

Inkshed

Newsletter of the Canadian Association for the Study of Writing and Reading
Volume 5, number 2. March 1986.

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Surrounding us wordy animals there is the infinite wordless universe out of which we have been gradually carving our universe of discourse since the time when our primordial ancestors added to their sensations *words* for sensations. When they could duplicate the taste of an orange by *saying* "the taste of an orange", that's when STORY was born, since words *tell about* sensations. Whereas Nature can do no wrong (whatever it does is Nature) when STORY comes into the world there enters the realm of the true, false, honest, mistaken, the downright lie, the imaginative, the visionary, the sublime, the ridiculous, the eschatological . . . , the satirical, every single detail of every single science or speculation, even every bit of gossip—for although all animals in their way communicate, only our kind of animal can gossip. There was no story before we came, and when we're gone the universe will go on sans story.

Kenneth Burke, Letter to the Editor, *TLS* 12 August 1983: 859.

Inkshed

5.2. March 1986.

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20 January, for 1 February
5 March, for 15 March
20 April, for 1 May

5 September, for 15 September
20 October, for 1 November
5 December, for 15 December

A primary objective of this newsletter is to intensify relationships among research, theory, and practice relating to language, language acquisition, and language use—mainly (but by no means exclusively) at post-secondary levels. Striving to serve both informative and polemical functions, *Inkshed* publishes news, announcements, notices, reports and reviews (of articles, journals, books, textbooks, conferences, workshops); commentaries, discussions of events, issues, problems, and questions of concern to academics in Canada interested in writing and reading theory and practice.

Send inquiries, materials, subscription requests and payments to

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Important News from the 4 Cs Canadian Caucus

A first piece of news of our session in New Orleans is that we will propose another Canadian Caucus sponsored session for 4 Cs (in Atlanta, March 1987). Phyllis Artiss agreed to put together a proposal for a session dealing in some way with assessment of student writing. If you are interested in participating in such a session, you can write to her (immediately—proposals must be submitted no later than June 1, 1986), c/o English Department, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, NF A1C 5S7.

We also came to two other important decisions:

One was that it's time for *Inkshed* to launch another membership or subscription drive. Several who came to the Canadian Caucus session did not know about *Inkshed*. They also know others who would be interested but who have not heard about it. Because it seemed clear that *Inkshed* is not reaching many who might wish to participate in our conversation, we decided it was time again to let people know about us and ask them to join us.

Hence the inclusion in this issue of a new subscription form, and this plea or admonition:

If you wish to continue receiving *Inkshed*, fill out and return the subscription form (with a cheque, if you can).

And hence this urgent request:

Please photocopy this issue of *Inkshed* and pass it on to others who might like to join us. Tell them about us, and urge them to fill out and send in the subscription form. Ask them also to photocopy the newsletter and pass it on to others they know who might be interested. Let's try to reach as many as we can of those who share our interests, values, priorities. Please make this important effort.

The other decision was that it is time to do all we can to support the Canadian Council of Teachers of English (CCTE). Again, several who came to the Canadian Caucus session did not know (or know much) about CCTE, so we spent a good deal of our time talking about the kind of organization it is and about how its journals and conferences have become more clearly relevant to post-secondary educators. Victor Froese and Stan Straw have now published their first issue of *The English Quarterly*. Under their editorship, and with the help of some good submissions, that journal offers great promise. Aviva Freedman and Ian Pringle are putting together the Fourth International Conference on the Teaching of English (FICTE)—a meeting that promises easily to be the most important professional gathering in our discipline since the 1966 Dartmouth Conference (see *Inkshed* 4.6 and 5.1). Our conclusion: both CCTE and post-secondary teachers of writing and literature will benefit if the post-secondary presence in CCTE is strengthened. Professional societies, meetings, and publications are at the center of disciplinary activity. No other national professional society in Canada (including ACUTE) offers us anything like a "home"; and it has become increasingly clear over the past couple of years that CCTE is an appropriate and important "resident organization" for inkshedders. CCTE's invitations to us to join them have been gracious and genuine. We must join and support them. We need each other.

So, *join CCTE*, certainly; and *attend this May's conference in Ottawa*, if you possibly can. Write now to

Ian Pringle, FICTE, 255 Paterson Hall, Carleton University, Ottawa, ON K1S 5B65

No way you can attend the FICTE, but want to join CCTE anyway? \$30.00 (Cdn) gets you a membership and subscriptions to *English Quarterly*, *Highway One*, and the *CCTE Newsletter*. Send your name and address and a cheque to

CCTE Membership, Box 3382, Station B, Calgary, AB T2K 4M1

Tentative (alphabetized) Program for Inkshed III

<u>Presenter</u>	<u>Title</u>
Phyllis Artiss	Common Voices (Theirs, Yours, Ours)
Doug Brent	The "Research Paper": What Is it and What Does it Really Demand?
Jane Brown	Writing in Business: The Uncharted Field
Chris Bullock	Changing the Context: Applying Feminist Perspectives to the Writing Class
Rick Coe	Literacy: Agent of Oppression, Agent of Liberation. . . .
John Harley	Translating Academic Language Into Everyday Terms: Bucking Our Own "Social Contexts"
Peter Hynes	Writing Across the Official Languages: Bilingualism at the Glendon College Writing Workshop
Karen Burke LeFevre	Invention as a Social Act
Mike Moore	The University as a Social Context for Teaching and Research in Reading and Writing
Jim Reither & Russ Hunt	Authority and Community in the Writing Process: An Extended Workshop
Catherine Schreyer	Inspection <i>vs</i> Evaluation: Various Roles for a Commentator in the Writing Process
Graham Smart & Devon Wood	Developing Awareness of Context through Taped Reader Feedback
Stan Straw	Driving Students to Point-Driven Response: Cognitive and Metacognitive Methods of Teaching Response to Poetry
Audrey Watson	Teaching Illiterate Adults

Want to register? See *Inkshed* 5.1. Want to learn more? Write

Patrick Dias and Anthony Paré
Inkshed Conference
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McGill University
Montreal, PQ H3A 1Y2

(Pat & Anthony want Inkshed III participants to know that a bus will transport people to Montreal via Mirabel Airport after the conference. Bus connections are available at Mirabel to Ottawa [for those going on to FICTE] and to Dorval airport [for those going elsewhere].)

Cohort Report: CCTE's Commission on the Role of Literature in the Classroom

/// Trevor Gambel

In 1983 I took over the CCTE Commission on the Role of Literature in the English/Language Arts Classroom. You might remember my distributing a survey questionnaire during the first half of 1984 and during the Fredericton conference of CCTE in August of that year (also the first *Inkshed* conference). That survey was to help me establish parameters for and generate issues to be addressed by the Commission.

In December 1985 I submitted the Report, lengthy at some 300 pages. The CCTE executive deferred decision *re* acceptance, publication, and distribution of the Report at its January 17-19, 1986, meeting in Toronto until the IFTE conference and annual executive meetings in Ottawa in May this year. Several Inkshedders have already given valuable advice on a draft version distributed late last spring, and their responses led to the considerable revision and additions that exist in the Report submitted.

A subtitle of the Report might be 'Literature Teaching K-12: A Canadian Perspective,' because it does cover the broad perspective, and it deals with implications for teacher education. Undoubtedly my biases in both theory and pedagogy will show through. The best way of succinctly showing the breadth and depth of the Report is to list its the table of contents or chapters, and these follow.

I am submitting this item because *Inkshed* readers might be interested to know that CCTE will be adopting a policy toward teaching literature in Canadian schools. Please be watchful for statements by CCTE on the teaching of literature, and for opportunities to become involved in shaping policy and approaches to literature teaching in Canada.

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Why Teach Literature?

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Implications for Teacher Education
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 Stages in the Development of Responding to Literature
Literature and the Humanities
Literature Across the Curriculum
Evaluation and the Teaching of Response to Literature

Most sections or chapters end with a summary or conclusion and a list of selected readings readers might like to pursue. Two major problems encountered were the ordering of chapters to lead readers through a cumulative development of issues and ideas on literature and its teaching, and the extent to which various literary theories were to be covered. Hence there is little attention paid to formalism (Jakobson), archetypal theory (Frye), reception theory (Iser), structuralism (Barthes), deconstructionism (the Yale school), psychoanalytic theory (Holland), or historical Marxism (Eagleton). It is not that I considered these theories and theorists insignificant; my focus was always on the transfer of theory to classroom practice with the reader as teacher.

I do welcome any comments on this brief description of what is probably an impossible task—developing a report on teaching literature K–12 in Canadian classrooms that speaks to K–12 teachers, teacher educators in departments of English and faculties of education, curriculum developers, and officials in provincial departments of education.

I can be reached thus:

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Writing Lab Newsletter

The *Writing Lab Newsletter* is intended as an informal means of exchanging information among those who work in writing labs and language skills centers. Brief articles (four to six typed pages) describing labs, their instructional methods and materials, goals, programs, budgets, staffing, services, etc., are invited. For those who wish to join the newsletter group, a donation of \$5.00 (U.S.) to help defray duplicating and mailing costs (with cheques made payable to Purdue University, but sent to me) would be appreciated. Please send material for the newsletter and requests to join to:

Professor Muriel Harris, Editor
Writing Lab Newsletter
Department of English
Purdue University
West Lafayette, IN U.S.A. 47097

FAME AVAILABLE

Mike Moore (Wilfrid Laurier University) is preparing a third (his second) Canadian edition of the popular *Handbook of Current English*. The text's sample student short research essay and short report may be replaced if suitable substitutes become available. Any *Inkshrd* reader with a student who has recently produced exemplary work in either category is invited to send Mike a copy for consideration. Please send before the end of May.

Incidentally, Mike would also welcome any other suggestions for improving the *Handbook*. Radical orientation is certainly not in the cards (save your breath, Coel), but specific comments and ideas would be appreciated. We aim to serve.

Michael Moore
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Suggested Readings for Inkshed III

Coe, Richard M. "Literacy 'Crises': A Systemic Analysis." *Humanities in Society* 4.4 (Fall 1981). (A revised version of this article forms the first part of Rick's piece in *Literacy, Society and Schooling*, ed. K. Egan, S. de Castell, and A. Luke [NY: Cambridge, in press].

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A focus on the relational structure of written discourse presupposes that it is a form of symbolic action, like speech. Even though the text as a mediate act makes it possible for actual writing and reading performances to be remote in time and space, it also determines that fact that these actions are defined by their reciprocity. The construction of linguistic meanings is inherently intersubjective and collaborative, so that one cannot examine the constituent writing and reading acts (which appear to be private and largely mental) except in terms of their relationship. The writer's thought, composed in the writing act and invested in the text, acquires fullness, actuality, and power to act on the world only through the cognitive contributions and responses of a reader. The text is a script for a thought process that readers enact in infinitely various ways to produce meanings; by itself it is only potentially meaningful. Yet readers, despite their own essential contributions, experience texts as authored, as expressions of human intentions and thus the locus of the meanings that readers construct. Whatever tensions, conflicts and slippages mark the discourse transaction, it remains, like marriage and warfare, an inherently co-personal activity

Louise Wetherbee Phelps, "The Domain of Composition,"  
*Rhetoric Review* 4.2 (January 1986): 183-184.