

PEMBROKE CENTER

Associates Newsletter

Vulnerable Families in the (Un)Changing Economy

On October 13, more than 80 students, parents, alumnae/i and community members gathered in Pembroke Hall for this year's Family Weekend program, a conversation with Anna Aizer, Professor of Economics and the first woman to be tenured in economics at Brown. The conversation, with Drew Walker, Associate Director of the Pembroke Center, focused on her work exploring the intergenerational effects of poverty. Aizer discussed her research on the gender pay gap and how growing up poor affects a child's educational and economic prospects.

The dialogue began with an overview of the gender wage gap in the U.S., which currently stands at about 18 percent on average. Aizer explained that the wage gap has been closing over time in ways that have largely been beneficial for all as the result of long-term trends in increasing women's educational attainment and more women in the workforce. The wage gap has, however, also shrunk as a result of a decline in men's wages accompanying falling union membership and less collective bargaining, which have typically buoyed wages.

The question of why men and women are still not paid equally remains a more difficult question to answer, Aizer explained, and contrary to some common misconceptions, the wage gap is not primarily related to occupational choice. Likewise, the role of discrimination is hard to track, though it is certainly a



PHOTO CREDIT: JANET ZWOLINSKI

Family Weekend participants Isabel Martin '18, Pamela Arya '84, P'18, Professor Anna Aizer and Pembroke Center Associate Director Drew Walker

factor. Economists have found that the pay gap is greatest in "jobs in which there is a premium paid for working very long hours and/or inflexibility in the work schedule," such as business, law and finance. The wage gap in such jobs grows over time – from as low as 5 percent to as high as 36 percent – as women move through their child-bearing years and potentially take time away from work to raise families.

Aizer's own research, she explained, shows the "tremendous implications" of a mother's economic status and well-being on that of her children, particularly in low-income households where 70 percent of children are living with a single mother. In particular, Aizer

studies how the conditions of poverty affect a child's "human capital," which is everything that determines how productive someone is as a worker, including physical health, mental health, cognitive and noncognitive skills. Her work has so far demonstrated four primary factors that impact the human capital of poor children: higher rates of domestic or intrafamily violence, increased exposure to stress, exposure to environmental toxins, particularly lead, in urban lower income housing and higher rates of interaction with the juvenile justice system.

Working with psychologists, epidemiologists and physicians at

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From the Interim Director

What a time to be interim director of the Pembroke Center for Teaching and Research on Women! In the last few months, the politics of gender and sexuality have been front-page news almost every day. Brave women have come forward in film, news, television, journalistic and academic workplaces to name men who have harassed, exploited or attacked them. Many kept quiet for decades, a few having shared their stories only with close friends or relatives. Some women report abandoning promising careers as a result of their experiences. Some signed confidentiality agreements to get the only kind of justice they felt they could extract from a harmful situation without risking further exposure.

These revelations are having an impact on the accused individuals. Will they have an impact on the structures that may have enabled them?

The Pembroke Center is uniquely committed to exploring such key, critical questions. How do we go from a focus on individuals to structures, without absolving individuals of their wrongs? How should we address issues of power and sex inequality in the workplace? How do we condemn sexual violence without contributing to “sex panics” in which we subject every gesture or inflection to close inspection and policing? Courses, talks and seminars at the Pembroke Center this year invite students to reflect on these and other related topics in detail.

At Pembroke's Family Weekend program in October, Brown Professor of Economics Anna Aizer shared her research looking at the gender pay gap and tracking the effects on children growing up poor in Rhode Island. *Vulnerable Families in the (Un)Changing Economy* drew a large audience and provoked a lively conversation.

The Pembroke Center's work has been anchored, as always, by the Pembroke Seminar, led this year by Cogut Humanities Initiative and John Hawkes Professor of the Humanities and English Leela Gandhi. The seminar's

weekly, in-depth exploration of the cultures of pacifism began with work by 19th-century English pacifists before turning to efforts by people in the U.S., U.K. and India to conduct an effective antiwar politics in the context of larger forms of life dedicated to nonviolence, service and friendship. These people were not single-issue activists but rather idealists and realists committed to radical ways of living otherwise. The seminar hosted historian Seth Koven (Rutgers) who gave a public lecture on queer conscience in the World War I era in England and also shared his work with the Seminar the next day. We attended to sexual and gender politics in which pacifist conscientious objectors were first treated as effeminate and only later, post hoc, treated as heroic. As I argued in my own “Boston Review” post this summer “He Said, He Said: The Feminization of James Comey,” no one is invulnerable to such feminization, a tool frequently used in efforts to discredit people politically.

The Seminar then turned to look at the U.S. Civil Rights movement and hosted Samuel Delany, a renowned science fiction author who explores themes of race, gender and sexuality in his work. Delany is the winner of four Nebula awards and two Hugo awards and was inducted by the Science Fiction and Fantasy Hall of Fame in 2002. We were fortunate to have him at Brown for a special week-long residency this fall.

We, at Pembroke, are focused on issues of race, gender and intersectionality. All of our visiting lecturers this year will be speaking on those topics. Please look inside the newsletter for details on all our programming, and thanks, as always, for your support of the Pembroke Center.



Bonnie Honig
Interim Director

An Interview with Aneeka Henderson, Affiliate Scholar-in-Residence in the Black Feminist Theory Project

What are you working on during your fellowship year at the Pembroke Center?

I am honored to have been invited to be an affiliate scholar-in-residence in the Black Feminist Theory Project at the Pembroke Center and privileged to have the AAUW American Postdoctoral Fellowship and the Woodrow Wilson Career Enhancement Fellowship supporting my research. During my fellowship year, I will be working on my book project, “Wedding Bell Blues: Race and the Modern Marriage Plot,” where I critically examine the ways in which a late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century archive of sonic, print and visual culture underscoring courtship and marriage dovetails with the rise of neoliberal logics and legislation. I show how cultural and political texts work in tandem to define citizenship and belonging through marriage. What my work adds to existing scholarship on family formation is an approach to reading social policy alongside fictional texts that reimagines each as cultural forms, together embedded in debates about marriage and black men and women’s cultural, political and domestic “place.”

What kind of sources do you draw on in your work?

Throughout “Wedding Bell Blues,” I analyze film, fiction, music, book covers and other cultural ephemera. As a controlling sonic metaphor, Fifth Dimension’s 1969 hit song “Wedding Bell Blues” operates as a muse for the book’s structure and composition. I link sonic, visual and fictional texts with the purpose of making emphatic the disturbing and captivating use of romance tropes across a heterogeneous cultural archive. In the epilogue, I shift more explicitly to self-fashioning and film scores in contemporary cinematic texts. I am inspired by the ancillary components or the parts of



Aneeka Henderson

a text that are often read as tangential and dismissed as trivial accessory. By interweaving an explication of fashion and film score, I created a new discursive textile for my research.

I am drawing on that analytical spirit and direction in my second research project, which moves between television and film. I illuminate the ways in which costume design and film score enunciate a narrative arc of self-possession as it intensifies the relationship to the text for spectators on an aural and visual level that often goes unrealized. I begin my inquiry with Anna Rose Holmer’s “The Fits” (2015) coupled with Rick Famuyiwa’s “Dope” (2015), moving to Issa Rae’s “Insecure” and Donald Glover’s “Atlanta,” then pivoting to Sean Baker’s “Tangerine” (2015) and Barry Jenkins’s “Moonlight” (2016), and finally turning to Ava DuVernay’s “I Will Follow” (2010) and “Middle of Nowhere” (2012). I am excited about this new intellectual itinerary and what it is compelling me to imagine and uncover.

It is early in your stay, but how has your time at Pembroke Center been so far?

My time here at the Pembroke Center has been invigorating. I am grateful to have office space, and I am thrilled to be in conversation with such a vibrant community of interlocutors who work in a wide range of fields and disciplines. The sustained and intellectually rigorous conversations in Leela Gandhi’s weekly seminar on The Cultures of Pacifism are invaluable and have helped me think in new and provocative ways about my research projects.

Aneeka Henderson will give the Black Feminist Theory Project Lecture at the Pembroke Center on Tuesday, December 12, 2017. Her talk is titled “Race and the Modern Marriage Plot.”

From the Archives



From the Christine Dunlap Farnham and Feminist Theory Archives

PEMBROKE CENTER ARCHIVES AT WORK: NEW DATA ON ARCHIVES USAGE

One mission of the Pembroke Center Archives is to preserve and promote women's history with the goal of increasing access to women's history collections.

New data is helping us measure the success of our mission, and this fall, a study of two of Brown University Library's access tools – the Collections A-Z website and the RIAMCO finding aid portal – tell a profound story about the importance of the Christine Dunlap Farnham and Feminist Theory Archives.

Collections A-Z is a list of "named collections that are distinguished by their specialized subject matter, age, uniqueness or value." Of the 534 special collections listed, 111 (or 20.8 percent) are by or about women. Of those 111 collections, 58 (or 52 percent) derive from the Pembroke Center Archives. And in the last year, that number (58) has increased by 24 collections.

In other words, without the Pembroke Center Archives, only 9.9 percent of the named special collections at the Brown University Library would document women's history.

The RIAMCO portal is defined as "the Rhode Island Archival and Manuscript Collections Online gateway" and

provides access to finding aids of archival and manuscript collections throughout Rhode Island. Of the 557 finding aids contributed to RIAMCO by Brown, 134 (or 24 percent) describe collections that are by or about women. And of that 134, the Pembroke Center Archives is affiliated with 84 guides – or 62.7 percent of women-related collections.

User statistics for Brown Women Speak, our oral history site featuring a growing collection of digitized interviews and transcripts, tell the same story. Since June 2017, the site has incurred an average of 651 unique page views per month.

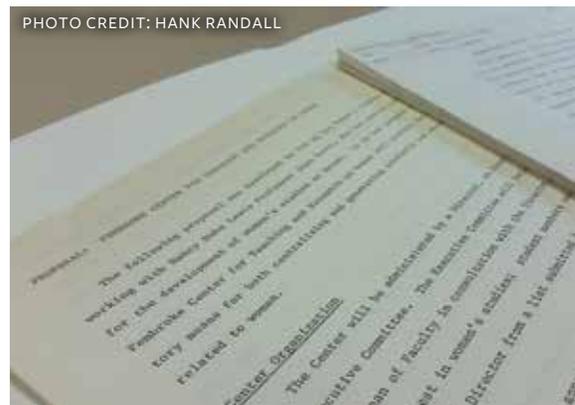
In addition, since January 2017, 2 of the top 30 most heavily used manuscript collections held at Brown's John Hay Library are part of our Feminist Theory Archive: the papers of Teresa Brennan (14th) and Naomi Schor (26th).

PEMBROKE CENTER RECORDS COLLECTION, PROCESSED AND AVAILABLE!

The Pembroke Center is home to a unique array of record-creating programs, groups and initiatives, including the Pembroke Seminar, conferences and lectures, postdoctoral fellowships, the gender and sexuality studies concentration, *differences* journal, the Christine Dunlap Farnham and Feminist Theory Archives and the Pembroke Center Associates Council.

For years, these institutional records were stored in file cabinets in Alumnae Hall. This summer Mary Murphy, Nancy L. Buc '65 Pembroke Center Archivist, and her summer archives staff gathered, processed and made available over 18 linear feet of the Pembroke Center's history. The collection documents the creation, operations and ongoing initiatives of the Center from 1961 to 2017.

The collection has proven to be well rounded in its scope and provocative in terms of the women's issues on campus that it documents. Items include the original proposals for the Center and the Associates Council and several folders of grant materials necessary to keep the Center operating in its early years. The collection documents every Pembroke Seminar with a syllabus and related correspondence as well as the Center's work with undergraduate concentrators, graduate fellows and affiliated scholars. The archives team also uncovered a noteworthy collection of clippings and correspondence related to the Sarah Doyle Women's Center and women at Brown, as well as controversial issues such as the rape list incident from the 1990s and sexual assault and harassment on campus. Perhaps the most exciting find was the photographs. These range from 1982 to 2001 and capture special events such as Commencement, various roundtables and Pembroke Center Associates Council meetings.



The original proposal for the creation of the Pembroke Center

2017–18 Pembroke Center Postdoctoral Research Associates

Each year, the Pembroke Center awards one-year residential postdoctoral research associate positions to scholars whose research relates to the theme of the current Pembroke Center research seminar. Postdocs participate weekly in the Pembroke Seminar, teach one undergraduate course, engage with Brown's scholarly community and pursue individual

research. They are valuable members of the Brown academic community and contribute widely to the body of research produced by the Pembroke Center each year.

We are pleased to have this year's cohort on board!



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Vulnerable Families in the (Un)Changing Economy Continued from page 1

Brown and in Rhode Island, Aizer has uncovered how the negative impacts to children's cognitive, emotional and physical well-being through increased exposure to these factors impair children's overall well-being and their prospects for both success in school and potential in the workforce. Likewise, involvement with the criminal justice system, particularly when children are detained in jail, significantly decreases a child's potential success.

During a lively Q&A, several people asked Aizer about the social and political ramifications of her research. Her response highlighted the important relationship between Brown and the communities of Providence and Rhode Island: "One of the beautiful things about Rhode Island is that it's a very small state and we happen to be in the capitol, and so I have been asked to testify in particular about my work in juvenile incarceration."

The Pembroke Center was grateful to have Professor Aizer here to emphasize the timeliness and importance of this research for human well-being in today's (un)changing economy. To view the video of this program, please visit: brown.edu/research/pembroke-center/videos

Seed Grant Funds Conference

Scholars at the Pembroke Center explore questions of difference, such as gender, race, ethnicity, class and religion. Our seed grants fund Brown faculty-led research projects that explore these issues.

We are pleased to share the project funded by the Pembroke Center for this academic year: The Conference for Research on Choreographic Interfaces will take place March 9–10, 2018 at the Granoff Center for the Creative Arts on Brown’s campus. Our thanks to those who donated to the Pembroke Challenge, which makes this program possible.



PHOTO CREDIT: PHOTO COURTESY OF KEVINCLARKCOMPOSER.COM/2016/02/SPEAKING-AT-BROWN/

Samuel Delany Residency



PHOTO CREDIT: HANK RANDALL

Pembroke Center Graduate Student Fellow Anna Thomas talks with acclaimed science-fiction author and cultural critic Samuel Delany.

In November, the Pembroke Center was honored to support the residency of acclaimed science-fiction author and cultural critic Samuel Delany. On November 8, we welcomed him as a special guest of the Pembroke Seminar, where he engaged in conversation with

a multidisciplinary group of students and faculty. Delany is a highly lauded writer of science fiction and cultural criticism, and his work explores questions of sexuality, gender, race, language, perception and the fluctuating conceptions of “the human.” His

prodigious literary talents are intimately informed by his experiences as a gay black man, the grandson of a freed slave and the nephew of famous civil rights workers. The Delany residency was organized by the Department of Modern Culture and Media.

Methods, Evidence, Critique: Gender and Sexuality Studies across the Disciplines

The Pembroke Center now offers a graduate certificate in gender and sexuality studies that enables graduate students already enrolled in Ph.D. programs at Brown to develop expertise and credentials in the interdisciplinary field of gender and sexuality studies while fulfilling the graduate requirements of their degree-granting departments. The graduate program gives students advanced training in the field and specialized professional training while fostering a community of scholars dedicated to the study of the intersections of gender and sexuality and other related methodologies, such as critical race studies, cultural studies, legal theory and psychoanalytic theory, as well as more traditional disciplinary methods.

Part of the training for the certificate program includes participation in the Methods, Evidence, Critique: Gender and Sexuality Studies across the Disciplines seminar. This fall, the seminar is attended by 15 students from a broad swath of disciplines, from public health to Italian studies, and students represent a wide range of research levels, including both first-year and sixth-year graduate students. Participants contribute to lively discussions organized around readings collaboratively chosen on such topics as critique, globalism and identity. Exploring how feminist and queer pedagogies inform our approach to teaching and learning, students focus on disciplinary propriety and transdisciplinary intersections, considering how to design studies, syllabi and research projects that are attentive to questions of gender and sexuality and all the many social categories—including race, religion, ethnicity, age, (dis)ability and class—that contribute to their construction. The seminar offers students the opportunity to read the work of such scholars as Audre Lorde, Adophe Reed Jr., Joan Wallach Scott, Barbara Johnson, Sylvia Wynter,

Betty Friedan, Gloria Anzaldúa, Wendy Brown, Gail Bederman, Eve Sedgwick, Robyn Weigman and Elizabeth Freeman, and discussions tend to bring together unlikely or incongruous ideas and approaches in often surprising ways.

The graduate certificate program currently enrolls 12 students from anthropology, comparative literature, modern culture and media, history, public health and American studies. Advanced graduate students also participate in a graduate colloquium/writing group, which meets once a month. There, each student takes a turn at presenting research in the form of a dissertation chapter, a journal submission, a conference paper or a job talk. On October 24, Anne Gray Fischer work-shopped an essay drawn from her dissertation, “‘You Are Now Entering the Combat Zone’: Policing Black Women to Solve Boston’s Urban Crisis,” which has been accepted for publication in “Social Histories of Neoliberalism,” a forthcoming special issue of the “Journal of Social History.” Drawing on newly recovered oral histories and police reports, Fischer’s essay argues that the sexual policing and spatial banishment of black women were central to Boston’s fiscal revival strategies of the 1970s. “I was grateful for the opportunity to share my work in the graduate student colloquium,” noted Fischer. “It was an incredibly generous and generative discussion, and we were especially fortunate to benefit from the insights of our invited faculty guest, Emily Owens.”

On December 5, Emily J. H. Contois presented “Blogging Food, Performing Gender,” a spin-off of her dissertation research that will appear in the forthcoming “Cambridge Companion to Food and Literature.” Contois’s contribution is a continuation of her exploration of food, gender and digital media.

Binge Watch:

Binge watch some classic Pembroke Center programs on Brown University’s YouTube channel. You’ll find Commencement and Family Weekend programs, student research presentations and special events, featuring stars like Lynn Nottage ’86, Rory Kennedy ’91, Tricia Rose A.M.’87 Ph.D.’93, P’14, Nancy Northup ’81, P’16, Anne Fausto-Sterling, Ruth Simmons and Louise Lamphere.

brown.edu/research/pembroke-center/videos



While on sabbatical in Italy, Suzanne Stewart-Steinberg visits a memorial of those who died in the neo-fascist Bologna train station bombing.



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Upcoming Pembroke Center Events

DECEMBER 12, 2017: Black Feminist Theory Project lecture “Race and the Modern Marriage Plot” by Aneeka Henderson, Assistant Professor of Sexuality, Women’s and Gender Studies, Amherst College, and Pembroke Center Affiliated Scholar-in-Residence

FEBRUARY 2, 2018: Pembroke Center lecture by Shatema Threadcraft, Assistant Professor of Political Science, Rutgers University

FEBRUARY 6, 2018: Pembroke research lecture by Caroline Elkins, Professor of History and African and African American Studies, Harvard University

MARCH 2, 2018: Pembroke Center lecture “Love Letter from a Critic, or Notes on the Intersectionality Wars” by Jennifer Nash, Associate Professor, African American Studies and Gender and Sexuality Studies, Northwestern University

MARCH 8, 2018: The Shauna M. Stark ’76, Out of the Archives lecture by Tani Barlow, T. T. and W. F. Chao Professor of History, Director of the Chao Center for Asian Studies at Rice University, and a contributor to the Feminist Theory Archive collection

MARCH 13, 2018: Pembroke research lecture by Terrance Wiley, Assistant Professor of Religion and Africana Studies, Haverford College

APRIL 9, 2018: Elizabeth Munves Sherman’77, P’06 ’09 Lecture in Gender and Sexuality Studies by Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, Professor of Modern Culture and Media, Brown University

MAY 26, 2018: Commencement Forum

I’d like to make a gift to the Pembroke Center Associates!

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