Center Chooses Research Theme for 2007-09

This past fall, following its customary process of consultation with its Faculty Advisory Committee and other Center constituents, the Center chose “Past Knowing” as its research theme for the 2007-08 and 2008-09 academic years. Reflecting on its own past as its 40th anniversary approaches, the Center seeks to consider the relationship of knowledge to its limits.

Fellows’ projects and public events will address any of the following senses of “Past Knowing”: 1) Past in the sense of beyond: phenomena and ways of apprehending them that are or have been considered to be outside the realm of classifiable or rational knowledge, such as mysticism, faith, intuition, or creativity; 2) Past in the temporal sense: forms of knowledge, artistic movements, or historical narratives that construct themselves as coming after some other discourse, theory, or practice, such as “post-” or “neo-”; 3) Disciplinary pasts: practices of knowledge gathering, organization, and dissemination that contemporary disciplines and institutions view as parts of their own past, and the narratives through which they construct their relationship to them; “antiquarianism” and its traces in various fields is an obvious example.

Projects and speakers will explore such questions as: how and to what extent do the common practices and protocols of scholarly fields attempt to account for phenomena commonly conceived not only as beyond their borders, but beyond their ken? How important are the conditions of “coming after” or “going beyond” to theoretical or other formations that embrace, assume, or resist the designation “post-” or “neo-”? What mechanisms do knowledge formations use to locate and understand the obsolescence or pertinence of their pasts, and with what effects? In what circumstances do disciplines or institutions seek inspiration, rejuvenation, or transformation from the recovery of past practices? Does the character of disciplines’ relationship to past knowledge help determine something fundamental?
From the Director

In my column in the fall newsletter, I commented that this year’s theme, “Autonomy, Gender, and Performance,” had generated a diverse group of fellows, from eight different departments. Given its crossdisciplinary mission, such diversity is what the Center strives for, but this also carries the risk that fellows’ interests will be too disparate for a community to form despite the common theme. The fall semester put any worries along those lines to rest, as the fellows developed a sense of camaraderie that made seminar meetings enjoyable and receptions for speakers long and lively. Many of the fellows spend much of their time in their Center offices, despite the fact that the ninth floor of Curtin Hall has undergone several rounds of roof repairs, not all of them anticipated but all of them noisy. The annoyance of jackhammers was augmented by what could have been a disaster when for some reason the roof was left uncovered over a weekend of thunderstorms, bringing cascades of water down the walls of many offices. Fortunately no one’s research materials were damaged, though many ceiling panels were completely ruined. This happened just at a time when departments were bringing job candidates by, of course; the holes in the ceiling occasioned stories of floods, fires, and freezes on other campuses, however, for physical plant problems are clearly a common feature of university life.

The curse of the weather gods appeared to strike again in early December, when for the first time in several years the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, along with most of the rest of the city, closed for inclement weather. Our speaker, Philip Auslander, was already safely in town, however, and we decided that we would go ahead with his talk. I am pleased to report that this was the only event held on campus that day (the calendar-masters seemed unable to believe we were going ahead with it) and that nearly forty people dug out their cars, pulled on their parkas, and trudged through the snowpiles to attend. The Center is sometimes regarded as a haven for effete intellectuals out of touch with the real world, but such an opinion was clearly belied by the crowd, for whom scarves and boots were not fashion statements.

I hope that the spring semester will see fewer meteorological challenges, but one never knows. (I’ve been around long enough to remember the year spring finals were canceled because of a blizzard.) I have complete confidence, however, that the friendship among the fellows will continue to make the Center a pleasant environment, and that our public events, which include two performances, our annual, two-day conference, as well as several speakers, will be stimulating, challenging, and fun, even if they occur in brilliant sunshine.

–Merry Wiesner-Hanks, History, Interim Director
Thank You!
The Center is grateful to the following people who have made financial donations in support of Center programming and the Tennessen dissertator fellowship since fall 2006: David Buck, David Crane, Joan Dobkin & Ruud van Dijk, Eduardo Douglas, Bruce Fetter, Carlos Galvao-Sobrinho, Robert & Ellen Ginsberg, Victor Greene, Jeffrey Hayes, Christina Hernandez-Malaby, Stanley Hoffmann, Thomas Malaby, Catherine Podolin, Claire & Stanley Sherman, Daniel Sherman, Zelma Sherman, Carol Tennessen, Bill & Eleanor Wainwright. The Center continues to intensify and systematize its fundraising activities (see p. 11). If you haven’t had a chance to respond to our fall appeal to contribute to Center programming, please consider making a contribution now. If you’d like more information, please contact Center Deputy Director Kate Kramer at kkramer@uwm.edu or 414-229-4141. Thank you in advance for your support!

From the Director

Feature Article
Center Chooses Research Theme, 2007-09, Invites Conference Proposals

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David Román lecture, October 27
Amanda Anderson lecture, September 29
Stephen Darwall lecture, October 20
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mental about the disciplines and thus distinguish between or among them? How have technological changes in access to information affected understandings of the pasts, presents, and futures of knowledge? What kinds of assumptions about past knowings undergird discussions of the contours of knowledge in the future? The Center will pursue projects and programs that address these questions theoretically, philosophically, historically, or in the form of creative work.

As is also customary, following its selection of next year’s research theme, the Center issued a call for fellowship proposals to UWM faculty in early fall 2006. From the wide array of proposals we received, this year’s fellowship selection committee has chosen a diverse, multi-disciplinary group of six fellows for 2007-08. We have also issued our annual call for fellowship proposals from UW-System faculty, and hope to add at least one non-UWM scholar to next year’s group of fellows.

Center Invites Conference Proposals

For its public programming under “Past Knowing,” the Center plans to invite a line-up of speakers from a variety of disciplines and to this end has renewed its call for conference proposals from UWM faculty. Launched in 2004 to complement the Center’s annual spring Open Fora, this call is an example of ways in which the Center seeks to reflect and serve the research interests of UWM faculty, academic staff, and graduate students in all of its activities. In 2004-05 we held three multi-speaker events that originated in this call, including the two-day conference “Art of the State,” organized by 2004-05 fellow Douglas Howland (History) and Luise White (History, University of Florida).

Currently, the Center seeks proposals for symposia and other multi-speaker events for academic years 2007-08 and 2008-09 that will further its mission of promoting cutting-edge research and encouraging dialogue across disciplinary boundaries in the humanities, arts, and humanistically informed social sciences. Along with regular lectures, multi-speaker events form the core of the Center’s public programs, provide a focus for its annual or biennial research themes, and leave a lasting trace through Center publications.

Topics should have the potential both of appealing to a broad range of researchers in and around UWM and of having a wider impact on scholarly debates in the humanities nationally and internationally. Any topic that falls within the humanities, broadly conceived, has interdisciplinary appeal, and does not duplicate recent conferences, may be proposed. We especially encourage proposals that fall within the Center’s 2007-09 research theme, “Past Knowing.”

Successful proposals will become part of the Center’s official calendar and will receive funding from and be coordinated by the Center staff. The Center will also assist in writing grant applications for projects that need or lend themselves to external support. In addition, scholarly work resulting from the events may be considered for the Center Working Paper series, or for its book series 21st Century Studies with Indiana University Press and, if elected, will be eligible for editorial support.

A proposal may come from up to three principal organizers (POs), with one of them serving as the main contact. One of the POs must hold a ladder-rank (assistant, associate, or full professor) position in the College of Letters and Science at UWM; all must be UWM faculty or academic staff. The POs are welcome to submit a proposal on behalf of a larger group that may include academic staff, graduate students, and community members. For complete information, please click on the link on the left-hand side of the Center homepage, http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/21st/.

A Streetcar Named Deseo: A Lecture by David Román

On October 27, the Center welcomed David Román, Professor of English and a core member of the faculty in the Program in American Studies and Ethnicity at the University of Southern California, for his presentation of a new research project on the complex ethnic theatrical identity of Anthony Quinn under the title “A Streetcar Named Deseo.”

Using Quinn’s 1948 replacement of Marlon Brando in the Broadway play A Streetcar Named Desire as a starting point, Román’s project aspires at once to be a reflection on theatre history (how it is written, received, and remembered), an investigation of casting as a form of cultural documentation, and a new window on mid-twentieth-century U.S. history. Part of the first generation that called itself “Mexican-American,” Anthony Quinn also resisted being type-cast, which was one reason for his move from Hollywood to New York after World War II.

Part of the research concerns Quinn himself. Román shared his experience of researching the actor’s scrapbooks which are housed rather plainly at a small library in Belvedere, Los Angeles. Another of Román’s approaches is an investigation of the process through which actors such as Quinn were cast at the time. What emerges is a picture of the racial politics of the time period that is much more nuanced and complex than the traditional image of racial strife and segregation. Members of a 35-person audience of Center fellows, graduate students, and UWM faculty eagerly engaged Román’s presentation—with both challenging questions and useful comments.

Argument, Autonomy, & the Novel: A Lecture by Amanda Anderson

After having had to postpone her appearance at the Center last year, Amanda Anderson, Caroline Donovan Professor of English Literature and Chair of the Department of English, Johns Hopkins University, visited the Center on Friday, September 29. The title of Professor Anderson’s Center talk, based on her most recent book The Way We Argue Now: A Study in the Cultures of Theory (Princeton, 2006), was “Argument, Autonomy, and the Novel.” In a broad sense, the paper dealt with the question of argument and life in the novel, or the problem of substantiating or owning a theory in one’s life. Centered around the work of George Eliot, particularly her 1860 novel The Mill on the Floss, the paper reconsidered Eliot’s oft-criticized idealism—her (or her characters’) efforts to practice theory as a way of life and theory’s relevance to practice. Arguing that Eliot was torn between moral certainty and actual existence, Anderson called The Mill on the Floss exemplary for how Eliot struggled with the existential challenge of living one’s doctrine. Through the use of charismatic, visionary characters, Anderson suggested, Eliot tells us that vision and prophecy are important elements to a moral existence, but that the price is to give up certain existential experiences, “necessary disenchantment.”

That many in the UWM community had been looking forward to Professor Anderson’s visit became clear during the discussion following the paper during which many faculty and graduate students seriously and deeply engaged this rich paper. The element of tragedy especially received attention, with Professor Anderson emphasizing at one point that throughout her work Eliot remains haunted that the doctrines she applies are crippling. Participants continued their discussion at a reception at the Center and during a dinner with the speaker.
Autonomy, Respect, and Mutual Accountability: A Lecture by Stephen Darwall

On October 20, 2006 Stephen Darwall, John Dewey Collegiate Professor of Philosophy at the University of Michigan, paid a very successful visit to the Center. When the audience assembled in Curtin Hall 118, the usual space for Center lectures, it became clear very quickly that the approximately 40 seats available weren’t nearly enough to accommodate all those who wanted to hear Professor Darwall’s talk (which doubled as a presentation for the Department of Philosophy colloquium series). Fortunately, Curtin’s large lecture hall was available to seat every one of the approximately 75 people at the event.

Author of works such as *The British Moralists and the Internal ‘Ought’ 1640-1740* (Cambridge, 1995), *Welfare and Rational Care* (Princeton, 2004), and most recently *The Second-Person Standpoint: Morality, Respect, and Accountability* (Harvard, 2006), Darwall presented a paper entitled “Autonomy, Respect, and Mutual Accountability.” The paper began by exploring so-called second-personal action—the act of making a personal claim on another. Positing that many moral notions are second-personal, Darwall next argued that respect for persons and mutual accountability are linked: “Holding someone responsible is always ... implicitly reciprocal, involving an element of mutual respect.” Autonomy (as competence and as authority) is a third, indispensable element. Autonomy as authority is a second-personal idea because it requires that others let one lead one’s own life; furthermore, to be able to lead one’s own life is to be able to take responsibility for oneself, which requires the capability of taking a second-personal perspective on oneself: second-personal competence. Darwall concluded that “the three ideas of my title ... come as a package deal. We are committed to all three ideas when we take up a second-person standpoint and address (putatively valid) claims and demands of any sort and hold one another responsible.”

At the outset of his talk, Darwall provided audience members with a written summary of his talk, making it easier for non-philosophers to follow along with what already was a clear and stimulating argument. The animated conversation with the audience immediately following the presentation confirmed that Darwall had been successful in engaging his multi-disciplinary Center audience.

Following Darwall’s Center talk, faculty, Center fellows, graduate students and others continued their discussions of the day at a crowded and cheerful reception at the Center.

“Part of respecting another person is to make oneself accountable to her ...”
Conversion Tales: Missionaries, Mary Magdalene, and Catholic Culture: A Symposium with Jodi Bilinkoff and Elizabeth Rhodes

As part of its fall line-up of events, on Friday November 10 the Center convened a symposium organized by Merry Wiesner-Hanks (History; Interim Center Director) under the title “Conversion Tales: Missionaries, Mary Magdalene, and Catholic Culture.” Co-sponsored by the Departments of History and Spanish & Portuguese, and the Comparative Study of Religion Program, the event featured two speakers, both of whom presented new research projects that, each in its own way, spoke to aspects of our research theme, “Autonomy, Gender, and Performance.”

Before a diverse, multi-disciplinary audience of Center fellows, faculty, graduate students, representatives from other area institutions, and community members, historian Jodi Bilinkoff (UNC-Greensboro) was the first speaker. Author most recently of Related Lives: Confessors and Their Female Penitents, 1450-1750 (Cornell, 2005), Bilinkoff presented a paper entitled “Missionary Lives.” Bilinkoff’s project involves an examination of texts by three 17th and 18th century Jesuit missionaries to the Americas. These texts have been viewed as hagiography, but Bilinkoff’s approach centers on how they can also be viewed as “constructions of male clerical lives.” Presenting what she called preliminary ideas, Bilinkoff was able to link her material to the Center theme, although she was quick to remind the audience that autonomy, gender, and performance were not terms used at the time. For example, she emphasized that while missionaries had to be independent, versatile, and indeed autonomous, their solitary existence was often characterized by isolation,loneliness, and alienation. The putative heroism of their mission could feel more like exile. Bilinkoff also argued that her texts suggest that missionaries had the sense of always being on stage, all alone trying to convert indigenous people.

The second speaker was Elizabeth Rhodes (Hispanic Studies, Boston College). She is a specialist in early modern Spanish literature, theology and religious culture, and women’s studies and feminist theory, the author of many articles and book chapters, and the editor of This Tight Embrace: Luisa De Carvajal Y Mendoza (1566-1614) (Marquette, 2000). Using a lively array of images to illustrate her argument, Rhodes presented a paper “Who was Mary Magdalene—Really?: A Literary Archeology.” The paper traced alterations in representations of Mary Magdalene in the early modern era. Rhodes convincingly showed a trend toward Mary Magdalene’s objectification between the late-15th and mid-16th centuries (and beyond) from fairly straightforward accounts depicting her as an apostle—heroic, royal, and always with agency—to stories conveying the image of a submissive, unchaste, hysterical figure. After the 16th century, the apostolic element of Mary Magdalene’s story disappears virtually completely. The case offers a good example, Rhodes argued, of the ways women “dangerous to men” become commodified objects rather than active subjects. Rhodes concluded with a brief excursus of more modern representations, including the musical and movie Jesus Christ Superstar and The Da Vinci Code, in which Mary has been removed completely from the story of her own life, leaving only a salacious trace in the lives of others.

In a change of pace from normal Center practice, after the presentations and discussion, speakers, Center fellows and staff and other audience members moved to Center fellow Anne Hansen’s house for a potluck dinner. As part of her visit, Professor Bilinkoff also met with members of the Feminist Theory research workshop for a discussion of her article, “Navigating the Waves (of Devotion): Toward a Gendered Analysis of Early Modern Catholicism,” in Crossing Boundaries: Attending to Early Modern Women, Jane Donawerth and Adele Seeff, editors (University of Delaware Press, 2000).
Current Center Fellows and Staff


Kate Kramer (Center Deputy Director) published “First Impressions, the Question, and Memorials of Identity” in *Memorials of Identity: New Media From the Rubell Family Collection* (2006) exhibition catalogue. Among the institutions to which this exhibition will travel are the Corcoran Gallery of Art / College of Art + Design and the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University. She also contributed several entries to the *Encyclopedia of Prostitution and Sex Work* ed. Melissa Hope Ditmore (Greenwood, 2006). Kate’s biggest news, however, is the arrival of Theo Kramer Poehlmann, born September 15, 2006: a happy, healthy baby boy!


Ruud van Dijk has been promoted from Center Assistant Director and Editor to Associate Director for Publications in recognition of his crucial role in maintaining the Center’s international reputation for research excellence through his exemplary contributions to Center publications and activities.

2005-06 Fellow Presentations and Center Open House


Our annual Open House (photo above) followed the panel. We were gratified to see many old friends and get to know new ones, and we look forward to the continued involvement with the Center’s work by all.
Kristin Pitt (French, Italian, and Comparative Literature) presented work on “Latin American Literature in Inter-American Context” at the North Central Council of Latin Americans’ 2006 Annual Convention, Mankato MN, November 2006.


Merry Wiesner-Hanks (Interim Center Director and History) is the editor of the new Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe. Problems in European Civilization Series (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2007). She also published “A Renaissance Woman (Still) Adrift in the World,” in Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal. Volume 1 (Fall 2006): 137-158. She was the keynote speaker for the third annual Early Modern Workshop in Jewish History, entitled “Gender, Family, and Social Structures,” Wesleyan University, Middletown CT, August 2006.


Stephen J. Toope, speaker at the 2002 Center conference “9/11: Reconstructions,” and contributor to the Center volume Terror, Culture, Politics: Rethinking 9/11 (Indiana, 2006) has been named President of the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada.

2003-04 Center Fellow Steven McKay (Sociology) has published Satanic Mills or Silicon Islands? The Politics of High Tech Production in the Philippines (Cornell University/ILR Press). The book challenges the myth of globalization’s homogenizing power, arguing that the uniqueness of place is becoming more, not less, important. It documents how multinational firms secure worker control and consent by reaching beyond the high-tech factory and into local labor markets.
Spring 2007 Calendar of Events

FRI JAN 26
Janice Boddy (Anthropology, Toronto)
a lecture, Autonomy and the Pull of Convention: Colonial Efforts to Stop Female Circumcision in Sudan, 1920-46
co-sponsored by UWM Women’s Studies Program and Department of Geography
3:30 pm CRT 118

FRI FEB 23
The Mammy Project
a performance by Michelle Matlock
co-sponsored by UWM Student Union Sociocultural Programming, Women’s Resource Center, Multicultural Center, Comparative Ethnic Studies Program, Africology, and Second Annual Midwest Interdisciplinary Graduate Conference “Performing (In)visibility” (Feb 23 - 24, 2007; http://pw.english.uwm.edu/~migc/Welcome.html)
7:00 pm Union Ballroom

FRI MAR 9
Performative Autonomy and the Embodied Past
a symposium organized by Merry Wiesner-Hanks (History; Interim Center Director) with Pamela Brown (English, Connecticut): “From`Joke of Nature’ to ‘Woman as Wonder’: Prodigies of Autonomy at the Early Modern Court,” and Susan Cook (Musicology, UW-Madison): “Remembering World War I: Maurice Ravel and the French Past”
co-sponsored by UWM Departments of English, History, and Music
3:30 pm CRT 118

FRI MAR 30
Lisa Nakamura (Speech Communication and Asian American Studies, UIUC)
a lecture, The Terrorist Look: Biometric Screens, Race, and the Digital Sublime
co-sponsored by UWM Department of English
3:30 pm CRT 118

FRI APR 20
Wonder Woman: The Musical
a performance by Elizabeth Whitney
co-sponsored by LGBT, Women’s Studies, and Women’s Resource Center
7:00 pm CRT 175

continued on next page

Graduate Students at the Center
On two occasions in fall 2006 the Center hosted a graduate student brown bag lunch with a Center speaker: on October 20, a large group of Philosophy graduate students met with Stephen Darwall, and members of a new, graduate student Queer Studies reading group had a lively encounter with the next speaker, David Román, a week later. Along with Center support for the Midwest Interdisciplinary Graduate Conference (February 22-23, 2007), the Tenessen Graduate Research Fellowship, and other projects, these lunches are now a Center tradition. We always welcome ideas from both graduate students and their advisors on how to enhance these initiatives!
In Terms of Gender: Cross-cultural and Interdisciplinary Perspectives

an international conference organized by Joan W. Scott (Institute for Advanced Study), Mary Louise Roberts (UW-Madison), and Daniel J. Sherman (UWM)

featuring keynote speaker Judith Butler (Berkeley) and including Mary Ann Doane (Brown), Éric Fassin (École Normale Supérieure, Paris), and Elizabeth Weed (Brown)

Conference begins Friday, May 4, at 1:00 pm, in Curtin 175

co-sponsored by the William F Vilas Trust Estate and the Center for European Studies, UW-Madison

The Center for 21st Century Studies Begins Search for Associate Director for Advancement and Planning

The Center seeks to appoint an Associate Director for Advancement and Planning (ADAP, official title Development Specialist) who will plan, coordinate, and implement faculty and Center efforts to secure outside funding for research projects.

The ADAP will also be centrally involved in the Center’s ongoing efforts, as part of UWM’s Comprehensive Campaign, to seek funds to endow its activities.

Primary responsibilities will be: (1) writing grant proposals to expand the range of the Center’s activities through outside funding and put us in a position to develop major projects supported by external funders; (2) identifying areas of potential interdisciplinary collaboration, either within the humanities or between the humanities and other areas, through extensive consultation with, and facilitation of discussion among, UWM faculty and staff; (3) serving as the Center’s primary liaison with our advancement partners in L&S, the Graduate School, and University Advancement.

Secondary responsibility will be offering advice and assistance to individual humanities faculty members seeking external funding for their research. The ADAP will work closely with other members of the Center staff and report to the Director and the Dean of the College of Letters and Science. Qualifications for the position include experience in the field of research planning and advancement, especially grant-writing, an M.A. or M.F.A. in the humanities or related field, demonstrated affinity with interdisciplinary research involving the humanities (broadly defined), and strong communication and organizational skills. Familiarity with publicly funded, comprehensive doctoral institutions and administrative experience desirable but not required.

Please visit http://www.21st.uwm.edu for further details. Review of applications will begin March 1, 2007, and continue until position is filled.
from left: Interim Center Director Merry Wiesner-Hanks visits with colleagues Margaret Atherton (Fellow 1981-82, 1989-90, 1998-99) and Anne Hansen (Fellow 2000-01, 2006-07) prior to Stephen Darwall’s lecture on Friday, October 20, 2006.