

Women and Gender Studies Symposium  
Keynote Lecture with Lauran Whitworth, of Agnes Scott College

**"Loving the Land and Each Other: Environmental Eros & Trans-Species Ethics in Feminist and Queer Ecologies"**

Tuesday, March 26

5:00 pm,

Pat Peterson Museum Education Room, GCSU library

In her 1978 essay "Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power," Audre Lorde avers, "[The erotic] has been made into the confused, the trivial, the psychotic, the plasticized sensation. For this reason, we have often turned away from the exploration and consideration of the erotic as a source of power and information" (54). Part of our maligning of the erotic, according to Lorde, is our separation of the spiritual from the erotic. In this talk, I will examine writings and illustrations by feminist and queer activists who perceive the environment and more-than-human organisms as a source of ethical, spiritual, and erotic inspiration. My case studies include feminist back-to-land communes, the Radical Faeries, the Queer Ecojustice Project, and essays by Alexis Pauline Gumbs. I locate in these materials an environmental eros that combines a Platonic/Greek sense of the word eros, a desire for that which is "larger than the self" (Willett 2014, 10), with Lorde's understanding of eros as a life force and creative energy. By desiring in and with nature, these feminist and queer ecologies model relationality between human and nonhuman others that welcomes interdependence and challenges human supremacy.



**Bio:** Lauran Whitworth (she/they) is Assistant Professor and Chair of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and Co-Director of the Environmental and Sustainability Studies minor at Agnes Scott College in Decatur, GA. Her current book project, *Environmental Eros: Picturing Feminist, Queer, and Trans Ecologies*, brings together gender and sexuality studies, film studies, and ecocriticism. The book focuses on the environmental ethics and aesthetics of 1970s ecological feminisms, the Radical Faerie movement, and several contemporary environmental groups, including the Queer Ecojustice Project. Her scholarship has appeared in *Feminist Theory*, *Intersections*, and *CAA Reviews*.

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