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ACCUTE CONFERENCE 2023

NEW! Creative Writing Collective CFP

Congress 2023 – York University – Toronto/Tkaronto – 27-30 May 2023

The [Association of Canadian College and University Teachers of English](#) (ACCUTE) is pleased to share the following Call For Papers on behalf of the [Creative Writing Collective](#) (CWC). Please use the [Online Submission Form](#) on the ACCUTE website to submit your proposal.

DEADLINE: 3 FEBRUARY 2023

NAVIGATING THE PUBLISHING INDUSTRY

AS CREATIVE WRITERS: TWO PANELS

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When W.E.B. Du Bois, in his 1926 essay, “Criteria of Negro Art,” argued that “all art is propaganda, and ever must be,” he gestured towards the pedagogical importance of creative, cultural forms including literature. Books tell stories and produce knowledge about communities and histories. In *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said wrote that the novel was instrumental during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in forming, consolidating, and normalizing Western imperial attitudes (xii). During the Harlem Renaissance, Dubois pointed to literature as a way to tear down barriers between Black and White people in a heavily segregated America. If scholarship takes seriously literature as culturally transformative such that it can produce and challenge ways of knowing and ways of being in the world, then it must also take seriously the publishing industry, an apparatus at once creative and economic, which ultimately dictates which books are produced, marketed and sold around the globe.

In the past half a decade alone, the American publishing industry, which houses the biggest and most influential publishers in the world, has had to adapt and respond to new challenges. Social justice movements such as Black Lives Matter quickly seeped into the world of book publishing,

forcing publishers to respond to the outcry of readers and authors who demand diversity inside the industry and on the bookshelves. At the same time, the Covid-19 pandemic has forced the book industry to maneuver around its economic effects. A study conducted by the National Endowment for the Arts in March 2022 reported that the US arts economy shrank twice as quickly relative to the overall U.S. economy with New York, the cultural and economic hub of the American publishing industry, losing two-thirds of its arts and culture jobs since 2021.

Though the publishing industry remains a strong economic force, uncertainty continues. Since September 2022, HarperCollins's company earnings declined amidst a unionized worker's strike over low wages and lack of diversity. In November 2022 the U.S. Department of Justice won their antitrust lawsuit against Penguin Random House (formerly two separate publishers turned singular conglomerate), filed in 2021 to block its acquisition of publishing rival Simon & Schuster. The successful lawsuit stopped Penguin Random House from extending its control over the U.S. publishing market and the globe, at least for now. But how potential future changes to the industry will affect authors and employees' livelihoods, as well as the kind of literature produced and circulated in society remains uncertain.

Creative writers ultimately have to contend with these industry changes and instabilities if we are to see our work in print. In an effort to bring together creative writers and publishers, The CWC is proposing a roundtable session and a traditional panel:

Roundtable:

In recent years, the Canadian publishing industry has seen just as much change as its larger American counterpart. By July 2020, Indigo had closed twenty of its two-hundred stores across Canada due to final losses from the pandemic. In 2022, The Writers' Union of Canada published its Diversity in Canadian Writing report to address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion within its industry. This roundtable will feature several representatives of the Canadian publishing industry, from agents to editors of Canadian presses to discuss the industry's unique and pressing challenges as it competes against multinationals.

Panel:

The CWC invites papers focusing on the many diverse ways in which the current publishing industry and creative literary output intersect. How might critical analysis of the current publishing industry fill the gap in literary scholarship?