The Apocalypse Seminar:
Fin de Siècle, Millenium, and Other Transitions

Reactions to temporal endings, including the apocalyptic "end-time," become particularly vivid in a "period" like our own, when the end of a century coincides with the turn of a millennium. This year's Fellows Program, "The Apocalypse Seminar: Fin de Siècle, Millenium, and Other Transitions," will explore the ways human beings demarcate time and how the distinct sense of beginnings and endings structures our lives and the ideas we create of the past. Ten faculty members representing seven departments will meet weekly at the Center to discuss these themes. Throughout the year, visiting scholars will address the fellows and give public lectures. The seminar is co-directed by Margaret Anne Doody, Andrew W. Mellon Professor of Humanities, Professor of English, and Director of the Program in Comparative Literature, and David C. Wood, Professor of Philosophy and Chair of the Department. Letters recently met with the seminar's co-directors to discuss the relationship between philosophy and literature and this year's topic.

LETTERS: Could you explain your understanding of the motivation behind this year's Fellows Program, especially in relation to your respective disciplines, literature and philosophy?

DOODY: For a long time, I have become increasingly worried by the emphasis placed on the "end of time," especially images I see in popular culture, television, and movies of not only coming disaster but an apocalyptic end. I am beginning to feel that we are extremely conscious of the end of the century and the end of the millennium, and that a desire to see something big and ugly happen really exists. It began to strike me that not only our literature and movies, but also our domestic and foreign policy, are now driven by this fear or lust for an apocalypse. I want to ask why we look at a mere marker, like the year 2000, with such great respect. Where is the emotional investment coming from, since the year 2000 is simply an artifact? Even Christians know that it does not date time from the birth of Christ, and for Moslems and people of other faiths the year 2000 has scarcely any real meaning at all. Yet everyday we see that it is gaining in significance.

I thought this was something that the academy needed to investigate. At first, I did not come to it as a literary scholar, but I can now see how the interest ties in with my interest in literature. I came to it as someone who believes in thinking. As members of what can be loosely identified as the Enlightenment, we ought to investigate such phenomena and not wall ourselves off from them and pretend that they do not exist.

WOOD: I have many of the same concerns as Margaret, especially the social and political

Contents
The Apocalypse Seminar 1
Harry C. Howard Jr. Lecture 5
Symposium on the Scopes Trial 6
1995/96 Fellows 8
WOOD:
The question of an ending or the question of the end of history, or the end of a millennium, or the bringing about of some ideal, are questions that not only have been particularly interesting for philosophers to think about but also affect the very idea of philosophy itself.

ones. My own interest, more generally, has been “time” for a number of years. I have tried to track a recent tradition of thinking about time beginning in the late nineteenth century with Nietzsche and continuing through the work of people like Husserl, Heidegger, and Derrida. I suppose this tradition goes back to Kant: it is a tradition that takes seriously the idea that when we deal with time we are not simply dealing with something “out there”; in fact, we are dealing as much with our own constructions of time as we are with any natural given.

One of the things that has fascinated me about this tradition is that it begins to question the hegemony of the idea of unitary time, of time as some sort of progression. In the political sphere, this is translated into the idea that history is on an upward path toward some guaranteed future enlightenment. As a result, I have been trying to pursue the project of multiplying our ways of thinking about time, not to arrive at some sort of vapid pluralism, but to get a better sense of how, in different contexts and for different purposes, we rely on models, assumptions, and patterns of thinking about time that are often hidden or not reflected on. While I do not hold some sort of a priori view about time as a form of intuition, as Kant did, I do take seriously the thought that time and space provide the deep, schematic organizing principles of our thinking.

The question of an ending or the question of the end of history, or the end of a millennium, or the bringing about of some ideal, are questions that not only have been particularly interesting for philosophers to think about but also affect the very idea of philosophy itself. Philosophy aims at truth. But we ask ourselves, “Well, when is this going to happen? Is this something that we can expect in the near future?” These questions seem to aim at some sort of closure of metaphysics, or some type of total vision. We have had accounts of what that totality might look like from Hegel, for example. We have had various announcements of the end of philosophy. So the issue of the end, the end of time, the end of history, is both an issue for philosophy and an issue about philosophy.

This Humanities Center project will enable me to explore the ways in which people from quite different disciplines have thought through these issues about time and history and about the coming to an end of various things. I am especially interested in ways of thinking that may not have been anticipated by philosophers and that will allow an interruption of even my best laid plans. In turn, I am hoping that I can contribute the same sort of perspective that I have already mentioned.

DOODY: Literature is also profoundly concerned with time, not only because it keeps cropping up in literature as a theme, but because literature itself is organized in time. For instance, you cannot read an epic or a novel without noticing it takes quite a long time to do it. Reading time is part of the experience of literature. In addition, the “author” is always pointing out moments of temporal crisis or temporal passage so that one can say every literary work, even a small one, is organized around some reflection of time. Even the more conventional works operate with a desire to create some sort of interruption, if only by calling a moment of time to your attention. “Mignonnette, allon voir si la rose/ Qui ce matin avoit decloxe/Sa robe de pourpre au soleil. . . .4” Time is part of the content of such a poem, but it is also part of its content that we, the readers, should live in the “now.” Literature has an inclination to value the “now,” which is what differentiates it from philosophy to a very large degree. Philosophy is more abstract and is not so inclined to value the transcendental side, whereas literature only has transcendental yearnings. Literature keeps trying to escape back into the immediate and to value an experience that is not necessarily temporally organized.

LETTERS: According to this description, it sounds as though philosophy and literature are at odds when it comes to their respective approaches to questions pertaining to time and the end of time. Do you think that philosophy and literature can find a more productive collaboration?

WOOD: The work of Paul Ricoeur, particularly his long trilogy Time and Narrative, begins from the premise that philosophers have not solved the problems of thinking about time. One of the most important reasons they have not solved these is that philosophers try to think of time independently of language. Ricoeur says we have to solve these problems by taking a detour through literature, particularly through narrative. But what is so fascinating about these books is that at the end Ricoeur realizes the problems and contradictions are still there, that the detour through literature does not completely solve them. So then we have to ask ourselves, what does literature do? One of my answers would be that it dramatizes contradictions that are not merely logical errors in our thinking about time, but reflect lived tensions in our experience of time as an interruptive event and time as an intelligent, narrative continuity.
DOODY:
Much of this apocalyptic fervor is cropping up in rich countries that have a lot of technology. While technology has promised some control, we want infinite control. But the only infinite control would be to stop the world of nature altogether, which is the world of time in which things die.

DOODY: The Phaedrus itself is a terrific example, because it starts off in a very novelistic way, and it evokes a natural landscape with trees and the water. But then it moves into the daily life of eros, after which it turns away from this to look at the transcendent love of the earth itself. The entire work is a strong expression of our desire to get away and be free of time and matter.

In fact, it is this coupling of time and matter that becomes very important. Literature represents that which is trying to work toward possibilities other than what I call “dry transcendence,” which is an attempt to get away from the world of matter. And, inasmuch as women stand for matter and time, women must be transcended. Within this framework, women are like trees and soil, in that they are there to be used like other matter for the purpose of achieving transcendence. As a result, there is a move to get rid of those who are calling for respect for women, for attention to be paid to the environment, etc., because they are speaking as if matter is important.

DOODY: I might also add that the same seems to be true with animals. That is, they are there for us to use. To use a concrete example, we can chop down huge tracts of the Brazilian jungle, in order to graze cattle, in order to supply beef for fast food chains. Animals, like women and the environment, are simply a resource for transcendence.

DOODY: To take the point one step further, I think when time is seen as an extension of matter, time is hated. It is in time that we live and die. Time is used as the measure for biological events that are distressing; therefore, time is often attached to that from which we want to escape.

WOOD: Are you thinking of decay?

DOODY: Yes, time is thought of as decay, so then time is hated. It is a tyrant; therefore, to reach the “end-time” would be to cheat matter. For instance, in Paradise Lost, Milton has difficulty imagining how you could garden in a world without death. Any gardener knows that you rely on death a great deal if you are going to be a good gardener. You are always trimming and pulling out weeds, fertilizing, and poking dead leaves back into the soil. The whole cycle of gardening is a cycle that depends on decay. We use words like “decay” and “corruption” negatively, but we rely on these as part of the whole system of things.

WOOD: We might start to think here of the apocalyptic sects that seem to be appearing all over the world. It is as if they are responding to a sense of loss of control over themselves, over time, over matter, by giving in to the force of death. Both suicides and mass-murder attempts are attempts at avoiding subjection to forces with which these sects feel they cannot deal.

One of the real problems with the current approach to the millennium is that we still take shelter under the belief that the future is when things are going to turn out right and come together. And yet everything we read would suggest this is not going to happen. This brings with it an extraordinary sense of loss of control, loss of confidence, and a breakdown in the horizon of the future. Death-dealing sects are actually attempting to recover control.

DOODY: The odd thing is that human beings usually have very little control over their life and death and over their environments; life is harsh. The modern world has been given a great deal of technological control, and it is interesting that we are finding much of this apocalyptic fervor cropping up in rich countries that have a lot of technology. While technology has promised some control, we want infinite control. But the only infinite control would be to stop the world of nature altogether, which is the world of time in which things die. It is almost as though to accept a natural death is to fall prey to the ugly, dirty forces of matter, of nature. But to bring an end to time, to force the millennium to come, to force a new world to appear would be magnificent, because it would put an end to that cycle of powerlessness and decay. As a result, every Hegelian or neo-Hegelian pursuit of synthesis has to be referred to with a certain irony.

WOOD: The trouble is that irony is a dead end, because it devalues various kinds of commitments to tolerance, pluralism, and so on. It can be a form of detachment rather than a form of life that will enable us to get along with each other.

DOODY: This is where we part company. I see irony as a very creative possibility, a way of laughing at ourselves and getting rid of some of the rigidities of acknowledging that we often hold paradoxical views. I think Swift is a great ironist and, at the same time, a great fighter for human freedom and human rights, but he is not nice about it. He pokes us where we have our inconsistencies.

WOOD: But irony is never constructive.

DOODY: No, I think that is not true. I think irony can be and very often is constructive.

WOOD: I am happy to agree with this when we regard irony as
DOODY: I do not think in a blanket way anything can be wholly trusted. Even the very best and highest, often turns out to be often the worst; it corrupts, so the better it is, the worse it gets. But that does not mean that we cannot to some extent trust imagination; we have to. In fact, that is one of the few things we have left.

To go back to your earlier point, I think the stresses of the 1990s are in many ways peculiar to ourselves. These stresses come out of a bloody twentieth century, with its horrible and dramatic events, apocalypses without end—World War I, the Holocaust, World War II. Yet it is horrible to think that these "apocalyptic" epochs of the twentieth century have inspired others to want to repeat them. These horrific events seem to have a grandeur that gives meaning as a temporary rush. Here is an addiction much more sinister than drug addiction. It is an addiction to the kind of rush of power and meaning that you get from a truly violent event.

WOOD: When there is nothing that seems to make sense to do, or to will, or to desire anymore, the will to negate and destroy is very powerful.

DOODY: I certainly do not want to universalize it, because those people who are weeping for the children in Oklahoma City are not the people who set that bomb off. But there are those who delight in the rush of power that comes from destruction. One of the things that appeals to people about the horrible history of the twentieth century is that these orgies of destruction release people from individual meaninglessness and give them a certain war mentality that excites a sense of divine meaning. That is extremely hideous. I am not sure how this would be possible, but the business of ridding some other human being of life must be de glamorized.
The Inaugural Harry C. Howard Jr. Lecture

This fall, the Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities will host the inaugural Harry C. Howard Jr. Lecture. The lecture series was endowed by Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Nash Jr. and Mr. and Mrs. George Renfro, all of Asheville, North Carolina. By creating the lecture series, the couples have honored Harry C. Howard Jr. of Atlanta, Georgia (BA ’51), their longtime attorney and friend. The lecture series will allow the Center to bring an outstanding scholar to Vanderbilt annually to deliver a lecture on a significant topic in the humanities. Lewis P. Simpson, Boyd Professor and William A. Read Professor of English Literature, emeritus, at Louisiana State University, will present the inaugural lecture on Thursday, October 12 at 4:10 p.m. in 126 Wilson Hall on the Vanderbilt campus. His lecture is entitled "The Poet and the Father: Robert Penn Warren and Thomas Jefferson."

Professor Simpson will discuss the two versions of Robert Penn Warren’s well-known poem Brother to Dragons: A Tale in Verse and Voice. The event that provides the narrative framework of the poem is the murder of a slave in Livingston County, Kentucky, on Sunday December 15, 1811. Two brothers, Lilburne and Isham Lewis, brutally killed one of the family slaves, George, for purportedly breaking their deceased mother’s favorite vase. To hide their act, the Lewis brothers cut the body into pieces and attempted to burn the parts in the fireplace of a cabin on their farm. Their attempt to cover up their odious crime was thwarted when, early the next morning, the New Madrid earthquake jolted the earth, causing the chimney to tumble down on George’s dismembered body, smothering the fire. George’s remains were discovered, and Lilburne and Isham Lewis were subsequently indicted for murder.

The brothers were set free on bond. Wishing to avoid the negative publicity a murder trial would bring to their family, as well as the possibility of having to spend time in prison, the brothers agreed upon a suicide pact. They met in the family graveyard, where they decided they would shoot one another across the graves. Lilburne Lewis died; his brother Isham survived. Isham was jailed and tried for the murder of George, but he escaped from jail and formal justice.

The record of this brutal murder continues to hold a certain fascination because the two murderers were the sons of Thomas Jefferson’s sister, Lucy. As Warren’s poem indicates, Jefferson never commented on the crime, although the actions of the Lewis brothers were common knowledge at the time. In fact, there is no evidence that Jefferson ever acknowledged his nephews’ actions either publicly or privately.

As Simpson points out in his book The Fable of the Southern Writer, in the chapter entitled "The Loneliness Artist: Robert Penn Warren," Warren was, from the very beginning of his career, preoccupied with "the tension between ideology and reality in American history." Brother to Dragons reflects this interest. The core of the poem is concerned with the idealism of Thomas Jefferson, whose ghost appears as one of the main speakers. In the course of a dialogue with "R.P.W.," Jefferson is confronted with the bitter fact that his own relatives were capable of committing such a violent and atrocious act. At the same time, he is confronted with the evidences of continuing evil in American history since his time. As a result, Jefferson is forced to re-examine his belief in the innate goodness and perfectibility of humanity and to refigure, on a broader and more realistic basis, a new definition of human hope. A resolution to this enigma required that the facts of history be themselves placed within an ideal framework constructed by the poet. Now, "R.P.W." had the same moral enigma Jefferson had faced, complicated by the poet’s dedication to artistic form.

Warren was very interested in situations that questioned the poet’s proper relation to the facts of history. The very form of Brother to Dragons reflects his awareness that the tension between the ideal and the real in American history cannot be resolved by placing the facts of history into a pure, idealized literary form, as this would only produce another irresolvable tension. This does not mean, however, that Warren wanted to abandon the literary form and the possibility of constructing a space for the resolution of the tensions of history. As Warren writes in a prefatory note, the form of Brother to Dragons is that of a "dialogue spoken by characters, but it is not a play. . . . The main body of the action lies in the remote past—in the earthly past of characters long dead—and now they meet at an unspecified place and at an unspecified time and try to make sense of the action. . . . The place of the meeting is, we may say, 'no place,' and the time is 'any time.'"

As such, Warren takes real events and places them in an idealized, literary space in order to give the murder and Jefferson’s astonishing lack of reaction to it a more thorough consideration. At the same time, however, Warren recognized that this maneuver required the action of the poet. Rather than hide the active participation of the poet behind the ideality of a constructed literary form, Warren put himself and his considerations into the poem. Thus the story itself is related partly by the principal actors from history and partly in direct narrative and commentary by the poet, identified as "R.P.W."

The experience of writing Brother to Dragons was a confrontation between Warren’s own poetic sensibilities and the facts of history; the resolution to historical tensions presented in the original publication was contingent on Warren’s beliefs and opinions at the time. Despite being hailed in 1953 as Warren’s most important book, Warren continued to work on the poem. For the next twenty years, he continued to reshape and reform the poem, until, in 1979, he published Brother to Dragons: A Tale in Verse and Voice: A New Version. He writes in the 1979 foreword that "as I began to live with the text . . . my dissatisfaction with several features grew. Now there are a number of cuts made from the original version and some additions. . . . Though the basic action and theme remain the same, there is, I trust, an important difference in the total 'feel.' For the reworking was not merely a slow and patchwork job. It meant, before the end, a protracted and concentrated reliving of the whole process." It is the significance of "reliving of the whole process" that Professor Simpson will address in the inaugural Harry C. Howard Jr. Lecture.

Lewis P. Simpson is Boyd Professor and William A. Read Professor of English Literature, emeritus, Louisiana State University. For over twenty years he was editor of The Southern Review, for which he now serves as consulting editor. He is the author of several books, including Mind and the American Civil War: A Meditation on Lost Causes (Louisiana State University Press, 1989; Avery O. Craven Award of the Organization of American Historians, 1990); The Fable of the Southern Writer (Louisiana State University Press, 1994; Jules and Frances Landry Award of the Louisiana State University Press, 1993). In 1991, he was awarded the Hubbell Medal for Distinguished Contribution to the Study of American Literature by the American Literature Section of the Modern Language Association. He is also a Fellow of the Fellowship of Southern Writers, which in April 1995 awarded him the Cleath Brooks Medal for Distinguished Achievement in Southern Letters.
Religion and Public Life: Seventy Years after the Scopes Trial

I

n the spring of 1925, John Thomas Scopes, a young high school teacher in Dayton, Tennessee, was indicted and tried for violating the Butler Act. William Jennings Bryan served as prosecutor; famed Chicago lawyer Clarence Darrow, acting on behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union, was the attorney for the defense. In a case that attracted international attention, Scopes was convicted of violating the anti-evolution legislation.

As a major research university in Tennessee, Vanderbilt was not immune to the repercussions of the Scopes trial. In the fall of 1925, Vanderbilt Chancellor James H. Kirkland reacted to the Scopes trial in his address marking the university’s semicentennial:

The answer to the episode at Dayton is the building of new laboratories on the Vanderbilt campus for the teaching of science. The remedy for a narrow sectarianism and a belligerent fundamentalism is the establishment on the campus of a School of Religion, illustrating in its methods and its organization the strength of a common faith and the glory of a universal worship.

Others at Vanderbilt University reacted defensively to the critical publicity surrounding the state’s anti-evolution legislation. The negative portrayal of southerners as backward thinking and bigoted, most notably by H. L. Mencken, for example, prompted Fugitive writers Alan Tate, John Crowe Ransom, and Donald Davidson to defend staunchly the “southern way of life.” Their collective response to the anti-southern sentiment of the 1920s, which the Scopes trial had helped to foster, culminated with the Fugitive conference that resulted in the publication of I’ll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition in 1930.

In order to understand the changes that have taken place in the subsequent seventy years and the continuing interplay between religion, science, education, and public life, the Robert Penn War-

Panel members will present papers establishing the historical context of the Scopes trial and its implications for the relationship between religion and public life. The panelists include:


Inherit the Wind
Wednesday, November 1
7:00 p.m.
John Egerton will introduce the film Inherit the Wind, which will be shown at Sarratt Cinema at 7:30 p.m.

Session One. The Historical Context of the Scopes Trial
Thursday, November 2
4:15 p.m.

John T. Scopes being arraigned in the courtroom in Dayton, Tennessee.
Session Two. Science and Religion: Cooperation, Compromise, and Conflict
Friday, November 3
9:30 a.m.

The second panel will consider contemporary issues involving the interplay of science and religion. Panelists include:

- William Provine, Charles A. Alexander Professor of Biological Sciences, Cornell University. Professor Provine is the author of *Spall Wright and Evolutionary Biology* (University of Chicago Press, 1986) and co-editor of *The Evolutionary Synthesis: Perspectives on the Unification of Biology* (Harvard University Press, 1980).
- Kurt P. Wise, Associate Professor of Science and Director, Origins Research and Resource Center, William Jennings Bryan College. Professor Wise completed his Ph.D. at Harvard University under the supervision of Stephen Jay Gould. His dissertation is entitled "The Estimation of True Taxonomic Durations from Fossil Occurrence Data." His subsequent work in paleontology and geology has appeared in both academic and general public journals.

Session Three. Trajectories: From 1995 to...
Friday, November 3
2:00 p.m.

The panelists will respond to the ideas presented in the previous panels and will consider the future implications of current debates concerning science and religion and their broad implications for religion and public life. Panelists for the session are:

- Jean Bethke Elshtain, Laura Spelman Rockefeller Professor of Social and Political Ethics, University of Chicago Divinity School. Professor Elshtain is the author of many books. She is most recently author of *Democracy on Trial* (Basic Books, Harper and Row, 1995) and editor of *Politics and the Human Body: Assault on Dignity* (Vanderbilt University Press, 1995).
- Ira Glasser, Executive Director of the American Civil Liberties Union. He is the author of *Rethinking Democratic Education* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), a book concerning civic education. He is also an advising scholar to the National Standards in Civics Education Panel and has worked with a number of educational projects in the university and government contexts.
- Hedy M. Weinberg, Executive Director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Tennessee. Ms. Weinberg works closely with school administrators and students throughout the state on issues related to religious freedoms and the separation of church and state.

Session Four. Teacher Workshop on Religion and Public Life
Saturday, November 4
10:00 a.m.

A workshop will be held with interdisciplinary teams of teachers. Teachers from Davidson County will apply to participate in this workshop and will attend all conference sessions. Chairing the Saturday workshop and small group discussions are:

- Marcy Singer Gabella, Assistant Provost for Initiatives in Education, Assistant Professor of Teaching and Learning, Vanderbilt University. Professor Gabella’s areas of special interest include curriculum design and development and school-university partnerships. She serves on the Advisory Committee of the Freedom Forum/First Amendment Center Project on Teaching about Religion in the Public Schools.
- David Steiner, Assistant Professor of Political Science, Vanderbilt University. He is the author of *Rethinking Democratic Education* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), a book concerning civic education. He is also an advising scholar to the National Standards in Civics Education Panel and has worked with a number of educational projects in the university and government contexts.

**The Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities**

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Statement of Purpose

Established under the sponsorship of the College of Arts and Science in 1988 and renamed the Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities in 1989, the Center promotes interdisciplinary research and study in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. Members of the Vanderbilt community representing a wide variety of specializations take part in the Center’s programs, which are designed to intensify and increase interdisciplinary discussion of academic, social, and cultural issues.

Vanderbilt University is committed to principles of equal opportunity and affirmative action. Published by University Publications & Design 1995. Photographs in article on the Scopes Trial Symposium courtesy of William Jennings Bryan College; other photos by Peyton Hoge.
1995/1996 Humanities Center Fellows

KATHYRN BABAYAN, William S. Vaughn Visiting Fellow, Assistant Professor of History at the University of Michigan, works in the area of Islamic history. Her current research is an exploration of the Safavi empire (1501–1722) in pre-modern Iran. In particular, her work focuses on the combination of religious messianism and political power that gave the Safavi empire its unique, esoteric character. In addition to preparing the Persian translation of her dissertation for publication in Iran, she is the author of several forthcoming articles on Islamic history, including “The Safavi Synthesis: From Qizilbash Islam to Ismaili Shiism.”

MYRIAM J. A. CHANCEY, Assistant Professor of English, specializes in the study of Caribbean literature. Her current project focuses on the ways in which female authors in Haiti have experimented with form and language to convey their experience of exile under the domination of neo-colonial powers. In particular, she is concerned with how colonized nations, and subgroups oppressed within those nations, delineate time given the disruption or suspension of their own indigenous cultures. She is the author of several poems, articles, and the forthcoming book In Search of Safe Spaces: Afro-Cuban Women Writers in Exile.

MARGARET A DOODY, Spence and Rebecca Webb Wilson Fellow, Andrew W. Mellon Professor of Humanities, Professor of English, and Director of the Comparative Literature Program, is the co-director of the 1995/96 Fellows Program. Her most recentbook, The True Story of the Novel (Rutgers University Press, 1995), is an investigation into the origin and nature of the novel. The readings of literary texts presented in the book proceed from her rejection of the conventional Anglo-Saxon distinction between Romance and Novel. She maintains that such a distinction served both to keep the foreign out of literature and to obscure the diverse nature of the novel itself. In addition to her strictly scholarly work, she is the author of two novels: The Alchemists (Bodley Head, 1980) and Aristotle Detective (Viking Penguin, 1980).

JANET SCHRUNK ERKSEN, Assistant Professor of English, specializes in the study of Anglo-Saxon literature. She is currently working on a project that explores how Germanic cultures adapted the fundamental text of the Christian fall into the narrative traditions of Anglo-Saxon literature. Specifically, she is interested in how this re-articulation facilitated both the decay of early medieval Germanic culture and the rise of a specifically Christian culture. She is the author of several forthcoming articles, including “Lands of Unlikeliness in Genesis B.”

WILLIAM FRANKE, Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature and Italian, is currently conducting research for the second book in his extensive study of Dante. The first work, Dante’s Interpretive Journey: A Dialogue Between the Commedia and Modern Thought (forthcoming), concerns the poetic formation of existential-historical time in the first two segments of the Divine Comedy. His current project concerns the way in which time and eternity are experienced in the poetic language of Dante’s Paradiso and the ways in which language both creates and suspends time.

JAY GELLER, Lecturer in Religious Studies, explores the relationship between the narrative ordering of events and questions of Jewish identity. In particular, he is concerned with issues revolved around the Jews’ place in a post-Christian world and how threats to their continued persistence became represented as a natural history that confirmed both Jewish difference and post-Christian, European identities. More specifically, he is interested in how the Holocaust has ruptured faith in master historical narratives and narratives of self-identity. He is the author of the forthcoming book The Nose Job: Freud and the Feminized Jew.

MICHAEL P. HODGES, Professor of Philosophy, has had a longstanding interest in the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein. He is particularly interested in looking at how a knowledge of the milieu at the end of the nineteen century would enrich and deepen the understanding of the formative period of Wittgenstein’s life. In turn, he would like to demonstrate how Wittgenstein’s particular involvement in this unique historical period played itself out in a thinking that defends human practices and institutions outside of the traditional demand for philosophical foundations. He is currently working on a joint project which compares the work of Wittgenstein and Santayana. He is also the author of Transcendence and Wittgenstein’s Tractatus (Temple University Press, 1990).

ELLEN KONOWITZ, Assistant Professor of Fine Arts, is currently working on a book about early modern prints and stained glass. In particular, her writing is focused on the work of Dirk Vellert, a specialist in glass and print design, who lived in Antwerp in the first half of the sixteenth century. She is analyzing an extensive cycle of his stained glass windows, which rework Albrecht Durer’s woodcut Apocalypse. The woodcut reveals eschatological themes in the transformation of religious thought during the Protestant reform movement in the Netherlands. She is the author of several articles, including "Drawing as Intermediary Stages: Some Working Methods of Albrecht Durer and Dirk Vellert Re-examined." FRANCIS W. WESOLO, Associate Professor of History, is working on a project entitled “Serf and the Peasant in Hungary: The Life and Times of a Tsarist Statesman.” In this study, he points out the importance of the sharp juxtaposition between the narrative constructed by historian-biographers about Witte’s life and the narrative constructed by Witte’s own memoirs. In the former, Witte’s life is placed fully within the context of tsarist political, social, and cultural history. In the latter, however, the narrative suggests Georgian-era beliefs and illusions shattered by the crisis Russia experienced at the beginning of the twentieth century. He is the author of Reforming the Russian State: Local Society, and National Politics, 1855–1914 (Princeton University Press, 1990).

DAVID C. WOOD, Jacque Voegeli Fellow, Professor of Philosophy, and Chair of the Department, is the co-director of the 1995/96 Fellows Program. He continues to be interested in philosophical considerations of time, and in particular the problematic conceptualization of the future. His current project focuses on deconstruction and apocalyptic thinking, with a direct concern for philosophy’s consideration of its own “end” and the broader way in which time appears as the condition for the realization (or frustration) of human ideals. He is studying the figures of Kant, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida for this project. Professor Wood is the editor and author of numerous articles and books, including Of Derrida, Heidegger and Spirit (Northwestern University Press, 1993), Philosophy at the Limit (Unwin Hyman, 1990), and The Deconstruction of Time (Humanities Press International, 1989).