Letters

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Diagnosis in Context: Culture, Politics, and the Construction of Meaning

The 2013/2014 Faculty Fellows Program at the Warren Center, "Diagnosis in Context: Culture, Politics, and the Construction of Meaning," is co-directed by Vanessa Beasley, Associate Professor of Communication Studies and Director of American Studies, and Arleen Tuchman, Professor of History. The year-long interdisciplinary seminar will explore the types of work that medical diagnoses perform. Modern medicine typically defines diagnosis as the act of identifying or naming disease, with disease understood as a pathophysiological condition that produces characteristic symptoms and follows a predictable path. But such straightforward statements can hide more than they reveal. Specifically, they leave unexplored the power of language and labels to create imagined boundaries between and among populations—boundaries that can affect the lived experience of disease and disability as well as the allocation of resources.

Letters recently met with the co-directors to talk about the 2013/2014 Fellows Program.

Letters: How did this Fellows Program come together?

TUCHMAN: Vanessa and I have been walking together once a week for several years now. During our walks, we talk about both our work and our personal lives. One of the most amazing things about our weekly conversations is how what we call the "personal" and the "professional" flow one into the other. Vanessa and I found that as we talked about our experiences dealing with family members with chronic health problems, our areas of scholarly expertise were also significant parts of these discussions. At a certain point, we realized how beneficial it could be to engage a seminar group on this topic, and we specifically started talking about the politics of diagnosis.

Arleen Tuchman (left) and Vanessa Beasley

BEASLEY: One of the reasons that we were specifically interested in diagnosis—as opposed to different ways to think about health or other broad categories—is the fact that it represents an intersection between Arleen's field of history and my field of language. We are keenly aware that diagnoses are not just socially constructed, but are also historically variable and contested. They change across time, and there is something at stake in those changes. From a language perspective, I am interested in the fact that diagnosis is in some ways what we might consider a speech act. Once the diagnosis is uttered, once you are in that interaction with the clinician who is giving you a diagnosis, hearing it can change who you are. It can also change people around you, in, say, a family or an organization. A diagnosis can bring a change in medical status, and it can also change how a lifetime is understood or imagined as well. I am very interested in the fact that diagnosis

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happens through language that isn't always sufficient to the tasks at hand and their implications; it is a performative act with material, emotional, symbolic, and physiological consequences.

TUCHMAN: And those consequences can be positive, they can be negative, they can be both positive and negative, and everything in between.

Letters: How do you understand the term "diagnosis"?

BEASLEY: We talked about this often as we were drafting the proposal to submit to the Warren Center Executive Committee. One way to understand the word is as a clinical term, a description of a set of symptoms. Another way is to see the term as a social act, with implications that go far beyond clinical interaction into other accounts of social relations more generally. That is, even a layperson's perception or suspicion of a diagnosis can impact how he or she treats someone. We do this all the time when we wonder about the health and well-being of other people and if we should adjust our behavior accordingly. A third piece has to do with identity. This third piece can be the most existential: how you think of yourself and how you think about your life. And, as Arleen noted, this could be positive or negative or both.

TUCHMAN: I would add that diagnosis can also be seen as a political act, given that certain diagnoses serve political means. There is an economic dimension as well to the category. I'm thinking here about the commercials that populate television and other media, where the pharmaceutical industry takes symptoms you may be experiencing and transforms them into a category for which they can then create medicines. All of these dimensions are important. Mark Schoenfield, who is one of the Warren Center Fellows this year, is interested in diagnosis as epistemology, as a way of knowing. He is going to be looking at what kind of work diagnosis performs in periodicals in the Romantic period in English history.

BEASLEY: I study political communication and, within that context, I am fascinated by the level of perceived solidarity diagnosis can enable. You can see this sense of common political cause when football players wear pink jerseys to promote breast cancer awareness, for example. There was a recent article in *The New York Times Magazine* that used such examples to ask if we have made breast cancer too "cute." Likewise, I am also interested in diagnosis from the public policy angle. Certain resources are apportioned to certain groups based on diagnoses and related standards for diagnostic inclusion. There is a big debate currently about the diagnosis of autism and what to do with autism spectrum disorders, for instance. Rates of diagnosis of autism spectrum disorders have increased so quickly that some people feel like the category itself is now too broad and thus there should be an effort to narrow it. In response, there has been a huge uproar among some parents because that change would make their children ineligible for services and/or support in schools or other settings. These two sets of examples show us that diagnosis frequently has political implications, both at the symbolic and policy levels.

Vanessa Beasley

TUCHMAN: I think that one of the reasons that it is easy to make breast cancer "cute" is because it doesn't evoke any notions of blame. When you hear that someone has breast cancer, there isn't any obvious way of determining whether or not they are responsible for having contracted the disease. So a diagnosis also has embedded in it assumptions about etiology.

Letters: How will you incorporate an interdisciplinary approach to your explorations of the theme?

TUCHMAN: Listening to each other talk about these shared interests from different disciplinary perspectives will be a big part of the seminar. Several disciplines are represented in our Warren Center Fellows group: English, history, communication studies, sociology, anthropology, and ethnomusicology. At our preliminary meeting last spring, Greg Barz, who is the ethnomusicologist in our group, said, "Oh look! We've got three social scientists and three humanists!" We are aware that each of the disciplines employs different tools and different methodologies. Members of the seminar may very well be just as interested in learning about each other's approaches as they are in learning more about diagnosis.

BEASLEY: All disciplines have what Kenneth Burke called "terministic screens." That is, as a scholar, you have been trained to look at your texts, subjects, or phenomena in certain ways. That training helps you see things based on your discipline's framework, and what you see usually answers your research question in a way that other scholars in your field can understand. But all terministic screens also have blinders. So one of the things that is really exciting about the potential for this kind of conversation is not to think so much about whether or not you are looking at your question and data correctly according to field-specific standards, but instead to hear someone say, "Oh wow, look at these other things that you and your methods may not be able to see."

TUCHMAN: Perhaps we will be able to have a clinician meet with our seminar during the year for a conversation, as physicians have a lot of angst about this too. Jerome Groopman, the author of *How Doctors Think*, wrote this book as a way of encouraging health care consumers to push their doctors in the clinical setting because often doctors make diagnoses very quickly. He wants patients to feel confident enough to ask questions and to push their physicians to think outside the box.

Letters: How do advances or changes in science and medical technology also change diagnostic categories?

TUCHMAN: One of the questions we are sure to be addressing is what genetics is doing to diagnostic categories. Historically, diseases were not thought of as discrete entities. Names were important for heuristic reasons, but diseases were believed to morph into one another. Basically it was a question of the balance of humors. What I have seen in my work on the history of diabetes is the shift from an individual "having a diabetes" to "becoming a diabetic." In this way, disease entities became the way of thinking about what was going on pathologically. Most of this transition took place over the course of the nineteenth century and got set in stone with the

discovery of the bacterial causes of infectious disease. Yet this way of conceptualizing disease has never been perfectly satisfying and now genetics is just blowing this out of the water. With the push now to determine an individual's particular genetic makeup, and an awareness that individuals respond differently to a set of interventions, the idea of disease as a discrete entity may once again need to be reconceptualized.

BEASLEY: The other aspect I would add concerns relatively recent developments in the visual representation of disease. The idea that you can see disease in particular ways has so many implications beyond the clinical; this is fascinating to me. Think about the human brain. We have centuries of examples, across traditions, Eastern and Western, about people talking about the brain and the mind as being related but also separate. And now I think what we are seeing, particularly with scanning technologies, is the idea that we can look inside the brain and see what's going on not only with disease but also with emotions. This is an exciting development, of course, and one that can change common assumptions about epistemologies. It could change the way people think about the capacity for emotion, about relationships, and about what it means to have a "healthy brain." This all connects with something people in contemporary Western culture cannot get enough of: we want the pictures, and we want those pictures now.

TUCHMAN: In his book *Prescribing by Numbers*, Jeremy Greene explores the ways in which these diagnostic tests allow us to identify conditions before anyone is symptomatic. I joked with my husband that I'm going to stop going to my annual medical exam because I walk in healthy and I walk out with several diagnoses. Greene's book engages with this issue; he asks us to think about what it means to feel healthy, but then to undergo tests that produce numbers that suggest you are pre- this or pre- that. Have we gotten to a point that we are treating conditions that are not yet diseases? This has radically altered the way we diagnose.

Letters: Can you give an example of how terms like "diagnosis" and "disease" might, as you have said, "hide more than they reveal"?

BEASLEY: For me, the question of how diagnosis hides more than it reveals gets to questions of how and when diagnostic labels can

Arleen Tuchman

diminish our understanding of someone else's humanity. That's the move I get concerned about. If you are introduced to someone who has Down syndrome and you leave the interaction thinking about that person *as* Down syndrome (as opposed to as a person who has a certain diagnosis and also likes the same music and baseball team that you do), there's a certain type of problematic hiding going on there. For this reason, within the disability community, we talk about using "people first" language. You would never say "my cancerous uncle," for example, you would say "my uncle with cancer." So to put the diagnostic category second is part of the idea that what we don't want to do is to hide the person or her or his humanity. We want to behold the person first.

TUCHMAN: We can also see how diagnoses hide more than they reveal when we examine the cultural meanings ascribed to certain diagnostic categories. For example, there is a battle going on between individuals with type 1 and type 2 diabetes. Some people who have type 1, which manifests more commonly among the young, are saying that they want a different name for the disease. This captures beautifully the power that a name can give to a condition. If the diagnosis was simply a neutral description of the changes that occur to a person physically and mentally, we wouldn't be having a seminar next year! To want a different name for type 1 means that those with this form—and their advocates I should add—are rejecting the various meanings associated with the label of type 2. I would say all of those meanings are hidden, and we're looking for ways to unpack them.

Letters: You're working with Humanities Tennessee on a project for the 2013 Southern Festival of Books on October 11-13. Can you tell us a little about that?

BEASLEY: We are working with Humanities Tennessee on a program entitled "Taking Our Pulse: Promises and Pitfalls of 21st-Century Medicine" that will be woven into the larger festival. We have developed a list of authors whose work on diagnostic categories or their experience with diagnoses is likely to be compelling to the public, either through fiction or non-fiction. In addition, we would like to explore issues related to a writer's craft that have to do with questions of how much you disclose about your own personal experience. We're all human, we all have these experiences with diagnoses, and we all know it can be really affirming to find out, "Yes! There is something wrong with me!" but it can also be devastating to get that message. What does a writer do with such feelings? How can they be expressed?

TUCHMAN: Members of the Fellows Program will serve as facilitators for these sessions at the Southern Festival of Books. Some of the speakers in the series will include Victoria Sweet (*God's Hotel: A Doctor, a Hospital, and a Pilgrimage to the Heart of Medicine*), Susannah Cahalan (*Brain on Fire: My Month of Madness*), and Kelly E. Happe (*The Material Game: Gender, Race, and Heredity after the Human Genome Project*). We're also going to work with Vanderbilt iLens [International Lens Film Series] and will suggest some films that can be shown as part of their series that relate to the fellows' program theme. We are all very enthusiastic not only about the work that the seminar will be engaged in this year, but also about the opportunities to engage with the public on issues related to the culture, politics, and meanings of diagnoses. I am confident it will be a fruitful year for all of us involved in the Warren Center Fellows Program.

Alijewicz Receives Postdoctoral Fellowship at Queen's University Belfast

We are pleased to announce that Michael Alijewicz, a recent Ph.D. from the Vanderbilt English Department and a member of the 2012/2013 Warren Center Graduate Student Fellows Program, will be a Visiting Postdoctoral Fellow at the Institute for Collaborative Research in the Humanities at Queen's University in Belfast for the 2013/2104 academic year. During his time at the institute, Dr. Alijewicz will revise and expand his book project, "'Nothing Is but What Is Not': Subjunctive Aesthetics in Early Modern England." He will also have the opportunity to engage with the other fellows at the Institute and to participate in the interdisciplinary activities hosted by the program over the year. The Warren Center is delighted that we will have one of our former Graduate Student Fellows in residence at Queen's during this academic year.

Michael Alijewicz

The Institute for Collaborative Research in the Humanities at Queen's came into existence in August of 2012. Its first director is John Thompson, Professor of English. The Institute provides strategic leadership at Queen's to support and enhance world class interdisciplinary research in the humanities at all levels, from postgraduate training and early career research through to the development of large-scale collaborative research projects of exceptional scope and importance. It encourages and promotes cross-school, cross-faculty and inter-institutional collaboration that leads to high-quality research outputs with significant impact on society. Thompson said, "The Warren Center has been our inspiration and model in setting up the new Institute at Queen's so we are delighted to be welcoming Michael next year into our midst. We trust he'll enjoy the experience and feel at home next year in Nashville's 400-year-old sister city of poetry, song, and creative industry." The Institute's core activities in the 2013-14 academic year will be related to the theme "Cross-currents in Global Humanities: Communicating the Challenge of Cultural Exchange Beyond Borders."

For several years, Queen's University has sent one of their top postdoctoral students to participate in the Warren Center's Graduate Student Fellows Program. Gail McConnell, Clive Hunter, Tara Plunkett, and Paddy McQueen are past participants in the program from Queen's. This year's visiting Graduate Student Fellow at the Warren Center is Aoife Laughlin. Laughlin is a member of Queen's School of History and will be completing her dissertation entitled "Defining America: Race, Religion, and Ethnicity in the 1848 Presidential Election."

Queen's University is one of Vanderbilt University's strategic international partners and the two universities have a very successful history of collaboration. Support for the 2013/2014 Postdoctoral Fellowship at the Institute for Collaborative Research in the Humanities at Queen's is provided by the Department of English, the Arts and Science Dean's Office, the Warren Center, and the Vanderbilt International Office.

THATCamp, Vanderbilt University, November 1-2, 2013

Across campus, students and scholars in the humanities are using digital tools in a large variety of ways to take their research to new levels. In order to help facilitate the conversation on digital scholarship, the Warren Center's Digital Humanities Seminar, the Vanderbilt Center for Teaching, the Center for Second Language Studies, the Vanderbilt Institute for Digital Learning, and the Curb Center for Art, Enterprise & Public Policy will co-host our second THATCamp Vanderbilt University, an unconference on humanities and technology, November 1-2, 2013.

The Humanities and Technology Camp (THATCamp) was first held in 2008 at the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media at George Mason University. This "unconference" is based on participant generated session ideas and conversation rather than the traditional conference model of pre-scheduled paper presentations. An unconference is like a seminar, whereas a conference is more like a lecture. Participants at THATCamp are expected to share their ideas and work, and to collaborate with each other throughout the conference. In 2009, institutions across the United States began hosting regional THATCamps for local audiences, and now THATCamps are taking place around the world.

THATCamp Vanderbilt University will hold workshop sessions on Friday, November 1, that will feature hands-on instruction on various digital humanities tools and topics. The unconference sessions will be held on Saturday, November 2.

Faculty, students, staff, librarians, archivists, journalists, technologists, and other interested parties of all skill levels are encouraged to attend. Participation is free, but registration is required and will be available at http://vanderbilt2013.thatcamp.org.

Sacred Ecology Symposium: Landscape Transformations and Ritual Practice

The 2011/2012 Faculty Fellows Program at the Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities will host a symposium titled "Sacred Ecology: Landscape Transformations and Ritual Practice" on August 30, 2013. The symposium serves as the culminating project of the Fellows' year-long seminar, led by Betsey Robinson (Department of History of Art), Tracy Miller (Department of History of Art), and John Janusek (Department of Anthropology). The symposium will take place in the Sarratt Student Center, Room 189, with a reception afterwards at the Warren Center. The tentative schedule follows. Please check our website for the final program.

Friday, August 30

8:45-9:00 am Welcoming comments

9:00-10:30 am Veronica della Dora

"Mountains and Vision: From Mount of Temptation to Mont Blanc"

Veronica della Dora is incoming Professor of Human Geography at Royal Holloway University of London. Her research interests include cultural and historical geography, sacred geographies, landscape, history of cartography, and Byzantine and post-Byzantine studies. She is the author of *Imagining Mount Athos: Visions of a Holy Place from Homer to World War II* (University of Virginia, 2011). Della Dora's current research examines Byzantine perceptions of landscape and geographical imaginations. She is now working on a joint monograph on Christian pilgrimage and landscape and on an illustrated volume on mountains for the Reaktion Earth series.

10:45 am-12:15 pm James Robson

"Confined in the Locus of the Sacred: From Sacred Sites to Insane Asylums in East Asia"

James Robson is Professor of East Asian Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University and President of the Society for the Study of Chinese Religions. He specializes in the history of Medieval Chinese Buddhism and Daoism, and is particularly interested in issues of sacred geography, local religions, and religious art. He is author of the prize-winning *Power of Place: The Religious Landscape of the Southern Sacred Peak* (*Nanyue* 南嶽) *in Medieval China* (Harvard University Asia Center, 2009). He is presently engaged in a long-term collaborative research project studying a large collection of local religious statuary from Hunan province.

12:15-1:30 pm Lunch

1:30-3:00 pm Deena Ragavan

"Constructed Landscapes: Sumerian Temples and the Natural World"

Deena Ragavan specializes in the literature and religion of the ancient Near East. She received her PhD in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations from Harvard University with a dissertation examining Mesopotamian cosmology and the symbolism of sacred architecture in Sumerian literary texts. She has previously published a group of Old Assyrian tablets from the Harvard Art Museum/Arthur M. Sackler Museum and, most recently, is the editor of *Heaven on Earth: Temples, Ritual, & Cosmic Symbolism in the Ancient World* (2013). Her current research focuses on Sumerian temple architecture and topography based on textual and archaeological evidence.

3:15-4:45 pm Lindsay Jones

"A Southern Mexican 'Cross of Miracles': The Irony of an Anti-Tourist Site's Debt to Tourism"

Lindsay Jones is a professor in the Department of Comparative Studies at the Ohio State University. His interests lie in the cross-cultural study of religion, with particular attention to sacred architecture and the cultures and religions of Mesoamerica. He is author of numerous works, including *Twin City Tales: A Hermeneutical Reassessment of Tula and Chichén Itzá* (University Press of Colorado, 1995) and *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture: Experience, Interpretation, Comparison* (Harvard University Press, 2000). His current work focuses on the Oaxaca region of southern Mexico**.**

4:45-5:30 pm Reception, Warren Center

The *C*-Words

Edward H. Friedman

No one can whistle a symphony. It takes a whole orchestra to play it. —Halford E. Luccock

How much easier it is to be critical than to be correct. —Benjamin Disraeli

I hate the fact that people think "compromise" is a dirty word. —Barbara Bush

The Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities is a site for the liberal arts at Vanderbilt University. The Center offers programs in the form of seminars, talks by local and visiting scholars, discussion groups, and so forth. Graduate dissertation fellows interrelate and enhance their professional development as they complete their doctoral theses, and the contributors to the annual faculty seminar share interdisciplinary approaches to a given topic. Over the years—and the Center is about to celebrate its twenty-fifth anniversary—the dialogues have become greater in number and, correspondingly, have involved more participants and more schools within the university. This brings us to the first of the c-words: collaboration. Everyone in the Vanderbilt community is simultaneously an individual with a job to perform and part of a larger mix. More often than not, the position—student, faculty member, administrator, staff—will entail multitasking, and, more often than not, will have a description with some sort of academic inflection. With increasing frequency, universities have been compared to big businesses, and the idea of teamwork hardly can be removed from the equation. As a microcosm embedded in a microcosm, so to speak, the Warren Center fosters a spirit of collaboration, of cooperation, of joint ventures, of meaningful debate, and of reciprocal learning. It is as if there were a sign posted at the door of the Vaughn Home that cautioned, "NO 'WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?' ALLOWED." Looking out for Number One is fine, as long as it is understood that, as Structuralism points out, everything is a component of a larger system that helps to define its purpose, its function. Universities can teach, by example, that we can thrive personally and as part of a group, which is to say that instruction is a both/and rather than an either/or proposition.

Academia has been marked in recent decades by stronger interaction among fields of study and areas within universities. Stated succinctly, interests, methodologies, and discourses have expanded. Vanderbilt's record in the opening of boundaries has been impressive. This is good for the university, good for scholars, and, especially significantly, good for students. Achievement is calculated in many ways, and we honor individual efforts, as we should, but we also ask our students to consider the larger picture, with the objective of serving more than oneself. We expect students to know the difference between submitting their own work with unauthorized assistance and depending on others to deepen their vision. Vanderbilt students recognize this distinction through work on group projects and through numerous service and charitable acts. Alternative Spring Break encapsulates this sensibility, this sensitivity to others, as a feature of the educational process. In the classroom, the sharing of knowledge obviously is fundamental. Discussion should not be about one-upmanship but about formulating ideas—and growing intellectually—in a productive environment. The concept of collaboration may seem self-evident when one speaks of life in a university, and at Vanderbilt one finds an atmosphere of generosity and solidarity that at times can seem natural when, if truth be told, it is benevolently and carefully managed. There are, understandably, imperfections in the scheme of things, and there certainly is room to grow, but good will abounds on campus. People care about each other, in the classroom, in residence halls, in circles of friends, in all types of gathering places. Camaraderie is not forced, and that makes it all the better, of course. Still, a consciousness of the need for—and the rewards of—collaboration is useful, because on the broader playing field, as it were, collaboration currently is not quite the operative paradigm.

One does not have to enter the ranks of punditry to comprehend that we are experiencing an obstructionist moment in history. Whereas much could be accomplished if smart people of diverse persuasions, ideological and otherwise, were to assemble peaceably to problem-solve—to aid in curing the ills of the body, of society, of the economy, etc.—there seems to be a struggle for power that supersedes collective benefits. A notably large bloc of opposition seems to lie in wait to attack plans and proposals as they are introduced and advocated. The attacks almost seem preordained, to the extent that the specific content of the plans and proposals become, to a degree at least, irrelevant. What counts in a mindset that favors the obstacle is resistance for its own sake, precisely the antithesis of collaboration. Sad to say, obstructionism yields results: impasse, delays, defeats, confusion, and bad publicity for "the other side." Results of this variety, however, do not translate into success, except by the most cynical standards. People can be overlooked, and hurt, when these kinds of tactics are employed. As educators and colleagues in an educational community, we cannot change all that is happening around us, but we can offer examples of collaboration that will have an impact on the ways in which we and our neighbors—and future generations—deal with problems, disagreements, and divergent points of view. To interject another c-word into the conversation, perhaps we can examine strategies of compromise in such a manner that negotiation and concession do not become equated with losing, giving up, or choosing the easy solution. Educational techniques can be direct, or, at the other end of the spectrum, they can tend toward the subliminal. We are in a position to show as well as to tell about the importance of collaboration and compromise. The opportunities are unlimited, and they should not be wasted.

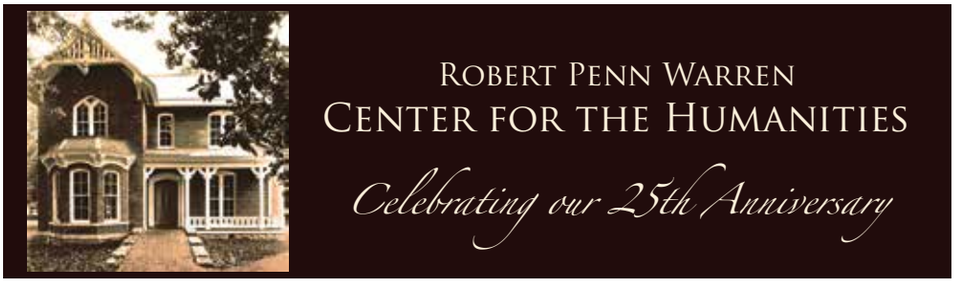
In a similar vein, and noting a matching opening consonant, we can reflect on the place of criticism in the curriculum and (way) beyond. As a teacher of literature

and "purveyor" of criticism, I see it as my duty to encourage students to read critically and analytically and to give them tools to do so. I want them to read carefully, thoughtfully, and independently, and to polish the presentation of their ideas orally and in writing. Their work should not be mechanical, rote, or a regurgitation of their class notes. Their opinions matter, but ideas must be articulated with precision and defended with rigor. Teaching critical skills is key to most, if not all, disciplines. On the one hand, then, we are training students to be critics. On the other hand, we generally want to refrain from overkill, that is, from creating critical monsters, for whom the critical act is first and foremost about the critic. We do not want to suggest that all criticism is equally viable, that everyone is automatically equipped to be a critic, or that the most negative criticism is the best criticism. We want students to be open-minded, flexible, and willing to take into account a range of perspectives. Some of these thoughts—the bullet points—are simple to grasp, while others are more nuanced, in light of the proliferation of media outlets for criticism. We can convey our assessments of just about everything quickly and openly. Those who publish in *The New York Times* or in *The Wall Street Journal* are not as separate or as hierarchically removed as they used to be from fledgling analysts, from the millions of bloggers "out there" in cyberspace. What might be called the critical balance may be difficult to pin down. "Be critical, but not overly critical" could come across as a mixed message. We should be advocating informed and constructive criticism, but current conventions appear to promote shoot-from-the-hip maneuvers. Everyone is not prepared to judge every issue or every person, yet we are regularly given free rein to do just that. Few of us believe that we are ill-equipped to pass judgment, but the fact is that (1) we may not know what we need to know to draw appropriate conclusions; (2) there are countless channels through which to disseminate our views, not all of which are reliable; and (3) the mechanisms to differentiate valid from irresponsible critical stances are limited and are themselves subject to criticism.

These days, everybody really is a critic, for better or worse. In academic contexts, we need to stress the correspondence between clear thinking and well-founded critical arguments. No social, political, philosophical, theological, or literary commentary can be completely unbiased, for, as they say, one cannot separate the dancer from the dance. Rhetoric is as much a factor today as it was in classical antiquity. Even sacrosanct scientific evidence is open to scrutiny. Nonetheless, the search for objectivity is noble and worthwhile, as is the goal of eliminating injustice and prejudice. Contrary to the prevailing view in some quarters, compromise may be the opposite of cowardice or of copping out. As with the tango, alas, it takes two to compromise. As Aung San Suu Kyi, Burmese opposition politician and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize and other awards, observes, "You cannot compromise unless people talk to you." Silence and the shutting out of others should never trump dialogue, and dialogue should be as fair and as substantial as possible. If the youngest members of our community can learn this lesson now, they likely will be able to enlighten their elders, and we will smile as we contemplate the future.

Edward H. Friedman is Gertrude Conaway Vanderbilt Professor of Spanish, professor of comparative literature, and director of the Warren Center.

Speaking for the Humanities: Celebrating 25 Years



The Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities will mark its 25th anniversary this fall with a series of events to be held September 19 and September 20. On September 19 at 4:10 PM at Sarratt Cinema we will screen a documentary film highlighting programs and projects sponsored by the Warren Center over the past 25 years. Consisting largely of conversations with scholars who have been very involved at the Warren Center over the course of its institutional life, the film will be a reflection of not only the centrality of the humanities to our campus lives but also will demonstrate the centrality of the humanities in our world.

On Friday, September 20 a series of panels exploring ways that discourse in the humanities has changed over the past 25 years will be featured at the First Amendment Center. Panel members are all former William S. Vaughn Visiting Fellows at the Warren Center. Panels and panelists will include "Theory and Culture" with Susan Hegeman (English, University of Florida), Anne Morey (English, Texas A&M University), Arkady Plotnitsky (English, Purdue University), and Maurice Stevens (comparative studies, the Ohio State University); "Globalization and Diaspora" with Deborah Cohn (Spanish, Indiana University Bloomington), Nihad Farooq (American Studies, Georgia Technical Institute), Sharryn Kasmir (anthropology, Hofstra University), and Jemima Pierre (African American and Diaspora Studies, Vanderbilt University); "Media and Technology" with Leo Coleman (comparative studies, the Ohio State University), Cara Finnegan (communication studies, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), Richard Grusin (English, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee), and Stephen Rachman (English, Michigan State University); and "Gender, Sexuality, and Race" with Jean Feerick (English, John Carroll University), Gilbert Herdt (anthropology, San Francisco State University), Richard King (history, University of Nottingham), and Benita Roth (sociology, State University of New York at Binghamton).

Please check our website for more details about the program.

2013/2014 Warren Center Faculty Fellows

Diagnosis in Context: Culture, Politics, and the Construction of Meaning.

GREGORY M. BARZ is the Alexander Heard Distinguished Service Professor and Associate Professor of Ethnomusicology at the Blair School of Music. He is a medical ethnomusicologist focusing on the role of the arts (music, dance, drama) in HIV/AIDS interventions in sub-Saharan Africa. He is the author of numerous books and the producer of several documentary films and CDs. He was nominated as producer for a Grammy Award for his CD, *Singing for Life: Songs of Hope, Healing, and HIV/AIDS in Uganda* (Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, 2007). In addition to holding a Senior AIDS Fulbright Research Award, he has been a Franklin Fellow and held a fellowship with the British Academy. His most significant achievement was winning Vanderbilt's annual Raft Debate (an open defense of academic disciplines) twice in a row before being asked to retire from the competition.

VANESSA B. BEASLEY is Associate Professor of Communication Studies and Director of American Studies. Her scholarship and teaching focus on the history and functions of U.S. presidential rhetoric. She is the author of several articles and book chapters as well as the book *You, the People: American National Identity in Presidential Rhetoric* (Texas A&M, 2004). She is also the editor of the volume *Who Belongs in America: Presidents, Rhetoric and Immigration* (Texas A&M, 2006). She is currently completing a book that traces how presidents from LBJ to Obama have talked about race in an allegedly post-racial era, research that raises questions about the use of Civil Rights movement narratives within public policy debates on the Americans with Disabilities Act.

SUSAN K. CAHN is Professor of History at the University at Buffalo, specializing in U.S. women's history and the history of sexuality. She has written and edited books on women's sports. Her book *Sexual Reckonings: Southern Girls in a Troubling Age*, (Harvard University Press, 2012) is about adolescent girls' sexuality and its significance in the ongoing struggles over race, class, and gender relations in the American South. She is the author of articles on lesbian history, adolescent sexuality, and chronic illness. Her current research is on the gendered history of mental illness with a focus on borderline personality disorder. She is the 2013/2014 William S. Vaughn Visiting Fellow at the Warren Center.

LAURA M. CARPENTER is Associate Professor of Sociology, specializing in gender, sexuality, and health over the life course. She is author of *Virginity Lost: An Intimate Portrait of First Sexual Experiences* (NYU Press, 2005) and co-editor of *Sex for Life: From Virginity to Viagra, How Sexuality Changes Throughout our Lives* (NYU Press, 2012). At present, she is completing a book manuscript on the politics of male circumcision in the contemporary United States, Canada, and Great Britain. Her next book-length project will explore how chronic illness affects sexual beliefs, behaviors, and identities—and vice versa—with a focus on diagnoses typically seen as having little to do with sex (e.g., diabetes, heart disease).

KENNETH T. MACLEISH is Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Medicine, Health and Society at Vanderbilt University. He studies how war, broadly considered, takes shape in the everyday lives of people whose job it is to produce it—U.S. military service members and their families and communities. He is the author of Making War: Everyday Life at Ft. Hood (Princeton University Press, 2013). His current work continues to explore the impact of making war on bodily and psychic life by examining how medical and protective technologies, diagnostic categories, institutional and political pressures, and cultural ideas about violence all shape the experience of war and the interpretation of war-affected bodies and minds. His ongoing research interests include relationships between the harm, healing, and enhancement of soldiers; ideas about suicide, risk, and resilience; and the production of morality in military medical interventions.

MARK L. SCHOENFIELD is Professor of English and chair of the English Department, with specializations in Romanticism, law and literature, and periodical culture. He is the author of *British Periodicals and Romantic Identity: The "Literary Lower Empire"* (Palgrave Macmillian, 2008) and *The Professional Wordsworth: Law, Labor, and the Poet's Contract* (University of Georgia Press, 1996). Mark is currently exploring how British periodicals and other institutions organized and analyzed knowledge, and how the interchange of knowledge among institutions transformed the public perception of it.

ARLEEN M. TUCHMAN is Professor of History. She is the author of numerous books and articles on the history of modern medicine in Europe and the United States. Her most recent book, *Science Has No Sex: The Life of Marie Zakrzewska, MD* (University of North Carolina Press, 2006) explores competing understandings of science, gender, and medicine through the eyes of one of the first female physicians in the U.S. Currently, she is writing a cultural history of diabetes, which examines the stories that have circulated since the late nineteenth century about who gets diabetes and why. She is particularly interested in diabetes' transformation from a disease of wealth to one of poverty, and from a Jewish disease to one that afflicts disproportionately Native Americans, African Americans, and Hispanic/Latinos.

2013/2014 Warren Center Graduate Student Fellows

EMILY M. AUGUST, American Studies Fellow, is a doctoral candidate in English. Located at the intersection of medical humanities and literary criticism, her dissertation, "Cadaver Poetics: The Reinvention of the Body in the Nineteenth Century," explores how surgical medicine's increasing dependence on access to cadavers rendered the corpse widely available as a critical object through which literary writers theorized the human body's shifting social and cultural definitions. Her dissertation traces the figure of the animated cadaver—and the politics of its employment—through the four newly-codifying genres in which traditional conceptions of the body were most visibly and productively imperiled: the fairy tale, the African American criminal confession, women's poetry, and the anatomical textbook.

WHITNEY N. LASTER is a doctoral candidate in sociology; she will also receive a graduate certificate in African American and Diaspora Studies. In her dissertation, "Racial Hierarchy and Liminality in South Africa," she combines primary historical data, population level survey data, and in-depth interviews to investigate the concept of racial liminality—an intermediate status derived from being situated between a dominant and a subordinate group in a racial hierarchy—by studying the history of coloureds and their social location, attitudes, and experiences in post-apartheid South Africa. Her project will contribute to understanding the ways that racial hierarchy can impact group experiences, and also demonstrate that group boundaries are permeable for liminally positioned persons.

AOIFE LAUGHLIN, a doctoral candidate in history, is the Warren Center's Visiting Graduate Student Fellow from Queen's University, Belfast. Her dissertation, "Defining America: Race, Religion, and Ethnicity in the 1848 Presidential Election," examines antebellum political rhetoric about citizenship and national identity. The dissertation deconstructs a number of the key issues dominating political discourse during the period leading up to and surrounding the 1848 election to explore how citizenship in the American nation-state was debated and ultimately conferred on or withheld from different groups. The overarching aim of the dissertation is to examine the consolidation of an "American" national identity taking place in the mid-nineteenth century in the face of significant changes to the demographic, geographic, and political landscape of the United States.

JOHN T. MADDOX, Joe and Mary Harper Fellow, is a doctoral candidate in the department of Spanish and Portuguese. He studies contemporary literature of Brazil and the Hispanic Caribbean. He was Assistant Editor of the Afro-Hispanic Review and has published journal articles in Brazil, the United States, and Canada. He is writing a dissertation entitled "Dramas of Memory: Slavery and African Oral Traditions in the Historical Novels of Manuel Zapata Olivella and Ana Maria Gonçalves." In the dissertation, he argues that today's Latin American historical novels about slavery are among the most groundbreaking of the genre, opening it to new narrative and political possibilities by recovering a shared yet understudied past that unites the Americas.

PAUL C. MORROW is a doctoral candidate in the department of philosophy, and is the George J. Graham Jr. Fellow. His dissertation, "Social Norms in the Theory of Mass Atrocity and Transitional Justice," studies emerging strategies for explaining, preventing, and pursuing legal and moral accountability for large-scale crimes, such as genocide and crimes against humanity. His work draws on current research in meta-ethics, philosophy of action, and philosophy of law, and incorporates a number of historical case studies. Paul has previously served as Raab Foundation Fellow at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington.

AUBREY K. PORTERFIELD is a doctoral candidate in English and is the Elizabeth E. Fleming Fellow. Her dissertation, "Modernism's Choreographies of Stillness: Race, Inertia, and Agency in Twentieth-Century Texts," claims that the still body is alternately an object of fascination and discipline and a subject with enhanced meditative and critical capacities in modernist fiction from 1890-1945. To study the shifting meanings of the still body as it emerges across modernist texts is to better understand the ways in which early-to-mid-twentieth century authors moved beyond traditional categories such as liberal humanism, racial identity, and nationalism to construct alternative notions of selfhood. While her work is invested in revising interpretations of modernism as an aesthetic tradition devoted to motion, she is also interested in using the trope of the still body to trace historical, political, and stylistic connections between Anglophone modernism and some of its contemporary literary movements, including Japanese New Sensation literature.

ANSLEY L. QUIROS is a doctoral candidate in history. Her dissertation, "The Devil and Jesus in Americus, Georgia: Lived Theology in the Civil Rights Movement, 1942-1978," seeks to understand the ways in which Christian theology functioned on both sides of the race question in the South. How is it that both civil rights activists and staunch segregationists invoke the will of God and claim that the Divine is on their side? By asking this question and telling the story of the coming of civil rights in a small town in South Georgia, the civil rights movement comes into focus not only as a social and political conflict, but as a theological one as well.

JAMIE E. SHENTON is a doctoral candidate in anthropology specializing in cultural anthropology of the Kichwa in the Ecuadorian Amazon. Her dissertation, "Aspirational Horizons and Bodily Logics of Production: Intergenerational Shifts and Competing Identities among Kichwa Women in Amazonian Ecuador," explores how the dramatically expanding aspirations of Kichwa women in a small rain forest community in Ecuador are interwoven with relations among body, identity, and production. Contradictory aspirations often co-operate with (rather than negate) longstanding Kichwa principles. The dissertation aims to contextualize the changing situation of young indigenous women, as both continuities and shifts between their experience and that of their mothers and grandmothers have generated a very different set of future ambitions for these first generation students, career women, and feminists.

2014/2015 Warren Center Fellowship Opportunities

The Warren Center will sponsor two fellowship programs in the 2014/2015 academic year: one for faculty members and one for Vanderbilt University graduate students.

The 2014/2015 Fellows Program, "Public Scholarship in the Humanities," will be co-directed by Joel Harrington (Professor of History) and Holly Tucker (Professor of French & Medicine, Health, and Society). The year-long interdisciplinary faculty seminar will explore questions related to publicly engaged scholarship and will examine what may be gained and what may be lost for scholars and scholarship when we are asked to make our work more accessible to a broad general audience. How will the future of scholarly research in the humanities be impacted by this increasing emphasis on publicly engaged scholarship as well as by the turn to digital humanities and other forms of new media? How do we prepare ourselves and our graduate students for this changing landscape? Publicly engaged scholarship involves partnerships between faculty members at academic institutions and individuals or organizations in the private and public sectors for the purpose of creating and distributing knowledge as well as promoting meaningful shared discourse. This working partnership among equals enhances scholarship, creativity, and learning while also contributing to the public good.

Participants in the Fellows Program will explore the changing "publics" addressed by contemporary humanities scholars as well as the variety of partnerships involved. The seminar will also engage with more fundamental questions related to the new types of knowledge and intellectual inquiry that can be produced as a result of publicly engaged scholarship. Finally, the seminar will provide the opportunity for participants to examine specific ways in which individual faculty members as well as colleges and universities are being called upon to adapt to a changing social, political, and economic climate in regard to the production and dissemination of knowledge. What are the implications for humanistic scholarship, for instance, in an era when expertise and opinion can travel across the globe in seconds via the Internet or in which faculty can teach thousands of students in a single class be via massive online open courses? The Warren Center will sponsor a Visiting Fellow with expertise in the area of study, in addition to selected members of the Vanderbilt faculty. Information regarding the internal and external application process can be obtained from the Warren Center or its website.

The Warren Center will also sponsor an interdisciplinary year-long Graduate Student Fellows Program. Vanderbilt University graduate students in the traditional humanities departments or those whose work is of a humanistic nature are invited to apply for the seven dissertation-completion fellowships. The fellowship provides a stipend as well as a modest research fund. Students are not allowed to hold any other form of employment during the term of the fellowship. Graduate Student Fellows are expected to complete and defend their dissertations before the start of the next academic year. The Graduate Student Fellows will meet in weekly seminars at the Warren Center, giving presentations from their work to the seminar and discussing texts of common interest. The Warren Center will also arrange for a number of visiting speakers to meet with the seminar during the year to provide opportunities for discussion of issues pertinent to scholarly life, such as the art of writing, successful strategies for publication, funding opportunities, grant writing, and workshops on delivering academic presentations. Each Warren Center Graduate Student Fellow will give a public lecture in the spring term. Fellows will also be expected to be active participants in the life of the Warren Center during their fellowship year. Further information is available on the Warren Center's website.

2013/2014 Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities Seminars

The following is a list of seminars and reading groups that will be hosted by the Warren Center in the fall semester. For more detailed information please contact the seminar coordinators or the Warren Center.

18th-/19th-Century Colloquium: The colloquium brings together faculty, graduate students, and visiting scholars to explore ground-breaking scholarship on the arts, cultures, and histories of the 18th- and 19th-centuries. While loosely focused around British culture, the group also invites scholars from other linguistic and geographic fields to share work and join in the discussion. Seminar Coordinators: Rachel Teukolsky (English) rachel.teukolsky@vanderbilt.edu, Scott Juengel (English) scott.j.juengel@vanderbilt.edu, and Humberto Garcia (English) humberto.garcia@vanderbilt.edu.

Behind Bars: The Complex Politics of Incarceration: This seminar seeks to have conversations with scholars in a wide range of fields and disciplines about a major social and political concern in the twenty-first century: the prison industrial complex. Through an examination of critical race and queer theory, transnational feminisms, and the work of grassroots activist organizations, the seminar will engage discourses of prison reform and prison abolition as two distinct methodologies that attempt to address the same pervasive social problem. Reading scholarly work as well as the work produced by activists, we hope to explore how the academy can engage these issues productively and materially. Seminar coordinators: Alex Chambers (philosophy) alexandra.e.chambers@vanderbilt.edu and Tatiana McInnis (English) tatiana.d.mcinnis@vanderbilt.edu.

Brazilian Studies Reading Group: This graduate student led seminar provides a forum for the discussion of contemporary Brazilian topics. Each semester the group will facilitate interdisciplinary dialogues with pre-circulated readings, discuss works-in-progress by graduate students and faculty, and invite recognized scholars to present new work. We will consider issues in the context of the recent protest movements, which began in São Paulo as a response to increased bus fares, before spreading through most urban centers across the country. Topics for discussion may include traditional power structures, social movements, access to equal education, workers' rights, political corruption, race relations, and income disparity. Meetings and lectures will sharpen our analyses and understanding of contemporary Brazilian problems and the issues facing its citizens. Seminar coordinators: Ashley Larson (Latin American Studies) ashley.d.larson@vanderbilt.edu, Max Pendergraph (history) joseph.m.pendergraph@vanderbilt.edu, and Guilherme Russo (political science) guilherme.russo@vanderbilt.edu.

Circum-Atlantic Studies Seminar: This group reads and treats scholarship that is interdisciplinary in nature, focuses on at least two of the following regions—Africa, Europe, Latin America, the Caribbean, and North America—and treats some aspect of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, colonialism, and/or postcolonialism. Seminar coordinators: Celso Castilho (history) celso.t.castilho@vanderbilt.edu and Jane Landers (history) jane.landers@vanderbilt.edu.

Digital Humanities Discussion Group: The Digital Humanities seminar brings together colleagues from across the university who are interested in issues related to this area of study. The seminar participants will explore theories, practices, and methodologies of DH and explore ways to best support this type of work on our campus. Seminar coordinators: Lynn Ramey (French) lynn.ramey@vanderbilt.edu and Mona Frederick (Warren Center) mona.frederick@vanderbilt.edu.

Exploring Boundaries: Race and Ethnicity in the 21st-Century United States: How racial and ethnic boundaries continue to shift and transform is an exciting and important topic of intellectual pursuit for scholars of all disciplines. This year-long seminar is designed to facilitate discussion, debate, and collaboration among individuals across campus who are interested in contemporary issues of race and ethnicity. At each of the monthly meetings, participants will bridge theory with practice, engaging with foundational texts in the field as well as with the work of their peers and that of invited speakers. Thematic topics of discussion will include methodological issues in studying race, heterogeneity within racial and pan-ethnic groups, and contemporary social problems. Seminar coordinators: Samantha Perez (sociology) samantha.l.perez@vanderbilt.edu and Courtney Thomas (sociology) courtney.s.thomas@vanderbilt.edu.

Film Theory & Visual Culture Seminar: This seminar aims to foster dialogue among faculty and graduate students across campus working in film, visual culture, art history, literature, and cultural studies interested in theories of the image, philosophies of perception, aesthetic and critical theory, media histories, and the history of vision. The group will meet monthly to discuss readings, share work, and engage the research of invited scholars. Seminar coordinators: Jennifer Fay (film studies and English) jennifer.m.fay@vanderbilt.edu, James McFarland (German) james.mcfarland@vanderbilt.edu, and Paul Young (film studies and English) paul.d.young@vanderbilt.edu.

Gender and Sexuality Seminar: This seminar provides an interdisciplinary forum for the development of critical perspectives on gender and sexuality. The seminar examines how gender and sexuality shape human experience within and across cultures, in different time periods, and as part of social practice. Participants will choose the format with an aim toward balancing new scholarship by graduate students and established scholars, as well as exploring topics of particular interest to the group. Seminar coordinator: Katherine Crawford (women's & gender studies and history) katherine.b.crawford@vanderbilt.edu.

Geographic Imaginations and the Spatial Humanities: The spatial humanities, extending from the spatial turn in geographic studies and overlapping with digital humanities, were born of the promise of innovative humanities research that reaches beyond demonstrative mapmaking to spatial analysis of humanities data. Scholars have used Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to document historic and literary action through space and time, map linguistic and cultural relationships, and model or predict behavior based on specific parameters. This seminar will collaboratively explore the historical contexts and theories of the spatial turn, examine specific case studies of spatially-oriented humanities research, and practice mapping our own data with existing spatial technologies. The seminar will include a monthly reading group and complementary workshops, along with visits from two schol-

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VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities
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2013/2014 Warren Center Seminars (cont.)

ars in the field of spatial humanities. Seminar coordinators: Courtney Campbell (history) courtney.j.campbell.1@vanderbilt.edu, Beth Koontz (anthropology) beth.koontz@vanderbilt.edu, and Scotti Norman (anthropology) scotti.m.norman@vanderbilt.edu.

Group for Pre-modern Cultural Studies: The purpose of the group is to serve as a forum for those with interests in pre-modern studies, including not only history but language and literature, chiefly, though not exclusively, Greek, Hebrew, and Latin, as well as music, art, and culture. The group meets monthly to discuss ongoing research by a faculty member, recent publications in the field, or the work of a visiting scholar. Seminar coordinators: Bill Caferro (history) william.p.caferro@vanderbilt.edu and Leah Marcus (English) l.marcus@vanderbilt.edu.

Imagining America: Artists and Scholars in Public Life: The Warren Center and the American Studies Program are co-sponsoring this group to provide opportunities for exchange among faculty members and graduate students who are interested in or who are currently involved in projects that engage public scholarship. Vanderbilt is a member of the national organization, "Imagining America," a consortium of colleges and universities committed to public scholarship in the arts, humanities, and design. Seminar coordinators: Teresa Goddu (American Studies) teresa.a.goddu@vanderbilt.edu and Mona Frederick (Warren Center) mona.frederick@vanderbilt.edu.

Literature and Law Seminar: This reading group will meet to discuss current approaches, new challenges, and new possibilities that are offered to legal and literary scholars when they use insights from both fields to illuminate their work. The seminar welcomes anyone interested in the many topics now addressed in this field, including the use of obscenity laws to regulate creative work, the representation of law in literature, law as literature, the application of literary methods to legal texts, the challenges of constructing "characters" appropriate to literary and legal settings, and the revitalization of law through reference to humanistic texts and approaches. Seminar coordinator: Robert Barsky (French and Italian) robert.barsky@vanderbilt.edu.

Mexican Studies Seminar: The goal of this group is to raise the profile of research related to Mexico on the Vanderbilt campus and support members' individual scholarly endeavors regarding this important nation bordering the United States. The group brings together faculty and graduate students from history, political science, literature, sociology, art, anthropology, music, and Latin American studies. At monthly meetings the group will discuss work-in-progress authored by members and invited scholars from beyond Vanderbilt. Seminar coordinators: Helena Simonett (Latin American Studies) helena.simonett@vanderbilt.edu and Edward Wright-Rios (history) edward.wright-rios@vanderbilt.edu.

The Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities

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For a listing of Warren Center programs and activities, please contact the above address or visit our Web site at *www.vanderbilt.edu/rpw_center*.

Statement of Purpose
Established under the sponsorship of the College of Arts and Science in 1987 and named the Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities in 1989 in honor of Robert Penn Warren, Vanderbilt alumnus class of 1925, the Center promotes interdisciplinary research and study in the humanities, social sciences, and, when appropriate, natural sciences. Members of the Vanderbilt community representing a wide variety of specializations take part in the Warren Center's programs, which are designed to intensify and increase interdisciplinary discussion of academic, social, and cultural issues.

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