the resulting discussion, I proceed to unravel who and what comprises Plath's “biographers” through contextualizing*

the extent to which the biographical impulse and our hunger for truth and knowingness makes biographers of both reader and critic alike. In the end, this project is not a strict literary critique. Rather, this analysis works with and against the tension that Plath writes into her literature – effectively defixing (her)selves and unfettering her multifarious “I.”



Yunyi Li

Aesthetics of Privacy: Thinking Surveillance and Feminism through Contemporary Art



My honors thesis project, “Aesthetics of Privacy: Thinking Surveillance and Feminism through Contemporary Art,” primarily examines contemporary artists who work within the emerging genre of “surveillance art” and the ways in which they represent, respond to, and dissent against the growth of pervasive surveillance devices and technologies in the United States and throughout the world. These technologies include Google Glass, Google Street View, biometric technologies, social media, as well as state surveillance programs such as XKeyscore and PRISM. Since June 2013, when former National Security Agency contractor and whistleblower Edward Snowden began to leak previously classified documents regarding the United States intelligence agency, the public has had increasingly greater access to information regarding the inner-workings of surveillance practices as well as their impacts, coming to understand the newly exposed disciplinary gaze of surveillance as all-encompassing. No longer are only the figures of the criminal, the terrorist, the undocumented immigrant, the crooked politician affected; we have all become susceptible to the visual field of the surveillance state. While this is, in some ways, both a dystopian as well as a democratizing rhetoric, surveillance remains deeply

marked by divisions of gender, race, sexuality, and so on, both in concept and in practice. Although I take my title “Aesthetics of Privacy” from artist Adam Harvey’s artist statement, using feminist theories of film, visual culture, and the “male gaze” as a starting position (including the writings of John Berger and Laura Mulvey), I also argue that cultural anxiety regarding surveillance is not only a fear that one’s personal sense of privacy might be violated, nor is it only a matter of safety and national security. Rather, it is also an anxiety of being placed into a historically feminized position of hypervisibility under, in Judith Butler’s words, “the masculine privilege of the disembodied gaze.” The heart of my project is interested in a two-fold set of assumptions about visibility and invisibility, that at the same time visibility renders one subject to forms of social and state control and thus becomes a position of disempowerment, visibility also functions as a form of social recognition. This apparent contradiction also materializes within the field of surveillance art, as either a tendency towards self-exposure (as in the works of artist Hasan Elahi) or a tendency towards invisibility and imperceptibility (as in the works of Adam Harvey). Other artists I discuss in my project include: Arne Svenson, Michele Iversen, Cindy Sherman, and Zach Blas.



This project is the Winner of the Women's Studies 2014 Dora Anne Little service award. Congratulations to Sunny!

Sunny Frothingham

The Dormitories are Burning: Gender-Neutral Housing and Critical Trans* Politics in the Contemporary University

“What would a truly co-educational institution look like? It is exhilarating to envision such a place. It would be a world in which gender and sex do not spill over into every avenue of life...”

-Duke University President Nan Keohane 2002

While traditional college housing systems organize students along a binary of biological sex, many universities, like Duke University and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC- Chapel Hill), are beginning to address the inadequacies of sexed housing. Practically, sexed housing often fails to be a comfortable or safe environment for students who are trans*. Ideologically, sexed housing presupposes that all students will fit neatly within the sexed housing categories the college recognizes and enforces, and that biological sex is a stable foundation of difference.

In Chapter 1, I present a basic overview of Michel Foucault's understanding of power, in order to develop the context of gender-neutral housing policy in a broader critical trans* politics through the use of Dean Spade's *Normal Life*. Spade's conception of life-chances draws heavily from Foucault's biopolitics, which examines the way states and institutions shape people into neoliberal subjects—people who fit the needs of the market. I relate three modes of power, victim-perpetrator, disciplinary, and population management to gender neutral housing through Spade's critical trans* analysis, and Judith Butler's conceptions of normative gender performativity and compulsory heterosexuality. While attempting to change the administration of sex and gender by a higher education institution is most directly, in opposition to population management policies; I posit that a change in housing policy may have broader potential to decrease the incidence of perpetrator-victim violence and challenge the disciplinary norms that alienate trans* bodies. I also interrogate the potential for gender fluidity and gender queerness to be an asset to the human capital of the neoliberal subject, as produced in part by the institutional administration of gender.

In Chapter 2, I explore the historical precedent of American higher education institutions' power to reinforce and reproduce hierarchical prejudices in its politics of sexed spaces, racial and religious barriers, and codes of gender performance. More broadly, I explore the stakes the university holds, as a neoliberal institution, in gender and sex.

In Chapter 3, I posit elements of a comprehensive gender-neutral housing as a possible solution to address harassment of trans* students in university settings, through examples of efforts to reform university policies at Duke and UNC- Chapel Hill. In addition to publically available information about Duke and UNC-Chapel Hill, I come at the issue of gender-neutral housing from my experience in these spaces. By deliberately exploring cases that I am engaged with, committed to, and implicated in, I offer a perspective shaped by the knowledge production of my own activism. Especially given the relative newness of gender-neutral housing proposals at high profile universities, I see my experience as a valuable asset in explicating and analyzing what is at stake in higher education housing policy.

Chapter 4 offers an overview of the potential for gender-neutral housing to improve the safety and comfort of trans* students in college and the policy's repercussions for classification of gender on campus and in society. Here I reiterate and explicate the implications of gender-neutral housing in a neoliberal setting as a population control method, and explore the potential for gender fluidity to be co-opted for neoliberal ends.

Coming next fall...

Psychoanalysis in an International Frame

Each year since I have directed Women's Studies we have followed the interests of a faculty member (or of a few) and had a themed focus for two postdoctoral fellowships, a graduate course, an undergraduate course, and also for visiting speakers who come in and share their scholarship with us.

For 2014-2015, our theme will be Psychoanalysis in an International Frame. Psychoanalytic thought has, since its inception, been in dialogue with and partially constituted by feminist thinking. In its early years, many thought with and against Freud on the topic of female sexuality and femininity, from Helene Deutsch to Karen Horney, and from Karl Abraham to Ernest Jones. Feminist psychoanalysis contended with masculinist thinking and did much to change it. In feminist thought more generally, psychoanalysis has had a mixed status. Some have rejected it more or less wholesale, others have had more measured responses, and there have been elaborate and important interventions from feminist thinkers working within particular psychoanalytic traditions (for example, the Lacanian, the Freudian, or the Kleinian). The imbrication of psychoanalysis with feminism has been massive, and more often than not, it has shared with other strands of psychoanalytic social theory more generally, a deep investment in western Marxist analysis of culture following the work of critics such as Louis Althusser. From the 1970's on, the discourse linking feminism,

sexuality studies, and psychoanalysis has been vibrant and has been among the most compelling forms of critical analysis attempting to grasp what Jacqueline Rose, and later Judith Butler, understood as the psychic life of power.

What that body of work often failed to engage until more recently, however, was that psychoanalysis imagined itself from its inception at the turn of the twentieth century as an international force. Psychoanalytic institutes emerged all over the world in the early years of Freud's work, and his correspondence with those setting up institutes or grappling with local conditions and psyches marks psychoanalysis as a particular internationalist modernist enterprise. In 2014-2015, we will be coming to grips with the world, or perhaps more appropriately, the worlds of psychoanalysis, how it came into formation at a particular moment of empire and of state formation, how it spread, became distinct in its formation, how it erred from its original path but was informed by it, and how we understand those questions through a lens of sexual difference. Reaching back and forward we will address its various functions and foreclosures, its potentialities and its limitations.

*By Ranjana Khanna,
Margaret Taylor Smith Director of Women's Studies
Professor, English, Literature Program, Women's Studies*

WHERE IN THE WORLD: Women's Studies

Congratulations are in order to our 2013 Travel Award recipients. Their research, presentations and scholarship have spanned the globe. These scholars presented papers on women's rights, feminist theory, LGBT research, activism and gender relationships. We also supported students who received summer internships, attended international conferences, as well as those students who needed funds to further their research. See for yourself some of the interesting places our awardees have traveled to.

MAY 2013 TRAVEL AWARDEES

Leah Allen

Graduate Student: Literature
Presented "Before Gender: Uses of Sex in Second Wave Feminist Literary Criticism" at the Annual conference Women's and Gender Studies et Recherches Féministes. (Canada)

Yasmin Cho

Graduate Student: Cultural Anthropology
Presented "Buddhist Women" – Tibetan laywomen and their unique half-nun's way of living at the 13th International Association of Tibetan Studies Seminar at Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. (Asia)

Amalle Dublon

Graduate Student: Literature
Presented a paper on Sound, Reproductive Labor, and "Vibrational Ontologies" at the 19th Annual Performance Studies International Conference at Stanford University. (California)

Sarah (Sunny) Frothingham

Undergraduate Student
Major: Women's Studies & Public Policy
Delved into a variety of policy and research projects to gain valuable knowledge and understanding of key LGBT issues facing the nation at The Center for American Progress, a non-partisan think tank. (Washington, DC)

Steffen Kaupp

Graduate Student: German Studies
Presented a paper from on the topic "Changing images of the male body over time" at the Annual Coalition of Women conference in German. (Germany)

Danielle Nelson

Undergraduate Student
Major: Women's Studies
Awarded an editorial internship with Ms. Magazine in Los Angeles where she covered and articulated feminist scholarship throughout her writing contributions. (California)

Nikolas Sparks

Graduate Student: English
Presented "Black Radical Correspondence: Carcerality and the Production of Space at the 19th Annual Performance Studies International Conference at Stanford University. (California)

Kimberly Welch

Undergraduate Student
Major: Theater
Conducted research in Kampala, Uganda about women's education rights and how art for social change can be used as an avenue for advocacy. (Africa)

Louis Yako

Graduate Student: Cultural Anthropology
Conducted research on Iraqi academics and higher education in diaspora in London which included understanding gender issues and relations between men and women in Iraqi society. (London)

OCTOBER 2013 TRAVEL AWARDEES

Katherine Costello

Graduate Student: Literature
Presented a portion of her dissertation and organized a panel, "Critical Narratives: How and Why to Historicize the Stories of Feminism's Past," at the National Women's Studies annual conference. (Ohio)

Rachel Greenspan

Graduate Student: Literature
Attended the South Atlantic Modern Language Association's 2013 conference – "Cultures, Contexts, Images and Texts: Making Meaning in Print, Digital and Networked Worlds" (Georgia)

Ana Huang

Graduate Student: Cultural Anthropology
Presented a paper at the annual conference of the American Anthropological Association titled "Global Gay and Its Discontents." (Illinois)

Amanda Hughett

Graduate Student: History
Presented a paper titled "Dependent on the Hands of Charity: African American Women and the Politics of Poor Relief in Eastern North Carolina, 1865-1935," at the Southern Historical Conference. (Missouri)

Ali Mian

Graduate Student: Religion
Presented a paper at the at the annual Modern Language Association convention titled "The Body (Un)becoming: Naiza Khan's Queer-Feminist Art." (Illinois)

Danielle Nelson

Undergraduate Student
Major: Women's Studies
Conducted research at the Smith College Archives, Northampton and met with Karen Kukil, the Associate Curator of Special Collections. (Massachusetts)

Cara Peterson

Undergraduate Student
Major: Women's Studies & Public Policy
Attended the Ashoka U Exchange Conference and gained knowledge on "Diversity as an Asset for the Advancement of Social Entrepreneurship". (Rhode Island)

Sophie Smith

Graduate Student: Literature
Presented a paper titled "Affinity Without Affection?: Wives, Women, and the Play of Self-Interest in the Montgomery Bus Boycott," at the National Women's Studies Association annual conference. (Ohio)

John Stadler

Graduate Student: Literature
Submitted a panel proposal to the 2014 Society for Cinema and Media Studies Conference titled "Pedagogy of Pornography: The Current and Future Status of Porn Studies in Academia". (Seattle, WA)

Spring 2014 Newsletter

Become a Friend

The Program in Women's Studies continues to face more challenges providing for our undergraduates and graduate scholars. Expanding the classes we offer to attract more undergraduate majors and minors, finding the best faculty to teach those course offerings, maintaining the parlors — all are projects that keep us hard at work. Please consider becoming a **Friend of Women's Studies** by making your gift by credit card at Duke's secure credit card site (<https://www.gifts.duke.edu/>). Under the section Additional/Other Designations please type Friend of Women's Studies and in the Designation Comments box, please include NWS, fund code 399-2735. Or you can send your check (with NWS, **399-2735**, on the memo line) to Duke University, Alumni and Development Records, Box 90581, Durham, NC 27708. If your company has matching gifts, please consider helping us this way.

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