

ACCUTE

ASSOCIATION OF CANADIAN COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2013

PRESIDENT: Stephen Slemon

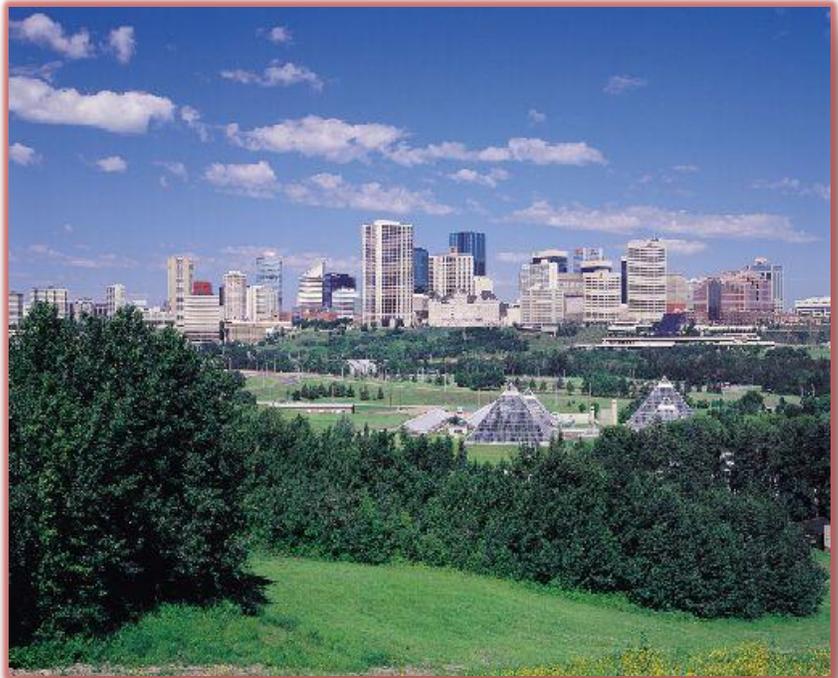
VICE PRESIDENT: Nat Hurley

COORDINATOR: Laura Schechter

GRADUATE ASSISTANTS: Zoran Vuckovac and Samantha Christensen

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Stephen Slemon

Future ACCUTE

You could not guess from ACCUTE's Congress 2013 conference program that our association is in difficult health. ACCUTE conferences have *always* been fabulous – both intellectually and socially – and this next one will continue our 56-year tradition. Our Saturday, June 1st keynote lecture, "Lifewriting @ the Edge: Going Public in the Eighteenth Century," by the great UCLA scholar **Felicity Nussbaum**, is going to demonstrate *why* scholars across the many

"English studies" subdisciplines really *do* want to attend to the difficulty in research projects that fall outside their immediate field. It will make clear, once again, why there is so much to be gained from the kind of non-specialist conference that ACCUTE has always presented. Our Sunday keynote, by **Kyla Wazana Tompkins** (Pomona College) will not only share research findings from a recent monograph that is being talked about everywhere – Tompkins's

Racial Indigestion: Eating Bodies in the 19th Century (NYUP, 2012) – but will put those findings into *dialogue*. Professor Tompkins will speak about her book for part of the session, and then **Mary Chapman** (UBC) and **Len Findlay** (U Saskatchewan) will respond, en route to an engaged general discussion, piloted by session chair Nat Hurley. Two Executive-organized session – on **Early Modern Poetry and Early Modern Performance** – bump up alongside an extraordinary set of member-organized, themed, and joint-association sessions that range across the registers of “English studies” activity: sessions on “animal others,” “securing the nation,” “the digital humanities,” “extrahuman forces,” “scientific modernisms” “queer archives,” “visuality,” “the politics of austerity,” and even “women’s underworlds,” to name just some of them. This year’s **ESC panel** – “Everybody loves imparfait: cultures of imperfection” – will extend, in magnificent fashion, our journal’s extraordinary record of session engagements that go on to become “Reader’s Forum” dialogues. I’m especially stoked about a Saturday-morning roundtable on “English @the edge of *what?*” that features eight current members of the **Canadian Association of Chairs of English** as they consider our discipline’s institutional future.

That’s just some of the scheduled stuff, but for me what matters most at a conference tends to happen in surprise locations – the panel you stumble into inadvertently that ends up changing how you think about something, or the conversation you had during the morning coffee break that causes you to default on your audience obligation to a friend presenting in the next session. ACCUTE has always excelled at the accidental. It’s why the *ESC* bash on the opening Saturday of each Congress proves so to be academia’s most consolidating social occasion. It’s why the ACCUTE dance party on the Monday has a proven track record in the destruction of academic reputations.

The very immediate future for ACCUTE is therefore one of certain ebullience, made possible through ACCUTE Coordinator **Laura Schechter**’s genius for conference organizing and through our Congress local co-ordinator **Lisa Surridge**’s extraordinary capacity for the manufacture of on-the-ground management miracles.

An interim-term future for ACCUTE is in part secured through the tremendous talent of our Executive Committee’s nominees to the next Executive Committee: **Lily Cho** (York U) and **Lisa Surridge** (Victoria) as members-at-large, and **Jason Haslam** (Dalhousie) as Incoming President, with **Lyn Bennett** as ACCUTE Vice-President for 2014-16.

But for the sustainable long-term future of our scholarly association, we need to do some serious thinking. We budget administrative costs for our association on assumptions about host-university capacities that are proving no longer viable in this age of extraordinary postsecondary funding cutbacks. Our membership levels are down: ACCUTE had 900 registered (and paid-up) members immediately after the 2010 Concordia Congress, but fewer than 400 at the beginning of the 2012-13 academic year, and though we’re now rebuilding (we’re back up to about 500), it’s going to be a long climb back. SSHRC has cancelled its Aid and Attendance Grant to Scholarly Associations, and we’ve decided to re-purpose some funding – a lesser amount, but nonetheless significant – so that we can provide some financial support to ACCUTE members, and especially graduate students, who attend Congress 2013. This wouldn’t have been possible had not *ESC* Editor Mike O’Driscoll and his team achieved such extraordinary success in reaching a huge global audience through our journal’s various digital platforms, and then generously put *ESC*’s financial situation at greater risk than journal best-practices would suggest by offering ACCUTE some temporary financial relief.

A look at ACCUTE’s annual financial statements will show you that we run on a shoestring budget: down to our last couple of thousand immediately after Congress, but nevertheless just capable of paying our CFHSS dues when our Congress attendance fees are forwarded to us in late summer. In comparison, it’s perhaps worth looking at the financial situation of the Canadian Historical Association – a larger scholarly association than we are now, it is true, but the comparison is still instructive. The CHA maintains an independent office in Ottawa, employs a full-time Executive Director, a part-time Treasurer, and has a reserve of three-years operating expenses squired away in various investments. It got there in part by increasing its membership fees, and its fees for attending Congress.

In the business portion of our AGM, we'll be showcasing some potential new models for ACCUTE financing, not in order to make major decisions about ACCUTE funding now, but more importantly with a view to having a real discussion about this question: what do we want ACCUTE to be in the future? My own view is that ACCUTE plays an irreplaceable role in community building within and across the many, and deeply various, subdisciplines of English Studies, and that we need to find ways to make that existing role sustainable in the long term. Beyond that, I believe that ACCUTE needs to play an even more visible, activist role in performing the work of advocacy – for English Studies in the immediate sense, but also for humanities and social sciences disciplines on the whole, and especially for those

many who work within those disciplines in situation of deep structural exploitation.

I hope you'll therefore come to the Victoria Congress AGM on Monday, June 3rd. It's not going to be all reports, and motions, and Robert's Rules of Order. We need to talk. And immediately after the gavel falls, the AGM transforms itself into an **ACCUTE Research Celebration wine & cheese**, funded in part by our good friends at Wilfrid Laurier University Press, featuring book launches and the presentation of the F.E.L. Priestley Prize. You *so* want to be there: for the glass raised to our research imaginations, for the craic, and in preparation for the career-altering dance party that takes place later that night.

Stephen Slemon
University of Alberta



VICE-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Nat Hurley

As Stephen Slemon suggests above, in his President's message, the landscape of ACCUTE is changing in response to shifts in funding structures and university commitments across the country. There will be much more to say about these changes at our AGM in Victoria. But for now, I'd like to forecast some of the ways our upcoming conference showcases and preserves the best of what we do at ACCUTE and some of the new things we're trying out this year in the spirit of embracing change.

We have made a special effort to focus on the vitality of English Studies: its liveliness, its traditions, its responsiveness to change, its essential work, and its life-sustaining character. The ACCUTE conference nods to the Congress theme – “@ the edge” – but without falling fully for the metaphor. Being at the edge, after all, is not just about being on the cusp of

discovery; it can also be an institutional demand. Isn't it telling that we find ourselves so uneasily positioned these days: where what we do seriously and passionately can be condensed and repurposed as a marketable slogan or cliché? To the extent that the rhetorical landscape of Congress – and indeed of the university – places us @ the edge, we wonder, as we ask our panel of English department chairs, @ the edge *of what?*

This year's conference builds on the intellectual strengths of the organization and the joie-de-vivre that infuses social events like the ESC Bash while also experimenting, by adding new kinds of events and modifying existing ones. In addition to adding a panel with news from CACE (Canadian Association of Chairs of English), we have added a panel on paths to Academic Publishing today, and transformed one

of our plenary events so as to stage a conversation about new work in our field. And then, of course, there's the legendary ACCUTE Dance Party. Because if we have to be @ the edge, there *will* be dancing.

Read on for some information about our coming conference attractions:

Kyla Wazana Tompkins's *Racial Indigestion*: A Plenary Conversation:

Kyla Wazana Tompkins's book, *Racial Indigestion: Eating Bodies In the 19th Century* (NYUP, 2012) has been acclaimed by one reviewer as "A dazzlingly original and important contribution to our understanding of nineteenth-century American literature and culture." "The connections she makes between eating and vernacular culture," says another, "make the book satisfyingly literary, even as it is so clearly a stellar work of cultural studies." A third declares that this book forces us "to see racialization in wholly new arenas and new ways." We have invited Tompkins (a Canadian who currently teaches at Pomona College) to deliver a plenary address to ACCUTE members based on this, her first book. And we have invited Mary Chapman (UBC) and Len Findlay (Saskatchewan) to offer short responses to the book. Our hope is to generate a broad conversation about the work. If you'd like to know more about the book, please visit <http://racialindigestion.tumblr.com/>, where the introduction to the book is available in PDF. We



ACCUTE FEDERATION REPRESENTATIVE'S MESSAGE

Nicola Nixon

News from the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences

As many of you know, ACCUTE is a member of the CFHSS, the Federation which advocates for us in Ottawa among the various funding bodies and the

welcome your responses!

Academic Publishing:

It is safe to say that publication has never been more important to the lives of scholars, especially to junior scholars. At the same time, the landscape of academic publishing seems to be shifting under the weight of different kinds of pressures in the context of media change and changes in support to university presses. The panel brings together editors of scholarly journals, authors of scholarly monographs, and experimenters with new forms of digital publication – in short, curators of scholarly knowledge across a range of forms. While this panel may be of particular interest to new members of the profession who are interested in learning how to navigate the world of academic publishing, it will be of interest to all ACCUTE members with an interest in the changing demands of academic writing as well as the pragmatics and politics of getting it to print.

Dance, Dance, Dance!

The annual ACCUTE Dance party will take place on Monday, June 3rd at the Victoria Events Centre. Always a highlight of the Congress schedule and a site of interdisciplinary fancy footwork, the dance party welcomes all ACCUTE-goers and their friends. Don't forget to bring your dancing shoes so you too can boogie @ the edge of glory – as earnestly or ironically as you'd like.

Nat Hurley
University of Alberta

federal government itself and which hosts the annual Congress. ACCUTE members have been prominent in the Federation, from Noreen Golfman (Memorial U), who was the President of the Federation for two terms and was ACCUTE President, to our current ACCUTE President, Stephen Slemon (U Alberta),

who has just completed his term as Chair of the ASPP (the Awards to Scholarly Publications Program, which awards subvention funds to books published by Canadian presses). Another ACCUTE member, Ray Siemans (U Victoria), is continuing his term as Vice President of Research Dissemination.

The AGM in March was largely concerned with ratifying a new governance structure and a new set of Federation by-laws that are in compliance with the Federal Not-for-Profit Corporations Act mandated in 2009. There were kudos for departing President, Graham Carr (Concordia U), and applause for incoming President, Antonia Maioni (McGill U). There were workshops that required us to, abstractly, justify the humanities to potentially hostile, or at least skeptical, media around the value of humanities education – what else is new? And there were presentations from SSHRC: the categories (Talent, Insight, Connection) will remain the same; there will be no new money; but everyone is spinning that optimistically. Although it's hard to know exactly why that is the case, given the cancellation of the (AASGA program) grants that enable attendees at Congress to recoup some of their travel expenses; which is especially hard on graduate students.

On the up-side, for those of our members applying for the CIHR (Canadian Institutes of Health Research) funding, because they are working on health-related research, there has been a concerted push to establish a Humanities and Social Science Advisory group and a network of peer reviewers that will enable a fair peer review process for applicants. And also on the up-side, there is a vigorous interest in Digital

Humanities. The Federation continues to confirm its commitment to the Berlin Declaration for Open Access, although Ray Siemans continues, with his committee, to investigate the logistics. The Federation has been careful in its endorsement of Open Access, rightly questioning the impact it will have on academic journals, who are largely funded by library subscriptions and universities, and university presses, who are largely funded by library purchases and universities.

On the down-side, it seems as though “research success measures” are in the offing – some way to quantify the work we do, so that it can be measured and compared across the disciplines. The Federation is working to ensure that universities and their deans are not comparing apples to oranges – Philosophy to Economics, English to Sociology – in the way in which research “success” is measured. Not all of the Humanities and Social Sciences have, after all, the same set of measures for articles, books, chapters, and other forms of publication. And “success” is a measure that is definitely in the eyes of the beholders, especially around publications and conferences and op-ed columns. But the push towards quantifiable results is real and imminent; and the Federation is hoping to establish some set of protocols that are suppler than those that are currently being discussed at higher levels. They are, in other words, trying to be pre-emptive around a process that will have a serious impact in future, as universities attempt to justify themselves and their standards.

Nicola Nixon
Concordia University



ESC: UPDATE FROM THE EDITOR

Mike O'Driscoll

On behalf of the *ESC* Editorial Team, I'd like to invite you to join us during Congress in Victoria for two special events we have in the making. On Saturday, June 1st at 3:30pm Associate Editor Cecily Devereux will host the annual *ESC Roundtable*. Titled "Everybody loves imparfait: cultures of imperfection," this year's gathering will feature the scholarly talents of Daniel Laforest, Karen MacFarlane, Derritt Mason, Peter Schwenger, Toni Smith, and Maité Snauwaert. Right afterwards, *ESC* will host its annual opening-night get together. The *ESC Royal Bash* will be held on Saturday, June 1st at 5:30pm. Come join the *ESC* team and all of your ACCUTE friends at The Sticky Wicket in the heart of Victoria, 919 Douglas Street. We've got the second floor all to ourselves, and this will be a great chance to meet up with people before heading out for dinner, and the best time to raise a glass to ol' Vicky herself.

You've got *ESC*'s latest issue in your hands right now, and if you haven't already done so, take a look and discover Guest Editor Len Findlay's fabulous special issue on "Rethinking the Humanities." Canada's top cultural scholars come together to challenge our preconceptions about what we do and why it needs our nurturing consideration. The next issue is just heading to the printers and is full of great stuff: a Readers' Forum on "Cynicism and / as Academic Citizenship" organized by Robert Zacharias; Anthony Harding's guest edited cluster on "Authorship, Genre, and Copyright in the Romantic Period"; some fabulous articles on "Collective Subjects" and "Cultural Currencies"; plus book reviews on the latest in the discipline.

See you in Victoria!

Mike O'Driscoll
University of Alberta

An updated program for Congress 2013 is available on the website, at <http://accutecanada.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/2013-draft-program-2.pdf>.

CONGRESS 2013 EXECUTIVE ORGANIZED PANELS

Panel: New Directions in Early Modern Performance Studies

This exciting panel, to be chaired by Kim Solga (London), will bring together four prominent scholars working in the area of early modern performance studies for brief and open-ended presentations that will allow for plenty of discussion with the audience. Susan Bennett (Calgary) aims to expand the notion of "performance" in terms of how we think about contemporary performances of Shakespeare's plays and those of other early modern dramatists. Janelle Jenstad (Victoria) will introduce key questions related to the Internet Shakespeare Edition's searchable database of performance materials from over 1000 film and stage productions related to Shakespeare's works. M.J. Kidnie (Western) will be engaging the crossover space between performance and adaptation, and Jennifer Roberts-Smith (Waterloo) plans to explore digital visualizations of early modern theatrical text and performance (in formal editorial environments and informal gaming environments).

Christina Luckyj
Dalhousie University

Panel: New Directions in Early Modern Poetry

This panel is part of a pair co-organized by Christina Luckyj and Jim Ellis on behalf of the ACCUTE Executive, with the aim of raising the profile of early modern scholarship at the ACCUTE conference. As with the panel on Early Modern Performance, this session will bring together leading Canadian scholars to discuss what they see as some of the most interesting and promising developments in early modern scholarship. Lynne Magnussen (Toronto) will reflect on her recent experience editing Shakespeare's Sonnets; Stephen Guy-Bray (UBC) will speak from his extensive work on queer approaches to early modern poetry; and Katherine R. Larson (UT Scarborough) will be drawing on her recent work on early modern songs to address the material, embodied and gendered

dimensions of lyric form. As with the performance panel, this will talk a roundtable format, with plenty of time to address the issues raised.

Jim Ellis
University of Calgary

STRATEGIES FOR NON-TENURE-TRACK WORKERS: “IN CRITICAL CONDITION”

As you well know, Dorothy Hadfield, our Sessional Representative on the Executive, has spent this year trying to foster connections among ACCUTE members who hold non-tenure-track positions. We would like to extend and strengthen this ongoing project, injecting new energy and resources into Dorothy’s much needed advocacy. We propose a meeting at Congress, a meeting to network, share information, and strategize. “In Critical Condition” will be held Monday, June 3rd, 11:00-12:15, in Clearihue A-311. We invite all sessionals, contract instructors, and independent scholars to join a facilitated conversation that will identify key concerns and work to produce more than stopgap coping mechanisms. An event not to be missed!

Laura Schechter
University of Alberta

CONGRESS 2013 ACCUTE RESEARCH CELEBRATION

ACCUTE has partnered with Wilfrid Laurier University Press to host a wine and cheese in celebration of recent WLUP publications. Please join us for the ACCUTE Research Celebration following our Annual General Meeting, which will be held Monday, June 3rd, 3:30-4:45, in Bob Wright A-104. The reception will begin at 5:00, and we invite all ACCUTE members to bring their recent monographs for a display table. We’ll also announce the winner of this year’s F. E. L. Priestley Prize at the reception.

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CONGRESS 2013 CHILDCARE UPDATE

Good news for Congress attendees traveling with small children. The Federation has arranged for childcare through Kids & Company, but please note that care is only available for kids up to six years of age. The Kids & Company daycare can be found at 3500 Uptown Boulevard, about twenty minutes by car from UVic. Kids & Company strongly encourages you to arrange for care ahead of time; more information can be found at <http://www.congress2013.ca/plan-your-trip/child-care>, or by directly phoning the business at 250-381-2212.

LS



OFFICE DEPARTURES AND ARRIVALS

As the academic year winds down, the ACCUTE office says goodbye to one of our RAs, Samantha Christensen. Sam brought a wonderful energy to our Edmonton group, and we thank her sincerely for all of her hard work this year. ACCUTE welcomes a new RA, Adam Kneeland, for the months of May and June.

LS

THE EXECUTIVE

Stephen Slemon (President)

Nat Hurley (Vice President)

Laura Schechter (ACCUTE Coordinator)

Heather Jessup (President Grad Caucus)

Mike O'Driscoll (Ongoing member of ACCUTE executive, Editor of ESC)

Margaret Steffler (President of CACE)

Nicola Nixon (Past President)

Dorothy Hadfield (Sessional representative)

Clint Burnham (Member at large)

Jim Ellis (Member at large)

Christina Luckyj (Member at large)

