

# ACCUTE

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## NEWSLETTER

Department of English  
University of Alberta  
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### President's Remarks

#### Of the "threat" to the canon and English departments' course guides

Put any fairly large and heterogeneous group of English professors together in recent years, and someone is bound to intimate that new directions in our curricula have been gained at the expense of Chaucer or Shakespeare or Milton (or at least that some of their more "backward" colleagues, as they would have it in the certainty of their own convictions, think they have). Put in this reductive form, as it often is, the curriculum debate becomes an either-or issue: do we teach Chaucer or Adrienne Rich; Shakespeare or Achebe; a "core" curriculum--organized on principles of nationalism, historical period and genre--or theory and a series of new "isms." And yet . . . I know of no one teaching in a Canadian programme in which such choices are actually being made; Shakespeare seems as alive and well in English departments as he's ever been even while some courses on women's or postcolonial literature and on theory often also find their way onto our curricula.

Suspecting a straw man, or perhaps a paper tiger, I foolishly asked ACCUTE campus representatives to send me a copy of their department's current course offerings with the idea that the Association would do a survey of what was actually being offered in departments. What I got from a few of the thirty-nine universities<sup>1</sup> who responded was a university *Calendar*, an unreliable source of information since most of our *Calendars* are thick with

courses we teach irregularly, if ever. What I got in the greatest numbers were English department course guides, most for 1991-92, but some for 1990-91, and some for 1992-93. Some offered extended and precise course descriptions and reading lists; some gave terse and general descriptions. One department sent me a text list which it produced for all its students and on which the courses were indicated by number only and not by title; I had a fine time deducing what the topics of the course offerings were and had to admit defeat in one instance! With the increasing, though far from universal, tendency to teach writing in the first year, and the survey courses which once would have been first-year material in the second, it was not always easy to decide whether a second-year course belonged in the category of "introductory" or "senior" offerings. Some courses were full-year, others one-semester; some subjects were offered in both full-year and single-semester courses. Some guides listed descriptions for different sections of the same course; others gave no indication of how many sections of the course there were.

The data, in short, simply weren't sufficiently consistent to yield a survey of our course offerings with any claim to complete thoroughness or to appropriate weightings of different courses. What follows, then, is not an empirical survey, but simply a reader's report based on the descriptions of these thirty-nine course guides. It reports courses offered, without attempting to make distinctions between full and half-year courses, between single and multiple sections of the same course or between

large lectures and small seminars. It is rough and ready, but nonetheless it suggests something of what shape a year in English Studies takes in Canada.

To begin with that trio so often invoked in debates about the canon--Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Milton. Out of the 1467 senior courses I tallied from these course guides, Shakespeare was the sole subject of 59 (4%) course offerings; Chaucer of 26 (1.8%), and Milton of 19.5 (1.3%); the .5 arises because in one course he was paired with Spenser). In practice, Shakespeare is much more taught than these figures indicate because most departments offer multiple sections of at least some Shakespeare courses whereas they virtually always offer single sections of Chaucer and Milton courses. But all these authors are more taught than these bare figures indicate; Chaucer is central to many courses on medieval literature, Shakespeare to drama and Renaissance courses, Milton to seventeenth-century literature courses.

Turning to the "core" curriculum, that organization of course on principles of national literary history, I tallied 604 of the 1467 courses. Excluding courses entirely devoted to *Beowulf* (3), Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Milton, as well as genre courses with material on them from various literary periods, there were 23 (1.6%) courses in Old English, 39 (2.7%) in Middle English literature, 79 (5.4%) in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century literature. Restoration and eighteenth-century literature was among the most consistently taught of courses--both in terms of its being offered in a given year and of its text lists--; it tallied 80

course offerings (5.5%). 44 courses (3%) addressed the Romantics. Other nineteenth-century British literature courses, exclusive of courses devoted to single authors or to survey courses in the history of the novel with a large nineteenth-century component accounted for 96 offerings (6.5%). In twentieth-century British literature 57 courses were offered (3.9%), in twentieth-century U.S. 48 (3.3%), in Anglo-Irish 11 (0.7%), and 70 (4.8%) surveyed this century's literature across national boundaries.

Traditional genre survey courses in drama, techniques and forms of poetry, the novel, the short story, comedy, tragedy, satire, allegory, romance and fantasy, etc. accounted for another 143 courses (9.7% of all course offerings). (Genre surveys of popular literature, on the other hand, accounted for 19 courses in science fiction, the horror novel, and detective fiction, or 11.7% of senior genre course offerings and 1.3% of all the course offerings tallied.) Once again, the tally does not tell the entire tale. For to the 17 courses which survey drama across the centuries, we can add 3 courses in medieval drama, 21 in Jacobean and Elizabethan drama, 10 in Restoration drama, 2 in U.S. drama, 8 in Canadian drama, 28 in twentieth-century British and U.S. drama, and, of course, those 59 Shakespeare courses.

Survey courses of non-Canadian and non-Commonwealth literature, whose principle of organization most of us would recognize as placing them within the traditional categories of the historically and genre-based curriculum, account, then, for 51% of

the courses I was able to tally.

But perhaps the inroads on the "core" curriculum are being made in the "Special Topics" and "Studies in an Author" courses that many of our departments offer at the 400-level. "Thoroughly self-indulgent," one of my colleagues grumbles about such courses, implying that they serve the hobbyhorses interests of their instructors and not the students' need for a firm grounding in the discipline. What my reading in the course guides totaled up was 200 such courses, devoted usually to a single author, occasionally to two or three (in which case authors got credit for a half or third of a course in my adding). The scores: Shakespeare, 59. Chaucer, 26. Milton, 19.5. Spenser, 5.8. Pope and Joyce, 3.5 each. *Beowulf*, Dickens, and Fitzgerald, 3 each. Melville, 2.5. Blake, Wordsworth, Byron, Browning, Hemingway, Stevens, 2 each. T.S. Eliot and Atwood, 1.8 each. One catches one's breath-- 16 authors and 141 courses down the list one comes on a woman author and a figure slightly less canonical than those before her. The list goes on, with minor canonical ruptures. Freud, Swift, Fowles, Hawthorne and Faulkner merit 1.5 courses each. Yeats, 1.3. Then we hit a spate of women authors: Jane Austen, George Eliot, Virginia Woolf, and Margaret Laurence have one course devoted entirely to their work as do the *Gawain* poet, Ben Jonson, Middleton, More, Samuel Richardson, Johnson, Coleridge, Walter Scott, Hardy, Hopkins, Shaw, James, Conrad, Waugh, Frost, Nabokov, Ondaatje and Robertson Davies. Two other women poets receive less attention: Dickinson gets half and P.K. Page a third of

a course. In total, out of 200 such courses studying 61 authors, 6.6 (3.3%) of them address 7 women writers (11.5% of the total). Two address African writers (Soyinka and Achebe); none addresses Caribbean, Indian, or Native writing. Some members of English departments will find much to be ashamed of in this list but it certainly need not make any of us feel guilty about the number of upstart writers getting into core curricula. In their announced topics, at least, those 200 courses can join the genre and historical surveys of the "core" curriculum to make up 947 or 64.6% of the senior course offerings in these guides.

Among the tributary streams, such as language and writing courses, that have long been part of our curricula, language and linguistics courses, with the emphasis falling on history of the language, modern English, and grammar, accounted for 50 (3.4%) of the total senior course offerings. And 89 courses were in advanced composition, rhetoric, expository writing and creative writing (6.1%). Canadian literature--the current "threat" to the curriculum when I was an undergraduate--claims another 135 or 9.2% of the total course offerings, though, like Shakespeare and the history of the novel, Canadian literature courses often arrive in multiple sections.

But what about the courses that are construed as either a corrective to the canonically organized curriculum or the beginning of the end of it, depending on one's critical viewpoint? Popular literature courses are summed up by the 1.3% of courses given over to detective and science fiction. Literary and critical theory and

practice is the subject of 75 courses of which more than half remain given to courses long in place: History of Literary and Critical Theory, usually beginning with Plato (18 courses), Research Methods and Bibliography (9 courses), and Practical Criticism or Literary Interpretation and Analysis (14 courses). However, 27 courses are specifically described as "Literary (or Literary and Critical) Theory." That's 1.8% of the course offerings. As for those other challenges to the curriculum: I tallied 42 courses in women's literature, of which exactly half (variously titled as "Women in Literature," "Major Women Writers," "Women's Literary Tradition"), seem designed at least in part as companion courses to those on Major Authors or History of English Literature usually taught at the first or second year level out of the *Norton Anthology*. As for Native writers, there were four courses, three of them in colleges. That's 2.9% of the senior courses I surveyed given over to women's literature, 0.3% to Natives' writing. If we can find no greater "threat" than this to our curricula, we should surely stop worrying.

Or perhaps look for the erosion of the curriculum on another front. For a tally of the announced topics of courses is superficial at best. What we need to know is not only *which* courses are being taught but *how* they are being taught. Is the History of Literary and Critical Theory course going on down the hall beginning, and staying with, deconstruction? Is Milton being debunked as a misogynist with no attention to other, more valuable aspects of his work? Is Dickens being shunted aside for the less

felicitous and informed novels of Mrs. Trollope? Or, is Woolf being taught as necessarily second-rate because, as one of my colleagues once put it to a student, she doesn't write about the "GREAT subjects, like War and Peace"? Is the role of women in the origins of the novel continuing to be obscured in our courses despite newly available editions of their work? Are Canadian and U.S. literature courses being taught without reference to native writers?

To answer these questions would demand a much more exhaustive survey than either the *Newsletter* or the information given in most English departments' course guides permits. It would also demand that the walls of our classrooms become, as Connie Rooke puts it later in this *Newsletter*, "transparent." Dipping into the course guides for test cases which might intimate answers, however, at least tentatively confirms the experience many English professors live in their departments: that some instructors are attempting to include appropriate work by woman and so-called "minorities" on their courses, while others are making no reference to either new scholarship or newly available editions which might have enabled such inclusions. Taking as a sample twelve departments (those at UBC, Simon Fraser, Alberta, Calgary, Saskatchewan, York, Toronto, Trent, Queen's, Dalhousie, Acadia and U.P.E.I.), I read the guides for courses including material from four areas: 1) Restoration and eighteenth-century literature (excluding courses devoted only to drama, but including works that appeared on introductory courses and on "History of the Novel"

courses and all "Special Studies" courses in the area); 2) nineteenth-century British fiction (including authors on introductory courses, on novel survey courses and on "Special Studies" courses); 3) twentieth-century U.S. poetry and fiction (including material on first-year courses etc., but not tallying the number of times James, Pound and Eliot appeared on British literature courses); and 4) Canadian fiction and poetry courses (including one U.S.-Canadian comparative course and material listed as taught on first-year courses and on "History of English Literature" or "Major Authors in English" courses). Once again, an author was counted once only per course, and not each time s/he appeared on the same course; i.e., if Dickens was taught in three sections of a five-sectioned introductory course, and whether the same or different Dickens novels were taught in that course, I tallied that as 1 course on which Dickens was taught. If Dickens was taught on a History of the Novel course at five different universities, or if he was taught in five different courses in one university, I counted that as five occasions on which he was taught.

Course descriptions for Restoration and eighteenth-century literature listed by name 50 authors. Multiply them by the number of different courses in which they were taught, and one arrives at 261 course listings for these 50. Women were 10 (20%) of these 50 and were listed 31 times (12%). In addition, two instructors named anthologies of women's writing on their reading lists. The course descriptions I have available are particularly resistant to the kind of tally I

am attempting here in that many list anthologies without specifying all the authors to be taught from them. Still, Aphra Behn is named 8 times, Radcliffe 7, Burney and Wollstonecraft 4, Haywood and Montagu 2, and 4 other women authors are named once. This is not stiff competition for the 25 times each of Defoe and Swift are listed, nor for Henry Fielding's 21 appearances, Pope's 21, and Dryden's 15. Had I included drama courses in this count, the women authors on my tally would have fared worse for the very sound reason that women dramatists (as compared to novelists and poets) were comparatively rare in the period. Two trends do emerge out of these descriptions. One is a much clearer split in course descriptions than we find across the curriculum between instructors who do and do not include significant amounts of women's writing. Some descriptions clearly indicate a substantial body of women's writing on the course; many others just as clearly indicate no women authors at all, either describing a course which is titled as a survey of the period as a study of "Dryden, Pope, and Swift," or listing up to a dozen male authors. The second is the inclusion of early women novelists in some of these course descriptions who are not yet, on the evidence of the course guides, being taught on survey courses on the history of the novel, where Austen is usually the earliest woman writer, only occasionally preceded only by Behn and her *Oroonoko*.

In nineteenth-century British fiction courses 24 authors are listed a total of 231 times. Women account for 8 (or 33%) of these, but are listed 136 (59%) of the time. In the context of the

curriculum as a whole, these are highly unusual figures, to be accounted for, perhaps, by several factors. First, the preeminence long granted to Austen (33 listings) and Eliot (25), along with Dickens (30), and Hardy (20), in both novel surveys and Victorian fiction studies. These are courses in which women have an academic history. Second is the intensification of interest in the Brontës, both of whom are now taught on many courses where at one time many instructors tended, if memory serves me, to choose between *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*. And third is a much livelier interest than once was the case in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and the sceptical and female assessment it makes of the aspirations of Romanticism. If we were to do a historical study of such course guides, we would, I think, find that the correlative to these women's works on these course lists is comparatively less teaching of Scott and Thackeray, each of whom was named only 6 times in these course descriptions.

When we turn to North American literature courses, we encounter quite different pictures for Canadian and U.S. literature. 134 Canadian authors are listed 467 times; 112 twentieth-century U.S. authors 440 times. These higher figures reflect a more unstable canon than was the case for the two earlier periods; they are also seriously underestimated given that these descriptions indicate frequent reliance on poetry anthologies without specifying the authors to be taught from them. On Canadian courses 55 women are listed (41% of the total writers listed) 204 times (43%), this despite the fact that the three

authors by far the most frequently taught are Atwood (38), Laurence (27), and Munro (21). (Findley, Davies, Sinclair Ross and Moodie are listed 14 times each, Leacock, Ondaatje and Kroetsch 12 each, Kogawa 10.) Among twentieth-century U.S. writers taught, women are listed 117 times (27%). Compared to Faulkner's 32 appearances, Hemingway's 25, and Fitzgerald's 22, Plath appears most frequently (13 listings), followed by Morrison (10), Wharton and Walker (9 each), O'Connor and Chopin (8 each) and Hurston (7). The presence of three black women among these 7 most frequently read suggests that they are doing "double duty" in many courses, "representing" both women and blacks.

In fact, Alice Walker and Toni Morrison are, along with Ralph Ellison, who is also listed 10 times, the most frequently taught black authors, who, in total, account for 17 of the authors named on these courses (15%) and only 49 (11%) of the listings. Moreover, one course taught at the University of Calgary on contemporary black writing in the U.S. accounted for 12 of those 49 listings. And one native from the U.S. is listed as being taught (that's .01% of the authors and .002% of the listings).

Canadian courses look substantially less generous with respect to black and Asian writers, but more so with respect to natives, though it takes little to appear more "generous" than others here. 13 black and Asian writers are listed on Canadian literature courses and they tally 36 appearances on courses (Joy Kogawa accounts for 10 of those instances of an Asian writer's being taught). That's 9% of the

total authors and 5.8% of the listings in course descriptions. 4 Canadian native writers (2.9% of the authors) are listed: Beatrice Culleton (6 listings), Tom King (3), Maria Campbell (2) and Jeannette Armstrong (1), for a total of 2.6% of the listings. Once again, the "inroads" such writing is making on courses seem even less extensive when one notes that 15 of the total of 48 times native, black, or Asian authors from Canada are listed are accounted for by one course at York. The fact that anthologies of native writing and of multicultural writing each appear twice on reading lists suggest a few more authors may be being taught than these figures indicate, but, were we to take into account all the other anthologies used in Canadian literature courses, the tally of their actual representation would probably prove to be even lower than these figures indicate. Similarly, had my selection of a dozen representative course guides to examine closely included any of the three colleges offering a course in native literature, these figures would have been higher. Had it included all 39 course guides, they might well have been much the same.

A (rough) comparative look at courses including Canadian and twentieth-century U.S. literature immediately suggest two things: first, if the inclusion of native and Asian writers in both countries, and of black writers in Canada, is a cause, it is a cause without many rebels. The second is that Canadian literature courses developed at the same time that the challenge to the curriculum came from the women's movement whereas the U.S. literature canon--Faulkner,

Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and Eliot, Pound, Stevens, Williams and Lowell--was very much more firmly fixed; this difference in the historical moment of literary nationalism is no doubt part of the reason Canadian women are so much better represented than their U.S. sisters on our courses.

Individuals can challenge long-cherished curriculum values, however, not by the authors or works they teach, but by the critical approaches they take to those works. Here most of the course descriptions become even less helpful. Some are framed only in terms of period and genre, while many extend their reference to a listing of authors and works. Fewer are explicit about the critical approach the instructor will take (or about indicating differences in critical approach from section to section of the same course). The generally brief allusions in these descriptions to critical approach suggest that courses are nearly always structured around close reading of major works, formalist analysis, and literary and social history, though this is often as much assumed as spelled out. Only occasionally do course descriptions spell out other critical approaches, or the suggestion that several approaches will be examined for what their proponents have had to say about the subject. Semiotic, feminist, reader theory, and Marxist approaches, for example, were each cited once in the descriptions for courses in Victorian fiction. Other courses, such as those on "Gender in Victorian Fiction" or "Political and Social Ideology in Victorian Fiction" mark their deviation from the literary-historical norm in their titles. Nonetheless, taken

as a whole, these course descriptions suggest a notable homogeneity across the country in what is taught and how it is taught. And they do not offer much evidence that the traditional "core" curriculum is being threatened in any significant way.

I will be the first to admit that a sample such as this is anything but "scientific." Variations in the information provided by different departments, differences among programme requirements, the unspecified use of anthologies, incomplete listings of works and authors in course descriptions, and the lack of sufficient information to weight findings for the length of a course, the number of sections offered, and their enrolments mean that tallies such as those I've given here are certainly far from completely descriptive. I might characterize them as *suggestive* rather than *demonstrative*.

What they suggest to me is that: For some instructors, in some courses, the literary canon is undergoing some revision, as indeed it always has. Major authors do not seem to be displaced, either in terms of courses devoted to them or in terms of their place on survey courses. What is happening in some courses is that some women, and much more occasionally, some native and authors of colour are being added, largely, it seems, by teaching fewer not-quite-so-major authors or fewer works by a single author. Many departments have expanded the number of courses in the curriculum to include women's literature, though such courses do not often meet "coverage" requirements for a degree. Women's writing and native writing is most apt to be taught in relatively new areas in

our curricula involving contemporary literature--areas, in short, in which the canon is least stable. Courses in postcolonial literature are one instance of this; those in Canadian literature, with its 134 authors taught in this sample, offer a prime instance. Courses tend to become *more* rather than *less* traditional at the senior levels; the greatest concentration of canonical authors, and the fewest women or non-white authors, are to be found in 400-level Special Studies courses.

They also suggest that their course descriptions may not accurately reflect what is happening in the classroom: that, however much recent theoretical approaches and social concerns may have fundamentally changed the *presentation* of material as well as some of its selection in actual classrooms, university calendars and course guides go on sounding much as always. For if there is one thing that these course guides do reveal to a certainty, it's that many of these descriptions do not give sufficient information to enable a student to identify the authors and the works that will be read, let alone the critical and theoretical approaches that will be taken in a course. A student trying to ensure that s/he will not re-read the same authors from course to course, or will not receive an entirely formalist or entirely post-structuralist education in English will be hard put to make decisions on the basis of many of the available course descriptions. Were we selling our courses in the supermarkets, laws protecting consumers against inadequate labelling could be invoked against many of us. Humanists, I hear someone retort,

don't take their goods to market. But that is to ignore the practical consideration of where the money to teach these courses comes from and the moral consideration of our responsibility to describe our courses in such a way that students can make informed and intelligent choices about what they take. Course guides, as well as courses, need re-thinking from time to time.

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Meanwhile, I've grown so weary of all this adding of authors and courses, I've caught up on all the weeding by way of distraction. As I liberated one of my recalcitrant flowerbeds from chickweed early this morning, I found myself humming "So long, it's been good to know you." Where ACCUTE is concerned, I'm not quite as insouciant as the persona of that song and I expect I'll miss it a little more than s/he lets on. But it has been good to know you. It's a pleasure to set things afoot in an Association such as ours, of course, but the greatest pleasure has been working with ACCUTE members over the last two years. I have come to know old friends much better during my Presidency; I've made many new friends. I've certainly valued the comments and collaboration of many ACCUTE members. Still and all, I'm happy to be mailing my box of Presidential files to Professor Michael Keefer at Guelph. And I'm looking forward to ACCUTE's next years under its new executive.

Shirley Neuman

<sup>1</sup>Memorial, U.P.E.I., Cape Breton, Acadia, Mount St. Vincent, Dalhousie, St. Mary's, Mount

Allison, UNB (St. John), Vanier, Bishop's Concordia, McGill, UQAM, Ottawa, Carleton, Queen's, McMaster, Trent, York, Toronto, Brock, Waterloo, Windsor, Western, Lakehead, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Regina, Lethbridge, Calgary, Alberta, Grant MacEwan, Cariboo, Trinity Western, UBC, Simon Fraser, Victoria sent course guides.

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## Thinking about the Profession

### Second Thoughts on "Professional Skills"

(Linda Hutcheon, U. Toronto)

In an earlier issue of this *Newsletter*, I suggested that it was our responsibility to prepare graduate students for the profession as best we could. Correspondence from and conversation with both students and colleagues across the country have suggested a few other issues perhaps worth addressing and opening up to debate. The first involves the impression--obviously received, if inadvertently conveyed--that the institution of "professional skills" seminars would necessarily imply some overly normalizing model, some kind of uniform "ideal" of what a successful career ought to look like. As a quick glance around any department of English will verify, there are as many career paths as there are careers: our interests, talents, and drives differ, as do our life choices and personal responsibilities. However you elect to toss the mixed salad of teaching, scholarship, administrative service, and participation in broader professional domains, the dressing

and the flavour, as well as the balance of ingredients, are individual and, to some degree at least, within each person's control.

The corollary of this is that, while citizenship in our "community of scholars" comes with obvious rights and privileges, it also entails certain less discussed responsibilities. Ours is a profession that *contributes* to as well as *reports on* what constitutes knowledge in the discipline of literary studies. We are thus, by definition, both researchers and teachers and, whatever the popular media perception might be, the two functions aren't easily separable. But we also have other obligations, ones that are just as important if we are to be "good citizens" within our communities. These include things that are perhaps less immediately attractive, or perhaps less clearly rewarded or visibly rewarding--things like administrative work, committee membership, counselling, supervising, participating in peer review (at all levels), even trying to communicate with the general public in order to avoid damaging accusations of academic parochialism and intellectual elitism. In the anxiety to get a job, then secure tenure, and then promotion, there is sometimes a temptation--a thoroughly understandable one--to seek to postpone or avoid these "citizenship" tasks, to leave them to others. There is no doubt that this is a competitive world, but we must be careful both to historicize and to contextualize that fact: it has been that kind of world in the academy for many years now, and isn't likely to change in any major way in the immediate future. We should be willing to take that

into account, both in the demands we make upon others and in the level of engagement we choose for ourselves.

We are a self-governing profession, and with that privilege comes real responsibilities. I would hope that none of us would ever forget that we have each been helped by others, others who have made it possible for us to get those doctorates, jobs, tenure, promotions, or grants by their exemplary "good citizenship." I suspect I am not alone in feeling that there is almost a moral imperative to return the favour for other colleagues, just as there is to do one's part in the governance of the institution and the profession at large--whatever the (very real) pressures to publish and whatever the (very draining) demands on our time and energy made by teaching.

Institutions can obviously help by monitoring their own attitudes to these community issues, by examining what kind of message they send out to junior colleagues (and senior ones too) about the importance and value of such tasks. But, in the end, this kind of willingness to serve the profession is a matter of individual commitment. The art of being a "skilled professional" should include a willingness to engage our energies in making our scholarly communities work--in every sense of that increasingly complex word.

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### Constructing the Curriculum

At this year's Learned's, ACCUTE and the Canadian Association of Chairs of English jointly spon-

sored two sessions on Constructing the Curriculum; one on an "Imagining an Ideal Curriculum," in which John Fekete, Heather Jackson, and jointly Ranita Chatterjee and Daniel Wilson were asked to imagine an ideal curriculum for the contemporary world, and one in which Victor Li, Heather Murray and Connie Rooke were asked to discuss ways of "delivering" an ideal curriculum in the face of limited funds and faculty and limited student and faculty skills. Excerpts of three of the presentations, which led to considerable discussion, are printed here.

### Imagining an Ideal Curriculum (Heather Jackson, U. of Toronto)

I take it that when teachers of English assemble to discuss "curriculum," they refer to the "course of studies" by means of which students are initiated into the profession; and that when they add the qualifying phrase "in the contemporary world" they are assuming first of all that the state of the world has a direct bearing on that curriculum, and secondly that, as the "contemporary" is always on the move, the curriculum will have to be remodelled regularly.

The impetus for the latest remodelling of the program in English at Toronto came from outside the Department in the form of globally applicable new program requirements for the Faculty of Arts and Science (which was responding as best it could, no doubt, to pressures from the contemporary world). By the time the shock waves reached us, they had translated themselves into relatively modest demands for more

stringent breadth requirements and slightly stricter regulations about the number of upper-level courses required in major and specialist programs. Never ones to leave well enough alone, we saw the directive of the faculty office as an opportunity to re-examine our curriculum at every point, and to make sweeping changes if we wanted to. So we were off.

I chaired the curriculum committee, which had a dozen members, half faculty and half undergraduate students. Some of them were veterans of curricular change, however, and at our first meeting they surprised me by their determination to proceed not by research, not by appeal to First Principles and not by mere administrative tinkering, but by bringing forward "dream curricula" for discussion. Everyone contributed. In theory these "dreams" were completely unfettered; in practice, of course, like other kinds of dreams, they were constrained by and constructed out of the materials at hand: institutional traditions and guidelines, pedagogical assumptions, the capabilities of our staff and students, and the assimilated experience of the committee members.

As Heather Murray has pointed out in print, when we produce curricula, we regularly reproduce ourselves. This phenomenon is apparent especially with hindsight in the dream-curricula that I saved from among our proceedings. They took various forms: they were long or short, hortatory or plaintive. Some took an architectural approach to the whole set of course offerings; some aimed to originate the course of a lifetime. Most of them were written

in Calendarese, but one of them sounded like Raymond Chandler and included bits of dialogue. As time went on, naturally, the later ones took up or shot down ideas raised in earlier ones. But in a blind tasting, you could tell where they came from.

The most conservative, from a seasoned administrator on the committee, merely rearranged the courses we already had, resurrecting one or two successes from the past to fill perceived gaps; the most radical one, from someone deeply involved in comparative literature, began with a wonderfully ambitious course on tragedy and comedy that was to include Sophocles, Freud, Aristotle, Hegel, Shakespeare, Racine, Job, Kierkegaard, Jung, Milton, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Melville, Trotsky, Brecht, Robbe-Grillet, Raymond Williams, Conrad, Bakhtin, Aristophanes, Menander, Molière, Bergson, Congreve, Beckett and more Freud. Several of the student members of the Committee dreamt of a curriculum that they could see as more relevant than our present one is to a "culturally diverse student population," but they differed interestingly in the ways they suggested for going about creating such a thing. One submission recommended more compulsory survey courses at the first- and second-year levels, but another saw the principle of diversity (cultural diversity in society, and in the literature; and critical diversity within the profession) as leading necessarily away from the idea of a core curriculum to an increased range of offerings at every academic level.

The most fanciful, but in some ways also the most rigorously logical, proposal that we had

argued that "our curriculum must respond to the question 'What should be taught?'"--meaning, what are the books that people most need help to read, the ones with the highest "Intimidation Quotient" (or IQ)--and that we should make a list of 100 or so such works and make them the program common to all.

We could easily see these dream-curricula, then, as "reproducing" their authors or, in the language of the therapists, as exercises in projection or self-expression. But the concept of the self is in tatters these days: any one of us a week later might have produced a different dream. And what sort of "self" does a committee, let alone a department, let alone a profession, have? Probably it's the instability of our collective identity that leads us to perform this exercise of redefinition every few years.

Some common goals did emerge in our discussion of these documents. Identifying these common goals gave us answers to some of the questions we had been given, and eventually specific recommendations.

First, we accepted the principle of diversity both as a feature of the body of literature that we profess and (in a different sense) as a characteristic (and actually a *strength*) of our oversized department; this led us to reject the idea of a rigidly controlled program (a *thick core*). We have now no *single* course required of all major or specialist students.

Secondly, we agreed on a democratic approach to admissions and rejected the idea of a separate course or stream for non-specialist students.

But, thirdly, we agreed on the

necessity of using all our introductory courses to bring students up to a certain standard in their literary skills before turning them loose on further courses. Student members of the Committee were eloquent about "basic skills" that they had had to pick up somehow on their own, or embarrassingly late in their careers. And by basic skills they meant what I can only call literal reading skills (not New Critical close reading but the recognition, for example, that "Low was our pretty cot" does not describe a bed), and conventions of essay-writing. (It was a *leitmotif* in several of the "dreams" that critical and non-fiction prose should be *studied* in class: it will probably surprise you that we haven't done much of that to date.)

So insofar as there is a new emphasis in our program at Toronto, I hasten to say (a) that this is us, now, not a prescription for anybody else, (b) that what is mandated in a curriculum may be ignored in a classroom, and (c) we don't know yet whether our proposals will "work," whether or not they will have a positive effect on teaching staff and students. But insofar as there is a new emphasis at Toronto, it is the emphasis on skills proposed by Kim Michasiw in the December issue of *ESC* as a way of "reorganizing our categories."

What, in the end, were our recommendations, and what relation did they bear to our dreams? I am afraid you will think all this mountainous labouring has produced only a mouse--and a mouse-clone, at that, of its predecessor, but I believe that the changes we made, without involving a clean sweep of the Calendar, will have sig-

nificant effect. I'm going to spell out only the most important ones: we introduced what we think are exciting new introductory courses; we made sure that poetry would have a central place in the experience of major and specialist students and expanded the description of the main poetry course so that it represents "world literatures in English"; we reorganized our theory offerings and redefined our introductory courses so that theory is available at every level of the curriculum.

These recommendations did not closely resemble anyone's fantasy, but by the sort of magic that sometimes happens--in fact, quite often happens--in committees, to which we give the cynical name of "compromise", they were recommendations we could not have arrived at individually, ones we felt quite proud of--and ones that our temperamental General Meeting accepted without change.

I'm not trying to sell anyone else a product that was custom-designed for us but I can recommend the process by which we arrived at it. Admitting an element of fantasy--even such controlled and circumscribed fantasy as I have described--into the deliberations of a standing committee made those deliberations much more fun than any of us had expected; it saved hours and hours of library time that would probably only have confirmed what we already knew; the confessional factor contributed to mutual understanding and made it easier to achieve consensus than might otherwise have been the case; and--this is most important, I think--at a time when we really needed fresh ideas, it stimulated creative thinking. When our

dreams turn out to be nightmares in the classroom, then we will go through this exercise again--and I like to think we will use the same procedure.

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**Delivering the Curriculum**  
 (Heather Murray, Toronto)

While yesterday's panel dealt with curricular ideals, today's confronts the cruder and ruder realities of curriculum delivery in tough times. While there is always, inevitably, a gap between the envisioned and the implemented, perhaps at no time in our disciplinary past has the gap been wider, this current "moment" combining a renewed, possibly inflated, academic aim and a compelling social mandate with increasing (and in many senses unanticipated) restrictions. This disparity between the "ideal" and the "real"--caused by a particular concurrence of cutbacks and backlash--is my focus today.

Idealist growth in the past has often been accompanied by material gain, however modest. The evolving social mission for vernacular literary study in nineteenth-century Canada led to the separation of English from modern language study in the 1880s and 1890s; this was accompanied by the development of chairs and lectureships for that sole purpose, and the gradual formation of independent departments. English was able to ride the educational waves following each of the two world wars--the first followed by a call for the education of a developing, and increasingly divergent nation, and the second by an agenda for education in the interests of Canadian prosperity--by accom-

modating itself to these targets first with an increased focus on issues of literacy (compositional and cultural) in the '20s, and then with the development of a scholarly orientation and infrastructure in the '40s and '50s. The '60s demands for access and innovation were accompanied by a significant material deployment allowing the building of new universities and departments and the considerable expansion and redesign of those already in place.

Today's reworking of disciplinary ideals is perhaps unprecedented in its depth and extent, involving not only a through "internal" rethinking of canon and curriculum (caused largely, but not solely, by the advent of "theory"), and by an increased public demand for responsiveness and responsibility in the curriculum. ("P.C." could as easily stand for "public concern.") The irony, of course, is that this is taking place at a time when "holding the line" appears to be all that is possible. The very fact that this occurs just when universities were starting to talk "equity," when a new generation of able and "theoretical" scholars came onto the market, and when cases for the curricular incorporation of women writers and world literatures were strongest, is enough to bring out the conspiracy theorist in us all. We are now back to basics with a new set of the three "Rs"--in this case, reduce, reuse and recycle--reducing the curriculum to its so-called core; reusing an increasingly limited range of texts and courses; recycling staff around and around. These three "rs" bear little resemblance to their ecologically-motivated counter-

parts, and are more like the tinfoil-hoarding strategies of what used to be called "thrift times." When curricular cutbacks are enforced, operating from a set of principles bearing little relationship to disciplinary mandates old or new, it's hard to think about curricular innovation.

Many of you will have read Frank Davey's précis of this problematic in the most recent ACCUTE Newsletter (Mar. 92). In "Seeking Curricular Gain from Enforced Cutbacks," he expresses concern that by making cuts, however necessary, we are complicit in a set of political decisions (one might better call them indecisions) that we should resist. Yet ten minutes with any Dean in the country will convince one that cuts are, literally, irresistible. Davey suggests that "complicity" can be limited if departments agree on some principles to govern these inevitable changes: 1) that long term curricular goals be kept in mind even while cuts are made; 2) that the things we can't do--the absences--be publicly noted; 3) that newly-won areas such as theory, women writers and post-colonial literature should not lose out; 4) that stabilizing staff workload remain a priority.

Davey's piece usefully suggests that the curricular "ideal" be kept in view--our own view, and the public view--even when it cannot be achieved. It follows from this that curricular planning should not stop simply because the resources to execute our goals are not presently available. However, the current situation appears to be very different from what Davey advocates. Curricular principles are often abandoned in the face of inadequate budgets and staff; the

tendency is for departments to shrink back to what is perceived as the "core" of the curriculum. And the curricular conversation stops.

The reasons for this are not solely financial, but result from the definitions of "curriculum" that we use and which structure curricular development. In the metaphors English departments live by, a curriculum is a container, like a box full of Lego. It can accommodate a lot of stuff of different shapes and sizes and sometimes in a jumble, but to put more in you have to take other things out. Or--a curriculum is like a maze, with lots of alleys and byways, but only one path that really gets you where you should be going. Or--a curriculum is like a puddle, at times overflowing its boundaries but shrinking back when things dry up. Curricula have developed according to the discipline's fluid boundaries (the puddle), its ability to tolerate a certain amount of waywardness (the maze) and to jam things in (the lego box). These metaphors all have reverse implications: there's a normal boundary, one true path, and only so much room. The difficulty we now face is a result. Since in the past curricular change has normally taken the form of super-additions, the core has remained more or less unchanged and the very notion of a "core" remains unchallenged. Whereas once it was possible to equate change and expansion, leaner times demand a new set of principles for curricular revision.

This suggests that a thorough reworking of curricular purposes and structures is not something to be postponed until times are better, but is more necessary now

than ever before. I will suggest 5 possible directions for such work, all of which are aimed at remedying curricular inefficiencies.

1) Increasing the number and variety of texts taught. A tally of the reading lists in most handbooks yields surprising results--an extraordinary degree of repetition of texts throughout the curriculum (students in some programmes can study a work such as *Sons and Lovers* almost annually), coupled with a paucity of works represented (*To the Lighthouse* is an invariable choice, with Woolf's other novels rarely taught). This is counter-coverage since the end result is exposure to a relatively narrow range of texts. The canon debate became derailed by the red herring question of cataclysmic substitutions (Milton OR Zora Neale Hurston!), whereas what is normally at stake is choice among a broad variety of more-or-less substitutable works and authors (*Great Gatsby* or *Their Eyes Were Watching God*). Textual variety enhances rather than threatens coverage, especially when students' opportunities for reading outside of classroom assignments are reduced by the jobs they of necessity hold. Departments may well wish to take a less *laissez-faire* attitude to the question of text selection, and to audit for repetitions in readings assigned.

2) Similar arguments could be offered for expansion of the range and type of course assignments. The classic 10-12 page essay format is time-consuming to grade, and becomes formulaic for students by third year--but examinations are not the only alternative. Further, a wider variety of

writing assignments is pedagogically sound, if we are to teach good writing even as a byproduct. The ACCUTE Newsletter might well provide a forum for the sharing of innovative in-class exercises and graded assignments.

3) Frank Davey suggests that we redefine what is meant by "coverage." Perhaps theoretical courses and concerns, Davey offers, should be the framing elements of the curriculum, and he wonders whether "a department that focused on modes of literary significance [would] be able to offer, with limited resources, a more dependably inclusive coverage in English than one that attempted to retain as much as possible of the present curriculum." Perhaps not all departments would find Davey's programme desirable or possible--but two useful directions emerge from the points he makes. First, there is nothing pre-ordained or naturally-superior about an historical coverage model (or, in fact, any "coverage" model at all); and second, that such a traditionally-constructed curriculum does not in fact meet the goal of "coverage" when that is confined to materials alone rather than skills and methods. We need to develop a much broader sense of what it is we expect students to learn (a question which is begged by lists of courses and works) and to develop curriculum accordingly.

4) Courses need to be placed in a more interactive and inter-dependent relationship. Current curriculum structuring is highly inefficient, since it is based on a rank-ordering of different "coverages"--historical, then national, generic, and so on--without a consideration of the intersections and overlaps of these areas of inquiry. And the

Lego block model pictures courses as free-standing units whose sum we call "curriculum." But a programme based on a definition of a curriculum as the total of departmental offerings will be wasteful and duplicative compared to one planned on what might be termed "critical path" principles, where curriculum is designed to maximize the experience and exposure of individual students as they make their sometimes common and sometimes divergent ways through that aggregate. Courses should be doing as least double duty--history and methods, generic and material analysis, for example--if students are to be well-educated with limited resources.

5) Courses on women writers, world literature in English, and the literary productions of Canada's first nations and varied cultural communities, need continuing development. It may seem odd to classify this last point as a curricular "efficiency," since such courses demand an expansion of material and staff that tough times would appear to make impossible. But fulfilling our disciplinary social mandate may prove to be productive in more ways than one. The need to develop a compelling vision of who we are and what we do and why, has been a theme of this conference. We need this to overcome a certain current professional angst, to knit our scholarly and professional lives together (both as individuals, and as a collective) and to convince the public that what we do is worth doing. (Frank Davey initiates his analysis with the difficulties of mustering defenses of university spending, given cutbacks in the health and social service sectors.)

But recent high expectations of the discipline indicate that the public may not be as hard to convince as we think. The current critique of English--for its eurocentrism, its under-representation, its privileging of the "literary" over other linguistic forms--is a critique generated in large part from outside the academy, and it comes to rest on English as a synecdoche for the humanities and even higher education more generally. This is not a new phenomenon: witness the undereducation debates of the '50s and '60s, the Canadian content debates of the '60s and '70s, and the more recent discussions of "cultural literacy." Why us? Why does the debate not focus on history, for example, or fine arts, or sociology? The fact that it is us shows that in the public perception, the work we do is viewed as already (and at the least, potentially) distinctive and important. We do things the other disciplines don't. Disciplinary survival may well lie in taking up this challenge--in making that "real" our curricular ideal.

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**Looking Again: Good Will and the System Approach to Curriculum**  
(Constance Rooke, Guelph)

I'll begin by isolating three areas of constraint that may work against the delivery of an ideal curriculum. The first is the *faculty* we actually have; the second is the *students* we actually have; and the third is the *money* we actually have.

In developing the curriculum, we must begin with the disposition of faculty--their interests and

capability, and the willingness that may or may not exist to entertain new ideas or to work collaboratively. We need to find ways of capitalizing on the strengths that exist, on what people do best. It doesn't make sense to impose on resistant faculty teaching practices or critical methodologies that will (by a negative alchemy) turn into dross--either because such faculty want to expose them as fool's gold, or because they do not know how to reveal them as precious metal.

I am not suggesting that we must despair of change. Old dogs can learn new tricks. New dogs can learn old tricks, too. We can change. But we must look for the most likely *sites* of change, and then approach those sites with as much good will as we can possibly muster. The most likely sites of change are those on which *some* common ground can be discovered and acknowledged, and the most potent stimulus for change is mutual respect. Respect: *re-spectare*, to look again. We must look again at what our colleagues are saying.

I probably sound like Little Mary Sunshine. But it is not my intention to efface difference. And it is certainly not my intention to recommend innocuous *familial agreement* over all. I simply believe that one of the most serious of our present constraints is a paucity of good will. I think this has prevented us from working *together*, and I think we have to work together--not all of us perhaps, and not all of the time, but more of us, more often. I simply do not believe that we can 'deliver' a curriculum without effective collaboration, without some areas of common

ground, and without some concerted attempt to accommodate and orchestrate difference--instead of letting the differences fall where they may.

There is one further constraint related to faculty that I would mention. *I believe that the walls of our individual classrooms must become more transparent.* If our curriculum is to be something more than a hodge-podge of courses, we need to have some idea of what is going on in one another's classrooms. Clearly, we must preserve the freedom of the individual instructor. But we must also, I think, find non-threatening ways of making at least some of those walls more transparent. I am thinking here of team-teaching, teaching dossiers, informal visits to one another's classes, departmental seminars on teaching practice, etc. But again, this takes good will, and it takes time.

The second area of constraint involves students--their skills, their circumstances, and their interests. We must address their need to develop the most basic reading and writing skills. But we have other, more elevated goals as well--including critical self-consciousness, some knowledge of history, and acquaintance with a reasonably extensive array of literary texts. I have no doubt that we can address more than the most basic skills. I think we *must* work on developing those skills, but that we can make progress--even from the beginning--on other fronts as well. One difficulty here is the tendency of some colleagues to dismiss such elementary work as inappropriate to the post-secondary level. That argument seems to me beside the point. If students need that help, we must respond--or all the

rest will come to naught. Equally pernicious, by my lights, is the tendency of some other colleagues to seize upon and exaggerate these fundamental weaknesses--in order to oppose certain more elevated goals, which are then depicted as vanity, and seen as serving the interests of faculty rather than student need. The tension is real, but we cannot respond by rushing headlong in one direction or the other. We cannot ignore the deficiencies with which students leave high school; neither can we cease to be a university.

The circumstances of our students must also be taken into account, and recognized as constraints upon the ways in which we develop and deliver the curriculum. I am thinking, for example, of the fact that many of our students have *jobs*. That means we have to think a lot harder than most of us have been accustomed to doing about *part-time* students and their trajectories through the curriculum, their access to the courses they need. We need to think about what courses are offered at night over a five or ten year period. Maybe we need to think about offering courses on weekends. We need to think too about how much work it is reasonable to demand of our students, and about the absenteeism that seems to be increasing as our student population changes. In what circumstances and in what ways *should* we be more accommodating?

Clearly, we have to think about who our students are, and what their interests are. That means to me that we design a curriculum that can build on their experience, taking advantage of what they already know, and what they

care about. Respecting our students means looking at *them* again: *respectare*. And it means looking again at our curriculum, with some respect for their wishes, their needs, their diverse learning styles. The vast majority of our students, as we all know, do *not* go on to become English professors. That reality complicates, and places additional constraints upon, the way we design and deliver the curriculum.

As to my third area of real world constraint--the *money* we actually have, or don't have--I shall speak much more briefly. We all know that we have too many students, and too few faculty, to do our job the way we'd like to do it. That leads to reliance upon TAs and markers, who are often insufficiently trained for the tasks they are called upon to perform--or it leads to a reduction in the number of essays we require of students, or to diminished care in our own marking, or to other methods of evaluation. It means large classes, less discussion. And it means *fewer* courses, overall. Inadequate funding also decimates our libraries, limiting the kind of work we can ask of students. Inadequate funding means that computer access for students is limited, and that it may be hard to purchase or develop computer-assisted learning programs. Inadequate funding means a shortage of appropriately sized and designed classrooms--not enough seminar rooms or not enough large lecture halls, fixed seating, and so on. All of this constrains us.

Now for solutions. What we need, I think, is a shift from the old paradigm of curriculum as composed of a set of individual,

discrete, autonomous classes--where planning at the macro level has to do primarily with the *subject matter* of these courses, and attention is paid to coverage (making sure that you've got a course in 19th C. American and a course in Romantic Poetry, etc.) and where each class has a similar size, and each attempts to fulfil the same learning objectives in approximately the same way (lecture-discussion format, 6-8 novels, per semester, 15 pages of writing, and so on), or where differences exist (exams or no exams, journals or creative projects, research assignments, etc.) but these are determined by the individual professor, without much attention to the curriculum as a whole or other courses the student may be taking. I call this the "autonomous approach" to curriculum.

We need a shift *from* that to a greater awareness of the whole of the student's experience, and a recognition that different courses can do different things in different ways. But this "system approach" to curriculum requires a much greater effort of coordination between courses, to ensure that *over the curriculum* as a whole students will be getting what they need. It requires collaboration by faculty, and that requires good will--but that is one constraint we can deal with.

One advantage of the system approach is that it addresses a common, and I think well-grounded, student complaint: that English courses are too much alike. The kind of work they do, within a fixed and replicated time-frame, is too repetitive. AND no one is coordinating students' assignments; they've got five long essays due at the end of the

semester--let's say--and haven't felt ready in any single case to begin writing until they've had a fair chunk of the course under their belts. So it all comes down on them at once, and in order to cope they quit going to classes in the last few weeks of the semester, or they begin at a stately pace, and end at such a frantic speed that several riders are de-horsed. I know, of course, that students must learn to pace themselves, and that much of what I am describing is inevitable. But I still believe that we are making things harder than they need to be, and that changes in the system could have the effect of getting students to do more work and more effective work, over the semester as a whole.

We might consider, for example, six week intensive courses. And we might consider more flexible course requirements (eg., a student taking three English courses writes an essay in only one or two of those courses--and is evaluated in the other by a test. Or the student negotiates one interdisciplinary paper between an English course and a course in another department).

If a complex array of *different* and *coordinated* learning experiences is installed in the curriculum, there remains the question of how the individual student, who will take only a *subset* of the curriculum as a whole, will get different and coordinated experiences within that subset.

One answer--neither easy nor impossible--is to design several trajectories (or partly pre-determined subsets) and require students to choose one of these. Courses within each successive phase of the trajectory would be

designed to provide *different* learning experiences. An honours student in third year might take one of several reading courses with lots of reading, taught in a large lecture, without an essay requirement--and *at the same time* would take one of several small seminars either on another subject altogether or on a linked subject.

These *sets* of courses (located at various levels) could be taught by instructors who choose to agree on a certain set of skills they are interested in developing: a more personal kind of essay, for instance, or a research paper, using archival material, or a particular critical orientation. And the courses in that set could be canonical and post-colonial and so on--so that the student pursuing a particular trajectory (New World Writing, for example) could find a course within that set that contributes to the content-specialization.

I acknowledge that this "system approach" to curriculum is enormously complex; the number of factors to be juggled *is* formidable. But I've played with it, and I think it can be done. I think it could work for faculty, I think it could work for students, and I think we could afford it. Essentially, it allows us to hold on to some small expensive classes, because it *rationalizes* some inexpensive, large classes.

Two other points, before I end. I have said almost nothing about interdisciplinary work, to which I am strongly committed. But I think the system model I'm talking about works well for that. And secondly, I do not think that writing problems are the exclusive responsibility of English departments. I think we should all be urging upon our universities a

system of "designated writing courses: across the curriculum. And I think we should explore the use of computer programs (available to all students in all departments) that teach grammar and punctuation, so that we do not have to spend the rest of our lives explaining semicolons, over and over and over. (I designed such a program for Guelph and we've found it very helpful. It's making life a lot easier on our TAs, as well.)

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"Thinking about the Profession" is a regular feature of the ACCUTE Newsletter. We invite submissions from our membership on any topic of concern to the profession. They should be written in a vigorous and engaging prose, and should be clear-thinking and stimulating. And they should be no longer than two double-spaced pages. We also invite brief, cogent responses to the writers of "Thinking about the Profession." These will be selected and edited for publication with an eye to the limitations of space on one hand, and to maintaining the integrity of the writers' views and a representation of a range of views on the other hand. Both submissions for the next Newsletter and responses to this month's "Thinking about the Profession" should reach the ACCUTE office by September 15.

### The New ACCUTE Executive

Effective July 1, 1992 the ACCUTE Executive moves to the Dept. of English, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario N1G 2W1. All correspondence should be directed to either Professor Michael Keefer, President, c/o Dept. of English, or Professor Ann Wilson, Secretary-Treasurer, c/o Dept. of Drama, at Guelph.

Continuing members of the Executive for 1992-93 are Professor Shirley Neuman, Chair, Dept. of English, U. of Alberta, as Past-President, and three members-at-large: Professor Smaro Kamboureli (English, U. of Victoria), Professor Martin Kreiswirth (English and Centre for Theory, UWO), and Professor Marjorie Stone (English, Dalhousie). Mr. Robert Irish (U. of Toronto) will serve as graduate student representative. Ex-officio members are Professor Douglas Wurtele (English, Carleton), editor of *English Studies in Canada*, and Professor Herbert Rosengarten (Chair of English, UBC), President of the Canadian Association of Chairs of English.

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### 1993 Conference: Call for papers and Suggestions for Plenaries

The 1993 ACCUTE conference will take place during the first week of June at Carleton University in Ottawa. Members are invited to send their suggestions for **plenary speakers** to Professor Michael Keefer, President, ACCUTE, Dept. of English, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ont. N1G 2W1 before August 15. Suggestions should be accompanied by a few sentences

indicating the contributions of the proposed speaker and the reasons you think s/he would be especially effective as a plenary speaker. Please remember to include the address and, if possible, the telephone number of the proposed speaker.

ACCUTE members are also invited to submit **proposals and papers** for consideration for the 1993 conference. Proposals should be 2-3 double-spaced pages or more; papers must not be longer than 20 minutes. When making submissions, please recollect that ACCUTE conference presentations are no longer than 25 minutes. Two copies of papers and proposals should be accompanied by a brief abstract and a brief biobibliographical sketch (no more than a paragraph each). Please direct papers and proposals to ACCUTE, Dept. of English, U. Guelph, Guelph, Ont. N1G 2W1. They must be received by November 15. They will be assessed by two readers and a decision will be announced in February.

Members wishing to propose Special Member-Organized sessions are reminded that the deadline for announcements in the next *Newsletter* is August 20. They should ask that papers and proposals be sent to them, in the first instance, by November 15. They should forward their selection of the submissions they receive to ACCUTE, at the address given above, no later than December 15.

**The Writer as University Teacher**  
(Melinda McCracken, Chair,  
Status of Women Writers  
Committee, The Writers' Union  
of Canada)

I am writing to bring to your attention some results of a recent survey conducted by the Status of Women Writers Committee of the Writers' Union of Canada (TWUC).

Most people work to make a living. But artists must make a living to do their work. Writers need ways of earning money that allow us time to write. When writers come onto a university campus, we are expected to teach. But as writers, we must also write. Our greatest fear is that we will become professional teachers, and lose our craft.

Our survey shows that writers prefer to work in positions with some flexibility. We prefer to go on university campuses for short terms--as instructors, writers-in-residence, and workshop leaders. We need to work part-time, but not at a disadvantage. We need universities to set up joint appointments in tenure-track positions. Three writers could hold one position, each teaching one year, and writing for two.

An obstacle to writers being hired in joint appointments is lack of recognition for literary merit. Writers on university campuses are treated not as writers, but as academics with a peculiar gift. We want universities to consider our literary credits as equivalent to degrees.

Our survey shows women writers associated with academic institutions are consistently worse off than their male counterparts. Three and a half times as many men as women have tenure. Twice as many women as men are given only

short-term contracts in sessional or term positions. There are almost no women writers in senior faculty positions.

TWUC is asking universities: 1) to take action, and if necessary, affirmative action, to achieve a balance of men and women in all categories of positions, full-time and part-time; 2) to accord writers degree equivalence for literary merit; 3) to find the money to take advantage more often of Canada Council matching funds for annual and short-term Writer-in-Residence positions on campus, and to alternate these between men and women; 4) to take advantage of any provincial arts council short term workshop programs to hire writers and women writers.

For more information, please contact The Writers Union of Canada, 24 Ryerson Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M5T 2P3.

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#### Announcements / Calls for Papers

**BEYOND EUROCENTRISM: THE HUMANITIES, THE ACADEMY, AND THE ECONOMY.** A multi-disciplinary conference to be held in Saskatoon September 24-26, 1992. Keynote speakers include Gayatri Spivak (Columbia), Sandra Buckley (McGill), and Craig McNaughton (CFH). For further information contact Len Findlay, Dept. of English, U. of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Sask. S7N 0W0. Tel.: (306) 966-5506. Fax: (306) 966-8839.

**LEONARD COHEN CONFERENCE:** The Leonard Cohen Conference Committee invites papers on the theme, "Leonard Cohen: Singer as Lover, Reconsidered," to be presented at a proposed Leonard Cohen Conference, October 22-24, 1993, at Red Deer College. Papers may treat any aspect of Cohen's contributions to fiction, poetry, music, and performance. They should be suitable for oral delivery in 25 minutes, and no longer than 20 double-spaced pages. DEADLINE: papers must be postmarked no later than January 1, 1993. All papers submitted will be vetted. The Committee's decisions, together with a Conference program, will be forwarded to submitters in March, 1993. SSHRC funding is being requested. Send the paper, along with a 100-word abstract and, on a separate sheet, your name, address and telephone number, and the title of your paper, to: Dr. E.F. Dyck, Leonard Cohen Conference Committee, English Faculty, Red Deer College, Box 5005, Red Deer, Alta. T4N 5H5. Telephone: (403) 342-3320. Fax: (403) 340-8940.

Call for Papers: **NEMLA**, Philadelphia, 27-29 March 1992. Topic: **RE-VIEWING THE CANON: ENGLISH-CANADIAN POETRY.** Submit 1-2 pp. proposals to Dr. Ruth Panofsky, 302 Innis College, 2 Sussex Ave., U. of Toronto, Toronto M5S 1J5 by 15 September 1992. Presenters must be current members of NEMLA.

*Textual Studies in Canada/Études Textuelles au Canada* is planning a special issue on the role of academic conferences in the construction of knowledge. Suggested topics: "Histories of Significant Conferences and their Impact on

English Studies," "Conferences and Professional Networking," "The Discourse of Schmoozing," "The Politics and Economics of the Academic Conference: Who Gets to Speak," "The Graduate Student's Perspective: Entering the Critical Conversation," etc.

We encourage a variety of approaches: narrative, anecdotal, dialogic, critical. Letters of inquiry are welcome. Please write to Katherine Sutherland or W.F. Garrett-Petts c/o *Textual Studies in Canada*, Faculty of Arts, The University College of the Cariboo, Box 3010, Kamloops, B.C. V2C 5N3. E-mail: petts@cariboo.bc.ca.

The 21st annual conference of the VICTORIAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION OF WESTERN CANADA (VSAWC) will be held at the University of Winnipeg on October 1-3, 1992. Special guest speakers will be Dr. Hugh Cunningham, of the University of Kent at Canterbury, and Dr. John D. Rosenberg of Columbia University, New York. Information concerning registration and reservations may be obtained from either A.G. Bedford or L.G. Siemens, Dept. of English, U. of Winnipeg, Winnipeg, Man. R3B 2E9.

## News of Members

Sheila DELANY (SFU) will publish her translation, with notes and introduction, of Osborn Bokenham's *Legend of Holy Women* (University of Notre Dame, July 1992). Her study of Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*, *The Naked Text*, will appear next year from the U of California Press.

Susan GLICKMAN (Toronto) announces belatedly but with joy the arrival of her son, Jesse, born June 21, 1991. Susan has also published several articles recently somewhere or other about something or other.

Terry GOLDIE (York) has coedited (with Daniel David Moses) *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English* (Oxford). "Fresh Canons: The Native Canadian Example" appeared in *English Studies in Canada XVII* (1991).

Anthony HARDING (Saskatchewan) has recently published "Forgetfulness and the Poetic Self in Home at Grasmere" in *The Wordsworth Circle* 22 (1991): 101-112.

Richard HILLMAN (York) has published *Shakespearean Subversions: The Trickster and the Play-text* (Routledge).

Devid KETTERER (Concordia) has published *Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy* (Indiana UP, 1992). Chapter 6 of that book, "The Establishment of Canadian Science Fiction (1959-1983)," is serialized in *The New York Review of Science Fiction*, nos. 42 & 43 (Feb. and Mar. 1992): 1, 8-14; 17-22. A section of it, "Esther Rochon's *The Shell: An Exquisite Monstrosity*," appears in *Science-*

*Fiction Studies* 10 (Mar 1992): 17-20.

Lewis J. POTEET (Concordia) has published *The Hockey Phrase Book*, co-authored with his son Aaron C. Poteet (Hantsport, NS: Lancelot, 1991) and *Talking Country: The Eastern Townships Phrase Book* (Ayers Cliff, Québec: Pigwidgeon Press, 1992).

Trevor ROSS will be taking up a position this summer as Assistant Professor at Dalhousie University. An article, "Copyright and the Invention of Tradition," will appear in the Fall 1992 number of *Eighteenth-Century Studies*.

Henry SUMMERFIELD (Victoria) has contributed "Religion becomes Political: Ruth Praver Jhabvala's Tenth Novel" to *Passages to Ruth Praver Hjabvala*, ed. Ralph Crane (New Delhi: Sterling, 1991).

Jerry A. VARSAVA (Memorial) has published "En-Gendered Problems: Characteral Conflict in Hemingway's *Garden*," *LIT: Literature Interpretation Theory* 3 (1991): 115-35.

Priscilla WALTON (Carleton) has just published *The Disruption of the Feminine in Henry James* (Toronto, 1992). Her article, "'this isn't a fairy tale. . . It's mythology': The Colonial Perspective in *Famous Last Words*," has been published in *Commonwealth* (14.1 [1991]: 9-15).

#### News of Members and Other Announcements of Interest to ACCUTE Members

Using the format of the Newsletter [Percy SHELLEY (Oxford) has published...], indicate what you have published recently and other items of interest to the membership. Items must be typed, must not exceed 50 words and must not require copy-editing. The editor retains the right to exclude any material submitted (he regrets that space constraints preclude news about conference papers, research grants, all but very prestigious awards, reviews or encyclopedia entries). To appear in the September 1992 issue of the Newsletter, items must reach ACCUTE by August 15, 1992. Mail to ACCUTE, Dept. of English, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario N1G 2W1.

MEMBERSHIP FORM 1992

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ACCUTE DIRECTORY OF MEMBERS' AREAS OF SCHOLARLY RESEARCH: The *Directory*  
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1. Literatures of a Particular Period and National Literatures  
(e.g. Middle English, Restoration Literature, 18th-19th C. American  
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etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Genres (e.g. Ballad, comedy, autobiography, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Culture and Gender Studies (e.g. American Studies, Women's Studies, Women's Literature, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Criticism, Theory, Methodology (e.g. History of Criticism, Bibliography, Literary History, Psychoanalytic Criticism, Feminist Theory, Textual Editing, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Language and Linguistics (e.g. Composition, Rhetoric, Creative Writing, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

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6. Pedagogy (e.g. Teaching practice and evaluation, curriculum, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

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7. Authors/works (list up to four) \_\_\_\_\_

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8. Other \_\_\_\_\_

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