



September 2005
Newsletter

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Canadian College and University
Teachers of English

President: Keith Wilson
Secretary-Treasurer:
Jennifer Panek
Coordinator: Tobi Kozakewich
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ACCUTE'S MANDATE

To promote the interests of those teaching and studying English language and literatures in Canadian colleges and universities by facilitating the dissemination and exchange of research and the exploration of professional issues, by organizing scholarly and professional meetings, by seeking to improve work conditions, by representing the interests of members before provincial and federal decision-making bodies, and by supporting the interests and aspirations of members entering the profession.

President's Column

Keith Wilson

The opening news I have for you in this issue of the Newsletter is major indeed.

You will remember that I announced in the June Newsletter that at this year's ACCUTE AGM, held during the May Congress at the University of Western Ontario, Evelyn Cobley of the Department of English at the University of Victoria had been ratified as the incoming President Elect of ACCUTE. We thought at that time that all the customary arrangements for institutional support were acceptable to the University of Victoria and had been effectively agreed upon. In the event, the Dean of Humanities at the University of Victoria was unwilling for his institution to bear the cost of the customary teaching release for the President and the Secretary-Treasurer. Understandably, Evelyn felt unable to assume the time-consuming role of ACCUTE President without such standard support from her university, and therefore had to withdraw her acceptance of the position. I am sure that you will all join with me in expressing our gratitude to Evelyn for her initial willingness to take this on and our regret that circumstances beyond her control made it impossible for her to serve the ACCUTE community in this way.

Now for the more upbeat news. I am delighted to be able to tell you that the ACCUTE Executive takes great pleasure in nominating Steven Bruhm, of the Department of English at Mount



Arts Hall, University of Ottawa

Saint Vincent University, as President-Elect of ACCUTE. As most of you will know, Steven is a long time friend and vocal supporter of ACCUTE, an innovative and energetic scholar, and as anyone involved with the International Gothic Association already knows, an inspired association administrator. The Executive is most grateful to him for his willingness to assume the Presidency. The Executive also nominates his colleague, Karen Macfarlane, as Secretary-Treasurer: many thanks to Karen also. Steven and Karen's own enthusiasm is matched by that of their university, which is giving them full support in their future roles. Our sincere thanks to the Mount Saint Vincent Department of English and senior administration for making their assumption of these positions possible. Steven and Karen's nominations will be formally ratified at next year's AGM.

At the risk of anything else I have to say sounding anticlimactic after that announcement, there were a number of other matters I wanted to bring to your attention. As most of you will know, CFHSS will soon be hosting a major conference

President's Column Continued...

on higher education in Canada. Entitled "The National Dialogue on Higher Education," it will be held in Ottawa from 27th-29th November. For full details of the program and registration, go to www.visionedu.ca. Registration is \$450 before October 8th and \$495 after then; the student rates are \$250 and \$295 respectively.

The Executive nominates Steven Bruhm (Mount St. Vincent) as President-Elect.

The September Newsletter also contains our calls for papers – both the open call and the member-organized and joint session calls – for next year's conference. Those of you who were at Congress this year will have been impressed at the superb job of organization and support performed by the University of Western Ontario and, with their customary calm and thoroughness, by the Congress staff. More than once I heard people saying, "This Congress is going to be a tough act to follow." York University has by all accounts taken up the challenge with energy and creativity, and next year's Congress promises to be every bit as stimulating as the last. I urge you all to submit proposals and make plans to attend. Could I take this opportunity to underline that when proposals are submitted, they should be accom-

panied by an abstract and a brief biographical note for potential inclusion in the conference program? There were quite a few instances last year in which we needed to contact again people whose papers had been accepted because these items had not been included in the original submissions package.

This edition of the Newsletter also contains the texts of the papers on book reviewing given by Jo-Ann Wallace, Editor of *English Studies in Canada*, and Kel Morin-Parsons, Executive Director of the CFHSS Aid to Scholarly Publication Program, as part of a professional concerns panel at the last AC-CUTE conference. Many thanks to Jo-Ann and Kel for allowing their publication here.

My final news is the sad announcement of the death last month of Sylvia Bowerbank of the Department of English at McMaster University. Sylvia was a much loved friend and colleague to many in the ACCUTE community. We send our condolences to her family, friends, and colleagues at McMaster. An appreciation of her life and work appears elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Job Ad: Canadian Literature

Applications are invited for a tenure-stream position, Assistant Professor, Department of English, University of Toronto, St. George campus. Qualifications: Ph.D. in English with specialization in **Canadian Literature**. Applications are welcomed from candidates qualified to teach, supervise theses, and carry out research in that area. The University of Toronto is a three-campus university with a unitary graduate department on the St. George campus. Duties consist of research and undergraduate and graduate teaching on the St. George campus. Applicants must show promise of outstanding research and teaching potential. Salary commensurate with experience and qualifications.

Send applications and c.v. to **Professor Brian Corman, Chair, Department of English, 7 King's College Circle, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON M5S 3K1**. Have 3 letters of reference (or dossier) and graduate transcripts sent directly to the Department as soon as possible. Include ONE writing-sample of not more than 25 pages. Appointment

commences 1 July 2006. **The deadline for applications is 7 November 2005**. Applications will not be accepted after the deadline.

The University of Toronto offers the opportunity to teach, conduct research and live in one of the most diverse cities in the world. The University also offers opportunities to work in a range of collaborative programs, including Book History and Print Culture, Aboriginal, Canadian, environmental, ethno-cultural, sexual diversity, gender and women's studies. The University of Toronto is strongly committed to diversity within its community and especially welcomes applications from visible minority group members, women, Aboriginal persons, persons with disabilities, members of sexual minority groups and others who may contribute to the further diversification of ideas. All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply; however, Canadians and permanent residents will be given priority.

Congress 2006

Toronto 2006 – May 27-May 30
York University

Congress Theme:

The City: A Festival of Knowledge

Open Call for Papers and Proposals Related to your Current Research

Despite the existence of an overall Congress theme, you certainly do not have to match your research and writing to it in any way. We are always interested in strong proposals on any aspect of English studies, so please consider submitting something in response to this general call. Individual papers emerging from your own specific work in your fields always dominate the Congress program. You may submit **only one proposal** and, to have your proposal considered for possible inclusion in the ACCUTE program, **you must be a current member in ACCUTE.**

All proposals that receive two positive readers' reports are automatically included in the ACCUTE program. Our challenge is then to match the accepted papers with each other with a view to shaping coherent and engaging panels. ACCUTE is not a specialist society; we are aiming to create a cohesive program that takes into account the breadth of our members' interests and activities.

Member Organized Sessions

Please see the call for papers for member-organized and joint sessions beginning on pages 14 and

20, respectively, of this Newsletter. Because organizers act as the first vector, they are not eligible to give papers on the panels that they have themselves proposed. Please note that organizers should not advise panelists that they are presenting until the ACCUTE second reader has made her or his assessment, and ACCUTE has contacted the organizer.

Plenary Speakers

Building on last year's success, the 2006 ACCUTE Conference will feature two distinct kinds of plenary session: a lecture and a plenary panel. We are pleased to announce that next year's plenary lecture will be given by J. Hillis Miller. The plenary panel, which next year will be on biography/life writing, will comprise Michael Millgate, Rosemary Sullivan, and Christine Wiesenthal. Full information about our plenary speakers will be available in the December ACCUTE Newsletter.

Conference Notes

As is our custom, we will try to offer as diverse a set of disciplinary and interdisciplinary papers as we can. If you think your proposal might work well as part of a joint session with a learned society in an allied area, please let us know and we may be able to establish joint panels where appropriate.

Travel Funding

Travel claim forms – applications to cover part of presenters' travel costs to the ACCUTE conference – will be available at the ACCUTE desk at the conference. Be sure to get your form in before the late-June deadline (the exact date will be printed on the form).

Procedures for Submitting Proposals and Papers

If you are responding to our general call for papers, please send **one** hard copy **and** an electronic copy of your paper or proposal to the ACCUTE office at the University of Ottawa, along with the other required documents listed on page 4 of this Newsletter, by **15 November 2005.**

If you are responding to the organizer of a proposed special session, please send **three** hard copies of your paper or proposal, along with the other required documents, **directly to the organizer** by the same date. The organizer will forward copies of the proposals or papers (both electronic and paper) received to the ACCUTE office by **5 December 2005** together with assessments of each submission.

Unless otherwise indicated by the organizer of a special session, proposals should be approximately 500 words in length.

If you are submitting a completed paper, it should be no longer than 10 to 12 double-spaced pages (no more than 20 minutes speaking time). While an email electronic submission is strongly preferred over disk submissions, the latter will be accepted. If you are submitting a disk, please label it clearly, indicating your name, the title of the paper, and the computer program you used.

Please remember to **email** your response to our general CFP to the ACCUTE office at: accute@uottawa.ca

Congress 2006 Continued...

Other Required Documents

Whether you are submitting a paper or proposal, in response to our general call or to a member-organized or joint session, your submission should be accompanied by a cover page containing the following information:

- your name (in the form LAST, FIRST)
- your full mailing address
- your email, phone, and fax numbers
- the title of your paper
- a 50-word bio-bibliographical note
- a description of any audio-visual support you may require

Also include, on a **separate** page, a 100-word abstract of your paper including its title. *Abstracts and bios exceeding these limits will have to be cut for inclusion in the conference program.* Please include electronic copies of your bio and abstract in your submission. Lastly, in order to permit blind reviewing by assessors, **the papers and proposals should not include the author's name, position, or institutional affiliation.**

Vetting of Papers and Proposals

With the exception of presentations in executive-organized sessions, all submissions for the ACCUTE conference program are vetted by at least two specialists in the field and read by the ACCUTE president.

In the case of member-organized sessions, the organizer acts as the first vettor; the submissions to the proposed session are then sent out to a second vettor, with the names

of the submitters withheld, as in the case of submissions received in response to the general call for papers.

In the case of joint sessions with other societies, ACCUTE is prepared to respect the other society's procedures for selection. But wherever possible, we also seek the opinion of a specialist reader who is a member of our own Association as well.

Papers and proposals should not indicate the author's name, position, or institutional affiliation.

The ACCUTE office will do everything within its power to ensure that papers or proposals submitted in response to the general call for papers and those submitted to the organizers of special sessions have an equal chance of being included in the conference program. Assessors are asked to judge each paper or proposal according to the following criteria.

A. Guidelines for the Assessment of Papers

1. Significance: the paper should make an original contribution to scholarship, to theoretical understanding, or to current debates on matters of common interest to ACCUTE members.
2. Accessibility: if focusing on a single and little-known text, the paper should address issues that would be of interest to members unfamiliar with it, and indicate these issues in its title. A good paper should invite the interests of non-specialists.

3. Length: papers at the conference must be effectively presentable in 20 minutes or less. Papers written without consideration of this time constraint (i.e., papers over 2500 words) will clearly need significant re-writing. When the scholarly significance of the paper might justify such re-writing, vettors may make the case for it, but this remains a matter for their professional judgment, so the submission of an overlong paper potentially reduces its chances of acceptance.

B. Guidelines for the Assessment of Proposals

1. A good proposal should have a clear thesis. It should present some indication of the evidence that will be put forward to support it. It should take into account published scholarship relevant to the topic being investigated. In short, it should read like the abstract of an argument written by someone knowledgeable in the field concerned.
2. As well, a good proposal should give a strong indication that it will result in a paper meeting the criteria in ACCUTE's guidelines for papers, above.

Remember: ACCUTE reserves only a maximum of 20 minutes per presenter at its annual conference

Congress 2006 Continued...

Criteria for Selection

In their assessments, vettors are asked to rank proposals as outstanding, acceptable, or unacceptable.

When making final decisions about the program, the conference organizers place most emphasis on the reports of the vettors. Any submission receiving two assessments of "Outstanding" by our vettors is automatically included in the conference program. In the small number of cases where a paper or proposal is assessed as outstanding by one vettor and poor by another, the organizers try, wherever possible, to obtain the opinion of a third specialist vettor.

The organizers also consider the necessity of including a range of period, national, theoretical, and critical interests on the program, and the ways in which the papers can be intelligently grouped into coherent sessions. Other factors taken into account in deciding between equally ranked submissions include the scholarly achievement reflected in the bio-bibliographical note (particularly in the case of proposals as opposed to completed papers); regional representation; and whether the submitter presented at the preceding year's ACCUTE conference. As always, you will receive notification of the decision concerning your submission in late February. A draft version of the program will appear in the March 2006 issue of the ACCUTE Newsletter.

Any submission receiving two assessments of "Outstanding" is automatically included in the conference program.

From the Chair of the Professional Concerns Committee

Katherine Acheson

As an ACCUTE member for fifteen years, I was honoured and delighted to be asked to stand for a position as Member-at-Large on the executive, and am equally pleased to have been invited to chair the Professional Concerns Committee. The other members of the Committee are Lorne MacDonald (Calgary), Jo Deveaux (Western Ontario), Andrew Lesk (Toronto), and Devon Galway (Algonquin).

The PC sessions at the annual conference are always lively and well-attended. Over the years they have articulated issues of concern to us all, ones that we deal with more than we might like

to acknowledge we do, and about which we rarely have a chance to share ideas and insights outside of our own local cabals.

For the 2006 conference, the Committee is planning to have two roundtable sessions, the topics and composition of which will be set according to the submissions we receive in response to the Call for Papers in this issue of the Newsletter. We are also planning to co-sponsor a session with the Graduate Student Caucus on issues within the shared mandate of the two groups. I'll remind you that the tradition of the PC sessions is that they are relatively informal – shorter presentations, often from a personal

point-of-view, designed to stimulate discussion. Please do send a proposal about any of the issues in the CFP's list, or an other of interest to the membership.

I'll look forward to seeing you at York, and to our sessions there. But the Professional Concerns Committee works tirelessly year-round: if there is any matter related to its mandate that you think ACCUTE should know about, or could advise on, please send a note to me or any of the other members of the committee.

Calls for Transformations at TransCanada

Sophie McCall

What might *TransCanadian* literature look like in this present moment of resurgent nationalism, institutionalized multiculturalism and accelerated globalization? What is Canadian citizenship worth within a North American security perimeter fence that practices differential surveillance? Can institutions such as the university play a role in social change, or do they merely reproduce their own stasis? These were some of the questions that preoccupied the 100-plus delegates at the conference, *TransCanada: Literature, Institutions, Citizenship*, held at the Wosk Centre for Dialogue in Vancouver (June 23-26, 2005), and coordinated by Smaro Kamboureli (University of Guelph) and Roy Miki (Simon Fraser University), with help from committee members Alessandra Capperdoni, David Chariandy, Jeff Derksen, Sophie McCall, Kathy Mezei (all from SFU) and Mark McCutcheon (U Guelph). A recurrent theme that emerged from the discussions was the desire for transformation. There was a palpable hunger for political relevance as delegates tried to conceptualize how university academics might better use their institutional positions to initiate change within the university systems, as well as build meaningful links with writers, artists, activists and other communities.

The emphasis on transformation emerged from the format of the conference, which encouraged self-reflexive thinking and dialogue about current critical junctures in Canadian literary studies. Rather than holding

multiple parallel sessions, in which delegates presented tightly focused papers on their own research projects, the conference unfolded in a series of provocative keynote addresses, response papers, position papers and research cells. Each session was followed by lengthy debates, coordinated by discussants who had to keep track of ever-lengthening speakers' lists and impulsive interjections from the delegates, some of whom became quite enthusiastic about the UN-style venue in the Dialogue Centre (an amphitheatre with microphones at each seat). Small-group, research cell presentations helped counter the dizzying effects of the sometimes circular argumentation that whizzed around the amphitheatre at high speed.

A strong focus of the discussion was the middle term of the conference's title: institutions. This was a welcome departure from most academic conferences, in which 'the institution' becomes the large, ignored elephant sitting in the middle of the room. While Diana Brydon (University of Western Ontario) and Stephen Slemmon (University of Alberta) offered a hopeful vision of how to change existing university and national institutions, Rinaldo Walcott (OISE, University of Toronto), Len Findlay (University of Saskatchewan) and Julia Emberley (UWO) urged us to imagine alternative kinds of institutions. A memorable instance in the conference was Richard Cavell's (University of British Columbia) emphatic exhortation that "we have to stop talking to ourselves," and that we need to reclaim the role of the public intellectual to

reach wider and more diverse audiences. This discussion brought to light the disparities between delegates, each of whom has vastly uneven access to institutional power. Artists, writers, contract faculty members, graduate students and post-doctoral fellows at times pointed out that discussions were focusing too heavily on the macro-political level of university governing structures. The closing session of the event, entitled "The Future," promised to articulate what TransCanada's political project might be. Roy Miki and Smaro Kamboureli, who were jointly facilitating the session, helped push the discussions towards concrete out-comes and future collaborations. Though it was not possible to articulate a single statement about the focus of such a project, Stephen Slemmon, in an amazing moment of spontaneous intellectual creativity, managed to pound out a few sentences that will provide a starting point. More importantly, there seemed to be high interest and enthusiasm for holding a follow-up conference at the University of Guelph, where Smaro Kamboureli is establishing an Institute of Critical Studies in Canadian Literature.

Talk of institutions risks a certain evacuation of content, but the many outstanding presentations over the weekend, including keynote addresses, position papers, research cells, the

artist panel and the literary readings provided focus and specificity for the debates. It would be impossible to provide a sketch of them all (in any case they are still available at www.transcanadas.ca), but I was particularly taken by Ashok Mathur's (Thompson Rivers) deliberation on hybridity and the politics of representation in post-1990 critical race debates, and Lily Cho's (UWO) paradoxical imagining of a "diasporic citizenship." Daniel

Coleman's (McMaster University) key-note address on English-Canadian civility provided Peter Dickinson (SFU) with a perfect foil for his highly entertaining response paper. And the doctoral students' plenary session, which showcased five intriguing and original PhD dissertations in the last stages of production, suggested a real 'future' to TransCanada.

Last but not least was the hospitality that TransCanada offered its guests. TransCanada's parties will not be

soon forgotten. As Margery Fee (UBC) pointed out, the best way to get people talking and thinking together is to feed them well and get them on the dancing floor. Collaboration and intellectual exchange take on unexpected forms in the small hours of the morning....

Report from the President of the GSC

By Richard Cassidy

Greetings.

By way of introduction, let me thank our outgoing president Jennifer Drouin. Without Jen's generosity I would still, as I did six months ago, know very little about what ACCUTE is and does for graduate students of English, and without her representation at the London meetings—while I was still in the midst of my comprehensive exams in Canadian and Québécois literature—I would not be writing you today as incoming president. I am a third year PhD student of the city in the English department at l'Université de Montréal, and my hope is to be for you what Jen was for me: helpful.

The GSC's interests and purpose remain unchanged. Briefly, the caucus should continue to function as a point of contact and a source of useful and timely information for and about graduate stu-

dents of English in Canada. This year we plan not only to readminister our survey of graduate student life, and to continue the mandates of our fact-finding committees, but also to co-sponsor (with the professional concerns committee) a session at the 2006 conference on issues such as sessional work, post-doctoral research projects, job search, dissertation publishing, and starting a tenure-track job. An official call for papers will be published in the weeks to come, so keep your eyes on the list serve (<http://ca.groups.yahoo.com/group/accutegradstudents>) and start planning to make it to the Congress at York this spring 2006.

In the meantime, and building upon the great work done by Gregory Betts last year, this year's VP Information, Kaley Joyes (McMaster) is currently revising our survey questions to make them as clear and as focused as possible. Our second annual survey will continue to permit

1) students to have the information we need in order to make the most informed decisions regarding the future course of our studies and our careers; and 2) to permit departments to give students from across the country the most current and accurate impression of their programs. I will be inviting campus reps to once again take advantage of our annual survey to foster better communication between graduate students, chairs and graduate program directors. The results of last year's survey were published in the June 2005 edition of the newsletter, which can be viewed at www.accute.ca/members.

Our two fact-finding committees have been reconstituted this year and given more detailed mandates. Both the committee on departmental hiring practices chaired by Rilla Yaschuk (Saskatchewan), and the committee on graduate student funding chaired by Sara Humphreys

(Waterloo) are presently working on a small number of useful questions that will be attached to the annual survey this year. For more information on these important projects, or if you have time to help with them, I urge you to write me at: richard.cassidy@umontreal.ca.

Finally, to facilitate the fruition of each of these mandates, my job as president consists in maintaining, if not increasing, the structures of communication by which students across the country can keep in touch. However, this involves my

being able to correspond with a representative from every department. We currently have representatives from an impressive 25 of 29 departments. The last remaining links to be made are with Brock, Acadia, Calgary and Windsor. Anyone able to help put me in touch with graduate students from these departments would posthaste become the recipient of many thanks.

With that I wish you all a happy and hopeful start to this academic year.

The GSC's mandate remains unchanged: to function as a point of contact and a source of useful and timely information for and about graduate students of English in Canada.

*Call for Papers:
Christianity and Literature
Study Group*

The Christianity and Literature Study Group (one of the Allied Associations) invites proposals or papers on any aspect of religion and literature (including pedagogy and critical theory) for its annual Conference at the 2006 Congress at York University, Saturday 27 May to Tuesday 30 May 2005.

*We welcome submissions from doctoral students and suggestions for member-organised sessions. Please send submissions with a brief abstract and bio-bibliographical note (electronic submissions preferred) by **15 January 2006** to:*

*Dr. Barbara Pell,
Department of English
Trinity Western University
Langley, B.C. V2Y 1Y1
Tel. 604-513-25121 x3331
Fax. 604-513-2010
Email: pell@twu.ca*



October 19-23, 2005
University of Calgary

Registration is now open!

Alberta's complex history, politics, and geography have helped produce a diversity of writers and artists known both nationally and internationally for their distinctive and compelling work. To mark Alberta's centenary as a province and to celebrate Alberta's rich literary culture, the University of Calgary is hosting an international literary celebration and conference that will focus on the province's literature, drama and film.

Integral to the conference will be a series of public performances in these genres by nationally and internationally known writers such as Rudy Wiebe, Anita Rau Badami, Sheri-D Wilson, Greg Hollingshead, and Aritha van Herk. Confirmed speakers will include Myrna Kostash, Robert Kroetsch, Fred Wah, and Sharon Pollock.

Regular delegate fees: \$225
Student delegate fees: \$35

www.ucalgary.ca/UofC/conferences/WildWords2005/
E-mail: wildword@ucalgary.ca

Call for Papers

The Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (ACLALS) 14th Triennial Conference

Vancouver, British Columbia
August 2007

Literature for Our Times

At the 2005 World Social Forum, held in Porto Allegre, Brazil, Booker-Prize-winning author Arundhati Roy spoke about the function of literature for our times: "Our strategy should be not only to confront empire, but to lay siege to it... With our art, our music, our literature... —and our ability to tell our own stories." In an article, "The Arduous Conversation Will Continue," published in *The Guardian* on July 19, 2005, Hanif Kureishi voiced a similar opinion: "...the only patriotism possible is one that refuses the banality of taking either side, and continues the arduous conversation. That is why we have literature, the theatre, newspapers —a culture, in other words."

Are there other roles, besides the ones suggested by Kureishi and Roy, that literature has played in the era of colonialism and continues to fulfill now in this young Twenty-First century of ours, amidst the upheavals of regime changes, wars for resources, loss of faith in elected representatives, genocide, suicide bombings, resistance struggles and environmental disasters? Is literature a force for reconciliation and cross-cultural understanding or only an instrument for aesthetic pleasure of the privileged? Does literature provide us, in the famous phrase of Kenneth Burke, with "equipment for living," or does it only obscure reality and deflect resistance?

Papers are invited to engage with all aspects of the above theme. They could address, by referring to the literary, critical and other kinds of cultural texts, the fol-

lowing questions:

- Literature as an institution and ideologies of 'literature'
- Commonwealth versus Postcolonial versus World literature
- Literature as resistance
- Literature as "arduous dialogue"
- Literature as "equipment for living"
- Literature as pedagogy; Pedagogy of literature
- Literature of human survival (including issues of poverty and prosperity)
- Literature of Human Rights (including the right to access knowledge and resources)
- Literature of Apocalyptic and Utopic imaginings
- Literature for promotion of Peace and Justice
- Literature of real and imagined Ethnicities
- Literature of cultural affiliations (Race, Gender and/or History)
- Literature as a world language
- Literature in a global cultural economy
- Literature in translation
- Literature of healing and reconciliation

Abstracts of approx. 300 words for papers of 20 minutes duration, and approx. 400 words for three-paper panels (with the names of the panelists) which engage with these and other relevant questions should be e-mailed, with a short bio-note (50 words) and contact address to spierr@sfu.ca no later than **August 30, 2006**.

Address for regular mail:

Dr. Paul Matthew St. Pierre
ACLALS Secretary-Treasurer
Department of English
Simon Fraser University
Burnaby, BC, Canada V5A 1S6

ACLALS website: <http://www.aclals.org>

Professional Concerns: Book Reviewing

The Value of the Book Review: Public and “Private”

By Kel Morin-Parsons

Upon hearing the word *review*, the majority of North Americans think of a written piece or verbal “bit” containing someone else’s opinion on a film, play, or book. The key word here, of course, is “opinion”, and the weight given to such notices generally varies depending on the reputation of the deliverer. On the whole, however, while many performance reviewers now enjoy their own celebrity status, the actual impact of their work is less-than-immediate for most of us. I love reading Charles Taylor’s pronouncements on films, but I admit that, often, I do it more for the delight of Taylor’s (often deliberately provocative) style than for the helpfulness of his views in making my movie-viewing decisions for me. Similarly, I know relatively few people who will decide whether or not to see a play based on John Lahr’s take on it, but most of us who love theatre still want to hear his opinion. Maybe we’ll be influenced, and maybe we won’t.

Of course, the substance of the discussion here is not reviews of live or filmed performances, but of books—in particular, scholarly books. I would argue, however, that the function of the “public” review is similar in this instance—although the reasons for that function may be quite different. During the lively ACCUTE session in which I participated at the 2005 Congress, there was much discussion of whether or not book reviews were, frankly, worth scholars’ notice. What purpose did they serve? Were they objective and thorough? Were they too *nice*? Certainly, the consensus seemed to be that we are killing the genre with kindness, this emphasized by statistics cited by one panelist revealing that an overwhelming

preponderance of scholarly reviews is positive. This seems to be a great equaliser when it comes to the individual reviewer—if most reviews are too uncritical, that presumably applies to the work of most reviewers. It is perhaps understandable that in a community that is, after all, still relatively small in Canada, people are sometimes reluctant to be as frank as they might be about a colleague’s work in any public forum. More troubling reasons for reticence were also mentioned, however—the primary example being the new scholar’s fear of retribution if the object of an unflattering review written at the beginning of one’s career later turns up on an interview panel or, worse, a tenure board. None of us knows how to remedy such situations, aside from reminding ourselves to be both brave and even-handed in our own reviewing activities. It seems to me that most people are thus prone to regard scholarly-book reviews as they would regard film reviews—of interest, but not necessarily of influence.

Most people are prone to regard scholarly-book reviews as they would regard film reviews – of interest, but not necessarily of influence

The Aid to Scholarly Publications Programme (ASPP), of which I am manager, relies heavily on reviews of the manuscripts submitted to us for support. The reviews we see, however, differ from those initially discussed at the ACCUTE session. While the objects of concern there were “public”—signed pieces published in journals, newspapers, etc.—the reviews to which the ASPP owes so much are, for lack of a better term, “private” reviews. We are all more-or-less familiar with the variations on the

blind review process, but it is still an aspect of book reviewing that may tend to be overlooked in our anxious discussion of whether or not book reviews are effective. The ASPP, in my opinion, offers a shining example of how vital the review process can be.

The author of a manuscript submitted to the Programme does not learn the identity of the work’s reviewers, whether those reviews have been secured by the Programme or by the work’s editor (either case is possible, depending on the publisher involved). The identities of those people are known to the ASPP officer handling the file, to the author’s editor (if the application was made by a scholarly publisher), and to the members of the ASP Committee who make a recommendation on the manuscript, but reviewer anonymity is always preserved from the author’s point of view. This helps strike a balance that is in the best interests of the process: The reviewer can feel free to be frank about a manuscript, knowing that he or she remains anonymous to the author, but is also mindful of the fact that others do know his or her identity—the ASPP officer does; the work’s editor does; the Committee members do. I have been ASPP manager for four years, and I can say with confidence that the vast majority of reports we receive from reviewers are fair, properly critical, and thorough. Keep in mind that publishers sending us reviews have usually paid an honorarium of perhaps \$100 for a report, while the Programme itself is able to offer only a letter of thanks to reviewers; this for reviews that may run up to twelve or thirteen pages and include detailed lists of proofing errors. Many reviews are less elaborate, certainly, but even an “average” one will contain notes on errors, recommendations on additional sources, and comments on the

Professional Concerns Continued...

"readability" of the work. Scholars consistently exhibit a tremendous sense of service in executing this task.

Lest I give the impression that authors do not engage in this process (as is the case with "public" book reviews), please know that reviews are sent to the author of the manuscript in question so that they may respond to the reviewers' comments. The work of reviewers thus has an immediate impact in this process in a couple of ways: Committee members look to their opinions in making their own recommendations on a work, and also consider the extent to which an author has engaged thoroughly and thoughtfully with the reviewer's remarks.

Have I seen reviewers take advantage of anonymity? Yes, occasionally—although I have no way of knowing if such people might indulge in unrestrained meanness, or just plain rudeness, regardless of whether or not their identities were protected. Even here, however, the review can be useful, as authors who are canny will not only rise above any crabbed tones by displaying exceptional graciousness, but also use their responses to address and expound upon legitimate points that will be present in even the most confrontational report. As well, Committee members, all experienced and active scholars themselves, quickly recognize any truly unhelpful or biased reviews, and approach them with appropriate consideration. There is virtually always something useful to come out of a "private" review.

Of course, the ASPP review process is designed to address works that have not yet been published, and to, wherever possible, help their authors ensure that the finished product will be as strong as

possible. In this respect, these reviews differ from the reviews we read in scholarly journals or newsletters. The framework for the scholarly review, however, remains basically the same regardless of where the final text is going to end up. In this case, while the review may never be published in the *Globe and Mail* or *English Studies in Canada*, its value to the scholarly process is inestimable.

Book Reviewing: Practices and Principles

By Jo-Ann Wallace

The idea for a professional concerns panel on the subject of book reviewing came about, in part, from a debate on the ESC Editorial Advisory Board listserv about the journal's book reviews policy. Our editorial team had decided to put before the Board a number of issues that had been brought to our attention by our Reviews Editor, Robert Wilson. These issues included the degree to which a journal's reviews section should mirror the journal's overall mandate and vision; the decline in academic book publishing, especially in the humanities; and the increasing difficulty of securing books for review, especially from Canadian publishers whose print runs are smaller and whose profit margins are tighter. Our proposal was to supplement reviews of books by Canadians with reviews of books written by "others" but of anticipated interest to our readers.

The response to these issues was volatile—at least, it felt that way to those of us on the receiving end. The debate clearly touched a nerve. In retrospect, we probably shouldn't have been surprised. More than almost any other area in our professional lives, book reviewing goes to the heart of some very hot, very

sensitive issues—the obvious issues of power and patronage (reviewers worried that their negative or critical comments might have knock-on effects in their own future grant or promotion applications, for example), but also less obvious anxieties about the visibility and effect of our work. While we share these anxieties with our colleagues internationally and in other disciplines, they are perhaps more profound in the humanities and in a relatively small and unavoidably intimate academic community like ours in Canada.

However, in spite of the space we devote to book reviewing in our scholarly journals, in spite of the obvious person hours of mostly unrewarded work this implies (the work of editors and reviewers), and in spite of the volatility of the whole issue, there is surprisingly little secondary literature on the topic. Much of what is available falls into a kind of "how to" category with an emphasis on helpful hints: reviews editors shouldn't knowingly send a book for review to an author's spouse or to a known and sworn enemy; reviewers should summarize the contents of the book; reviewers should not use the review as an opportunity to ride their own hobby horses. A number of articles on reviewing cite the increased use of reviews in tenure and promotion decisions—or at least the perception that this is the case.

Two refreshing exceptions to this kind of article—both published in the last decade and both, significantly, by librarians—are David Henige's 2001 "Reviewing Reviewing," published in the *Journal of Scholarly Publishing*, and Robert Greene and Charles Spornick's "Favorable and Unfavorable Book Reviews: A Quantitative Study," published in the *Journal of Academic Librarianship*.

The Henige article, "Reviewing Reviewing," is a kind of ethnographic description of book reviews as "ritual ob-

Professional Concerns Continued...

jects" (35). Henige comes to some surprisingly hard-nosed conclusions: that most reviews follow a highly predictable pattern (one that he compares to the plot of the old television series, "The Love Boat"); that one of the reasons for this is that reviewers fear retribution; and that academic book reviews have very little influence or impact—not on sales; not on library acquisitions (especially with libraries' increased reliance on jobber vendors); and surprisingly little on academic reputations. He also concludes that, for the most part, book reviews are simply too short and too scattered or atomized to do much else. Until scholars and their journals are willing to devote the kinds of space and develop the kinds of review formats that would encourage real colloquy, we are stuck with what Henige describes as "the virtual fatuity of the review process" (32).

The second and very different article is Greene and Spornick's 1995 quantitative study of favorable and unfavorable book reviews across a number of social fields and academic disciplines. Their conclusions include the following: unlike media reviews (of movies and television shows, for example), book reviews are overwhelmingly favorable (comparable, in fact, to product reviews); art and literature rank at the top in percentage of favorable reviews; and book reviews in the humanities have a tendency to be more favorable than book reviews in the sciences and social sciences. Their analysis suggests that fully 77.3% of reviews in the humanities are positive, with 5% negative, and 17.7% "mixed or no opinion." Greene and Spornick conclude their analysis by raising the broader issue: "what is the value of reviews?" Their conclusion? "The chief function of a review is

to serve as an announcement. ... Reviews are an important source for learning of a new publication, with some description, but they do not function (as do media reviews) as a 'thumb's up or down' on the value of a book" (5).

Both articles raise the important question of what reviews are for. To a lesser degree, they also raise the question: who are reviews for? For the pleasure and edification of a journal's readers? For the author's career advancement? To guide librarians in their purchases? The question of who reviews, and why, is also touched on in both articles, if lightly. Junior scholars seeking to flesh out their c.v.s? Disinterested and esteemed experts in the field? The sworn enemy or former graduate student of the author?

*What do we review?
and who and what are
reviews for?*

All good questions. But I want to close by raising another question—the question of *what* we review. It goes almost literally without saying that our academic journals review books. And yet some of the biggest, most original, and most shaping influences on whole fields have come from articles.

One example from the field of post-colonial studies would be Homi Bhabha's work. Articles like "Of Mimicry and Man" (which appeared in the journal *October* in 1984) or "Sly Civility" (also in *October* in 1985) or "Signs Taken for Wonders" (*Critical Inquiry*, 1985) had an enormous impact in helping to shape an entire field long before they were collected and published in book form almost a decade later when *The Location of Culture* appeared in 1994. One *might* argue that articles have a disproportionate impact primarily in *new* fields and that traditional or canonical fields

continue to be shaped by books, and so our emphasis on reviewing books is justified. However, my own field of modernist studies was given a huge kick in the pants when Lawrence Rainey's "The Price of Modernism: Reconsidering the Publication of *The Waste Land*" was published in *The Yale Review* in 1989. It didn't appear in book form until Rainey published *Institutions of Modernism* almost a decade later in 1998. And so, Bhabha's and Rainey's key interventions in their fields remained unreviewed—although they were certainly cited and debated—until they appeared in book form. What does this tell us about the function of the reviews section?

In closing, I want simply to point out that while book reviewing and book reviews sections probably fall under the category of service to the profession, the nature of the service is not at all transparent or straightforward. It is helpful now and then to stand back and ask ourselves some questions: what do we review? and who and what are reviews for?

Works Cited

Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.

Greene, Robert J. and Charles D. Spornick. "Favorable and Unfavorable Book Reviews: A Quantitative Study." *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 21, 6 (November 1995): 449-454.

Henige, David. "Reviewing Reviewing." *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* (October 2001): 23-35.

Rainey, Lawrence. *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites & Public Culture*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1998.

In Memoriam: Sylvia Bowerbank

By Mary O'Connor

Dr. Sylvia Bowerbank passed away on Friday, August 5, 2005 at her home in the country after a year-long struggle with cancer. A friend, a mentor, a colleague, she touched so many with her intelligence, humour and wisdom and she will be sorely missed.

Sylvia was born July 10, 1947 in Hamilton, Ontario and spent her early years at Baptiste Lake where she gained an appreciation of nature that influenced her throughout her life. Educated at Carleton, McMaster, the University of Toronto and Simon Fraser University, Sylvia received her PhD in English from McMaster University.

Cross-appointed to the Department of English and to the Arts and Science Program, Dr. Bowerbank was one of the founders of the Women's Studies Program. She was also a Co-Chair of the President's Committee on Indigenous Issues. Sylvia sat on international editorial boards for journals and executive committees for inter-

national associations. She was also the vice-president and then President of the Canadian Women's Studies Association. She was nominated for teaching awards six times and, besides winning teaching awards, she received the McMaster Student Environmental Recognition Award and a Special Recognition Award from the President's Committee on Indigenous Issues and Indigenous Studies Program. She supervised numerous undergraduate, MA and PhD students. One doctoral student, Gary Kuchar, received the Canadian Association for Graduate Studies Distinguished Dissertation Award (best dissertation in Canada). She was also an external examiner for PhDs at Alberta, Queen's and the University of Western Ontario.

Sylvia's scholarship has been foundational in a number of fields: early modern cultural studies, especially women's texts and history; ecocriticism; literature and science studies; and indigenous knowledges and cultures. Her early essay on Margaret Cavendish ("Spider's Delight" English Literary Renaissance, 1984) has been reprinted many times, as has her essay

"Telling Stories about Places" (Alternative Journal, 1997). Her essay on Frankenstein (English Literary History, 1979) changed the way we looked at the "creature" (not "monster") in that novel. Her "Towards the Greening of Literary Studies" (Canadian Review of Comparative Literature, 1995) introduced new scholars to a new ecocritical way of reading literature. Her profound book on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century women's writing and ecology appeared with John Hopkins Press last year. It too will change the way we read the Early Modern period – its women writers, and its writing about science, about nature, and about place.

In lieu of flowers, the family would appreciate donations for a student award in Sylvia's name made out to McMaster University, c/o University Advancement, Downtown Centre 125, 1280 Main Street West, Hamilton, Ontario, L8S 4L8. Family and friends may leave online condolences at <http://www.mem.com/>.

The ACCUTE Professional Concerns Panel ♦ May 27-30 ♦ York University

The Professional Concerns Committee of ACCUTE invites members to participate in roundtable discussions on topics of interest to the profession at the conference at York in 2006. Any issue is fair game; the following are suggested to stimulate the imagination:

- Universities and Colleges
- Research and Teaching
- Community Outreach

- Multimedia and design in the English curriculum
- Retirement
- Working conditions
- The cultures of 'excellence' and 'innovation'
- Rejection, procrastination and isolation

Please send proposals to the Chair of the Committee (Katherine Acheson: koa@uwaterloo.ca) by November 15, 2005

Later Derrida

Papers are invited which variously engage the later work of Derrida and, perhaps, reflect upon the significance of such work for criticism and theory in the present and for the future. "Later" is broadly conceived and may include any writings of the past two decades or so on such topics as "hauntology," mourning, the gift, friendship, hospitality and so forth. A goal, however, will be to present a forum on work which significantly post dates those writings of the later 1960's and early 1970's which have been most centrally associated with deconstruction in the Anglo-American academy and to consider the possibilities opened up by the work of more recent decades, work sometimes described in reference to its increasing turn toward ethics, justice and politics as (however problematically) "affirmative deconstruction."

Please send by **November 15, 2005**, one printed copy of 300-500 word proposals or completed ten-to-twelve page double-spaced papers to:

Adam Carter,
University of Lethbridge,
Department of English,
4401 University Drive,
Lethbridge, Alberta, T1K 3M4.

Please also send one electronic copy of the same to a.carter@uleth.ca.

Proposals or papers should also include a 100 word abstract of paper and a 50 word bio-bibliographical note. All proposers must be members of ACCUTE in good standing.

Djuna Barnes

2006 will mark the fifteenth anniversary of the publication of *Silence and Power*, a touchstone collection of scholarship on Barnes edited by Mary Lynn Broe. Over the past fifteen years, Djuna Barnes has become an increasingly significant figure in the study of modernism and modernity. While recent articles by Kemp, Veltman, and Henstra, as well as studies by Boone, Miller, and Elliot and Wallace have addressed Barnes's poetry, prose fiction, journalism, and reputation, much more could be said about this pivotal modernist whose work and life intersect with so many facets of twentieth-century culture.

This panel invites submissions from scholars interested in exploring the writing and reputation of Djuna Barnes. Topics may include her responses to the urban experiences of New York, Paris, and Berlin; her relationships with contemporaries such as Mina Loy, Man Ray, T. S. Eliot, and the Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven; her position in the Sapphic circles of the Left Bank; her blurring of gender and genre lines; her participation in transnational modernism; her associations with the violent and the gothic; the role of wit and humour in her writing; and responses to her work by writers such as Anais Nin, Monique Wittig, and Beth Follett.

Please send one hard copy and one e-copy (MS Word attachment) of proposals (300-500 words) or papers (10-12 pages, double-spaced), along with a 100-word abstract and a 50-word bio-bibliographical note, by **November 15, 2005** to:

Dr. Ann Martin
Department of English
Dalhousie University
6135 University Ave.
Halifax, NS B3H 4P9
Ann.Martin@Dal.Ca
(902) 494-2971

Proposals and papers should indicate the originality or scholarly significance of the proposed paper, the line of argument, the principal texts the paper will speak to, and the relation of the paper to existing scholarship on the topic. A "Works Cited" section must also be included. Submitters must be ACCUTE members in good standing in order to be considered for the panel.

George Eliot in the 21st Century

Where are George Eliot studies going? Who is reading George Eliot these days, and how? Is this leading 19th century novelist now neglected by readers, feminists, and/or scholars – and if so, why? What are the barriers for George Eliot readers in the 21st century? What are the qualities and issues in her work that might lead to a George Eliot Revival?

Papers on the reception and stature of George Eliot, critical approaches, and film adaptations are especially welcome, but other George Eliot topics will be considered. Submitters must be ACCUTE members in good standing. Final papers should be no more than 10 double spaced pages. Please send your proposal (300-500 words), your abstract (100 words), and your biography/bibliography (50 words) both in hard copy and electronic copy by **November 15, 2005**, to:

Sue Sorensen, Assistant Professor of English
Canadian Mennonite University
500 Shaftesbury Blvd.
Winnipeg MB R3P 2N2
ssorensen@cmu.ca

The Popular Lyricist as Poet

Submissions are welcome which examine rock, pop, jazz, country, or rap lyricists whose songs stand up to scrutiny as poetry, especially as they might be used in literature or popular culture courses.

Submitters must be ACCUTE members in good standing. Final papers should be no more than 10 double spaced pages. Please send your proposal (300-500 words), your abstract (100 words), and your biography/bibliography (50 words) both in hard copy and electronic copy by **November 15, 2005**, to:

Sue Sorensen, Assistant Professor of English
Canadian Mennonite University
500 Shaftesbury Blvd.
Winnipeg MB R3P 2N2
ssorensen@cmu.ca

Revisiting the Academy of Lagado

This panel seeks to read the emerging academic discourse of the posthuman in the twenty-first century against the eighteenth-century formation of the legitimate subject—and in particular the gendered subject—of the early modern period. Through her invocation of Jonathan Swift and *Gulliver's Travels* at the opening of her novel *Oryx and Crake* (along with allusions to Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*), Margaret Atwood explicitly links the enlightenment's construction of the modern individual with the posthuman world of her narrative. The work also revisits for consideration the eighteenth century's passion for improvement; a desire for 'nature to advantage dressed.' If the humanist subject claiming autonomy, self-consciousness, an equal and individuated self has been deconstructed by the postmodern, how will "he", and especially, "she", be read by the posthuman? Does the posthuman, with its promise of surmounting biological and cognitive limitations through bioengineering and artificial intelligence, offer merely a new iteration of the enlightenment's dream of perfection? What of the regions of the world where individual political legitimacy remains an as yet unrealized desideratum? Papers are invited that consider literary responses to the posthuman and its challenge to the eighteenth century.

Please send proposals (300-500 words), by email or regular mail to:

Susan Paterson Glover
Department of English
Laurentian University
Ramsey Lake Road
Sudbury, Ontario P3E 2C6
(705) 671-1775 x 4370
sglover@laurentian.ca

Proposals due by
November 15, 2005

Ethics in Canadian Literature

It can be argued that an interest in the Real, either in the form of cultural materialism or communal responsibility, is rapidly superseding Deconstruction's world of signification; that the values of certainty and truth are increasingly supplanting concerns with the provisional, thus marking a widespread (re)turn to the ethical. Indeed, critics such as William Waters, Derek Attridge, and Michael Eskin have recognized a turn to ethics in literary studies. Given recent announcements about the death of postmodernism and the resurgence of moralizing in literary studies, we are assembling a panel to discuss the veracity and significance of this shift in a Canadian context.

The growing rejection of postmodern relativism in favour of renewed ethical concerns may be readily apparent in other places, but how does it apply *here*? Has Canadian literature adopted this developing preoccupation with morality, and if so, what are the ethical imperatives in contemporary Canadian literature? Margaret Atwood's 2003 dystopian fiction *Oryx and Crake* offers a didactic commentary on social organization and ecology, and Yann Martel's 2001 *Life of Pi* foregrounds belief in god(s), mysticism, and spirituality—to what extent are these texts products of this particular post-postmodern moment? How does a concern with ethics inform various critical approaches to Canadian literature (for example, postcolonial or trauma theory)? Michael Ondaatje, for instance, was taken to task by critics after the publication of *Anil's Ghost* for aestheticizing real trauma and not engaging in tangible political action on behalf of Sri Lankans. How does this reflect the changing relationship between ethics and criticism? Or have these preoccupations always been inherent in (the study of) Canadian literature? Studies of the "Canadian postmodern" are unique in their willingness to engage both with the Real and with identity politics. Indeed, Joy Kogawa's *Obasan* and Michael Ondaatje's *In the Skin of a Lion* have both been designated paradigmatic postmodern texts, and yet critics have also revealed their underlying commitment to humanist values. Did postmodernism ever really eclipse the ethical in Canada?

In addition to such concerns as the return of the Real, the relationship between literary theory and ethics, and the connection between literature and religion, other areas of consideration might include (but are not limited to):

- Traumatic cures and mourning: the emphasis on testimony, remembrance, and closure, as opposed to reticence, forgetting, and indeterminacy.
- The limits of reading literature through the lens of ethics: what postmodernism taught us about the search for truth and how this search can lead interpretation astray.
- The philosophical underpinnings of the relationship between art and morality: from Plato's ontological assertions about the Good, to Nietzsche's views on tragedy, to Wilde's aestheticism, the relationship between literature and ethics has been redefined so many times that historical context is essential.
- Ethics and hermeneutic practice: a theoretical movement from a distinctly poststructuralist methodology to issues of ethical and/or communal responsibility.
- The rehabilitation of realism: the reemergence of once discredited narrative strategies such as realism and humanism.
- The reemergence of God: narratives that foreground faith in god(s), spirituality, and mysticism.
- Empirical science: a renewed interest in mathematical certainty, DNA, empirical order.
- Ecocriticism: a developing preoccupation with the pastoral and representations of utopia.
- Canadian national identity: the centrality of moral good in representations of Canada as a nation (its status as the bearer of diplomats and peacekeepers, for instance).

Please e-mail a 300- to 500-word proposal, 100-word abstract, and 50-word bio-bibliographical note in MS Word to Vikki Visvis (vvisvis@chass.utoronto.ca) and Kristina Kyser (kkyser@rogers.com) by **November 15, 2005**. Submitters must be current members of ACCUTE.

Lives Lived in Theory: Autocritical Interventions in Life Writing

What interests me today is not strictly called either 'literature' or 'philosophy' ... 'autobiography' is perhaps the least inadequate name.

--Jacques Derrida

For a proposed panel at the 2006 Congress, we invite papers that address aspects of critical theory as it is inscribed in autobiography, or papers which address autobiography as theory. We are particularly interested in papers that address memoir and autobiographical narratives which arise from or speak to the theoretical foci of our discipline (Literary, Feminist, Queer, Psychoanalytical, Aesthetic, Postcolonial, Trauma, etc.) of Cultural Studies, broadly defined, or the experiences of literary/cultural production. This might include autobiographical narrative as theory, theory as autobiography, accounts of the scholarly life, etc.

What interests us, here, then, are those autobiographies which are themselves of theoretical import to the discipline, or which develop insights into the theory which they frame or from which they arise. Typically, autobiographical discourse deals explicitly with subject formation, but we are seeking papers which illuminate the ways in which "theory" and "autobiography" mediate these subjectivities. In what ways does the autobiographical narrative, mitigate, translate or inscribe the theoretical concerns of the author. Sara Suleri's autobiographical memoir, *Meatless Days*, can be read productively as a dialogue with postcolonial theory, especially given her problematization of the identity category "postcolonial woman" in "Woman Skin Deep." Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's *A Dialogue on Love* is a profound narrative on the ways in which

her academic life and theoretical investments mediate her experience of the body *in extremis*. Kate Bornstein's *Gender Outlaw* and *My Gender Workbook* are not only autobiographical accounts of coming to terms with the inadequacies of gender theory, but by means of autobiography, they have made an inestimable contribution to the theory of Queer.

Please submit a proposal of no more than 500 words by **November 15, 2005** to the e-mail address below. A copy of the abstract and bio-note, must also be submitted. For electronic submissions, ACCUTE prefers MS Word attachments. Proposals should be 300-500 words in length, and should clearly indicate the originality or scholarly significance of the proposed paper, the line of argument, the principal texts the paper will speak to, and the relation of the paper to existing scholarship on the topic. A "Works Cited" section must also be included.

Please Note: Submitters must be ACCUTE members in good standing. ACCUTE will not forward submissions to a second vector unless submitters are current ACCUTE members.

Dr. Jennifer Gustar
Associate Professor,
English and Women's Studies
University of British Columbia Okanagan
jennifer.gustar@ubc.ca

Dr. Janet MacArthur
Associate Professor, English
University of British Columbia Okanagan
janet.macarthur@ubc.ca

Life (Without) Writing: Auto/biography in Popular Culture

This panel is convened in honour of the late Gabriele Helms (1966-2004), a Canadian scholar of auto/biography who was a member of ACCUTE. In her essay "Reality TV Has Spoken: Auto/biography Matters," Dr. Helms argues that if "reality-based shows insist on the importance of personal identity and auto/biographical discourse, then it is about time that auto/biography scholars take reality TV seriously." We propose in this panel to widen Dr. Helms' call to "take seriously" auto/biographical discourses and rhetoric in popular cultural production generally, considering modes of self-representation outside of the traditionally literary. Topics can include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Graphic books (e.g., Brown's *Louis Riel: A Comic-Strip Biography*, Satrapi's *Persepolis* series) as auto/biography
- theorizing auto/biography studies and popular culture together
- the politics and aesthetics of "trash" in reality television
- talk shows, confessional discourse and the public sphere
- girl culture and auto/biographical discourse
- blogging, pod-casts, and other modes of internet identity
- celebrity tell-all narratives
- liberalism and the politics of representing biography on television
- popular a/b in the classroom and/or research context

What do these "low" or popular forms of self-representation tell us about discourses of the subject, or about how particular lives and stories get represented in popular culture? How does the study of such modes fit into (and/or challenge) traditional disciplinary frameworks or ideas about what kinds of cultural productions are worthy of academic attention?

Please send a 300-500 word proposal (including a Works Cited list), a 100-word abstract and a 50-word bio-bibliographic note by snail mail *and* email on or before **November 15, 2005**. You must be a member of ACCUTE in good standing by the time that you submit your proposal. Please send all email file attachments in RTF format or in MS Word format.

Send your electronic copy to:

Laurie McNeill <lmcneill@shaw.ca> and Julie Rak <julie.rak@ualberta.ca>

Send your snail mail copy to:

Dr. Julie Rak
 c/o Department of English and Film Studies
 Humanities Centre 3-5
 University of Alberta
 Edmonton, AB T6G 2E5

The Unconscious Master: Henry James and Jane Austen

Henry James, himself known as the Master, praised Jane Austen for her “little master-strokes of imagination,” suggesting that the reason for her high reputation “has been in part the extraordinary grace of her facility, in fact of her unconsciousness.” While James may have been reluctant to acknowledge his own debt to Austen’s art, several writers and critics have linked the two. Tony Tanner, for example, comments that James probably learned as much from Austen as she had learned from Richardson. In Rudyard Kipling’s story “The Janeites,” one character quips that Austen didn’t die barren, but left “lawful issue in the shape o’ one son; an’ ’is name was ‘Enery James.”

Why did James characterize Austen as an “unconscious” artist? To what extent do Austen and James share an understanding of the relation between fiction and ethics? Are the similarities between their novels superficial, or can James be seen as working within the same tradition? What do James’s American girls (such as Daisy Miller and Isabel Archer) owe to Austen’s young women? Edith Wharton has been called “Henry James’s heiress”; what might we gain (or lose) by thinking of James as “Jane Austen’s heir”?

This panel proposes to examine connections between James and Austen, and to begin to map the extent of their literary relationship. Papers might explore the authors’ approaches to the art of fiction, the country-house novel, and the novel of manners and morals. Papers discussing thematic intersections in their writings, as well as gender and class relations, are also welcome.

Paper proposals should be sent by November 1, 2005 via email to the panel organizers at: semsley@fas.harvard.edu or mmendels@staffmail.ed.ac.uk

Proposals should be 300-500 words in length, and should clearly indicate the originality or scholarly significance of the proposed paper, the line of argument, the principal texts the paper will speak to, and the relation of the paper to existing scholarship on the topic. A “Works Cited” section should also be included. Submitters must be members of ACCUTE. Membership details are available at:

http://www.accute.ca/become_a_member.htm

Those whose proposals are accepted by the organizers will be notified by mid-November, and the panel will then be submitted for approval to the ACCUTE vetters. Presenters whose papers are accepted will be expected to send the panel organizers three copies of their paper and proposal, accompanied by three copies of a 100-word abstract and a 50-word bio-bibliographical note by November 25, 2005.

Sarah Emsley
Expository Writing Program
Harvard University
8 Prescott Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
USA
semsley@fas.harvard.edu

Michèle Mendelssohn
Department of English Literature
The University of Edinburgh
David Hume Tower, George Square
Edinburgh EH8 9JX
United Kingdom
mmendels@staffmail.ed.ac.uk

Joint Session of ACCUTE and the Victorian Studies Association of Western Canada
May 27-30 ♦ York University

Victorian Undergrounds: Navigating the City

This panel solicits papers that take up the multifarious possible meanings and implications of both the “underground” and “navigating.” While the former may address topics as various as the Underground (the “tube”), fossils, ruins, burial sites, “underground” societies, sewage, etc., the latter may consider questions of knowing, understanding, negotiating, traveling, etc., and their intersections with the subterranean understood in its broadest sense.

Anonymous proposals of 300-400 words, along with the presenter’s contact information and a brief cv, should be sent by **October 31, 2005**, to:

Peter W. Sinnema
President, Victorian Studies Association of Western Canada
Department of English
3-5 Humanities Centre
University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2E5

Electronic copy is welcome at peter.sinnema@ualberta.ca. Please send all material as text message rather than as attachments.

Joint Session of ACCUTE and the North American Victorian Studies Association
May 27-30 ♦ York University

Elizabeth Barrett Browning in Literary History: A Bicentenary Session

Conferences in the US and the UK, a special issue of the journal *Victorian Poetry*, and other events are planned for 2006, to mark the bicentenary of Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s birth. While EBB was among the most influential and widely translated of nineteenth-century English poets, no session of ACCUTE has thus far focused exclusively on her writings and their place in literary history. This joint session of NAVSA and ACCUTE will contribute to marking the bicentenary in Canada. The organizer is interested in proposals that speak to any aspect of EBB’s (or Barrett Browning’s, as you prefer) works, artistic identity, formative influences, relationships with other writers, or impact on literary and cultural history. Possible topics might include (but are not limited to) EBB’s connections to Romanticism; Italian and English politics; Victorian religious controversies; the anti-slavery movement; the “woman question”; nineteenth-century generic and formal innovations; and the dissemination of her works and image in popular culture.

Please send electronic copies of proposals (300-500 words) plus a 100-word abstract, and a 50-word bio to Marjorie Stone mistone@dal.ca by Monday, December 5th. Follow this with hard copy, mailed to:

Professor Marjorie Stone
Department of English
Dalhousie University
6135 University Avenue,
Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3H 4P9

Joint Session of ACCUTE, the North American Victorian Studies Association, and the North American Society for the Study of Romanticism ♦ May 27-30 ♦ York University

Nation and Migration in Nineteenth-Century Literature

Proposals for individual or collaborative papers are invited on the theme of "Nation and Migration in Nineteenth-Century Literature." Possible topics might include (but are not limited to):

- emigration, immigration, and nineteenth-century literary history
- the pre-history of diaspora as a way of conceiving of nations in exile
- the role of exiled intellectuals and artists in shaping patterns of im/migration and ideas of nationhood, cosmopolitanism, and citizenship
- internationalist movements, migrations of ideas across borders, and their relationship to literature and literary nationalisms (e.g., Joseph Mazzini's "Young Europe," Marxist internationalism, the trans-Atlantic anti-slavery movement, Irish-Italian liberation politics, the transplantation of prison models from the US to Europe, suffrage movements, etc.)

Since this is a joint session of NASSR and NAVSA with ACCUTE, the co-organizers particularly welcome proposals for papers that migrate between the Romantic and Victorian periods, or that connect nineteenth-century literature in Britain and Ireland to developments in American or Canadian literature or continental European literatures.

Please send electronic copies of proposals of 300-500 words, a 100-word abstract, and a 50-word bio by Friday, December 2nd, copying to both organizers:

Marjorie Stone mistone@dal.ca and Julia Wright julia.wright@dal.ca

Joint Session of ACCUTE and the North American Society for the Study of Romanticism
May 27-30 ♦ York University

Bodies of Knowledge: The Organization of Romanticism

This panel welcomes submissions that explore connections between bodies of knowledge and the knowledge of bodies in the literary, philosophical, and medical discourses of the Romantic Period. How is "knowledge" (re)organized by Romanticism? How are organs and organisms rendered objects of Romantic knowledge? Possible topics include (but are not limited to) Romanticism and encyclopedic thought, the organization of education and learning (e.g., the university, its faculty and faculties), Romantic imaginings of/anxieties over hospitals and hospitalization, medical treatment and the medicalization of the body, the organization of social or political bodies, etc.. Papers that address the inter-relatedness of such topics are especially welcomed, as are papers that consider such topics as they relate to the organization of "Romanticism" itself as a body of knowledge. Please email abstracts (500 words or less) by **November 15, 2005**, to Peter Melville: p.melville@uwinnipeg.ca.

Joint Sessions of ACCUTE and the North American Society for the Study of Romanticism
May 27-30 ♦ York University

Ethics of Romanticism

This panel invites papers that question the place of “ethics” and/or the “ethical” in Romantic literature and philosophy. How can something like an “Ethics of Romanticism” or a “Romantic Ethics” be articulated and problematized from within the conceptual frameworks of the so-called “turn to ethics” in contemporary critical and literary theory? Conversely, how can the study of Romanticism inform, as well as place into question, poststructuralist, feminist, psychoanalytic, and/or other theoretical models of the ethical? Papers that touch on ethical philosophemes such as community, friendship, death, obligation, forgiveness, responsibility, and justice are especially welcome, as are papers that consider the inter-play between the ethical and the political in Romantic period writing. Please e-mail abstracts (500 words or less) by **November 15, 2005**, to Peter Melville: p.melville@uwinnipeg.ca.

Romanticism and Imperial Fantasy

This session seeks to explore the phantasmatic elements of imperial representation in the Romantic period. The session is particularly interested in moments of imperial performance and visual representation, but more analyses of more conventional textual representations of imperial anxiety, triumphalism and governance are also welcome. Please send 500-word abstracts or full papers, by **November 15**, to Daniel O’Quinn, School of English and Theatre Studies, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario, N1G 2W1, or via e-mail to doquinn@uoguelph.ca.

Joint Session of ACCUTE and the International Gothic Association
May 27-30 ♦ York University

Gothic Addictions

From Matthew Lewis’s *The Monk* (1795) and Charlotte Dacre’s *Zofloya, or The Moor* (1806), to Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein; or The Modern Prometheus* (1818), Thomas De Quincey’s *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* (1821), Robert Louis Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), and Marie Corelli’s *Wormwood: A Drama of Paris* (1890), the Gothic has been fascinated by the theme of addiction/obsession as it is variously manifested. Proposals for individual or collaborative papers are invited on the idea of the Gothic and addiction. Possible topics might include (but are not limited to):

- strategies and structure in the Gothic “pharmography”: i.e. narratives chronicling the process of drug/alcohol seduction and addiction
- addiction and the Faustian intertext
- obsessive science; science and drugs/alcohol (i.e. the elixir vitae)
- the tension between rational will/liberty/control and irrational enslavement/excessive passion
- drugs and Orientalism, racial contagion, imperial geography

- drugs/alcohol and individual/national degeneration
- “love is a drug” addiction
- drugs/alcohol as symbolic scapegoat onto which are displaced such “secret vices” as homosexuality (see Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*, 1985)
- Gothic literature as an “addictive,” socially dangerous form

Please send electronic copies of proposals of approximately 500 words and a 100-word bio by **Monday, December 5th** to Carol Margaret Davison (cdavison@uwindsor.ca). Follow this with hard copy, mailed to:

Dr. Carol Margaret Davison
Department of English Language,
Literature, and Creative Writing
University of Windsor
401 Sunset Avenue
Windsor, Ontario N9B 3P4

Joint Session of ACCUTE and the Canadian Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies ♦ May 27-30 ♦ York University

Ethics: Research, Pedagogy, Academic Citizenship (a TransCanada Project)

Ethics, as Marjorie Garber et. al. say, “is not only a praxis, but also a principle.” And, as recent calls for accountability and anxiety about the relevance of the Humanities show, practising ethics is a process that is constantly being redefined.

Should scholarship be responsive to current conflicts? Do academics have an ethical responsibility to take a stance *as academics* on the political and social issues that concern them as citizens—in the arena of public affairs, in their research, and in the classroom? Or, conversely, is the ethics of the academic profession synonymous with objectivity and neutrality in research, and in the classroom?

Is the need to assert the social relevance of humanities an ethical responsibility? If yes, how should we go about this? What does (should) academic citizenship entail? How can humanists negotiate the presumed objectivity of their research and critical discourse with a political and ethical position they might feel compelled to take? To what extent is an academic’s praxis of ethics bounded by institutional structures? What principles and strategies should define a pedagogy that is mindful of ethics and political responsibilities? What are the dangers of transforming the classroom into a theatre of current political issues? What constitutes the political in the humanities, and how should it be practised?

You are invited to submit papers that address the

meaning and role of ethics in research, in the classroom, and in institutional contexts. Please send 2,500-word papers, or 300-500 word proposals, by **November 15**, to:

Smaro Kamboureli
Canada Research Chair in Critical Studies in
Canadian Literature
School of English and Theatre Studies
University of Guelph
smaro@uoguelph.ca (email submissions preferred)

The proposal for this session is a response to the recurring question, “What is political?”, that delegates kept asking at the 2005 TransCanada: Literature, Institutions, Citizenship conference. Though the primary focus at that conference was on the institutional structures that inform and shape the production of Canadian literature, the intense discussions centered on the difficulties of negotiating our ethical responsibilities as citizens with our goals as researchers and teachers. The issue of ethics emerged as, perhaps, the most important concern for the 130 or so delegates at the conference, academics representing faculty (established and young) and graduate students. Since many of the delegates were not Canadianists strictly speaking, and since the issue is of great relevance, I think, to the humanities at large, it makes sense to have a session like this co-sponsored by more than one association.

Joint Session of ACCUTE and the Victorian Studies Association of Ontario
May 27-30 ♦ York University

Victorian Modernisms

The Victorian Studies Association of Ontario (VSAO) and the Association of Canadian College and University Teachers of English (ACCUTE) invite papers for a jointly sponsored session on Victorian Modernisms. The session will consider the complex, often burgeoning issues, aesthetics, values, and concerns that contributed to the formation of diverse forms of Modernism. Papers are expected to focus on the Victorian era, with possible topics including (but not limited to):

- fin-de-siècle fears
- later Victorian manipulations of earlier history
- 20th-century manipulations of Victorian history
- new architecture as social commentary

- Decadence, Symbolism, and Formalism
- New Women and New Modernisms
- the impact of non-English cultures on Modernism
- developments in the short story and other genres
- technology, innovation, and new ways of seeing
- the role of science in the formation of Modernism

We welcome proposals from all disciplines. Presenters must be members of the VSAO, VSAWC, ECVSA, or ACCUTE. Please send proposals of 250-500 words, along with your contact information and a brief bio or cv, by **5 December 2005**, to Dennis Denisoff at:

denisoff@ryerson.ca, or
Dennis Denisoff, Department of English, Ryerson University, 350 Victoria St., Toronto, ON M5B 2K3.

ACCUTE Executive Members

Keith Wilson, President
and Representative to the CFHSS
English Dept., University of Ottawa
70 Laurier Ave. E.
Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5
kgwilson@uottawa.ca
(613) 562-5800 ext. 1160

Steven Bruhm, President-Elect nominee
English Dept., Mount St. Vincent University
Halifax, NS B3M 2J6
steven.bruhm@msvu.ca
(902) 457-6179

Jennifer Panek, Secretary-Treasurer
Dept. of English, University of Ottawa
70 Laurier Ave. E.
Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5
jpanek@uottawa.ca
(613) 562-5800 ext. 1219

Katherine Acheson, Member-at-Large
English Dept., University of Waterloo
200 University Ave. W.
Waterloo, N2L 1G3
(519) 888-4567
koa@watarts.uwaterloo.ca

Judith Herz, Member-at-Large
English Dept., Concordia University
1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd., West
Montreal, QC H3G 1M8
jherz@vax2.concordia.ca
(514) 848-2424 ext. 2360

Richard Cassidy, President of the Graduate Student
Caucus
Département d'Etudes Anglaises
Université de Montréal
CP 6128, Succursale Centre-ville
Montreal, QC H3C 3J7
richard.cassidy@umontreal.ca

Eric Savoy, Member-at-Large
Département de littérature comparée
Université de Montréal
CP 6128, Succursale Centre-ville
Montreal, QC H3C 3J7
514-343-7926
eric.savoy@umontreal.ca

Jo Devereux, Sessional Representative
English Dept., University of Western Ontario
London, ON N6A 3K7
jdevereu@uwo.ca
(519) 661-2111 ext. 85804

Jo-Ann Wallace, Editor,
English Studies in Canada
English Dept., University of Alberta
3-5 Humanities Centre
Edmonton, AB T6G 2E5
jo-ann.wallace@ualberta.ca

Gernot Wieland, President of CACE
English Dept., University of British Columbia
Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z1
(604) 822-3174
gwieland@interchange.ubc.ca

ACCUTE 2005 Membership Form

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- A three-year membership fee (2005-2008) of \$205
- A three-year household membership fee (2005-2008) of \$335
- A \$5 donation to be directed to the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences (CFHSS)**

Return to: Jennifer Panek, ACCUTE Secretary-Treasurer, Department of English, University of Ottawa,
70 Laurier Ave E., Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5

Additional Information
To Be Completed by Those Applying for Household Memberships

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