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This newsletter can now be accessed through the Accute Website.
If you would prefer to read this material on the web and save ACCUTE the cost of printing and mailing a copy to you, let us know at accute@is.dal.ca

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The 1998 ACCUTE Conference and the New Congress University of Ottawa, May 27th-30th

By Marjorie Stone

At the Crossroads: Changes in Funding and Direction for the Learned Societies

Rituals resist extinction. No doubt, the 1998 meetings of the Learned Societies will not be, in many respects, greatly different from past meetings, even under their new name: the Congress of the Social Sciences and Humanities. Each society has distinctive patterns and rituals that it strives to preserve: particular kinds of structures for academic sessions; an honorary dinner or a luncheon; or particular ways of organizing its plenary sessions and its annual meeting. For ACCUTE, one of these rituals has become the “Wine and Cheese,” which often brings together two hundred or more members. The “Wine and Cheese” is a gathering marked by warm exchanges with old friends from many parts of the country, the formation of new collegial relationships, and the flow of good spirits. (On one occasion, late in the evening, it is rumored, there was even a public display of tattoos under the rubric of body art of the nineties).

Another ACCUTE ritual—less convivial but sometimes equally lively—is the Annual General Meeting on the third day of the conference, when important changes in policy are debated and flash points sometimes emerge, as occurred at Memorial over the question of hiring graduates of Canadian English Departments.

Each association’s distinctive rituals, the rituals that help to constitute its culture, have an uncanny way of persisting and reinventing themselves. Yet dramatic changes are taking place, in the nature as well as the format of the Learned Society meetings, as well as in the operation of the scholarly societies they bring together. Through special grants for initiatives like the Shared Program last year, and through targeted funding for the Colloquia series planned for the 1998 Congress, the Humanities and Social Sciences Federation and SSHRC are setting new agendas for the Learned Societies. The Colloquia series will focus on the three designated themes for the 1998 Congress: Health, Immigration/Migration and the Public Good. Each Colloquium must satisfy certain criteria: pertinence across several disciplines; liaison with non-academic sectors; and the inclusion of high-profile national and international researchers with expertise on the designated theme.

As Frank Davey’s HSSFC delegate report indicates (see below), we are witnessing a period of declining annual core-grant programs given to individual societies with “no strings attached,” and an increasing reliance on strategic project grants. This pattern is evident in the HSSFC plans to redirect some of the resources previously allotted to joint sessions between societies. These joint session grants worked well to promote linkages between different associations, but in the past it was left up to participating societies to determine the focus of the joint sessions. Connection to the overarching themes of the Learned was encouraged, but not essential. Liaison with non-academic sectors was not a criterion for obtaining a joint session grant. In 1998, less funding will be provided for joint sessions of this sort, in order to provide $5,000 in funding for each colloquium focused on the congress themes. Last year, ACCUTE was able to benefit from over $2,000 of the joint session subsidies by working intensively with other societies. This year, the executive is again working on many joint initiatives (see “The Shared Program”), but given the changes in funding support, we are also directing a great deal of energy to the Health Colloquium. ACCUTE was asked to take the lead in organizing this colloquium, in conjunction with the Canadian Philosophical Association.

In altering funding structures as well as the format of the Learned Societies meetings, SSHRC and HSSFC are clearly responding to powerful
Special Events Planned for the 1998 ACCUTE Conference & the first meeting of the Learned Societies under its new format of The Congress of Social Sciences and Humanities

Plenary by Linda and Michael Hutcheon
University of Toronto
“Pompous Pedants, Medical Monsters, Humane Healers: Physicians on the Operatic Stage—and in History”
Authors of Opera: Desire, Disease and Death and publications in the fields of postmodernism, irony and parody; and AIDS, pulmonary physiology, pharmaceutical and tobacco advertising.

A Public Reading by
Rohinton Mistry

Plenary by Mary Jacobus
Cornell University
“Border Crossings: Traumatic Reading and Holocaust Memory”

An ACCUTE/ACQL Panel:
Revisiting Canadian Literary Feminism
with Daphne Marlatt & Nicole Brossard

Additional Joint Sessions in the Planning Stages with ACTA, CACLALS, CSM, CSRS, CCLA, COCH/COSH, CWSA, and CHA

Registration for the ACCUTE conference will take place from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday May 27th. We expect to will run a full slate of sessions through until 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, given the Saturday night stop-over required for discount airfares.

Features of the New Congress

- Lower Registration Fees
- Three International Interdisciplinary Colloquia on the Congress Themes: Health (Coordinated by ACCUTE), Migration/Immigration and The Public Good
- An International Humanities Summit
- An International Book Fair, with representation from 150 presses, book launches, roundtables, readings and a cafe
- Exhibits, Tours, Plays and Cultural Events in the Nation’s Capital including: Special Tour of the National Library of Canada; Canadian Women’s Movement Archives Exhibit; National Archives of Canada Information Fair; Productions at the National Arts Centre and the Ottawa Little Theatre.
- See the Congress website (accessible through the ACCUTE website at http://is.dal.ca/~accute/).
pressures from government and to shifts in public opinion. If we are not more successful in demonstrating to governments, to the public and to university administrations the importance of what we do in the humanities, downsizing of programs is likely to continue at an accelerated rate. That said, associations such as ACCUTE need to exert strong pressure in return within the current climate in order to emphasize the vital importance of maintaining non-targeted funding for research, together with support for the unregulated movement of intellectual inquiry. Ironically, while there has recently been much discussion of the decline of the State in Canada, the State has become increasingly interventionist in its support of research initiatives and research dissemination in the humanities. At the same time, concern about the decline of the State seems justified as governmental agendas are increasingly shaped by private sector or corporate agendas. In this context, we should remember that SSHRC itself operates under the aegis of Industry Canada.)

The Congress theme of the Public Good provides an excellent opportunity for debating some of the complex implications of these transformations in HSSFC and SSHRC funding structures and agendas. To promote such debate in the period leading up to our 1998 Conference, I am circulating a call for submissions for a special forum in our March newsletter on “Literary Studies and the Public Good.” If the response to this call warrants it, such debate may also be continued in a Professional Concerns session at the Ottawa conference. Members of our Association also need to debate the advantages and disadvantages of our new practice of establishing conference themes connected to the overarching Congress themes (see “Conference Themes” below).

The 1998 inaugural Congress of the Social Sciences and Humanities will be an historic event. In effect, our Association, like the Learned Societies as a whole, will be at a crossroads, and much will depend on the directions we collectively move in. Plan now to attend. Support for Canadian Learned Societies is particularly critical at this point, as Frank Davey’s report indicates, if we are to preserve a collective voice. Indeed, HSSFC and even SSHRC may themselves be at risk of disappearing if more Canadian academics continue to opt for international specialist societies or American comprehensive associations like the MLA, to the exclusion of their own national societies and the Federation these constitute.

Literary Studies and the Public Good: A Call for Debate

The editor invites submissions for a special forum on Literary Studies and the Public Good in the March ACCUTE Newsletter. Among other topics, articles might focus on the value of studying literature in and of itself; the implications of targeting funding for research and research dissemination in literary studies; the changing agendas of Learned Society meetings; ACCUTE’s own new practice of establishing conference themes; the ways in which the “public good” is now being defined; pedagogical practices connecting the study of literature to the public good; support for the publication of specialized literary research; and the role of literary studies in education and career preparation. Articles may range from 1,000 to 2,000 words, and should be e-mailed or mailed to ACCUTE by February 15th.

The Shared Program of the Allied Associations

Given the wish to continue last year’s initiative of the Shared Program, as well as ACCUTE’s responsibility in coordinating the Health Colloquium, conference planning this year is proving to be particularly challenging. Last year’s ACCUTE program incorporated an unprecedented number of joint sessions with eight other societies:

ACQL: Association for Canadian and Quebec Literatures

ACTR: Association for Canadian Theatre
At this point, it looks probable that the 1998 program may well include a still higher number of joint sessions, with a larger number of societies. Work on the Health Colloquium (see below) has led to correspondence with a number of additional societies, and the prospect of joint sessions extending beyond the Allied Associations which participated in the Shared Program initiative.

While response to the Shared Program initiative last year was almost uniformly positive, the prospect of an increasing number of joint sessions with other societies is also changing our Association's annual conference program in ways we need to review and assess at the 1998 Annual General Meeting. For other reasons too, it will be time to review the Shared Program initiative. One reason is financial. Last year SSHRC provided a special, one-time grant of $5,000 to fund work on the Shared Program, which was administered by the ACCUTE office. Since we were able to bring in additional money in advertising revenue last year, a portion of this grant is still available to put towards production of a second Shared Program. But it is not expected that SSHRC will provide a second grant, and a plan for sharing future costs remains to be developed by the Allied Associations. The Shared Program also leads to a great deal of additional, time-consuming work in the ACCUTE office, given our role in coordinating it. These factors will have to be weighed in the balance at the Annual General Meeting with the benefits that the initiative has yielded in terms of an enriched conference program and enhanced cooperation with other associations.

The Health Colloquium

The first of the three high-profile Colloquia planned for the 1998 Congress, the Health Colloquium will take place on the last two days of the ACCUTE conference, May 29th and 30th, a Friday and a Saturday. Although the Congress office initially planned for each Colloquium to run through one day, it was decided to run the Colloquium over two days to facilitate participation by a larger number of societies, given the level of interest manifested, and to encourage public participation in certain events (on the Saturday in particular).

The following description of the colloquium has been developed for publicity purposes:

The Health Colloquium will situate the study of health and the analysis of health science and health care practices within the broader cultural, social and historical contexts that shape paradigms of disease and wellness. By featuring research in a range of disciplines it will aim to:

• investigate the ways in which cultural and philosophical systems of representation and social, political and economic conditions contribute to the health or illness of individuals and groups

• foster interdisciplinary exchanges that aid in reconceptualizing approaches to individual and social health

• stimulate linkages between academic researchers and teachers and a number of other constituencies and groups, including health care professionals and activists, government agencies, representatives of cultural minorities and women's groups, and organizations concerned with particular diseases or disabilities.

Social scientists often note how they are marginalized in medical and health research initiatives. Researchers in the humanities have been even more marginalized, as the current debate over the Tri-Council Code of Ethics for Research
Involving Humans indicates (see Frank Davey’s report, below, and ACCUTE’s brief on the Tri-Council code posted on our website). As a result, there is little public recognition of the rich and diverse body of research that has accumulated or is in progress concerning the intersections of literature and medicine, representations of disease and the body, and the role of literature and other cultural forms such as drama or film in preserving or promoting the health of cultures and societies. Even Medical Humanities programs tended to be dominated by current medical paradigms and perspectives. A primary purpose of ACCUTE’s work in coordinating the Health Colloquium is to help counteract this pattern of neglect.

The Colloquium planning has led to correspondence with a number of societies that ACCUTE has not customarily worked with in the past, including the Canadian Philosophical Association, the Canadian Association of Teachers of Technical Writing, the Canadian History of Medicine Association, and the Canadian Society for the History and Philosophy of Science. The Canadian Historical Association and the Canadian Religious Studies Association have also expressed interest in arranging joint sessions with ACCUTE, and a call for papers for a member-organized joint session with the Canadian Women’s Studies Association has been posted.

High profile events planned to date for the Colloquium include a public lecture by Linda and Michael Hutcheon on the representation of doctors in opera and literature, a panel on Aboriginal Arts and Healing, and an interdisciplinary forum on Reconceptualizing Reproductive Health. One of ACCUTE’s plenary speakers, Professor Mary Jacobus, will also be speaking on a topic relevant to the Health Colloquium (trauma theory and Holocaust narratives), although when we invited her to speak we indicated our openness to hearing her address any topic related to her current research in the various fields she works in (Romanticism, feminist theory, psychoanalytic theory). As our September Calls for Papers indicated, a number of calls for member-organized sessions or joint sessions with other societies were linked to the “Literature, Health and Disease” theme. Other societies are also planning sessions related to this theme, from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. We therefore expect that there will be a wide array of sessions for those interested to choose among. We are also currently investigating performance events relevant to the Health theme.

The Health Colloquium epitomizes what is at stake for ACCUTE in the current climate of targeted funding for learned societies conferences. On the one hand, not to be an active player in such initiatives is to risk losing an effective voice in overall planning for the new Congress, as well as access to funding support provided for the Colloquia series. Moreover, not to participate is to risk losing an opportunity for raising the public profile of the humanities in a positive and pragmatic way. On the other hand, playing a coordinating role in such a major undertaking necessarily diverts attention from other matters and influences our annual conference program in significant ways. Given the phasing out of SSHRC administrative support for associations such as ACCUTE, and the prospect of the elimination of our SSHRC travel grant, the executive has attempted wherever possible to draw on funds provided by HSSFC for the Health Colloquium. In doing so, we have sought to maintain sufficient financial reserves to subsidize the travel of members presenting at the conference.

To preserve balance in our conference program, the executive will try to ensure that sessions unrelated to the Health theme are available in a range of fields throughout the two days that the Colloquium overlaps with the ACCUTE conference. The joint sessions planned with other text-based societies for the Shared Program should help to extend the diversity of our offerings, together with the wide range of topics reflected in the submissions we have received from members in response to our general Call for Papers.

I have been very grateful to the generous way in which members of ACCUTE with research related to the Health theme have shared their expertise thus
far, and would like to thank in particular here Alan Bewell (U of T) and Elizabeth Harvey (UWO). I would also like to encourage any of our members with relevant research interests to contact the executive with their suggestions.

Conference Themes
Elsewhere in this newsletter Dominick Grace (Algoma UC) advances an eloquent argument for defending the sphere of the literary and offers a critique of the non-literary agendas reflected in this year’s themes. A different view was reflected in the response to last year’s ACCUTE survey, when the practice of circulating themes was approved by about 80% of the respondents (hence Dominick’s title, “A Minority View”). I have also had correspondence from faculty who have indicated that they renewed their membership in ACCUTE after allowing it to lapse because they liked the spirit of interdisciplinarity reflected in this year’s conference themes. Nevertheless, Dominick Grace is far from alone in registering resistance to the use of focusing themes, as comments from other ACCUTE members indicate. The issues at stake are complex, particularly since the question of what the “literary” sphere includes remains a difficult question to answer, as this issue’s graduate column indicates. In her description of the kind of work her graduate student colleagues are engaged in, Kathleen Batstone (U of Man) draws on a concept of literary studies that seems to differ markedly from that reflected in Dominick Grace’s article. Such differences are typical of a large, comprehensive association such as ACCUTE, and contribute to the vitality of the debates that help to shape our policies and initiatives. The executive invites more debate on this issue in the months that lie ahead, either through articles in the newsletter, or on the ACCUTE listserv.

SSHRC’s Strategic Themes and the Tri-Council Code
In the September newsletter (p. 18), I summarized the process of consultation that led to ACCUTE’s brief on new “Strategic Themes” for the SSHRC Strategic Grants Program. (A copy of the brief is posted on the ACCUTE website.) I prefaced this brief with a letter to Dr. Lynn Ponrod, outgoing President of SSHRC, setting out ACCUTE’s strong criticism of the social science bias of the previous set of strategic themes: Applied Ethics, Managing for Global Competitiveness, Science and Technology Policy in Canada, and Women and Change. In its brief, ACCUTE proposed two themes to SSHRC: Multilingual Societies and Changing Literacies, and Cultural Production and National Identities.

On December 1st, in response to an inquiry, I received an e-mail letter from France Landriault, the SSHRC officer responsible for consultation on Strategic Themes. The two new umbrella themes SSHRC has chosen are Social Cohesion, and the Cultural, Social and Economic Challenges of a Knowledge Society. Although it may seem like a small gain, the inclusion of the word “Cultural” in the second of these themes does reflect an improvement over the previous four themes. Over the next six to eight months SSHRC will consider “how the umbrella areas should be developed and establish research priorities for them.” We strongly encourage members to contact SSHRC during this period, to indicate ways in which the umbrella areas might be developed to include important new research initiatives in our discipline. France Landriault can be reached by e-mail: FLA@SSHRC.CA. Alternatively, members might address letters directly to the new SSHRC President, Dr. Marc Renaud at MRE@SSHRC.CA.

The ways in which humanities disciplines such as our own are marginalized through the social sciences tilt of many SSHRC initiatives is also dramatically illustrated by the Tri-Council Code of Ethics for Research Involving Humans. This matter was brought to the attention of the ACCUTE executive by Carole Gerson (SFU). It is addressed in detail below by Frank Davey, who drafted the ACCUTE brief responding to the Tri-Council Code (now posted on the website). As I pointed out in the letter to Marc Renaud accompanying this brief, the
English Studies in Canada

Professor Mary Jane Edwards will take over as the new Editor of *English Studies in Canada* in January. Professor Edwards brings her expertise as a senior researcher in Canadian Literature and Bibliographical and Textual Study to this position, as well as a wealth of editing experience as General Editor of the Centre for Editing Early Canadian Texts project, plus an impressive track record in obtaining grants for editorial projects. Professor Edwards will be assisted in her work by an experienced editorial team, including Professor Robert Lovejoy, Professor Jim Steele and Professor Robert Laird of the Carleton English Department, and Professor Keith Wilson of the University of Ottawa. Carleton University has offered an excellent package of financial and institutional support for the operation of the journal, including a course release for the Editor, the use of three offices in a Text Production Centre, computer hardware and software, and graduate assistants drawn from a Masters program with a concentration in Editing and Writing.

During the past few months' period of transition, the executive, in consultation with Professor Edwards, has revived a practice first established in 1977, and surveyed members' views regarding ESC. We have done this through a questionnaire, which we sent to a randomly selected yet representative number of members. We have also posted this questionnaire on the ACCUTE website, and on the ACCUTE listserv. If you have not yet seen this questionnaire, and are interested in responding to it, we encourage you to download it from the website, or to contact the ACCUTE office for a copy.

I would like thank the many members who have responded to this survey, as of the mailing of this newsletter. As our questionnaire indicated, in the last SSHRC grant competition, *ESC* tied for the highest score in terms of quality or scholarly excellence, but received a lower score for dissemination, given that ACCUTE members form a majority of the subscribers. The responses to date have yielded many excellent suggestions regarding ways of widening the circulation of the journal, together with very helpful information on new directions members would like the new Editor to consider pursuing, and features of the journal they would like to see retained.

Professional Concerns

Mervyn Nicholson (Cariboo UC) has taken over as Chair of the Professional Concerns Committee. Professor Nicholson is also currently a Member-at-Large on the ACCUTE executive. In his report as outgoing Chair of the CPC (June newsletter, pp. 8-11), Professor Herbert Rosengarten (UBC) noted the need for a closer connection between the CPC and the ACCUTE executive, given the number and the severity of the professional concerns our Association now seeks to address. The executive decided to bring about a closer structural relationship by asking one of our three Members-at-Large to chair the CPC.

Among the topics the executive is currently considering for professional concerns sessions are the following:

1. Research agendas, research ethics, and
research funding for those teaching in small as well as large institutions.

(2) The preparation of Teaching Assistants and the appropriate use of teaching evaluations

(3) New alliances and linkages for delivering programs in a time of restraint, including interdisciplinary programs, college-university linkages, and faculty exchanges

(4) The value of literary studies versus "cultural studies" kinds of approaches

(5) Hiring policies and the migration and immigration of expertise.

Regarding the first of these, Louise Forsyth, the President-Elect of HSSFC, has pointed out the value of encouraging a "lively conversation" within the humanities community concerning research ethics. This topic has thus far been dominated by the medical and social sciences in the context of the controversy surrounding the Tri-Council Code, even though the humanities surely have much to offer in debates concerning ethical issues. ACTR has also expressed interest in organizing another professional concerns session with ACCUTE, given the high attendance and positive response to last year’s joint session on "Getting and Staying Published." Please contact members of the executive regarding topics you would like to see addressed in professional concerns sessions and/or possible speakers.

University of Ottawa On-Site Planning

At the University of Ottawa our campus representative, Mary Arseneau, has been very busy assisting the executive with on-site planning for the 1998 Conference. I would like to take this opportunity of thanking Mary for her work to date. I would also like to thank Angela Robbeson of the University of Ottawa, who has been assisting us in organizing readings by creative writers for the conference.

The November 1997 HSSFC Meetings: A Report
by Frank Davey

The Humanities and Social Sciences Federation of Canada Board of Directors and General Assembly met in Ottawa November 28-30. This was the second annual meeting of the General Assembly since the merging of the humanities and social science federations in 1996 and the third of the Board of Directors. For me, these were my first meetings. Our president, Marjorie Stone, appointed me this summer as ACCUTE representative to the HSSFC General Assembly, replacing Len Findlay who had been elected HSSFC Vice-President for External Communications, and in early November the large association electoral college acclaimed me to the Federation’s Board of Directors.


With its three themes of Migration/Immigration, Health, and the Public Good, with more overlap than ever before in associations’ meetings, and with a sharp reduction in registration fees, the new Congress is expected by the HSSFC executive to be the most well-attended and intellectually fruitful Learnteds in recent years. A newly added feature to the Congress is the third Humanities Summit, with delegates from Australia, New Zealand, the US, and elsewhere, meeting at the Congress from May 25-28. HSSFC delegates, however, observed that the message that Congress is a “do-not-miss” event still needs to be communicated to association memberships.

2. Apprehension: Declining Memberships

Delegates from nearly all associations at the meetings reported declines in their memberships at least as great as the ongoing reductions of full-time faculty positions at Canadian universities. In some cases the proportion of full-time faculty in a discipline who hold memberships in its Canadian
associations was also reported to be declining, as faculty continue to prefer to belong to international specialist associations. Both SSHRC President Marc Renaud and HSSFC President Chad Gaffield pointed to the difficulty this decline in association membership is creating for those bodies, and which it will in turn create for Canadian academics if it continues. When the Council and Federation go to government ministers and ask for more money for research and education, the ministers ask how much Canadian scholars are contributing to their professional programs. On a per capita basis, Canadian academics, through their diffidence toward Canadian association membership, currently contribute around $2 each to HSSFC funding (association members contribute on average $4). Bluntly put, Canadian academics who endanger the credibility, and ultimately the survival, of their national disciplinary and interdisciplinary associations by not taking out memberships in them are also endangering the credibility and survival of HSSFC and SSHRC. Governments cannot be expected to care for the humanities and social sciences in Canada more than do individual academics. We should all understand that HSSFC and SSHRC are not eternal, and will some day, perhaps soon, cease to exist if more of us do not support them by participating in their constituent associations. Neither we nor our non-joining colleagues can expect to continue to enjoy SSHRC travel grants, ASPP publishing subventions, or the possibility of research grants for ourselves and fellowships for our students if we allow our associations to decline. This a message all ACCUTE members need to get out to their non-member and often internationally-minded colleagues. Even these non-members often hope to benefit directly from Canada's nationally funded grants, publishing subventions, and fellowships. And indirectly they do. But these grants won't keep coming unless more of us support our national associations. Moreover, without viable associations no one will be representing any of us on other national issues like the ill-conceived and humanities-threatening second draft of the Tri-Council Code of Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (see part 3, below), or the instrumentalism of government educational policies. Speak again to your colleagues.

3. Mixed Feelings: Responses to the Address by the New SSHRC President, Dr. Marc Renaud

Many delegates to the meetings had strong reservations about Dr. Renaud's "open for business" announcement regarding SSHRC and about his ostensibly tactical use of 1990s instrumentalist business jargon. His energy and optimism were appreciated, as were his interesting efforts to translate the work which HSSFC scholars do into charts and graphs that the politicians and bureaucrats might understand. However, his message to delegates that humanists and social scientists needed to begin at once to theorize the "usefulness" of their work, and to conceive of useful projects which they could undertake on behalf of government departments or private industry, was received with a mixture of realism and skepticism. Most delegates questioned what else a SSHRC president could say, and what other vocabulary use, when he owed his position to a department known as Industry Canada, and when government conceives of the humanities and social sciences as instruments of industrial policy. On the other hand, his injunction to be "of use", and to be public about one's usefulness, raised for many the questions "of use to whom and to what causes?"—to the further development of a civil and democratic society? to the raising of the material and cultural quality of Canadian life generally? or to the benefit of more specific goals, institutions, and programs? There was also some dismay among delegates at the general implication in Dr. Renaud's address that humanists and social scientists should seek to be collaborators with the new utilitarianism, rather than seek ways of resisting or modifying it—even here too delegates reflected upon the constraints that appear attached in these years to Council presidency. Nevertheless, some of us did begin considering the need for humanists and social
scientists to articulate more publicly the cultural 'usefulness' of their work — not in order to become collaborators but in order that the current governmental fixation on narrowly-defined economic utility not go unchallenged. Our task here, it seems to me, is to avoid nostalgia for the times before the technocrats of free trade and global economics came to political power, and to work even more intensively than we do now on the cultural consequences of the present political/economic moment. Perhaps we should also begin thinking publicly of the 'usefulnesses' we will have to deliver when we are called upon, as we surely will be, to help deal with the consequences of this moment's excesses.


Of most concern to ACCUTE at these meetings was the fate of the most recent draft of the proposed Code of Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, a joint initiative, begun in 1994, of the Medical Research Council (MRC), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). The new draft called for the establishment of 5-member "Research Ethics Boards" ("REBs") at all universities to review and approve all undergraduate, graduate, and faculty research that involved ethical risk and potential "harm" to human "research participants." The underlying model of research in this draft was a medical 'doctor-patient' one of powerful researcher and vulnerable "research participant." The ACCUTE executive was shocked to discover that this draft had, deliberately or inadvertently, defined authors as research participants from whom permission ("informed consent") would have to be obtained before one could comment on their works, and that the draft effectively banned research that might result in "harm" to the reputations of such research participants. While this draft offered exemption from such consent, and from ethics board review, to research on most texts "in the public domain," it had not extended this exemption to published texts currently in copyright or to film or theatrical performances. As one theatre scholar wrote to us, such provisions could require a researcher into a single theatre or film production to obtain the permission of a hundred or more highly mobile individuals before proceeding to apply for Research Ethics Board approval. The injunction not to "harm" could have prevented the kind of canon-interrogating criticism that has often benefited texts produced by members of vulnerable communities. The undertaking of book reviews, under this draft of the Code, would have required the informed consent of a book's authors and editors. The draft Code was further complicated by clauses which gave special rights to collectivities, and precedence to a collectivity's understandings of "harm" and ownership over those of academic research practice. These provisions appeared equally to constitute obstacles for research into the poetry of Pauline Johnson (for which Six Nations' consent could arguably have been required) and into the Canadian Red Cross's distribution of HIV-contaminated blood products (for which Health Canada, provincial health ministries, and Red Cross consent could have been required). While the Code demanded that "all" university research at any level, unless specifically exempted by the Code, be subject to Research Ethics Board review, it was unclear to what extent the sponsoring Councils could, or would, enforce this demand. The Councils could clearly cut off funding to any research which they funded, but whether they would be willing to cut off funding in general to universities that did not impose REB review on non-funded projects was not stated. As ACCUTE's response commented, unenforceable injunctions merely bring disrepute to the process of which they are a part. I write of these features of the Code in the past tense because the newly appointed President of SSHRC, Dr. Marc Renaud, has announced that the current draft will not be taken forward, and that in its place a set of ethics guidelines, which universities will be expected to follow, will be drafted by the three councils. However, at the HSSFC meetings rumours of other scenarios circulated, including one
that the MRC might adopt the present draft with only minimal revision and pressure the other research councils to follow. Dr. Renaud and the other council presidents have given no indication of how much consultation, if any, will follow the drafting of any new "guidelines". Considering the difficulties, carelessness, and misunderstandings that have marred the first two drafts of the Code, and the likelihood that such could infect the new guidelines, ACCUTE believes a further round of consultation to be essential. In ACCUTE's lengthy response to the draft Code, most of which I wrote, the executive insisted that published authors be specifically excluded from the Code's definitions of research participants, and that the exemption from participant consent and ethics board approval extended to texts in "the public domain" be extended also to published texts and public performances. It asked further that the protection extended to vulnerable communities not be extended to governments or corporations. It asked that the Code's concept of "harm" be re-written so as to distinguish between physical and social harm, between libel and justified critique, and to allow not only reconsiderations of literary reputation but critical commentary on all varieties of public utterance and action. It indicated that, were a Code adopted that did not include such distinctions and exemptions, it would recommend that ACCUTE members comply only minimally with it or seek legal or faculty association assistance when adversely affected by it. ACCUTE also criticized the unwieldy and expensive administrative structure foreseen by the draft Code. Our calculations were that, given the draft's wide definitions of "research participant" and reviewable research, medium- to large size universities would receive 300 or more applications for Research Ethics Board approval annually, with each requiring an hour or more of "face-to-face" meetings and board discussion. To respond to these would require such universities to establish at least three boards each, meeting for an average of 20 hours per week. At least two of the five members of the board — the lawyer and community member — would have to be paid, and the three faculty members compensated through course release. The cost of such boards (approximately 100 would be needed across the country), no matter from which pocket paid, would reduce the amount of funding available nationally for teaching and research. ACCUTE further criticized the process by which these boards were to be established — by the discretion and authority of university presidents — and argued that they would have more credibility and accountability if appointed by university's senates.

5. More to Be Done: Assessing the New HSSFC

To a large extent the 1997 meetings offered a test of the new Federation's governing structure and by-laws, adopted last year, and of the Federation's viability in a period in which irregularly acquired project grants have displaced annual core-program grants in both its own budget and those of its constituent associations. The division of the Federation into four electoral colleges, one each for small associations, medium associations, large associations, and universities, was echoed in a similar fragmenting of the focus of the meetings. The large associations, of which ACCUTE is one of eight, were concerned chiefly with the implications of the most recent draft of the Tri-Council Code and with the process through which the next and possibly 'final' draft of this document will be produced. They agreed that HSSFC should emphatically oppose any move to have this draft, or "some close approximation of it," adopted. The university representatives focussed most of their attention on the presentation given to General Assembly members by incoming SSHRC president Dr. Marc Renaud, and on his "SSHRC is open for business" definition of his presidency. The small associations were concerned about their own financial fragility, and requested that the Federation examine the possibility of financing a central office which could give secretarial and administrative support to their membership and conference-planning activities. The medium associations were most concerned about whether or not HSSFC
would serve as an effective lobbyist for particular
concerns, and specifically about whether the
Federation would take positions on university
decisions to terminate departments and programs.
All the electoral colleges were concerned about the
decline in membership in scholarly associations,
and about the damage this decline may be doing to
the credibility — or even the continued existence
— of institutions like HSSFC and SSHRC. Among
individual representatives there was also consider­
able curiosity about how the Federation would
manage the transition from core program financing
to project financing, and whether it would be able
to avoid significant and perhaps crippling deficits.
There was also strong interest in the planning for
the 1998 Congress at the University of Ottawa, and
concern about how associations were going to deal
with the two-campus site of the 1999 Sherbrooke/
Bishop’s Congress. As a process, these meetings
were not without difficulties. While the HSSFC
staff had done a superlative job of organizing the
meetings and making the delegates feel welcome,
the Federation’s limited budget for overnight
accommodations meant the squeezing of deliberations into two half-days and one full day. All the
meetings except those of the standing committees
— of the Board of Directors, the electoral colleges,
and the General Assembly — were rushed. While
executive and standing committee motions were
briefly debated and passed, some individual
delegates were left wondering whether their
suggestions or comments had any chance of
entering institutional memory, let alone of having
an effect on executive policy (I should say that this
was not exactly my own experience — in fact, my
sense was that my own and ACCUTE’s views were
usually listened to and taken into account). At the
General Assembly meeting the weakness of the new
by-laws, which make no provision for the introduction of motions from the floor by individuals or
electoral colleges, became graphically apparent.
Electoral college motions were rendered allowable
only by President Chad Gaffield’s imaginative but
dubious interpretation of the by-laws. There was
general agreement by the end of the last day that the
meetings had been top-down in structure, and that
something may need to be done to redress this.

and 2002 Congresses

In the traditional rotation of the regional sites of
the past Learned and current Congresses (four in
central Canada interspersed with two in the west
and one in the east), the invitation to host the 2001
Congress would have been extended only to
Ontario universities and the 2002 only to ones in
Quebec. Congress planners have concern, however,
that the current financial situations of Ontario
universities might make many reluctant to bid to
host the Congress. They have also had concern that
a rigidly implemented rotation policy could prevent
a university from hosting the Congress during the
year of a significant anniversary. The HSSFC board
thus voted to issue an invitation this spring to all
Canadian universities to submit bids to host either
of the 2001 and 2002 Congresses. While the
principle of geographic rotation will continue to be
taken into account, the Board wishes to be able to
vary its implementation, and to be able to obtain the
most appropriate bid for any particular year. This
seemed to be a reasonable change of policy to me,
and I supported it.

7. Dissension: How Broad Should the
Lobbying Role of HSSFC Be?

On two issues, the proposed Code of Ethical
Conduct and the announced closures of humanities
departments by Carleton University, there was clear
disagreement among delegates at the meetings and
between the executive and various delegates about
what lobbying role, if any, the Federation should
play. On the Carleton University issue, a number of
delegates, including many from the medium
associations’ electoral college, were mystified by
the reluctance of the executive to have the Federation take a position and communicate it to Carleton.
The executive defended its reluctance both on the
grounds of insufficient information (Len Findlay)
and the possible damage such action could do the
credibility of the Federation (Chad Gaffield).
Although the president did not explain how this damage might occur, my own view is that his argument is compelling. It is virtually impossible for HSSFC to take a position on an individual university’s actions because HSSFC is a federation of both scholarly associations and universities, and represents all of these, including Carleton. If HSSFC were to attempt to intervene in the Carleton case, it would be in effect representing Carleton against itself. It would also be jeopardizing its university memberships, which constitute approximately $200,000—two-thirds of its continuing core budget. None of us wants to see the humanities diminished by department closings, but we also continue to need the Federation. The situation regarding HSSFC and the proposed Ethics Code is arguably different. Here the executive pronounced itself reluctant to have the Federation take a position primarily because its membership had expressed conflicting views on the draft Code, and secondarily because it had agreed to organize the 1997 consultation process on the draft Code for SSHRC. My reading of the meetings was that there indeed were differences of opinion, but that a majority of delegates opposed the most recent draft and wished the federation also to oppose it. The ethics code, moreover, unlike the Carleton closings, is not an issue that has emerged from the actions of any single constituent member of the Federation; while individuals like HSSFC President Chad Gaffield and Vice-President for Women’s Issues Cannie Stark have contributed to the Code’s drafting, they have done so as individuals and not as representatives of an association or the Federation. In taking a stand on the draft Code, the Federation would not be explicitly criticizing one of its members or its own executive. As for HSSFC’s role in the consultation process, if this role has compromised the Federation’s ability to represent its members’ interests, we should be questioning the wisdom of having agreed to it. In my view, ACCUTE and other constituent associations of HSSFC should continue to press the executive to declare a Federation policy on the Tri-Council ethics proposals. The argument that diversity of opinion prevents HSSFC from speaking out is unacceptable. If the executive were truly to require membership unanimity before taking a position on an issue, HSSFC would have no positions on anything.

Secretary-Treasurer’s Column

ACCUTE Travel Policy

The executive is currently considering the fairest and most appropriate travel policy for the ’98 Congress. Since many members will be travelling by car, we think it might be best to use Dalhousie’s per kilometre rate of $0.28 for anybody coming from points in Ontario and Quebec. If we were to use such a policy, people travelling from Montreal could expect to be reimbursed $49 (Toronto $98, St. Catharines $149). Members travelling from outside of Ontario and Quebec will be reimbursed for the discount air fare or a portion thereof (we may have to pro-rate reimbursements).

We plan on spending no more than $20,000 for travel for the Ottawa Congress and hope that executive and plenary costs together do not exceed $5000. The average claim for the ’96 Brock conference was $306; not surprisingly it was much higher for St. John’s ($437) last year. The number of claims was the same for both 1996 and 1997 (59). We anticipate that the travel costs for the Ottawa Congress will resemble the Brock conference. Because there seems to be no assurance that the travel grants from SSHRC will continue beyond the next year, these travel support levels may decrease sharply. In any case, if you have opinions on our travel policy please let us know (better still, express them on the listserv, accute-1).

ACCUTE Finances

The former ACCUTE executive (Frank Davey and Peter Auksi) passed on almost $30,000 to Dalhousie, and Dalhousie anticipates that even a “best case” scenario will see it pass on only $20,000 to Memorial. There are a number of
factors behind this decrease. First, traditional wisdom suggests that when the conference is held either in the east or west, travel costs increase by $10,000 (this includes plenary and executive travel costs as well as those of the presenters). The St. John’s conference, like the Calgary one, was expensive. On the other hand, the idea of having the Congress in central Canada every year inspires nobody.

Second, our SSHRC administrative grant has been eliminated (we are still trying to retain a portion of this for one more year). Even if we are successful, it would be naive to think that the level of support we have received in the past will continue; hence, we need to make changes. Changing the format of the January executive meeting is the most important of these. Rather than meeting physically, we will be either communicating in a “real time” chat session or using a conference call. Obviously, face-to-face meetings are better, but last year’s did cost us $5000.

Third, there is the ongoing problem of a declining proportion of regular versus subsidized memberships. This fall has seen the number of subsidized members actually surpass the regular ones. A national trend away from full-time tenured positions towards part-time ones is a key to this change. We may be forced to reconsider the $40 fee for members in the subsidized categories (i.e., underemployed, student, and retired) or raise the regular fee of $75. Both options have serious negative consequences.

We have learned much from the last year and a half, and the Ottawa Congress, as interesting as the content promises to be, may show signs of extracurricular restraint. The Wine and Cheese will remain WINE and CHEESE (as one member shouted it on accute-l), so don’t expect live entertainment. We are trying to use electronic technologies to reduce travel and postage costs but this transition is not as easy as one might assume.

Whatever changes are in the offing, rest assured that ACCUTE will always exist as a professional society!

David McNeil

ACCUTE-L, the Electronic Newsletter and E-mail

Please remember that if you wish to contact us the e-mail address is accute@is.dal.ca. Send a message to this address if you wish to be added to, or deleted from, the listserv (accute-l@ac.dal.ca), and remember that messages to accute-l are distributed to everybody. While the listserv is relatively quiet (5 messages a week), it is also vital in the case of an emergency or important issue, like responding to Harris’s alleged comment on arts degrees. It provides a forum where our members can freely exchange opinions throughout the year.

Even before the mail strike, ACCUTE made a concerted effort to use electronic technologies to communicate with its members and outside agencies. The strike actually happened at the best possible time; a good deal of the membership renewals had already been received. However, if it had continued for much longer, we would have felt a serious financial pinch.

The Newsletter is now available electronically, but you will need to know your “username” and “password” to access it. Please just send us a request for these at accute@is.dal.ca. The job ads are also password protected. This is so that the www-site primarily serves ACCUTE members. We don’t charge departments to put their job ads on our www-site because we think that our members will want to see as many of these as possible. On the other hand, there have to be some benefits to membership or else there would be no incentive to join ACCUTE. The resource-pages (URLs for departments, listservs, libraries, member homepages, etc.) will be developed on an ongoing basis and they, too, will be password protected.

David McNeil and Keith Lawson
The Annual Conference: A Minority View
by Dominick Grace
Algoma University College

As one of the roughly 20% of ACCUTE members who have expressed dissatisfaction with the sorts of themes and with the focus on theoretical and non-literary discourses emerging at the conference, or in its planning at any rate, I have been asked to articulate my views in this forum, to generate discussion about why such a significant minority has expressed dissatisfaction. I should note, however, that I can’t claim to speak for all my colleagues in this elite dissenting group; I can speak only for myself. I suspect, though, that at least some of the reservations I have about the directions in which we are heading are common to many other dissenters.

My reservations can be traced to a single element of themes we are asked to consider: there is very little room in them for the discussion of literature. I have no quarrel with those interested in theory, nor do I disagree with those who see much of import in non-literary discourses. However, the proportion of topics in the three proposed thematic areas devoted to these areas, the latter one especially, is far too high. As teachers of English, we spend most of our time in class talking about literary texts; as an association of teachers of English, therefore, we should (I think) spend a reasonable proportion of our time doing the same thing.

Though the list of topics proposed in the June newsletter underwent revision, even the new list in the September newsletter invites the discussion of literary texts as such in only a very few categories; many topics do mention literature, but they do so in the context of primarily non-literary discussions. “Literature and Medicine,” “Literature and Psychoanalysis,” “The Social Functions of Literature,” etc. suggest more of an interest (or at least as much interest) in the non-literary as the literary, while other topics (e.g. “Nomadism”; “Homelessness”) invite little or no natural linkage to the discussion of literature (one might posit a paper like “Arthur: Spenser’s Homeless Hero” perhaps).

By my count, only two or three of the proposed topics in each thematic area clearly focus on the discussion of literature as literature, rather than on issues of a more psychological, sociological, political, or some other “ical” orientation. Even the topics that clearly invite literary discussion (e.g. “Tragedy, Comedy, and Healing”) contextualize literature in a non-literary environment. While I am sure that literature can offer significant insights into reproductive or health technologies (I teach Science Fiction, and I am sure that other serious readers of the genre were as bemused as I at how the cloning of Dolly seemed to excite people to call for discussions of the ethics and politics of cloning; SF offers decades of texts discussing such issues), I am not sure why we feel the need to stress such contexts in our discussions of literature to the extent reflected in the proposed themes.

It has been suggested to me that pressures on us to be “relevant” play a significant role in the nature of the themes proposed and in the nature of the topics suggested: many of the proposed topics deal
with current issues (and we are becoming an "issue of the month" society; even Chatelaine now has an "issue of the month" feature—that’s what they actually call it). The theory, presumably, is that literature, and therefore we as teachers of English, are relevant only insofar as we can demonstrate that literature is concerned with various "real" issues, and not just with entertaining us. Such attitudes towards literature are, of course, just about as old as literature.

Laying aside the traditional antagonism directed at the arts, however, we might wish to question seriously just what value "relevance" offers. Do we do ourselves any real favours by focusing on non-literary issues and shoe-horning discussion of literature into those issues? I doubt that political bodies such as the Reform Party or Ontario’s Progressive (!) Conservatives will find academic discussions of "The Traffic on Women, Workers or Slaves" or "Food, Feast and Famine" any more relevant in their terms than they would find academic discussions of Shakespearean prosody or the importance of metonymy and synecdoche in the poetry of Michael Ondaatje, but I think that such discussions of Shakespeare and Ondaatje would be far more relevant to my teaching of English than would discussions of cities or of cultural healing.

I should not be interpreted as saying that discussions of cities or cultural healing or trauma narratives or other of the proposed topics are therefore valueless or irrelevant, in general, or in relation to our discipline. I see no reason, in fact, why we should not be aware of the issues associated with the proposed themes and many reasons why we should be aware of them, as citizens and as English teachers. Such discussion should not be removed from the conference. However, such discussion should not predominate to the exclusion, or even the significant limitation, of other discussion.

The continuation of the open call for papers and of member-organized sessions should ensure that the conference itself offers a healthy number of papers on distinctly and distinctively literary themes. In addition to this ad-hockish creation of literary discussion, though, I’d like to see a more formal assertion of the value of literary discussion: I would propose that, if three themes are to be advanced for the conference each year, a minimum of one of them should be clearly and squarely focused on fundamental literary issues, modes, and/or genres. The establishment of such a theme would ensure that not only the conference itself but the way the conference is perceived by ACCUTE members accurately reflects its (and our) range. The 20% of us who registered disapproval would see literature foregrounded; the 80% of us (or should I say you?) who are satisfied would still see a significant focus on other important matters. (I should note that at least part of the concern some of us have expressed about the conference’s direction is perceptual; when preparing this paper, I checked the actual schedule of offerings at last year’s conference and found that there was far more discussion of literature than the thematic categories advertised last year would have suggested, and the same may well be true this year.)

I think a policy such as I suggest would lead at least some in the significant minority to consider more seriously submitting papers and/or attending the conference. The contributions of this minority would, I think, enrich the conference for all its participants. Who knows; perhaps some of the minority would find much more of interest in the papers on the politics of food than they had expected, and some of the majority might find there’s more to Shakespeare than dead white maleness.
I. Graduate Student Training: Some Assumptions and Some Questions

Diana Brydon
University of Guelph

Assumptions:
1. Graduate education is socially valuable and essential for the survival of many of the values we have traditionally associated with the social good.
2. Higher education is currently undergoing a serious crisis.
3. Many things we hold valuable are at stake: the future of higher education; the survival of the disciplines; the significance of a graduate education; the survival of the job of university professor as a respected and well compensated profession.

This crisis gives rise to the following questions:
1. What is a graduate education supposed to do?
2. What does accountability mean in this context?
3. How can the MA and the PhD be better designed to serve the goals we have set for them?
4. Should these goals be consistent across the country, from one institution to another? Should they be diversified through specialization? Should graduate education be concentrated in one or two elite institutions and abandoned in the rest? What are the implications of these choices for the discipline, for the profession, for higher education in general and the university in particular?
5. We have several models of professionalization to choose from, should we choose to "professionalize" more intensively. The apprenticeship model is yielding to the unionization model in the realm of teaching but not in research. What are the implications of drawing these further wedges between teaching and research?
6. How does the increase in sessional labour at the expense of tenure-track appointments affect graduate training, its methods and its goals?
7. How does the trend toward the separation of academic and managerial roles affect the work we do and therefore the nature of the work our graduate students can expect to do, should they find jobs in the profession?
8. How does this separation translate into the distinction between content-based and skills-based learning? How do we balance the need for courses in the methodology and matter of our field of study against the desire for courses in pedagogy, the job search, or the grant application?
9. How much choice do we have in making these decisions, given current economic and social pressures?
10. How can we increase the scope of the choices we have?
11. How do we manage the tensions between our collective responsibilities to our students, the field, the profession, and our own universities?
12. Which decisions can be taken collectively, within a national or international field of operation, and which decisions may usefully be made locally?

What do we mean when we talk about graduate training? Are we talking about a traditional English department curriculum, about a revised, theorized rereading of the texts and issues that traditionally constituted the field, about a shift away from the production and reception/interpretation of texts toward skills based instruction, or some combination of these? Many people working in the academy feel some resistance to accepting a shift in educational direction toward merely instrumental forms of knowing, without at least questioning whose interests such shifts are likely to serve. Most students still come in to the MA to improve their thinking, and many seem to resent time spent learning more about how to conduct computer searches or access discussion groups when they could be engaging more fully with the problems posed them by questioning our current fascination with such new technologies at the expense of...
analysing the uses to which we will want to put them.

These two kinds of learning are not necessarily incompatible, of course, although they are being divided by the current rhetoric of education in Ontario. Teaching students computer research skills, targeted forms of writing such as the grant application, conference paper proposal, teaching statement, and job application letter need not be isolated from other modes of reading and writing taught in the graduate school. Everything we do can be connected in a meaningful way if properly contextualized, and most schools seem to be doing this fairly effectively. Learning to ask the kinds of questions that generate discussion in the classroom is not that different from learning to generate the kinds of questions that lead to the best research. Perhaps it is these distinctions between content and skills-based learning, which currently dominate discussion of educational reform, that should be discarded.

If we ask the question, What are we training graduate students for?, we might find ourselves in a better position to decide what should be done. To answer this question, we need to make distinctions between the MA and the PhD. It is generally assumed that MA students may enter a variety of professions but that the PhD serves only as an apprenticeship to become a professor. Those assumptions are now being questioned, and articles are appearing about the variety of careers that graduates with a PhD may argue they have been well prepared for through their traditional doctoral training. The question at issue, however, is less how well or how poorly traditional MA and PhD training has served its graduates than whether the MA and the PhD in English need to be redesigned to meet changing economic realities and a changing job market.

If redesign is desirable, should specialization and competition between institutions be intensified, or should graduate education be concentrated in one or two designated graduate institutions and removed from the general comprehensive university? If redesign is not desirable, how do we make that argument effectively, given the current enthusiasm for restructuring, underfunding, and downsizing that currently dominates the debate?

Much of the discussion I have read so far on these issues tackles the practical measures different programs might take to make themselves more accountable and to reassure their graduate students that they are receiving the kind of training that is likely to help them get jobs when they finish. But I think we need to analyse the context in which we are defining our goals and designing our programs before we can usefully decide what measures might prove most practical in light of the current situation.

Tenure is slowly being eliminated almost everywhere. In US universities, much of the undergraduate teaching is being done by graduate teaching assistants and part-time sessional lecturers. When tenured professors retire in Canada, they are often only partially replaced through part-time sessional hiring. If we don't intervene to change the current trends, we are preparing our graduate students for an insecure future as underpaid and overworked sessional lecturers. If there are no good jobs available, no amount of training in the dress for success mode will help our students. Perhaps we should be training students in strategies for union organization and contract negotiation, areas where those of us with tenured jobs have been well served in the past but where we are most severely under attack at the moment. 1997 is the year the Ontario government and Ontario university presidents seem to have designated as the year to break the power of the faculty unions and associations. Our bargaining power has been severely eroded, and with it, our ability to preserve the gains we have won for future generations.

One of the things that disturbs me most about the contracts that graduate teaching assistant and sessional unions have negotiated at the University of Guelph is that they have enshrined a principle that separates teaching from research. Graduate student performance in their academic work is not allowable as a criterion for continued employment as a GTA. (It can be considered in making the first offer of employment to a student considering
attending our program.) A GTA who is barely passing his courses but who has seniority through having taught for more than one semester has priority for rehiring before a GTA with excellent marks but no seniority. Here the purpose of graduate education, with its image of the student as learner, has been sacrificed to the model of the graduate student as worker. We need a model that recognizes that the graduate student today is both learner and worker, and that the goal of graduate education is to graduate, not to defer graduation in order to accumulate seniority. The problem is even worse for sessionals, many of whom would prefer to be evaluated on research production as well as teaching, but who are forbidden this option by the terms of their contract.

This separation between teaching and research is mirrored in the new managerial models that separate university administration from the teaching and research functions of the university. In many instances, the new university president is a professional manager and no longer a scholar and teacher. The new Technical University of British Columbia will be governed entirely by its Board of Governors without the traditional division of responsibilities with a Senate. There are no provisions for the protection of academic freedom. The model for restructuring in the College of Arts at Guelph insists on a rigid separation between administrative structures and curricular/disciplinary restructurings. Appropriate graduate training would alert students to these changes and involve them in learning to understand their repercussions for future conditions of learning and making knowledge and for the profession in general.

At Guelph, we are beginning to think that the best graduate training will probably be to involve our students as fully as we can in every dimension of our work and our enjoyment of our work as a community. We need to share what we are doing and learning from all dimensions of our work: research, teaching, administration, service. We encourage students to share their own work, and invite them to form their own supportive community in our compulsory Theory for Literary Studies class, which forms a kind of theoretical spine for our MA. They read each other’s summaries and responses to the assigned readings and participate in the colloquium that concludes the course, where they deliver papers on their research-in-progress. We have found our students very competent at writing and presenting these conference papers. They don’t really need much professionalization in these aspects of the work. Where we realize they do need more preparation is in learning how to ask and answer questions in the discussion period, without sounding either threatening or defensive. In other words, they are very good at working on their own, but need, as we all may, more practice in collaboration and collective action.

In the current crisis, these are going to be the skills we will need to persuade university managers that reliance on sessional teaching is a false economy. The costs they think they are saving in paying sessionals badly and denying them job security are paid for through the time and energies of department chairs whose job it is to contain discontent, deflect critique, and sustain eroding community solidarity; they are paid for in the lost value of sessional research and commitment to the institution; and in the loss to the disciplines of the work both sessionals and professors might have done in a more equitable system. While sessionals are forced to teach without the balance of research just to make ends meet, professors are forced to take up the administrative slack of committee work that reduced tenure-track numbers forces on the few who are left, at the expense of their research. It is a system where everybody loses, except perhaps the senior administrators who have organized affairs to inure themselves from the repercussions of their decisions.

The only way out of this dilemma is for students, sessionals and professors to learn to analyse and counter the negative repercussions of supposedly neutral administrative decisions. We need to work together to design more integrated models of administration, where the goals of higher education determine the actions taken. Graduate students may wish to study the history of the university as an
institution, and the history of their discipline as an institutional practice, as part of their training for this daunting but necessary task. Perhaps these should form the elements of an integrated system of graduate training that will prepare students for entering and influencing the world of higher education as it is being redefined today. Professionalization is going to have to mean learning how to act to counter the attacks of the new right on our profession if the profession itself is going to survive as a possible career for future students. That means learning how to form alliances, how to work with existing organizations, and possibly how to begin to think about new modes of collaborative intervention, beyond those developed by traditional societies such as ACCUTE, traditional labour organizations, or government bodies such as SSHRC.

II. Graduate Training in English Studies

Ken Hoeppner
Mount Royal College

Graduate programs in English studies adequately prepare students for jobs in university departments of English. The number of well-prepared graduates exceeds the number of tenure-track jobs in such departments. That imbalance creates a problem for graduates.

Jobs in college and university college departments of English may be an alternative. For example, Mount Royal College’s department of English has hired five new tenure-track people in the past three years and will probably hire two more in the next year. Do doctoral programs in English prepare their graduates for college teaching jobs? The answer depends on the nature of the college and its programs. Many colleges, especially those in Alberta and British Columbia, offer English courses identical to university English courses. Most Ph.D. graduates are well-prepared to teach such courses.

But many college English courses exist to serve practical purposes. They exist to ensure that students can communicate effectively, and students take them because they must. Many Ph.D. programs do not prepare graduates to teach such courses to such students. Some colleges are developing applied degree programs. At my college, Mount Royal College, the department of English has helped to develop a new degree program in applied communications consisting of majors in technical writing, public relations, and journalism. It has also developed and offered a certificate program in professional writing. Although many Canadian universities now offer graduate programs in creative writing, I believe that only the University of Waterloo offers a graduate English program that prepares its students to teach in such “applied writing” programs.

Could graduate English programs change so that their graduates would be better prepared for jobs in such programs? If they could, then what changes should they make? Perhaps a profile of the people recently hired in the department of English at Mount Royal College could suggest some possibilities.

Three of the five have or soon will have Ph.D.s. Two have one or more masters degrees. All have at least one full year of teaching experience; three have five years or more, and often some of that experience is at a college. Three of the five have published or have articles under review. Many graduates of masters and doctoral programs share these characteristics.

What distinguishes the group hired at Mount Royal College is their non-academic training and work experience. These people have taken course in computer networks, in computer programming, and in developing multi-media. They’ve worked as journalists, magazine editors, photographers, as technical writers and editors, as librarians and research officers, and as managers of independent businesses. That experience, combined with their academic work, enables this group of instructors to teach undergraduate English courses and applied writing courses. It gives them credibility with students preparing for careers in journalism, public relations, or technical writing. I would also venture that it subtly affects their attitude—English studies
isn’t the only thing. They understand that not all students like English, but they have the range of experience that enables them to connect English studies and the non-academic workplace.

Could graduate English programs prepare their students for the kind of teaching environment I’ve described? Yes, in three main ways.

1. Incorporate a course in teaching English for the non-English major into the program. Focus groups involving students who haven’t succeeded in English might provide material useful in developing such a course.
2. Incorporate non-English coursework into the program—perhaps computer-based publishing including the design and lay-out of text and graphics.
3. Incorporate non-academic work experience into the graduate English program, following the model of an undergraduate co-op program.

Should such changes be made? The answers will depend on our view of the role of graduate studies in English. Do we regard English studies as the disinterested pursuit of knowledge within that discipline (or as a critique of the disinterestedness of disciplinary knowledge)? Do we regard it as preparation for a profession, professing English? That no one is likely to pay a person to pursue indefinitely the disinterested pursuit of disciplinary knowledge in English studies doesn’t mean that it’s not worth doing up to a point. One could argue that the completion of the Ph.D. in English is that point.

If the graduate program is to prepare students for the profession, then we have to clarify the requirements of the profession. As we do so, I believe we’ll discover that no single model of a graduate program will serve to prepare graduates for all of the profession’s variety.

III. A Graduate Student Perspective

Jason Potts
York University

I was asked to present a graduate student perspective on the training provided by English programs because I served as the student representative on the ACCUTE executive for 1996-97.

To provide this perspective—although one cannot hope to represent the views of all the graduate students in Canada—I need to address the issue of training both for academic and non-academic positions since most students now recognize that a Ph.D. is no guarantee of a career in the academy. Although I am sure that most people associated with graduate education in the humanities are aware that the situation is grim, the placement statistics for doctoral students in English bear repeating. Michael Keefer’s demographic study conducted for ACCUTE suggests that only fifty percent of students who begin a doctoral program finish the degree—an astounding rate of attrition—and that only half of the candidates who complete the degree find tenure-track positions or their equivalents. Therefore, to speak to the issue of graduate student training necessitates that I address, on the one hand, the manner in which graduate departments are preparing students for the professoriate, and, on the other, the degree to which departments are, or are not, assisting the approximately seventy-five percent of students who begin doctoral programs but who eventually find careers outside of academia.

For the past three years I have attended the annual graduate students’ meeting held at the Learned, and every year a number of students protest that Canadian departments do not value Canadian degrees sufficiently. This complaint is not directed at those candidates trained outside of Canada; I do not think that anyone begrudges individuals for choosing to study at an institution that creates the conditions whereby they might best pursue their scholarly interests. It is safe to say, however, that many students trained by Canadian departments feel that assessments of their accomplishments, given the parameters in which they work, do not recognize the demands and limitations involved in studying in the Canadian academy.

This is not to say that Canadian-trained candidates are not competitive. Many Canadian doctoral candidates have in their dossiers letters from faculty members from prestigious universities working in the same field as the student. In addition, they have
C.V.s that document their experience presenting papers at national and international conferences, and publishing in respected journals, as well as substantial teaching portfolios that demonstrate their background in and commitment to teaching. A student's level of professionalization, I would argue, has little to do with any substantive differences between domestic and foreign training. Indeed, those students who take part in the professionalization/proseminar programs offered by their departments will be as well prepared as any other candidate regardless of the degree-granting institution.

Concerns about training for the academic market, then, cannot be limited to the oft-discussed issues surrounding mentorship, technological sophistication and times to completion, although these are all extremely important topics for discussion. First and foremost Canadian graduate programmes in English need to evaluate how their degree requirements match the expectations of hiring committees. Are the efforts expended by faculty and students on coursework, projects, and comprehensive examinations going to be recognized by hiring committees who, at the end of the day, determine the membership of the academy? Hiring decisions always involve a myriad of institutional and departmental considerations, but Canadian-trained graduates will fare well in departmental committee rooms only when the type and amount of work produced by these candidates is perceived as of equal value to the type and amount of work produced by applicants from foreign schools.

Yet producing candidates who are able to compete for the few academic positions available is only going to become more difficult as cuts to higher education make it tougher for students to exploit fully the training that secures a position in the academy. In their analysis of the American graduate system entitled In Pursuit of the Ph.D., William Bowen and Neil Rudenstine argue that "providing sufficient financial assistance to doctoral candidates is especially important in the Arts and Sciences because the reward structure of the vocations chosen by many Ph.D.s limits severely the amount of self-financing that can be expected" (269). Expecting students to pay more of the cost of a graduate education, Bowen and Rudenstine suggest, will make it even more difficult to "include within the professoriate any significant representation of minority groups, or indeed, any significant number of individuals from families of modest means" (270). If financial hardship is a statistically significant factor in graduate degree completion for less enfranchised students when the selected sample of institutions includes Cornell, Harvard, Princeton, Stanford and Yale—schools that have large private endowments, internal scholarships and enviable placement records—then the situation is going to be worse in a Canadian system wherein tuition increases rather than tuition waivers are the norm. And given that disadvantaged groups are often the communities discussed in the classroom, their omission from the ranks of the professoriate—and increasingly from the ranks of graduate students—is more than unfortunate.

If the acceptance of large numbers of candidates into doctoral programs is supposed to mitigate such exclusionary trends in departments required to use graduate students rather than faculty and adjunct faculty, then programs must also reduce the opportunity costs of pursuing a graduate degree by increasing the likelihood of finding employment afterwards. Otherwise programs are not accessible at all: an invisible barrier precludes underprivileged groups from even filling out the applications. Since governments and administrations are unlikely to fund new positions in English departments anytime soon, it is incumbent upon programs to assume a degree of responsibility for those students who do not find academic postings.

A move to acknowledge non-academic careers should not be interpreted in any way as an attempt to devalue traditional scholarship, nor should it be interpreted as a capitulation to requests for universities and individual faculty members to shift emphasis to a more technical education. Rather, it is a call for the academy to extend the influence and benefit of English Studies to communities not
traditionally associated with academia. Legitimizing within the academy the use and value of non-academic work, while providing students with the contacts and resources needed to pursue these career choices (see Jennifer Andrews' column in the March 1997 Newsletter), will help in the very short-term. Designing co-op programs and other projects that could provide students with work experience in areas other than the the academy could become projects for the short-to-medium term. And these adjustments to programs can take place without disrupting existing academic training. Graduate students have, for a long time now, been pursuing careers outside of the academy and graduate programs have, whether they wish to acknowledge it or not, provided some of the knowledge that has helped individuals secure positions in such fields as technical writing (for law, business, government), the production of online hypertexts and web-sites, archival research in libraries and record offices, ESL training, publishing technologies, market research, and close copyediting.

Individual programs are implementing changes in the way they prepare their graduate students, but we must address these issues at a national level since we train our candidates almost exclusively for Canadian positions, whether inside or outside of the academy. We must of course balance the interests of individual departments with those of the national academy, but the “crisis” in the job market is no longer new. It is time that our programs provide training that reflects the conditions that we now associate with Graduate Studies in English.

IV. To train or not to train: This is not really a useful question

Catherine F. Schryer
University of Waterloo

When the chair of this session contacted me to ask if I would present some ideas that some of us at Waterloo have been developing regarding training and education, I wondered whether he had an ulterior motive—initiating a debate between advocates of education and training. As many of you know, Waterloo has been developing in somewhat interesting directions. We have an undergraduate major, for example, in Rhetoric and Professional Writing (RPW). Through an involvement in co-op work terms, courses in rhetoric, linguistics and professional communication as well as an extensive literature program, a student can emerge with a solid background in literature as well as web and document design, document management, journalism, public relations and technical communication.

At the graduate level students can choose to take their Master’s in either Literature or in our Language and Professional Writing (LPW) area. Our graduate students can select a co-op option in which they complete 2 or 3 work terms off-campus. We encourage our LPW students to take this option—particularly those students who come to us from other programs. Those students sometimes lack work and software experience, and so have more difficulty in some of our LPW courses and in getting employment after graduation. In fact, the graduate involvement in co-op has increased substantially over the last 2 years. Finally at the PhD level we offer a doctorate in Language and Literature. Our doctoral students can choose to specialize in either Literature or Language. The Language option can encompass dissertations in areas such as professional communication, rhetoric, discourse analysis or composition theory and pedagogy. Consequently, dissertations are in progress that explore the rhetoric of banking and the rhetoric of mediation.

I wondered then whether I would be expected to defend a “training” role for English Departments. In fact, in this short talk I am going to do no such thing. Rather I would like to suggest that the binary opposition that lies between “training” and “education” (the hidden term here) is both false and debilitating. A much more productive position involves English Departments advocating “theorized practices.” In short, yes, we must involve ourselves in understanding and teaching some of the discursive practices involved in language...
production in areas such as technical communication or public relations. But at the same time we must engage our students in a critique of those practices through our disciplinary knowledge in theories of rhetoric, linguistics and literary interpretation. At Waterloo, many of us, both in literature and in the LPW/RPW group, are working towards bringing this notion of “theorized practices” into our courses and pedagogy.

Before I proceed to provide actual examples “theorized practices”, I would like to spend a few moments arguing that the binary opposition between education and training is not only debilitating but perhaps even irresponsible. First, there is no doubt that this binary exists. Even a short trip to a barely adequate dictionary reveals the ideological nature of the divide. For example, in Funk and Wagnall’s the adjective “educated” is defined as “developed and informed by education” and “having a cultivated mind, speech manner.” The verb “to educate” is defined as “to develop or train the mind, capabilities or character by instruction or study.” The different ideological connotations around the verb “to train” are striking. Not only does “to train” mean “to educate” (one of its synonyms) but it also means “1. to render skillful, proficient, or qualified by systematic instruction, drill etc. 2. To make obedient to orders or capable of performing tricks, as an animal. 3. To bring into a required physical condition by means of a course of diet and exercise. 4. To develop into a fixed shape or course as in to train a plant on a trellis. 5. To put or point in an exact direction; bring to bear; aim as a cannon.”

The ideological strings attached to both these words make them difficult to use without enormous care. Implicit within “education” is a Platonic bias against practice. It is the student’s mind or character that is being raised up. No where in the dictionary meaning of education, and I would say in the popular conception of education, is there any sense of involvement in physical or material practices. Whereas in the concept of “training”, there is an implicit opposition to any form of resistance or critical thinking. Training seems to mean a structured immersion in physical and material practices without any ability to critique those same practices. Both concepts also seem to view the learner as some form of passive object that the instructor or trainer acts upon—another inadequate position. In fact, I would argue that the ideological strings attached to these words make the positions they inhabit socially irresponsible. It is irresponsible to send students, whether graduate or undergraduate, onto the various fields and markets without some exposure to the practices required by those markets. But it is equally irresponsible to send students into these markets without some critical tools that they can use to analyze and critique these same practices. Both practice and critique are necessary.

So how does one develop courses and pedagogy that advocate “theorized practices”? Here are some recent examples taken from some of our courses.

At Waterloo, we often require group or individual projects that actually produce a product: a web site, an article for a popular science magazine, a course design etc. These products become part of a portfolio that we encourage all students, both undergraduate and graduate, to maintain. However, attending these assignments is a requirement that the student also hand in a justification—an academic essay that uses rhetorical, linguistic or literary theory to justify the choices that they made as they were constructing their product. We also connect students to practitioners in the field. We have constructed assignments that try to solve public relations dilemmas within industry, for example. Then the entire group—students, practitioners and faculty—get together to evaluate the products. At the graduate level we offer a course in Composition Theory and Pedagogy. This course both teaches and problematizes the endeavor of teaching writing. We also ask our graduate students to do a fair bit of teaching within our program as both dependent and independent TA’s. We have initiated a teaching mentoring program so that all independent TA’s are paired with an experienced instructor who helps them design their course and then provides feedback. Of course, we have not yet
explored all the possibilities inherent in the concept of “theorized practices.” For example, it would be useful if we could somehow connect the concept to our co-op program.

However, many of us are finding the concept increasingly useful. We use it to explain to employers, practitioners, and administration the kind of useful and yet critical work that we do. For example, we have on several occasions taken our M.A. in Language and Professional Writing off campus and offered it to specific industries (if their employees have the specific academic credentials required by the University of Waterloo). The following description of the LPW, provided to industry, incorporates the concept of “theorized practices”:

The M.A. in Language and Professional Writing...helps students to analyze and theorize about language and communication in a variety of practical settings. It incorporates four distinct areas of study, including professional writing, the history and theory of rhetoric, discourse and text analysis, and composition theory and pedagogy. Professional writing studies such varied discourse as technical reports, science writing, government and industrial publications, legal discourse, writing with the not-for profit sector and computer documentation. This emergent academic discipline is suitably complemented by the field of rhetoric, which builds its study of non-literary and literary texts as instruments of persuasion on a 2000-year tradition. The field of discourse and text analysis studies how language works in social contexts, and it offers students a rich assortment of tools they can put to use for the detailed analysis of any text. Finally, the field of composition offers not only the resource they need to teach effective writing but also to develop programs suited to different settings, from professional work settings to university-level writing-across-the-curriculum initiatives.

In conclusion, I urge you to avoid the false dichotomies involved in a discussion of education vs training, and I urge you to find a more useful, more responsible term. “Theorized practices” works for many of us in terms of assignment, course and program design. We urge you to consider it also.

Graduate Student’s Column
Kathleen Batstone
University of Manitoba

The curse of coming of age intellectually at this point in history has been well documented and is a constant bugbear in the life of any graduate student hoping someday to work in the Academy. Worries about job prospects share space with immediate financial concerns and impossible schedules as attempts are made to incorporate the committee work, presentations, and publishing that are obligatory hurdles on the road to future employment. On top of it all, many university programs are under siege as budget cuts erode the ability of departments to function effectively. Within this context of doom and gloom it serves no purpose to bury our heads in the sand and pretend that everything will work out for the best. However, it may on occasion be of some benefit to our mental health, if nothing else, to push this gloom aside and concentrate instead on the positive aspects of being a graduate student in the late 20th century.

Ask any senior instructor force-fed on New Criticism how he or she feels about the options available in current graduate programs and you are likely to be met with at least one horror story drawing analogies between graduate schools of the past and despotic regimes sustained by forced labour. Never before have English students been presented with such an array of theoretical streams and such a wide variety of areas of study. Courses in Post-colonialism and Queer Theory share the stage with Structuralism and Reader Response, while large numbers of students research fields such as Canadian Literature which have only recently been recognized as legitimate genres. When else but now could you write a dissertation about the semiotics of food in literature, film and the visual arts?

As faculty numbers dwindle and it becomes
increasingly difficult for English departments to provide the courses necessary to fulfill degree requirements, the push toward taking courses outside the department is increasing. A quick look at the work of some of my graduate student colleagues reveals the extent to which new and innovative inter-disciplinary topics are expanding the limits of English as a discipline. Work with visual and other arts, film, and computer technology is being performed by students intent on blurring the boundaries which have traditionally provided the foundation of the university structure. Other students, aware of the unlikelihood of being employed within the Academy, choose instead to pursue advanced degrees for reasons other than the hope of a job. This situation can result in exciting work which is part of redefining the limits of the discipline, unconstrained as such research is by pressure to conform to the established way of doing things, motivated instead by a desire for personal fulfillment rather than professional advancement.

Reductions in the number of faculty in universities throughout the country have also put English departments in a position of having to restructure themselves if we hope to survive. The English Department at the University of Manitoba is currently engaged in reorganizing and redefining who we are and what we do, and the possibility of participating at the grassroots level in determining our future direction gives graduate students a voice in creating the type of English department in which we would like to live and work. As graduate students many of us are also in the unique position of being both students and instructors, permitting us insight into the functioning of the department that other members of decision-making boards simply do not have.

I would like to think that the increasing numbers of students applying to graduate schools throughout the country suggests that there are still benefits to be had from pursuing an advanced degree. Despite the discouraging job situation, dwindling financial support, and the prospect of putting the rest of our lives in cold storage for the two to five years it takes to complete a degree, there must be something worthwhile that keeps us going. For if this is not the case, then we can safely classify ourselves either as masochists or idiots, gleefully punishing ourselves or chasing an impractical dream. Since most of us are not yet ready to embrace either of these possibilities, perhaps we should occasionally turn our backs on harsh reality and take the good where we can find it.

Transferring Academic Skills to the Business World
Anita Trimmer Ross
Ericsson International Telecommunications

I read Jennifer Andrews' article in the March ACCUTE Newsletter with interest and satisfaction. I am one of those English majors who have found a challenging, rewarding career outside the academy, and I am enthusiastic about having transferred my academic skills to the business world. The reasons for my enthusiasm reinforce and expand the points Ms. Andrews made in her article concerning the practical skills possessed by those who have studied literature and rhetoric.

Not only are there a variety of careers that would interest many of you, but those careers also need you. And it may surprise you to know that many of the leaders in business are aware of the contributions you can make. The jobs are diverse, because all businesses need people who can solve problems and communicate ideas clearly and effectively. Although I am going to focus on my experience as a technical writer for the telecommunications industry, the capabilities I emphasize can be applied to numerous other areas.

So why am I enthusiastic? First, technical writing fulfills my desire to solve problems. I can use analysis and synthesis as well as subjective and objective reasoning in every project I undertake. And I learned these skills studying literature and rhetoric. After all, explaining an idea requires the same skill whether that idea is literary or technical.

Second, technical writing allows me to communicate a broad range of ideas, from highly conceptual ones used in such documents as marketing
literature and functional specifications to more objective ideas in step-by-step procedural documents. Each type of technical communication requires a different set of writing and critical thinking skills, all of which I learned by preparing essays on varied and sometimes unfamiliar topics in the humanities. This experience enabled me to confront new ideas with confidence, a skill many of my business and technologically-educated colleagues seem to lack.

Third, technical writing fulfills my need to learn. I am never bored. I realize that those of you considering alternatives to the academy fear that those alternatives may offer little intellectual stimulation. That is not true. I am constantly being presented with new technological ideas, not only in the products I document but in the rapidly changing technology on which those products are built.

Fourth, technical writing allows me to conduct research, which exercises my intellectual capabilities and prompts my curiosity. After all, curiosity guides those who study literature, for reading satisfies our questioning nature. Although a technical book hardly offers the same satisfaction as a novel, it does have its own engaging content when one is trying to understand how a product works.

Finally, technical writing lets me write! Some academics have criticized technical writing, insisting that its structure is too formulaic to make it an interesting, challenging task. I would argue that structure in technical writing is no more restrictive than the basic elements of an essay. Yes, there is a structure for the technical document, but like any essay its form depends on its topic, audience, purpose, and content.

So you may ask why I believe those of us who study humanities have special skills that are needed in the non academic world. After all, don’t those who have been educated in business and technology possess the same skills? I have been constantly surprised at the difficulties most of my technical colleagues have in analyzing, synthesizing, formulating, and communicating ideas—a difficulty that goes far beyond being able to write a coherent, correct sentence. Although this may seem a harsh judgment of intelligent and capable people, my experience has reinforced this belief. I have tried to understand their difficulties and have concluded that our educational experience taught us to approach ideas from different perspectives. Unlike students in the humanities, who confront ideas subjectively, business and technology majors learn through objective tasks. As a result, they frequently do not know how to use subjective analysis when confronting new problems.

In addition, the study of literature does not depend on a building block process where learning one skill is a prerequisite to the development of a more complex skill. Instead, we begin every literary analysis with an absence of knowledge. Thus, we learn first to analyze and synthesize the ideas expressed in the literature, next to channel these conclusions into a coherent concept, and then to explain that concept coherently. This ability to formulate such an explanation is likely the most important skill we have to offer. Source documents written by technicians usually have no grammatical errors and most often explain the technical details satisfactorily. Yet the documents usually lack a proper introduction that leads the reader logically into the details, fail to arrange the details in a developmental sequence, and finally fail to reach a logical conclusion. I attribute these problems more to the lack of analytical and synthesis skills than to poor writing skills. Humanities majors, on the other hand, know how to analyze and synthesize, because we have been doing just that all through our educational and professional lives.

I would encourage you to explore alternatives to the academy with confidence, because you hold the skills to succeed in other careers. Yet I warn you of the one drawback: the belief that taking a job outside the academy is doing less than your best. That is not the case. For those in the business world respect your skills. They also want you to respect the alternative career you’ve chosen. If you enter that career with a disappointed or haughty attitude, you will be unhappy and will fail. But if you enter into a career outside the academy with
enthusiasm and an awareness that your intellectual ability is not wasted but valued, you can have a successful, happy, challenging, and well-paid career.

The Politics of Adjunct/Lecturer Work
Susan Hillabold
Purdue University North Central

The fetters are off and I can finally speak, now that I enjoy a tenurable appointment at an American university. I was warned that if I published this article while I was still employed as a lecturer at a Canadian university that my chances for reappointment in Canada would be diminished. Canadian universities, forcing hundreds of recent Ph.D. graduates, like me, to search for jobs south of the border, are increasingly relying on adjunct lecturers as a means to save money. Universities have created a discourse around lecturer employment that suggests, ironically, that it is the universities, and not the lecturer, conferring the favour.

Adjunct lecturers are told that they should be thankful that they are employed at all. Blushingly, I admit that for a while I, like many other lecturers, did feel grateful. Here was a university willing to bend over backwards to hire an unemployed Ph.D. to teach English for minimum wage. What opened my eyes was a conversation I had with a tenured faculty member. As an adjunct lecturer, I was expected not only to teach comparable university courses, but also to prove a current record of scholarship. Publications and conferences ensure my employment every semester and improve my chances of tenurable employment. When the tenured faculty member replied that her additional duties included committee work, I was surprised by her sincerity.

Although my mathematical skills are a bit rusty, I reckon that teaching and scholarship was, according to this tenured faculty member, worth about $18,500. The difference between this amount and a tenured salary (about $30,000 and up) is the value of committee work. If the public found out that the academy valued committee work over teaching, even fewer tenured positions would be available. From that day, I began to analyze why the work of an adjunct lecturer was necessarily undervalued.

What I find intriguing about the adjunct culture is its invisibility. Tenured faculty generally are blind to the oppression of the adjunct while they theorize about the West’s long history of oppression of the “Other.” Post-Colonialists and Marxists value the struggles of the oppressed, primarily of class and race, but they often encourage the oppression of the adjunct lecturer. Unfortunately, telling an adjunct lecturer how lucky she is because she does not have the additional responsibilities of committee work does not diminish the reality that she and her family find it difficult to live on $10,000 to $18,000 a year. Deconstructionists play with reversing binary terms in order to erase the line separating inequality, but the tenured/non-tenured binary remains firmly in place. The adjunct is so invisible that a Marxist can argue for the maltreated workers to unite and then turn around to arrange a vote on the number of classes to be “awarded” adjuncts without allowing the adjuncts a vote or voice on the matter that directly concerns them.

The adjunct culture is a separate, voiceless one in the university community. The adjunct is not considered “staff” or “tenured faculty.” According to Indhu Rajagopal and William D. Farr in their 1989 article on adjunct work, the adjunct/tenured culture approximates a corporate paradigm in which tenured faculty take on the role of management and the adjuncts are forced into a subordinate role (272). Tenured faculty assess and manage the work of adjuncts in a way intolerable if applied to tenured faculty. Adjunct faculty are also excluded from such roles as academic managers (273, 277). You will not see an adjunct vice-president. Because of this corporatist paradigm, there is a general distrust of adjunct faculty. For instance, at my previous institution, adjuncts are denied keys to the mailroom or photocopier room. Eventually, this corporatist interest affects the bargaining of collective agreements. It is to the tenured faculty’s
Interest to ensure adjuncts get very little in their collective agreements. Bargaining over limited resources forces many institutions to rely on the cheap labour of adjuncts to provide the savings being applied to tenured faculty’s increments and benefits.

This corporatist ideology prevents adjuncts from acquiring any cultural capital. The work done by adjuncts, even those adjuncts with publications, is not valued to the same degree as that done by tenured faculty. There is an assumption that tenured faculty’s work is more academic and, thus, more important than that done by the adjuncts. Thus, adjuncts are not encouraged to attend meetings which are often directed to only “tenurable and tenured faculty,” a tactic that effectively denies the adjunct a voice in the department. As a result of tenured faculty’s control over the university’s cultural capital, research and development funds are directed at them, not at adjuncts. Adjuncts, barred from much needed money to buy books, attend conferences, and visit libraries, are continually finding their research efforts frustrated. Moreover, during the summer when I was not teaching, my library card was, up until last summer, invalid. The institution’s argument is that adjuncts are not hired to do research (although they are expected to publish) and allowing them library privileges, including inter-library loans, is an expense the academy is not obligated to supply. And, yet, when it comes to applying for adjunct appointments, research does count.

In these subtle and not so subtle ways, adjuncts are made to feel that they are a drain on the university’s resources. The tenured faculty at my previous department, for instance, decided that, for adjuncts, photocopied notices of upcoming events cost too much money. Now, adjuncts must search the bulletin board in case some lecture, not even anticipated, may be scheduled, while tenured faculty continue to be informed individually. Adjuncts often complain that they are excluded from many functions or public lectures because, we were told, it is too costly to notify them. Also, adjuncts were informed that they could not use department letterhead to apply for tenured positions because this practice was “a misuse of department supplies” and was considered an unnecessary expense (quoted from a letter delivered to adjuncts). The argument that ensued over this trifle was important enough for the university to involve the Faculty of Arts Faculty Administrator. In addition, adjuncts inherit the discarded remnants of desks, chairs, and lamps. (Also see “The World of ‘Gypsy Scholars’” by Dr. Brenda Austin-Smith.) When I once asked to have my very old carpet cleaned (it looked as if the previous adjunct committed hari-kari on it), I was told it was too expensive. The next day, the newer carpet in the hallway was cleaned. Ironically, hiring adjuncts saves universities money that they can, in turn, pass on to tenured faculty in yearly increments and benefits, illusive terms for the adjunct. In other words, the adjunct allows the university to make money, not spend it. Clearly, this strategy of denying adjuncts a clean and private working environment as well as access to materials available to tenured faculty is intended to make the adjunct feel marginalised and expendable. According to Katherine Mangan in Chronicle of Higher Education, adjunct lecturers “are being exploited to help colleges balance budgets” (A9).

Finally, there is something terribly amiss if tenured faculty have to be told to respect adjuncts (see “Wally’s World: How to Improve Working Conditions for Limited-Contract Faculty” by Drs. Judy Dudar and Gisèle Baxter, and “Recommendations for Treatment of Limited-Contract Faculty”). This institutionalized inequality, I believe, is a necessary defence mechanism. Tenured faculty have to justify or rationalize their discriminatory practices. They need to set up a discourse which creates the perception that, for some real reason, adjuncts are devalued labourers. This perception of difference is illusory since often there is no difference in academic qualifications or academic values. Tenured faculty have their tenured position with its yearly increments because of some divine right. Somehow, they are more brilliant and more professional than adjuncts. That’s why they have the tenured position and adjuncts do not. And as a
consequence of this divinity, tenured faculty can appear generous and gracious, a false generosity, when they do sympathize with the plight of the adjunct. For instance, as a show of generosity to exploited adjuncts, the Dean of Arts explained that a tenured faculty function was adopting a cash bar because the administrators determined that the cost saved from paying for alcohol for a single afternoon would pay for one adjunct stipend. But where was the Dean’s moral outrage? Where were the tenured faculty arguing for improving the working conditions of adjuncts? Where is the ethical treatment of their colleagues?

Adjuncts, in turn, accept this corporatist discourse, a language that allows tenured faculty to regulate and control lecturers. They internalize their devalued position, not seeing themselves as professionals. Often, the language of the class hierarchy invades their view of their academic contribution. They see themselves as factory workers on an assembly line, pumping out those students. Or, worse, they begin to believe the propaganda promoting inequality and class hierarchy. A friend of mine, for instance, who was awarded a SSHRC post-doctoral grant, has presented numerous papers at conferences, published a book which has been favourably reviewed, and has received unsolicited letters from students commending his teaching, has given up looking for tenurable employment because he thinks he isn’t good enough. Because adjuncts are hired from term to term or year to year, many who have not accepted the discourse of subjection are too afraid to speak out. Voicing their outrage will cost adjuncts their contracts, which is ironic if we stop to think of the history behind fighting for tenure: freedom to speak without being punished.

In the long run, the entire profession is harmed by abusing adjuncts. There is a growing trend to view adjuncts as not professional enough and to see their work, teaching, as not that important. And if teaching students is so insignificant a part of the university as to entail the hiring of insignificant adjuncts, then it will only be a matter of time before tenured faculty’s work is also devalued. It is vital that tenured faculty understand that their treatment of adjuncts, in addition to being unethical, will eventually undermine their own status in the university community.

Works Consulted


Calls for Papers and News of Conferences

The Research Society for Victorian Periodicals will hold its thirtieth annual meeting in Vancouver, British Columbia on July 21-22, 1998 (immediately following the meeting of the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing). RSVP is seeking proposals for individual papers or panels dealing with any aspect of Victorian periodicals including their cultural significance, theoretical bearing, and uses in teaching. RSVP is strongly interdisciplinary and proposals relating Victorian periodicals to, for example, music, art, theatre, rhetoric, exploration, and science, are encouraged. RSVP welcomes proposals from graduate students. Proposals in the form of a 200 word abstract accompanied by a one page c.v. should be sent by 30 January to
Christopher Kent,
Department of History,
University of Saskatchewan,
Saskatoon, SK, S7N 5A5, Canada.
Tel: 306-966-5798
FAX: 306-966-5852,
e-mail: hist.dept@usask.ca.

UCCB’S Second Annual Storytelling Symposium will be held at the University College of Cape Breton, Sydney, NS, May 15 (registration 5 to 7 p.m.) and 16, 1998.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Papers and presentations are invited on:
- Storytelling in music, history, or science
- Storytelling in working class culture
The program will include a storytelling workshop, a reception ceilidh featuring music and stories by Winnie Chafe, and dinner at the Miner’s Museum with entertainment. To register send a cheque made out to UCCB Storytelling in the amount of $25.00. An accommodation and meal package is available.
Completed papers, or two page proposals, with a 50 word bio-bibliography are due January 30, 1998. Inquiries may be directed to
Afra Kavanagh
Dept. of Languages and Letters
University College of Cape Breton
Sydney, N.S. BIP 6L2
Phone: 902-563-1431
e-mail: afrak@ucrb.ns.ca
FAX: 902-562-0119

The 1998 Academic Conference on Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy will be held June 12-13, 1998, in Toronto, Ontario, at the Merril Collection of Science Fiction, Speculation and Fantasy, one of the most important collections of fantastic literature in the world.
We invite proposals for papers in any area of Canadian science fiction and fantasy, including:
- studies of individual works and authors;
- comparative studies;
- studies that place works in their literary and/or cultural contexts.
Papers may be about works in any medium: literature, film, graphic novels and comic books, and so on. For studies of the audio-visual media, preference will be given to discussions of works
produced in Canada or involving substantial Canadian creative contributions.
Papers should be no more than 20 minutes long, and geared toward a general as well as academic audience. Please submit proposals (max. 2 pages) to:

Dr. Allan Weiss
3865 Bathurst St. #1
Toronto, Ont. M3H 3N4
e-mail: aweiss@yorku.ca

Deadline for proposals: March 1, 1998

Religion and Literature
A Joint Session of ACCUTE and the Christianity and Literature Study Group

The Christianity and Literature Study Group (which will meet concurrently with the ACCUTE meetings at the Congress in Ottawa in May 1998) invites 20-25 minute papers on any subject under the general rubric of “religion and literature.” We welcome submissions from doctoral students and contributions to sessions on critical theory and pedagogy.

Please contact:
Barbara Pell
Department of English
Trinity Western University
Langley BC V2Y 1Y1
Phone: 604-888-7511
FAX: 604-513-2010
e-mail: pell@twu.ca

Special Issue of the new electronic postcolonial journal Jouvert (June 1998) on the topic “Postcolonial Masculinities”

Deadline for receipt of papers: January 15th, 1998. Guest Editors: Daniel Coleman (McMaster) and Lahoucine Ouzgane (Alberta)

This special issue on “Postcolonial Masculinities” will bring together multicultural perspectives of postcolonial studies and recent work on masculinities that has emerged out of gender studies, feminism, and queer theory. The editors are looking for essays that address questions raised by this mutually interrogative dialogue in relation to various texts (e.g. literature, film, popular culture, etc.). If masculinities are culture-specific, how do postcolonial studies contribute to an understanding of a diverse range of masculinities? What are the interrelations between colonialism and patriarchy? Between nationalism and patriarchy? Between gender and genre? How are nuances of complicity and resistance delineated? How does a focus on particular cultures provide new ways of analyzing these widespread systems of social relations? How do diasporic subjects interact with dominant masculinities? Do postcolonial texts represent new or alternative forms of masculinity compared to the ones assumed in metropolitan centres?

Most work on colonialism and masculinities to date tends to focus on the interrelations between patriarchal dominance and imperial structures and discourses. The present special issue on postcolonial masculinities would like to turn attention to masculinities beyond the Euro-American purview, or ones that present alternatives to that purview.

Submissions should follow MLA format and may be sent to either of the two editors, preferably in hard copy, to save them the costs of downloading and printing them out at their own expense.

Daniel Coleman
Department of English
McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario Canada L8S 4L9

Lahoucine Ouzgane
Department of English
University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta Canada T6G 2E5
News of Members:

Richard Hillman (Western Ontario) has published *Self-Speaking in Medieval and Early Modern English Drama: Subjectivity, Discourse and the Stage* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan; New York: St. Martin’s, 1997).

Paul Stevens (Queen’s) has been awarded the Milton Society of America’s Hanford Prize for the most distinguished article published on Milton in 1996. The article, “Paradise Lost and the Colonial Imperative,” appeared in *Milton Studies XXXIV*. He shares the prize with Roy Sellars of the University of Geneva whose essay “Milton’s Wow” appeared in *Prose Studies*. This is the second time Stevens has won the prize.

Winfried Siemerling (Sherbrooke) has co-edited, with Katrin Schwenk, *Cultural Difference and the Literary Text: Plurality and the Limits of Authenticity in North American Literatures* (U of Iowa P, 1996) and published the edited collection *Writing Ethnicity: Cross-Cultural Consciousness in Canadian and Québécois Literature* (ECW Press, 1996). He is a co-editor, with Gregory Reid, Antoine Sirois, and Maria van Sundert, of the internet edition of the augmented *Bibliography of Studies in Comparative Canadian Literature/Bibliographie d’études de littérature canadienne comparée, 1930-1995* which is under construction but can be accessed at http://www.si.usherb.ca/CCL (upper case CCL is essential!).

Evelyn J. Hinz (Manitoba), who in 1993 was named Distinguished Professor of English, was in 1997 honored with the “Graduate Teaching Excellence Award.” The citation emphasized her extensive thesis supervision (14 M.A. and 14 Ph.D.) and noted that 10 of the doctoral dissertations she supervised had subsequently been published in book form by established university presses. Her other achievements include the reprinting of her *A Woman Speaks: The Lectures, Seminars and Interviews of Anais Nin* in French, German, Italian, Finnish, and Portuguese translations; the English version has also recently been republished in the Penguin World Classics series.

MOSAIC’s 1995 special issue on Media Matters has recently been chosen as a text in a course on “Modern Literature in English” at the University of Chicago. The issue focuses on “Literature and Its Changing Technologies,” and includes 8 original essays on topics ranging from early medieval manuscripts to multi-media comics and tradingcards to current hypertext fiction. Edited by Evelyn J. Hinz, the special issue also features a lengthy introduction and bibliography by guest co-editors Joseph Donatelli and Geoffrey Winthrop-Young.

For information on the journal or this issue, write to MOSAIC, a journal for the interdisciplinary study of literature, Room 208, Tier Bldg., University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3T 2N2. Ph: 204-474-9763; FAX: 204-474-7584; email: derench@bldgarts.lan1.umanitoba.ca; web site: http://www.umanitoba.ca/publications/mosaic.

Corrections to ACCUTE Member Directory:
The address of Kwantlen University College should read  
Kwantlen University College  
12666, 72nd Ave.  
Surrey, B.C.  
V3W 2M8

Patricia Rigg is at Acadia University, not Mount Saint Vincent University

The street address of University of Prince Edward Island is  
550 University Avenue
Please provide information below on your research interests for use in the 1998 ACCUTE Directory. The Directory is used mainly by colleagues seeking scholars to review books, prepare scholarly papers on special topics, and to evaluate manuscripts, grant applications, conference papers, and graduate student theses. In order to help colleagues locate specialists more easily, the 1998 Directory will again list scholars categorically by primary area of research interest first. In addition, members may specify other categories in which they would feel comfortable performing professional tasks; these will be included in a secondary listing format.

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