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## *Subnatures & Culinary Cultures*

An FHI Humanities Writ  
Large Program



# 2014-2015 Graduate Scholars Colloquium

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY FORUM FOR IDEAS

By Rachel Greenspan

PH.D. CANDIDATE, PROGRAM IN  
LITERATURE

The Women's Studies Graduate Scholars Colloquium provides a site of vibrant intellectual exchange for graduate students across the disciplines engaged in the study of gender and its multiple social, cultural, political and material implications. The colloquium is designed to address a range of issues emerging out of the work of its participants, as

well as other urgent questions in the field of Feminist Studies. In addition to graduate students (MA, PhD, and professional students), Women's Studies core, graduate, and affiliated faculty participate in the colloquium. Currently, the Graduate Scholars community has more than 50 active participants.

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# Director's Column



## Ranjana Khanna

MARGARET TAYLOR SMITH  
DIRECTOR OF WOMEN'S STUDIES

At the end of Spring semester 2015, I am stepping down as the Margaret Taylor Smith Director of Women's Studies. I took over the directorship from Robyn Wiegman in July 2007. The health of the program was already good at that time. Since then, there

have been changes, losses, gains, and many achievements for the faculty, graduate students, undergraduate students and staff in the program. I am delighted to report that the program is thriving.

Our undergraduate students have gone on to careers in medicine, law, journalism, publishing, fashion, non-profits, teaching, and a whole

range of other professions, including graduate school. The number of undergraduate students in our classes has remained consistent over the years and the Program now hopes to expand its reach through more collaborations with other programs. The graduate certificate program continues to grow and the graduate students are populating many fine positions around the world, and not only in academia. Their accomplishments have been widely recognized at a variety of colleges and universities.

pages of this newsletter over the years. Reading the many applications has kept the faculty busy, but has also kept us aware of the new currents in our field. The faculty have seen how each others' research projects have generated interest and have tapped a lively pool of candidates. We have had residential fellows in the following areas: transnational sexualities; race, art, and visual culture; feminism and freedom; the future of the feminist 1970's; the question of species; feminism and science; and

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*...Thank you all for the privilege to work with you and talk with you over these years...*

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At the University of Michigan, NYU, Princeton, U Mass Amherst, Dartmouth, the College of the Atlantic, UT Dallas, to name just a few, Women's Studies graduate certificate holders from Duke University have taken on the task of guiding the next generation.

Since 2008 we have had at least two postdoctoral fellows in residence annually who have contributed well to the intellectual life of the program. You have met many in the

international psychoanalysis. We see all the postdocs who have remained in academia (which is 90% of them) regularly as they keep in touch with us from the universities at which they are now teaching, come to our conferences and workshops, and send us their publications.

While Tina Campt left us for Barnard College in New York City, Robyn Wiegman shifted her primary appointment into the Literature Program, and we have an entirely new

staff with Kim Carlisle, Kelly Schwehm, and Sheila Devis, we have nonetheless grown, with hiring at every rank. The new additions over the last few years are Kimberly Lamm and Gabriel Rosenberg who are Assistant Professors in Women's Studies, Frances Hasso is Associate Professor, and Elizabeth Grosz is the Jean O'Barr Professor of Women's Studies. They, in addition to Kathy Rudy, Kathi Weeks, and Ara Wilson continue to research and publish widely, and of course to teach.

Our annual feminist theory workshop has become the primary venue for the ongoing discussion of feminist theory. We routinely bring in faculty and students from 15-20 different countries and 40-60 different institutions. We fund 10-17 international students to join us and through that have had new ideas floated for the future of feminist scholarship. We have had numerous mini-conferences and speakers that have kept us stimulated, and has established Duke as a venue for research in feminist, gender, and sexuality studies broadly conceived.

Thanks in part to our former Program coordinator Melanie Mitchell, we received funding from Mary Jones and the Mary Duke Biddle foundation to

renovate the parlors downstairs this year. I worked with Kim Carlisle and Lynn Joyner on this project, and you will hear more about it in the next newsletter. The parlors remain in the same spirit, but have been beautifully updated and also now have technology, which makes them state of the art rooms. In addition, the Women's Studies Program will be moving downstairs adjacent to the parlors. We will be in some of the most beautiful offices on campus, and our new site will give the Program more space and more visibility.

Last but not least, Women's Studies has now become the permanent home for the sexuality studies program. Reflecting this, the name will probably change to the Program in gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies.

I thank you all for the privilege to work with you and talk with you over these years, and I wish my successor, Priscilla Wald, Professor of English and Women's Studies, success, pleasure, and stimulation.

## WOMEN'S STUDIES SPRING 2015 EVENTS

### **JANUARY 15**

In Print: A celebration of gender-related publications by Duke faculty.

### **JANUARY 26**

Graduate Scholars Colloquium: Ali Mian (Religion), "Displaced Ornaments: The Feminine Between Immanence and Transcendence."

### **FEBRUARY 10**

Julian Gill-Peterson (Rutgers), "The Invention of the Transgender Child: Sex, Eugenics, and Aesthetics."

### **FEBRUARY 13**

Sara Clarke-Kaplan (UCSD), "Is that your Mama on the Pancake Box? Black Reproductivity and the Politics of Freedom."

### **FEBRUARY 16**

Stephanie Clare (Syracuse), "Earthy Encounters: Feminist Theory in a More-Than-Human World."

### **FEBRUARY 24**

Renata Salecl, "Subjectivity in the 21st Century: From Anxiety to Ignorance," Psychoanalysis in an International Frame series.

### **FEBRUARY 23**

Graduate Scholars Colloquium: Steffen Kaupp (German Studies), "(Un)Gendering Germanness: On Dysfunctional Families and Disrupted National Identity in Post-War and Post-Unification German Fiction."

### **MARCH 19**

Graduate Scholars Lunch Seminar with Lee Edelman (Tufts), "No Future" and "Sex, or the Unbearable."

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# Senior Stories

## BIAUNCA MORRIS

The path that led me to women's studies was an accidental one of trial and error. Upon entering Duke, I was always told that freshman year was the time to explore multiple options and try anything that interest you. The only certainty I had freshman year was that I was going to law school; the path that would lead me there was not as concrete.

*My interest in women's studies had always been dormant in my life...*

My interest in women's studies had always been dormant in my life since childhood when I noticed the different treatment of the sexes but I shrugged it off as something that was "just how life is". It wasn't until fall semester of my sophomore year, when I took my first two women's studies courses, that I realized the gravity of these differences and their impact on day-to-day female life. Women, Gender, and Sexuality in U.S. History taught by Professor Sarah Deutsch and Money, Sex, and Power by Professor Kathi Weeks opened my eyes to new possibilities of how the world could be. I had never imagined a U.S. history written from the female perspective. It never even occurred to me where our interpretations of history and historical references derived. I learned from Week's Money, Sex, and Power course how this history has been



systematically used to justify oppressing women in almost every realm of life from the private, domestic sphere to the public, economic market and even the legal system.

Fall semester, sophomore year was a semester of awakening where I began to make the connections of my women's studies to my public policy major and my prelaw path. The next semester, I declared my

double major in public policy and women's studies spring semester of my sophomore year. I had found my path.

I plan to continue to use my knowledge of the formal and informal gender inequalities at the private and institutional level, along with the context and constraints of policy making to shape my career in the legal field.



# CARALENA PETERSON

I came to be a Women's Studies major my second semester junior year. I think the biggest turning point was reading Gloria Steinem's *Revolution From Within*, as it really helped me to see the ways in which feminist and womanist thought can have an impact on our day-to-day worlds. The personal truly is political. I became a Women's Studies major because I realized, I didn't want to just be treating the side effects of a patriarchal society. I wanted to understand the structure—the contradictions and disempowering demands enforced through gender roles, constrictions, and expectations—and be able to work from there.

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*I didn't want to just be treating the side effects of a patriarchal society.*

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On a personal level, my studies and experiences during my pursuit of my Women's Studies major are what helped me to realize the things I was struggling with resulted from a much larger societal problem and I wasn't going crazy. The outlook I gained from this major is what taught me I didn't have to earn my love from the universe by being skinny enough, smart enough, funny enough, and seductive enough. That I didn't have to be a people pleaser who could only be happy when validated by approval of others.

Feminism is the core reason I possess the self-confidence and self-love I so cherish today. When the majority of undergraduate women leave college with lower self-esteem than when they came in—and I would be lying if Duke culture wasn't a struggle sometimes—I have feminism to thank for defying that statistic. As well as the feminist role models (friends, teachers and administrators of all gender identities) on campus who guided me along the way.



## CHELSEA DUCILLE

**M**y first experience with Women's Studies was a first-year seminar titled "Women Behind the Da Vinci Code" taught by Jennifer Copeland and Mary Rudy's class "Nature, Culture, Gender." My Women's Studies courses forced me to examine my life and my beliefs (social and religious). They allowed me the novel opportunity to engage in conversation and academia in a manner I had never done before in other coursework. Making Women's Studies my major allowed me to continue to engage in this thinking and break away from the mold of most of my peers.

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*The more I have learned, the more truths I have uncovered about the world around me.*

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The freedom of thought that my major has afforded me has given me the ability and courage to question my faith and many of the social and cultural norms handed down to me by my family. Before delving more into Women's Studies, I used to claim that I hated philosophy and sitting around talking about things that have no clear solution or end in sight. However, I have now realized the merits to such discussion and thinking and the profound and groundbreaking insights that can arise from deep thought and analysis. It seems that the more I have learned, the more truths I have uncovered about the world around me.

Now it is quite difficult for me to read an article, watch a movie, or listen to people without thinking about them with a Women's Studies perspective. I realize that being a black woman puts me in an ambiguous and doubly

disadvantageous position with respect to my sexuality, my profession, and various social interactions. My religiosity and my views on particular lessons, principles, and scriptures are now informed by greater historical and cultural understanding of political, racial, and cultural differences of biblical and modern times.

Though many of my Women's Studies courses have not married well with my premedical coursework, I have been given a few opportunities to think about these two areas' interdependence. I have come to see how the female body is subject to so many physical, social, and cultural structures, whether by reproductive limitations, genital mutilation, or healthcare policy and barriers. I want to work toward a world filled with more independent, strong and healthy women. I hope this will manifest itself with work in women's medicine, reproductive health, or maternal-fetal medicine with a Global Health focus.

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## CLARE FISHER

**M**y first year at Duke was filled to the brim with pre-health coursework such as chemistry and calculus. While informative, these courses felt disconnected from my goals related to health equity, and I found myself frustrated that the scientific findings were separated from context and discussions of ways of knowing. The summer after freshman year, I worked at a clinic in rural South Carolina that specialized in care for individuals with HIV. I saw how poverty, racism and HIV stigma can make accessing sensitive, quality health care incredibly difficult. But I was so inspired by the ways that innovation and activism can initiate change.

Upon returning to Duke, I enrolled in Women's Studies and pre-nursing coursework, eager to engage with such conversations. I realized that I wanted my academic career to offer an interdisciplinary framework for understanding the intricate relationships between structures of power and women's and children's health.

In my global health-related coursework, I have learned how biological, psychological and social factors work together to affect health. Only through fields of inquiry introduced by

Women's Studies coursework was I able to deconstruct the very existence of these power structures and to

will explore family structure and function across cultures, drawing heavily on feminist thought. Going forward, I

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*Women's Studies has presented me with a vocabulary through which I can discuss oppression and inequality...*

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begin to understand the ways that they deny agency to individuals. Women's Studies has presented me with a vocabulary through which I can discuss oppression and inequality, and it has provided feminist critiques that address the roots of social injustice.

will call upon my Women's Studies coursework to orient my perspective as a health care provider and researcher, perhaps as a Certified Nurse Midwife or Clinical Psychologist.

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I am currently completing an interdisciplinary thesis that



## SARAH HAAS

When I discovered the Women's Studies department at Duke, I discovered a whole new world. A world that was thought provoking, engaging, and controversial. A world that is interdisciplinary, inquiring, and constantly evolving. A world of difference. Stumbling upon this world drastically changed the trajectory of my Duke path. My passion for and interest in feminism has been developing for quite a long time, but I was not able to truly understand or develop a language to describe it until I

got to Duke and started taking Women's Studies courses.

Being a Women's Studies major has allowed me to engage with and articulate feminist ideas and theories, both inside and outside of the classroom. I was able to explore the academic world

social experience at Duke and I know I am leaving this university a different person than when I arrived. This transformation has left me a more analytical, questioning, and observant person. I can't wait to see where my Women's Studies major will take me. Whether I choose a career in

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*I know I am leaving this university  
a different person than when  
I arrived.*

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as well as my everyday world through a gendered lens. I have created final projects on masculinity at Duke, launched feminist social media campaigns, and debated landmark sex-discrimination legal cases. I have written papers about Disney princesses and education reform using feminist pedagogy. I have been challenged and motivated to bring what I learn from Women's Studies to other courses at Duke and beyond.

education, media, law or any other field, I know that I will take what I learned from my peers and professors with me – a new and nuanced way of thinking about and observing the world.

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My passion, studies, interests, and lived experiences all intertwine in the most exciting and beautifully frustrating ways. The course of study and the people that I met along the way have become an integral part of my intellectual and





## MAYA FLIPPEN

If there is anything I've learned over my four years in this institution, it's that my identity is tied to my studies, activism, service, and interactions. I cannot separate my sense of self and my academic experience—there is no walking away. That's why I'm so grateful to have had the rewarding, challenging, and life-affirming experience that comes from majoring in women's studies; this major has forced its way into how I consider what identity is.

I signed up for the only first-year women's studies seminar offered—Women Behind the Da Vinci Code. The course and teacher kept me engaged, and it was thrilling to spend my time studying concepts that were never talked about in my primary education; I regularly went back to my dorm and debated ideas from the class with my hallmates. Women's studies had me hooked.

As the years went on, it became increasingly clear that my friends studying different topics could separate themselves from their area of study. They would go to class, and come home from class, and, from what I could tell, not really think that much about the class once it was over and homework was

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*I cannot separate my sense of self and my academic experience...*

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done. My academic experience felt very different. I couldn't stop thinking about what I was learning. Never. My classes became the framework for how I see the world and interact with other people. I could never separate myself from what I studied—I carried it with me at all times. Coming to college I'd never expected to have that kind of academic experience. I didn't know how to explain it.

“Women's Studies” as a field of inquiry is invaluable to me. It is everything. Women's studies poses different questions and helps me dig about issues of social injustice. My understanding of different identities and inequities has completely changed my life, and I have this area of study to thank. I love it when I'm asked, “So, women's studies? What are you going to *do* with

that?” My answer? What am I not doing with it at every second, at every moment, every day of my life? This incredible and interdisciplinary look at life, these true opportunities to critically think and take action...this is what a top-tier education is about. Thank you, women's studies.

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# SARAH SCRIVEN

A tradition at my high school's graduation was "paper plate awards." In glittery letters with a stick figure woman donning a crown, my paper plate read, "The Ophelian Queen." I was proud of my plate—it suited me. Ophelia was the name of the high school club I worked with whose mission was to help girls develop a strong sense

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*Women's Studies has made me a better Ophelian Queen.*

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of self through connections with peers and community. I think Women's Studies has made me a better Ophelian Queen (maybe without crown for the sake of destabilizing power hierarchies). In my personal journal (where I can be a bit melodramatic), I wrote this on October 9, 2012, the night I selected my major: "One thing I am very happy about is the clarity I am beginning to see with my academic endeavors... Women's Studies." Honestly, I just love to say it. I even love to study it. Feminist theory is so beautiful.

When I selected my major, I anticipated a course of study that would favor re-imagining historically devalued lives in society. I had known from the few Women's Studies courses I had taken by then that the scholarly work done in the field explicated gendered issues that caught my attention throughout my life. Women's Studies focused on using the category of women to understand gender and the other social constructs through which difference dictates disparity.

Simone de Beauvoir and John Berger helped me to understand that society's ever present male gaze aided in the creation of the objectified

images of women I'd been seeing my entire life. Susan Bordo asked me to consider how women and girls' body image issues were linked to society's Foucauldian control over docile, feminine bodies. Scholars like Judith Butler asked me to reexamine sex/gender distinctions altogether, and interrogate the mythology of sexual difference as it is known. My professors, peers, and the discipline of feminist critique, asked that I think critically about every theory in order to examine its utility in interdisciplinary and intersectional contexts.

The knowledge I gained from Women's Studies will be invaluable as I move forward in a world filled with the potential to be a more just, caring society for people regardless of gender. The goal now is application. How can we redefine within society what Women's Studies can name in an essay? How do we create what Women's Studies can imagine? The crownless Ophelian queen shall find out!

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# Congratulations to the Program in Women's Studies Class of 2015

## WOMEN'S STUDIES FIRST MAJORS

*Chelsea Ducille*  
(MINOR IN CHEMISTRY)

*Clare Fisher*  
(MINOR IN BIOLOGY, MINOR IN  
GLOBAL HEALTH)

*Maya Flippen*  
(MINOR IN POLITICAL SCIENCE,  
CERTIFICATE IN DOCUMENTARY  
STUDIES)

*Sarah Haas*  
(MINOR IN EDUCATION, MINOR IN  
ASIAN & MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES-  
ARABIC)

*Sarah Scriven*  
(MINOR IN AFRICAN & AFRICAN  
AMERICAN STUDIES)

## WOMEN'S STUDIES SECOND MAJORS

*Biaunca S. Morris*  
(FIRST MAJOR IN PUBLIC POLICY,  
MINOR IN THEATER STUDIES)

*Caralena Christina  
Peterson*  
(FIRST MAJOR IN PUBLIC POLICY)

## WOMEN'S STUDIES MINORS

*Laura Arteaga-Lopez*  
(MAJOR IN BIOLOGY)

*Evelyn Ainsley  
McWilliams*  
(MAJOR IN SOCIOLOGY)

*Minali Nigam*  
(MAJOR IN PSYCHOLOGY)

*Katherine Gray Plevka*  
(MAJOR IN PSYCHOLOGY)

*Ashley Qian*  
(MAJOR IN COMPUTER SCIENCE)

*John Un*  
(MAJOR IN LITERATURE)

*Kelly Zhang*  
(MAJOR IN ECONOMICS, MINOR  
IN ASIAN & MIDDLE EASTERN  
STUDIES-CHINESE)

## GRADUATE STUDENTS COMPLETING THE CERTIFICATE IN FEMINIST STUDIES

*Calina Ciobanu*  
(PH.D., ENGLISH)

*Azeen Khan*  
(PH.D., ENGLISH)

*Deanna P. Koretsky*  
(PH.D., ENGLISH, CERTIFICATE IN  
COLLEGE TEACHING)

*Ali Altaf Mian*  
(PH.D., RELIGION)

*Georgia Paige Welch*  
(PH.D., HISTORY)



*Graduating seniors: Sarah Haas, Chelsea Ducille, Sarah Scriven, Biaunca Morris, Maya Flippen*

# No Leeway

By Chase Gregory & Carolyn Laubende

PH.D. CANDIDATES IN LITERATURE  
AND THE CERTIFICATE IN FEMINIST  
THEORY

Professor Lee Edelman, Fletcher Professor of English at Tufts University, visited Duke's campus for two weeks in March, participating in some of Women's Studies most prestigious annual events, and fostering a provocative discussion of current topics within queer and feminist theory.

At the ninth annual Feminist Theory Workshop, Professor



Professor Lee Edelman,  
Fletcher Professor of English  
at Tufts University

Edelman gave one of the four keynote addresses, and led one of the workshop's weekend break-out sessions. His talk, "Postscript on the Unbearable," charted a critical understanding of the concept of "the unbearable" as a follow-up to his latest publication *Sex, or the Unbearable* (Duke University Press, 2014). The discussion drew on work by Catherine Malabou, Alain Badiou, Jacques Lacan, and Frank Wilderson, among others.

On March 24, Edelman delivered his second major address at the annual Queer Theory Lecture in honor of former Duke Professor Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. Titled "There is No Freedom to Enjoy," Edelman's lecture took Harriet Jacobs's *Narrative in the Life of a Slave Girl* as its object in order to push the limits of how we think "queerness" in relation to the law, freedom, and politics.

Naming slavery as the "peculiar institution" in which a "violent pedagogy

of corruption" is openly sanctioned by the law, Edelman traced how the eroticized enjoyments of slaveholders become the "queer" force that Jacobs's text seeks to condemn. He argued that "freedom carries with it the libidinal enjoyment of keeping someone unfree," and that, taken to its extreme, freedom ultimately reaches its limit in the universe of Sade, an anti-social scene of pain without "the just restraints of a free society."

Edelman also ran two graduate student working groups. The first of these events focused on his landmark queer theory text, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Duke University Press, 2004), which uses Lacanian psychoanalysis to diagnose our political investments in heteronormative reproductive futurism and the figure of the Child, which Edelman insists are structurally opposed to figures of "queerness." The second talk focused on *Sex, or the Unbearable*, a dialogue with notable queer theorist Lauren Berlant. The productive conversation touched on authorship and co-authorship, tone, and

negativity. Both sessions allowed graduate students to engage these works in an informal setting.

In addition, Edelman also participated in a roundtable discussion. The roundtable, titled "Kinship Trouble: Part II," followed up on a panel from last semester, which discussed the changing state of marriage convention in the U.S. and France. This semester's talk featured Duke Professor Anne Garretta, as well as two other keynote speakers from the Feminist Theory Workshop, Anne Berger (University of Paris) and Françoise Vergès (College d'étudesmondiales, Paris). The lively conversation addressed the stakes of capitalism and inheritance rights in shaping different national discourses around homophobia.

All in all, Edelman's busy two weeks at Duke proved a productive opportunity for faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates alike to dialogue with one of the foundational figures in queer theory in a number of different settings.

# In Print

On Thursday, January 15, 2015, the Program in Women's Studies celebrated 2014 publications by Duke faculty on gender-related topics. The participants shared their work through selected readings. A reception in the Thomas Room of Lilly Library followed the readings. The event was well attended by faculty, students, and staff.

*Kahnke, Corinna*  
**"GENERATION GOLF MEETS ZONENKINDER"**

*Popliteratur*. Maggie McCarthy, ed. New York: DeGruyter. 2014.



Corinna Kahnke, Professor of the Practice in German, Language Program Director (German)

*Allison, Anne*  
**"PRECARIOUS JAPAN"**

Duke University Press, 2013.



Anne Allison, Robert O. Keohane Professor of Cultural Anthropology; Professor of Women's Studies, Duke University

*Hall, Amy Laura*  
**"TORTURE AND TELEVISION IN THE UNITED STATES"**

*The Muslim World* 103.2 (2013): 267-86.



Amy Laura Hall, Associate Professor of Christian Ethics, Duke Divinity School

*Lamm, Kim*  
**"MODERN SPECTACLE AND AMERICAN FEMINISM'S DISAPPOINTING DAUGHTERS: WRITING FANTASY ECHOES IN THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY"**

*Feminist Theory* 15.2 (2014): 179-96.



Kimberly Lamm, Assistant Professor, Women's Studies, Duke University

*Jay, Martin, and Sumathi Ramaswamy, eds.*  
**"EMPIRES OF VISION: A READER"**

Duke University Press, 2014.



Sumathi Ramaswamy, Professor of History & International Comparative Studies, Duke University



2015 In Print group: Anne Allison, Sumathi Ramaswamy, Amy Laura Hall, Ranjana Khanna, Corinna Kahnke, Kimberly Lamm

# 2014-2015 Graduate Scholars Colloquium

(Continued from page 1)

Continuing the tradition of scholarly discussions of our work in gender and sexuality across disciplines, our first meeting in September introduced the Women's Studies Postdoctoral Fellows Carolina Diaz, Anna Fishzon, Monica Huerta, and Ross Truscott and addressed this year's Women's Studies theme, Psychoanalysis in an International Frame. Focusing their comments on a shared essay, N. Abraham and N. Torok's 1972 "Mourning *or* Melancholia: Introjection *versus* Incorporation," the panelists integrated their own research and objects of study into four distinct and far-ranging papers. Addressing questions of mourning and time in Soviet animation (Fishzon), new modes of meaning-making in post-dictatorship Chile (Diaz), the links between reality and fantasy in photographs of mixed race persons in the U.S (Huerta), and performing a psychoanalysis

of psychoanalysis by pluming the shared essay's implications for interpreting post-Apartheid South Africa (Truscott), the short talks and the discussion that followed opened up diverse of points of entrance and flights of thought.

In October, Kiah Glenn, an M.A. student (Religious Studies), presented part of her thesis on the absence of women's voices in the *athan*, or the Muslim call to prayer. Ali Mian (Religion) offered insight on how Glenn might deepen her analysis of space and voice by including a subtle discussion of sexual difference. Our November presenter was James Ong (Philosophy), discussed the importance of difference, rather than assimilation, as a rubric for what he calls "organic social change." Ong's respondent, Layla Brown (Cultural Anthropology), suggested that he include a more empirically grounded analysis of the Civil Rights movement to produce a more nuanced understanding of

the concepts of change and difference in which Ong is interested.

In January, Ali Mian presenting his own work on Naiza Khan, a Karachi-based artist. Mian explained the ways in which Khan's exhibition, *Heavenly Ornaments*, emphasizes the fluidity and plasticity of women's sexuality in conversation with Islamic theology. Ali's respondent, Carolyn Laubender (Literature), discussed the implications of the work in feminist theory and encouraged Mian to expand on his analysis of Thanvi's contribution to Muslim theology. In February, Steffen Kaupp (German Studies) presented his work on the figure of the family in German narrative structures post-WWII and post-reunification, particularly through Borchert's 1946 short story, "The Bread," and the film *Goodbye, Lenin!* Respondent Ann Marie Rasmussen (University of Waterloo), urged Kaupp to parse the ambiguous function/

dysfunction dyad in order to better grasp the important contribution that Kaupp is making to the fields of German Studies as well as studies of kinship and gender. And finally, in March, Sarah Bereza (Musicology) presented her work on fundamentalist music recordings, which she argues are part of an everyday practice of discipleship. Her paper explored intimacy, various forms of fidelity—high-fidelity sound, fidelity as religious faith, and marital fidelity—and the perceived boundaries of sexuality tested by recording devices like the microphone. Darren Mueller (Musicology), her respondent, offered ways of bridging her concepts of intimacy, sexuality and fidelity through her empirical work by analyzing the material conditions in which the recordings were produced, marketed, and consumed.

## WOMEN'S STUDIES SPRING 2015 EVENTS

### MARCH 20-21

The Ninth Annual Feminist Theory Workshop

### MARCH 23

"More Kinship Trouble" with Lee Edelman, Anne Berger, Anne Garréta, and Françoise Vergès.

### MARCH 24

Annual Queer Theory Lecture with Lee Edelman (Tufts), "There is No Freedom to Enjoy."

### MARCH 25

Lee Edelman: A discussion with Undergraduates.

### MARCH 30

Graduate Scholars Colloquium: Sarah Bereza (Musicology), 'In Their Private Space': Physical Proximity and Sound Mediation in Fundamentalist Christian Music Recordings."

### MARCH 31

Carolina Diaz (2014-15 WST Postdoctoral Associate), "Towards an Affective Theory of Paranoia in Diamela Eltit's Jamás el fuego nunca," Psychoanalysis in an International Frame series.

### APRIL 7

Anna Fishzon (2014-15 WST Postdoctoral Associate), "The Place Where We Live: Playing and Playfulness in the Era of Soviet Stagnation," Psychoanalysis in an International Frame series.

### APRIL 9

Emily Clark (Tulane), "The Veiled Woman in Antebellum America: Nuns and Quadroons," the 2015 Anne Firor Scott Lecture.

### MAY 9

The Program in Women's Studies  
Commencement Celebration.

# Awards recipients

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, these students were recognized for their outstanding scholarship and research.

## WOMEN'S STUDIES 2015-2016 DISSERTATION FELLOWSHIP

*Rachel Greenspan*  
(PROGRAM IN LITERATURE)

*John Stadler*  
(PROGRAM IN LITERATURE)

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

## GENDER AND RACE RESEARCH AWARD

*Malakha Bility*  
(UNDECIDED, UG 2018) FOR "SUCH GREAT HEIGHTS"

*Mina Ezikpe*  
(CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY, UG 2017)  
FOR "STRATEGIES FOR REINTEGRATING"

*Robert Reece*  
(SOCIOLOGY, PHD) FOR "A QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATION  
OF BLACK WEBCAM MODELS"

The Dora Anne Little Award is 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.

## THE DORA ANNE LITTLE AWARD

*Cara Peterson*  
(WOMEN'S STUDIES & PUBLIC POLICY, 2015)  
FOR "COLLEGE AS TOLD BY AN UNDERGRAD"

# Meet our 2014-15 Postdoctoral Fellows



## ANNA FISHZON

This fellowship and the research theme, Psychoanalysis in an International Frame, have given me the opportunity to link my three big passions: Russian history, queer studies, and psychoanalysis. I enjoyed the course with Ranjana Khanna, “Psychoanalysis and the International,” as well as the marathon of related talks by clinicians and academics. Patricia Gherovici’s discussion of the ways transgenderism is changing psychoanalytic theory and practice, as well as Gohar Homayounpour’s three lectures on psychoanalysis in Tehran were the most stimulating for me. This

spring I have been teaching the graduate seminar “Voice, Opera, and Sexuality,” auditing great classes, and attending talks and conferences, most recently Duke’s Feminist Theory Workshop. During this year at Duke, I also have been working on my second book, *‘Though We Mourn the Past A Little Bit, the Best, Of Course, Is Still Ahead’: Children’s Culture and Late-Socialist Temporality*. It examines the iconic animated films of the 1970s in order to chart the legacies of Soviet childhood and the “queer time” of late socialism.

Anna Fishzon received her Ph.D. from Columbia University in History and her B.A. from Duke University in History and Russian Literature. She is the author of *Fandom, Authenticity, and Opera: Mad Acts and Letter Scenes in Fin-de-Siècle Russia* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) as well as articles on sound recording, celebrity, and the history of emotions. She has also taught at Williams College. Born in Kiev, Anna immigrated to the United States at age six.



## ROSS TRUSCOTT

My favorite part of the fellowship has been participating in the seminar series, Psychoanalysis in an International Frame. The discussions were wonderful and so helpful to my work. I look at psychoanalysis as it has been set to work in the political transition in South Africa, and the stakes of this deployment of psychoanalysis. Historically, psychoanalysis has played an ambiguous political role in South Africa, and there is a historical element to the work, but I’m mostly interested in attending to that which remains undisclosed in

the psychoanalytic concepts that are made to do political work, the way race, gender and sexuality are inscribed in psychoanalytic concepts, and the implications of this. I have been working on a book manuscript, the focus of which is on the concept of empathy in psychoanalytic theory. Empathy is fascinating not only because it has been deployed to mark the threshold of the “post-apartheid,” but also because, Freud actually invoked the term frequently, one could even say that psychoanalytic experience comes to hinge on it.

Ross Truscott holds a Ph.D. from the University of Fort Hare, and has held visiting fellowships at the University of Minnesota and the London School of Economics. He has published on psychoanalysis and postcoloniality, the history of psychoanalysis in South Africa, race, gender and sexuality, post-apartheid popular culture, empathy and political transition.





## CAROLINA DIAZ

Being at Duke as part of the Psychoanalysis in an International Frame postdoctoral fellowship has been a wonderful, enriching experience. The intellectual energy Duke and the Women’s Studies Program have are wonderful. I have been incredibly inspired by our weekly seminar with Ranji. The other postdocs and I carried the class discussion out into a bar and talked for hours and hours. But inspiration comes from every encounter you have: with professors from different programs, with students, with presenters that come from all over the world! I am particularly enchanted with the generous yet not less rigorous criticism and advice you get from each professor to whom you talk. I’ll miss Duke. Its energy is

contagious. I just feel inspired to write more, read more, and teach more.

I work at the intersection of philosophy, Chilean art and literature, and sexual difference. While at Duke I have written articles on paranoia and phenomenology from a feminist perspective. I have also worked on my manuscript which engages post-dictatorial temporality in Chile through the analysis of female artists and writers. My manuscript is, currently, full of specters and post-apocalyptic angels.

Carolina Díaz studied literature in Chile. She has a Master Degree in Spanish and holds a Ph.D. in Women’s Studies and Spanish from Rutgers University. She has published on issues of feminist temporality, feminist theory, literature, power, and law, and literature and ontology.



## MONICA HUERTA

It has been such a wonderful year at Duke. Last semester I transformed a dissertation chapter into an article, “What’s Mine: Involuntary Expressions, Modern Personality, and the Right to Privacy,” that has been accepted for publication. I am now working on an evolving manuscript that considers the historical relationship between bodily expression – especially of faces – and aesthetic expression in the 19th century. I first look at how visual media, and primarily photography, shapes reading practices and scientific theories of emotional expression, particularly involuntary ones. I also read canonical literary figures to show how they might revise and rely on notions of facial and bodily expression

to conceptualize aesthetic expression. Last, I pair these intertwining discourses and material histories of expression with copyright’s ongoing redefinitions of aesthetic expression. In all, I seek to understand forms of selfhood and artistic creation outside the bounds of control, autonomy, will, and choice through ideas about what expression is and the various registers (social, legal, scientific, aesthetic) for deciding which expressions are one’s own. This year, I also led writing retreats for undergrad and graduate students as well as a reading group about human (and animal) faces. In the fall, I will teach “Imagining Slavery & Gender,” a course where we’ll ask how novels, films, and contemporary art solidify, challenge, and reconceive of gender through historical imaginings of the American slave system.

Monica Huerta received her Ph.D. in English from the University of California, Berkeley, in 2014. She has an M.A. in History from Princeton University and an A.B. from Harvard University. She is at Duke as a Provost’s Postdoctoral Associate. Monica is originally from Chicago, and her family still thinks of Guadalajara as a home.

# *Subnatures and Culinary Cultures”*

*Gabriel Rosenberg*

WOMEN'S STUDIES DUKE  
UNIVERSITY

In fall of 2014, Professor Gabriel Rosenberg was a primary co-convenor for an interdisciplinary food studies project run by the Franklin Humanities Institute’s Humanities Writ Large Program and co-sponsored by the Program in Women’s Studies. The project, titled “Subnatures and

Culinary Cultures,” used a key concept from architectural theory—“subnature”—to think through the evolving politics of food aesthetics. According to architectural theorist David Gissen, subnatural characteristics are aesthetic features of space that modern architecture attempts to solve or displace—dankness, darkness, mud, weeds, smoke, puddles, dust, debris, crowds, and pigeons. Rosenberg and his collaborators applied the

concept to food and attempted to historicize and contextualize particular food aesthetics: how is what we consider palatable, tasty, or edible subject to change over time? What social structures and power dynamics inform why we like to eat what we like to eat? How do forms of social difference like gender, race, class, and sex inform food aesthetics? How can we reimagine social relations and the boundaries of community by critically

examining the boundaries of the edible?

The grant funded a series of public events that were peppered with “pop up lectures” from experts and cooks to think through these questions. More than 1,000 students and community members enjoyed dishes that foregrounded culinary continuities between the Carolina low country and West Africa.

# *Renata Salecl*

*By Ranjana Khanna*

MARGARET TYLOR SMITH  
DIRECTOR OF WOMEN'S STUDIES

Renata Salecl was visiting for half the Spring Semester 2015. She taught an intensive course on Psychoanalysis and Neuroscience for undergraduates, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and faculty. Salecl analyzes feminism across national borders, in law, in relation to neuroscience, and with psychoanalysis. To cap her



visit, she gave a talk about science and verifiability in scholarly and legal contexts. Salecl considered how the natural sciences, and neuroscience in particular, have achieved tremendous status in law, sometimes

with detrimental effects. In contexts in which ideas of objective existence count more than modes of analysis that are deemed speculative, law courts frequently fail to acknowledge how subjective an interpretation can be given to scientific findings, or indeed how subjective the questions are that go into the production of the apparently verifiable. Salecl has wonderful wit in her presentations, and began with an anecdote about a meal with a physicist working on black holes who

criticized her for working on psychoanalysis, which he said had no material physical proof. She quipped that he too had the same problem! Surely both the black hole and the psyche have effects that cannot be examined. One has mathematics to help it, the other has psychoanalysis. Salecl provided ways to understand some basic uses of psychoanalysis and neuroscience in the law, and how they to the question of sexual difference.

# Where in the World: Women's Studies 2014 Travel Awards

Congratulations to our 2014 Travel Award recipients. Their research, presentations and scholarship have spanned the globe. Women's Studies scholars have used their awards to further their research and study of a range of topics including: gender identities, women's rights, feminist theory, LGBT research, health care, and activism. Travel awards also supported students who received summer internships and attended national and international conferences.

## MAY 2014 TRAVEL AWARDEES

### *Courtney Goodman*

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT  
MAJOR: BIOLOGY

Conducted research to see what perspectives women in the Cangrejal truly hold toward traditional midwives versus births at healthcare centers and their level of trust in the advice of treatment administered by each.

### *Jasmin Palomares*

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT  
MAJOR: PUBLIC POLICY

Conducted research on the awareness of the Honduras community's knowledge of available contraception and health officials' views on banned contraception and abortion.

### *Tamar Shirinian*

GRADUATE STUDENT  
CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY AND  
CERTIFICATE IN FEMINIST STUDIES

Presented a paper at the Biennial 13th meeting for the European Association for Social Anthropologists (EASA) in Tallinn, Estonia.

## OCTOBER 2014 TRAVEL AWARDEES

### *Amev Adkins*

GRADUATE STUDENT  
RELIGION AND CERTIFICATE IN  
FEMINIST STUDIES

Participated in a panel, "Agency and Ethics of Embodiment: Trans-feminist Explorations," at the National Women's Studies Association in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Presented paper: "Women Are From Venus: Baartman and the Pornotropic Imaginations of Border Crossing."

### *Christine Delp*

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT  
MAJOR: PROGRAM II- ETHICS AND  
VISUAL DOCUMENTARY STUDIES

Presented thesis, "Abstinence and the Christian Moral Imagination," at the Southern Sociological Society's annual conference in New Orleans.

### *Ana Huang*

GRADUATE STUDENT  
CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY AND  
CERTIFICATE IN FEMINIST STUDIES

Presented a co-authored paper, "Young Activists, New Movements," at the National Women's Studies Association

Conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

### *Rachel Greenspan*

GRADUATE STUDENT  
LITERATURE AND CERTIFICATE IN  
FEMINIST STUDIES

Organized a seminar at 2015 ACLA Conference in Seattle based on the 2014-15 Women's Studies' theme "Psychoanalysis in an International Frame," and presented paper on Marie Langer.

### *Carolyn Laubender*

GRADUATE STUDENT  
LITERATURE AND CERTIFICATE IN  
FEMINIST STUDIES

Attended North American Victorian Studies Association conference and presented a paper on female agency.

### *Sarah Jordan Scriven*

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT  
MAJOR: WOMEN'S STUDIES

As a member advocate of WomenNC, traveled to NYC for the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) meeting.

### *Sophie Smith*

GRADUATE STUDENT  
LITERATURE AND CERTIFICATE IN  
FEMINIST STUDIES

Presented a paper at the National Women's Studies Association Annual Conference, "Borderlands or Border Zone?: The Aesthetics of Postnational Governance in the Sonoran Desert."

# The 2015 Certificate in Feminist Studies



## PAIGE WELCH

### RIGHT-OF-WAY: EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY ON THE TRANS ALASKA OIL PIPELINE, 1968-1977

**T**his dissertation examines competing interpretations of equal employment opportunity—the right to be free from discrimination in the labor market and the

workplace—in the 1960s and 1970s United States. Through a case study of employment during construction of the trans Alaska oil pipeline, I examine the toolbox of methods government

officials, corporations, trade unions, and nongovernmental organizations used to fulfill their visions of equality in employment. They used antidiscrimination laws and regulation, “manpower” job training and recruitment programs, preferential hiring, and affirmative action goals and timetables to rectify past discrimination and remake the composition of the workforce. I use the archival records of

state regulatory agencies, corporations, activists, and nongovernmental organizations, as well as original oral histories with pipeline employees, to compare four distinct employment programs on the 800 mile long, \$8 billion pipeline. They include a statewide affirmative action plan for integrating minority men in the construction industry, hiring goals for

Alaska Natives instituted by the federal government, a state law ensuring hiring preference to permanent residents of Alaska, and affirmative action plans by oil corporations and contractors for hiring women and minorities. I bridge the gender history of welfare with the history of civil rights in order to show how liberal ideals of economic citizenship in the late 1960s prioritized creating male workers and breadwinners through equal employment opportunity for minority men.

I find that by the mid-1970s, the gendered dimensions of liberalism underlying affirmative action for male minorities gave way to accommodate women as workers and economic citizens, to the point of celebrating women in nontraditional jobs on the trans Alaska pipeline as symbols of national progress.

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# CALINA CIOBANU

## DISPOSABLE LIFE: THE LITERARY IMAGINATION AND THE CONTEMPORARY NOVEL



and economic and political gain. In the novels considered, disposability is tied to excess—to the “too many” who cannot be counted, much less individuated on a case-by-case basis.

This project argues that the contemporary novel forces a global readership to confront the mechanisms of devaluing life that are part of everyday existence. And while the factory-farmed animal serves as the example of disposable life par

**T**his dissertation explores how the contemporary Anglophone novel asks its readers to imagine and respond to disposable life as it emerges in our present-day biopolitical landscape. As the project frames it, disposable life is not just life that is disposed of; it is life whose disposal is routine and unremarkable, even socially and legally sanctioned for such purposes as human consumption, scientific knowledge-production,

excellence, this project frames disposability as a form of normalized violence that has the power to operate across species lines to affect the human as well. Accordingly, each chapter examines the contemporary condition of disposability via a different figure of disposable life: the nonhuman (the animal in J. M. Coetzee’s *The Lives of Animals* and *Disgrace*), the replicated human (the clone in David Mitchell’s *Cloud Atlas* and Kazuo Ishiguro’s

*Never Let Me Go*), the woman (in Margaret Atwood’s *MaddAddam* trilogy), and the postcolonial subject (the victim of industrial disaster in Indra Sinha’s *Animal’s People* and political violence in Michael Ondaatje’s *Anil’s Ghost*). Chapter by chapter, the dissertation demonstrates how the contemporary novel both exposes the logic and operations of disposability, and, by mobilizing literary techniques like intertextual play and uncanny narration, offers up a set of distinctively literary solutions to it.

The dissertation argues that the contemporary novel disrupts the workings of disposability by teaching its audience to read differently—whether, for instance, by destabilizing the reader’s sense of mastery over the text or by effecting paradigm shifts in the ethical frameworks the reader brings to bear on the encounter with the literary work. Taken together, the novels discussed in this dissertation move their readership away from a sympathetic imagination based on the potential substitutability of the self for the other and toward a

form of readerly engagement that insists on preserving the other’s irreducible difference. Ultimately, this project argues, these modes of reading bring those so-called disposable lives, which are abjected by dominant ethico-political frameworks, squarely back into the realm of ethical consideration.

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## DEANNA KORETSKY

### SUICIDAL ROMANTICISM: RACE, GENDER, AND THE END(S) OF INDIVIDUALISM



mad genius, this dissertation traces how Romantic-era writers also employed the trope of suicide as a political tool to argue for the rationality of individuals without rights, or with limited rights, such as slaves, women, and the poor. In both scholarly and post-Romantic artistic engagements with so-called Romantic suicide, suicide is

typically interpreted as neither a critique of an unlivable society, nor even a mark of mental illness, but instead operates as a meta-critique of art itself, suggesting that

Moving beyond traditional conceptions of suicide in Romantic literature as indexes of Romanticism's fascination with tragic or

the artist, by virtue of his creativity, is somehow beyond this world. But by showing how suicide also emerged, in the Romantic period, as a metaphor for challenging social structures associated with liberal individualism, *Suicidal Romanticism* posits that the emphasis on the link between creative and suicidal proclivities associated with Romanticism, which persists even in our contemporary imagination in spite of social scientific arguments to the contrary, troubles our capacity to talk either about the problem of mental illness or about the social injustices that would drive somebody to want not to live. The Romantic writers examined here—including Thomas Day and John Bicknell, Mary and Percy Shelley, and William Wordsworth—proposed an

alternative conception of suicide, positing the need to open the social field to recognize all those who are considered “non-subjects.” By using suicide as a metaphor to interrogate the roots of inequality within a social structure based on exclusive individualism, these writers suggest that acts of suicide represent responses not only to private phenomena, but also to social conditions, and that the two are not mutually exclusive.

By thus reading Romantic-era discourses of suicide as radical interrogations of liberalism, *Suicidal Romanticism* also positions Romanticism itself as a response to political questions that first emerged in abolitionist and women's rights discourses of the long eighteenth century.

## ALI MIAN

### “SURVIVING MODERNITY: ASHRAF ‘ALI THANVI AND THE MAKING OF MUSLIM ORTHODOXY IN COLONIAL INDIA,”

My dissertation, “Surviving Modernity: Ashraf ‘Ali Thanvi and the Making of Muslim Orthodoxy in Colonial India,” employs the theoretical and methodological tools developed in feminist

studies and queer theory to examine critically the discursive formations of Muslim orthodoxy in South Asia. It contributes to the burgeoning body of work at the intersection of Islamic studies and gender studies by

asking: how did orthodox Muslim theologians respond to modern ideas such as historicism, individualism, gender equality,



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and sexual liberation in the social and political context of British colonialism? The discursive formations of Muslim orthodoxy in colonial modernity continue to shape

the politics of sexual difference and sexuality in postcolonial Islam in South Asia. My dissertation approaches this history by situating theological discussions of embodiment,

desire, domesticity, and the nation-state within their contextual frames of reference. It uses contemporary feminist and queer theory to ask new

questions about gender and sexual formation in ways that intervene in existing conversations in both religious studies and gender studies.

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## AZEEN KHAN

### THE SUBALTERN CLINIC

**T**he *Subaltern Clinic* explores a certain legacy of unreason that Sigmund Freud identified throughout the course of his writings as the “death drive,” or the compulsion to repeat. In Freud’s work, the death drive is often thought as the opposite of the pleasure principle, which situates the pleasure-unpleasure binary at the center of psychoanalytical thinking and Freud’s conceptualization of the psyche as well as morality, ethics, and civilization. *The Subaltern Clinic* traces a legacy of the death drive and a series of thematic concerns that emerge from it, specifically the instability of the pleasure-unpleasure binary that ostensibly upholds the “principle of reason,” through a colonial-postcolonial archive. In doing so, the dissertation attends to those subaltern figures who are constituted as the “unreason” of society, particularly the

mentally ill, women, and homosexuals.

In particular, the dissertation looks to the intersection

of psychoanalysis and deconstruction, specifically to Jacques Derrida’s engagements with Freud’s “Beyond the Pleasure Principle,” to argue

that deconstruction needs to be thought of as a marginal and politicized form of psychoanalytic thinking, the stakes of which emerge through Derrida’s readings of Freud’s death drive. The dissertation follows the thread of these readings to consider the problems of difference, violence, sadism and masochism, and anxiety in the work of colonial and postcolonial practitioners of psychoanalysis as well as postcolonial artists and novelists.

The dissertation makes the argument that an attention to the legacy of the death drive in the postcolonial archive allows for a more robust critique of postcolonial reason, which would attend to questions of ethics and aesthetics.

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