# INKSHED

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Newsletter of the Canadian Association

for the Study of Writing and Reading

Volume 9, number 3.  February 1991

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*Inkshed* provides a forum for its subscribers to explore relationships among research, theory, and practice in language acquisition and language use. Subscribers are invited to submit informative pieces such as notices, reports, and reviews of articles, journals, books, textbooks, conferences, and workshops, as well as polemical discussions of events, issues, problems, and questions of concern to teachers in Canada interested in writing and reading theory and practice.

*Inkshed* is published four times during the academic year. The following is a schedule of submission deadlines and publication dates:

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| 1 September, for 15 September | 1 February, for 15 February |
| 1 November, for 15 November | 1 April, for 15 April |

# RESEARCH NOTES ON GEORGE BOWERING
## AS RADICAL PEDAGOGUE AND READING TEACHER     / / / W.F. GARRETT-PETTS

In "Extra Basis: An Interview with George Bowering," Laurie Ricou asks Bowering to talk about pedagogy, "about teaching in your books, if you do" (52). It is a question to which Bowering never responds directly. Instead, he reveals that he sees himself as a "good, but not devoted," teacher; and he recalls how *Caprice* "probably began with a graduate course [he] gave on the Western ten years ago" (52). The response is not so much an evasion as it is a characteristic omission—and probably a reaction against what he sees as the pronounced moral didacticism of other writers, such as Margaret Atwood. Nonetheless, Bowering remains intellectually and emotionally concerned about "teaching" the reader how to respond. Perhaps more than any other Canadian writer, he has attempted to theorise away the boundaries between critical and creative discourse; and as Eva-Marie Kröller says on the back cover of *Imaginary Hand*, Bowering's own critical and creative idiom, though typically iconoclastic and flippant, "only serves to disguise the committed, even stern, voice he assumes in his role as teacher and critic."

Not all critical readers are as convinced as Kröller that Bowering's work contains evidence of serious commitment. Some see Bowering's writing, and the Canadian postmodern generally, as both frivolous and a threat to Canadian culture; and, significantly, such critics as T.D. MacLulich locate postmodernism and the reading practices associated with postmodernism as pedagogical problems. Fearing a decline of interest in the work of the more traditional writers such as Grove, Callaghan, MacLennan, Buckler, Ross, Mitchell, Wilson, Laurence, Richler, and Davies, MacLulich argues that

> Our universities should be encouraging such writing, rather than calling for experimental or language-centred fiction. After all, what will we get if Canadian fiction wholeheartedly adopts the international style? At best, we will see more incarnations of *The Studhorse Man* (1969). At worse—and this is a more likely result—we will get more works like Chris Scott's *Bartelby* (1971) or George Bowering's *A Short Sad Book* (1977) and *Burning Water* (1980). The games that these works play with Canadian themes may not announce the health of a national tradition, but may predict its death, crushed by the weight of excessive self-consciousness. (252-53)

For MacLulich, the realist paradigm remains an unquestioned (and seemingly unquestionable) presupposition: "When there is an emphasis on technical innovation in fiction—and a concurrent denigration of the straightforward mimetic possibilities of fiction—then our fiction may lose its capacity to mirror the particularities of culture and personality" (250). The indictment is a serious one. MacLulich implies that, by reading the Canadian postmodern, we are collaborating in the collapse of interest in issues of social import. Moreover, he argues that, since "[f]ormal instruction in Canadian literature is now the single most important factor in shaping the future readership for Canadian writing" (248), what we teach has serious social consequences. MacLulich is surely right to draw attention to questions of curriculum and the role of instruction in the development of a readership; but he goes too far when he suggests that enthusiasm for teaching and reading

the postmodern is simply a matter of satisfying "the latest dictates of literary fashion" (249). If, contrary to MacLulich, we start with the assumption that there may be a serious social purpose to Canadian postmodernism, then we are obliged to reconsider the ethics of reading writers such as Bowering and what their work teaches.

The question of reading the Canadian postmodern should be of particular interest to those of us committed to the study of rhetoric and composition, especially since Andrea Lunsford's Chair's Address to the 1989 Conference on College Composition and Communication, where she argued that we consider the field of composition studies "a postmodern discipline" (76). The postmodern, she says, self-consciously blurs disciplinary boundaries, stresses collaboration, seeks to foster dialogue, to "democratize reading and writing for ourselves and our students," and to maintain a commitment to both *praxis* and *theoria*, keeping inquiry "firmly situated in the experience of the classroom community, no matter how far into the thickets of theory we may explore" (76). Bowering is an author whose work seems particularly consonant with the kind of postmodernism that Lunsford advocates; and it is probably no coincidence that, like the case of composition studies in Canada, Bowering's efforts have been variously neglected and marginalized by the academy.

*Taking Bowering Seriously*

The question of Bowering's seriousness is complicated by his abiding love of (and faith in) the aleatory aspects of life and language. There is certainly an element of whimsy to Bowering's rhetorical stance, but there is also a serious epistemological point at stake, and we need not become so distracted by what we perceive to be a frivolous tone that we miss a serious message. Bowering, after all, has "always favoured tapinosis": "Tapinosis is a sneaky kind of rhetoric—it means the saying of very serious things in offhand language, in vernacular, even in slang" (*Errata* 61). Take Bowering's frequent references to things accidental. On a superficial level, an accident refers to a mishap often caused by inadequate planning or perception. For Bowering, on the other hand, the accidental illustrates the very nature of how we read and write narrative. He is fascinated by those moments when the discovery of meaning occurs "accidentally," for the accidental tends to prompt both a sudden recognition of interpretive processes and an invitation to integrate accidental meaning into a narrative of origins and causes. In *Errata*, for example, Bowering links his notion of the accidental to "intertextuality," which he says works best "as a series that looks accidental, that makes an order by apparent coincidence, synchronicity, let us say" (6). In the same collection of brief essays, he tells an anecdote that illustrates his sense of writing and reading as intertextual, social, collaborative, and accidental:

> One morning I walked along Inglis Street in Halifax with Ted Blodgett, the poet. We saw a sign on the shop window: "Words." Then next door we saw a pizza oven with this word on it: "Blodgett." In moments such as that, literate people start looking for meaning. Or they pretend to, and often that pretense is made in fiction or poetry or conversation. Actually Blodgett and I knew that there was no meaning in the

coincidence on Inglis Street.  In fact, the lack of meaning is what made the event delightful.  There is a lesson for the reader of contemporary poetry in this.  (65)

By reading such "texts," he says, the reader becomes aware of his or her role as a maker of meaning.  These aleatory moments constitute the brief epiphanies of Bowering's art: what they point toward is the necessity of a shaping consciousness to borrow and intertwine texts in new, meaningful arrangements and contexts.  The "truly" accidental occurrence, like all texts, remains literally "meaningless" until the reader activates its significance.  Meaning resides in reading, not in texts.  For Bowering, the accidental thus becomes an aesthetic principle asserting the ascendancy of process over product.  Accordingly, he describes his writing, or rather (ironically as seems appropriate) his *Selected Poems* is sub-titled "particular accidents"[1]—collisions between words and world, where both author and reader collaborate as accessories before, during, and after the fact.  One may distinguish, of course, between the truly capricious and that which merely "looks" unplanned.  But Bowering seems to be saying that, since all language acts are socially constructed and therefore essentially collaborative, and since we do not have absolute control over the dynamics of that collaboration, some element of chance influences the way we construct meaning at any given moment.  We never perceive the text the same way twice—not because the text changes, but because we are not the same people we were a moment ago.

If the accidental informs interpretation, it also informs composition.  More particularly it informs the writing of a work such as *Burning Water*.  Bowering, indeed, sees the whole inspiration for his novel as accidental:

> With *Burning Water* it started *by accident* when I was in London, Ontario and I couldn't write about that place.  I don't know how it happened, or why it happened, but I was in the library and I found Menzies' journal, which had been published by the B.C. government in 1933, or something like that.  I don't know why I picked it up, but I took it home and I read it.  ("Extra Basis" 59-60, italics added).

These aleatory moments insinuate themselves into all of Bowering's recent narratives, and they constitute a primary motivation for his writing and reading.  "What I really like in a story," says Bowering,

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[1]Robin Blazer, the editor of Bowering's *Selected Poems*, notes that the sub-title comes from Act V of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, where Prospero speaks the following:

> Sir, I invite your Highness and your train
> To my poor cell, where you shall take your rest
> For this one night; which part of it, I'll waste
> With such discourse as, I not doubt, shall make it
> Go quick away: the story of my life,
> And the particular accidents gone by
> Since I came to this Isle.

is that sometimes you have an experience when you are writing fiction, that something just happens nicely and you didn't think it was going to happen and it works and you say, 'Whoopee!' As if you were an outsider reading it and saying, 'Whoopee!' I love it when I find in somebody, or even in myself, a passage in a story that makes reference to twenty other things that have happened in that book. Not necessarily logical ones, like repetitive colour, or an object, or something like that. ("Extra Basis" 61).

Bowering likens such moments of perception to "reading a system that you don't know, but are beginning to know" (61).

Accidents suggest small tears in the otherwise ostensibly seamless fabric of patterns that make interpretation predictable, comfortable, and seemingly objective. To understand the accidental in narrative we need to take note of perception—of how we perceive, of how we read. "I'm more interested in perception than structure" (29), says Bowering in *Craft Slices*; and elsewhere he muses,

I would like to write a book, let us say a novel, an historical novel, in which once in a while a page is an actual mirror. If the reader has been deluded into thinking that the book "mirrors reality" or "holds the mirror up to history," the appearance of her own reading face might serve to shock her out of that error. (*Errata* 62)

The small shocks that Bowering sends his unwary readers argue for a renewed focus on epistemology,[2] and they repeatedly remind us that we are at least partly responsible for what we know and see: "reality is in the I of the beholder" (*Craft Slices* 28). As participants in, and co-creators of, the discourse, we need to recognise that simple inside/outside divisions will not hold:

The place, the "out there," is not prior to human perception or activity; it is the result of someone's being in the world. 'Environment' is not possible, because one cannot be surrounded by something he is a part of. (*Errata* 38)

Thus we do not so much "enter" the discourse; we become aware that we are already inscribed in (and by) discourse.

Only by refocusing his reader's attention on discourse as process, rather than as product, can Bowering establish a rhetorically aware audience. He is a writer profoundly concerned with the ethics of reading and writing—with teaching appropriate modes of response. "Here is what one wants his reader to learn and know," he states explicitly in *Errata*: "that writing and imagining can be done, can still be done. One wants them to notice thinking, not buy thought. That's thinking, not thinking about" (18). He wants his readers to engage the proposition that perception is a political act, that "we change the world by the manners

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[2]Bowering writes in "Modernism Could Not Last Forever," "A few years ago I told Frank Davey that I thought modernism was ontological in purpose, & post-modernism is epistemological" (*The Mask* 82).

in which we perceive" (*Craft Silences* 91). Bowering's rhetorical purpose, then, is not simply a self-serving search for a postmodernism audience; his sense of the political significance of language informs the shape of his artistic vision—a vision that has, I think, special relevance for those of us who teach reading and writing in Canada.

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# THE AFFECTIVE PLOT: RESEARCH ON READING LITERATURE
/ / / DAVID S. MIALL

> Poetry [is] a rationalized dream dealing . . . to manifold Forms our own Feelings, that never perhaps were attached by us consciously to our own personal Selves. . . —— O there are Truths    below the Surface in the subject of Sympathy, & how we *become* that which we understandly [*sic*] behold & hear, having, how much God perhaps only knows, created part even of the Form.    (Coleridge, Notebooks, II: 2086)

The domain of reader response theory among North American scholars has been in a lively state of cultivation over the last fifteen years or so. But "theory" is largely what it has remained: with the notable exceptions of Norman Holland and David Bleich, literary theorists have elaborated a variety of reading theories but have shown no interest in studying actual readers. The difficulties and contradictions apparent among the theories might be thought to indicate that some empirical testing of theoretical claims would be timely, but few critics consider this possibility, and those that do declare their indifference to such a project (see for example Culler, 1975, p. 123; 1981, p. 129). All we have, therefore, are stories of reading, which may be as fictional as the narratives being consumed by their protagonist (or is it antagonist? or helper?), the putative reader. In fact, in one

recent account of the scene, Elizabeth Freund's (1987) primer *The Return of the Reader*, the contradictory state of the field is taken to indicate that "it has a past rather than a future" (p. 10).

I am more optimistic. I believe that the process of reading literary texts is amenable to investigation, and that the most important work lies in the future. This is because effective research in this area will require an interdisciplinary competence which, given the current specializations taught in literature departments, few scholars are able to develop. Yet, like certain recent innovative developments in the sciences, the cutting edge for research involves combining fields——in this case, fields which normally have little or no understanding of one another——to produce a discipline that draws on literary theory, psychology, and (I am coming to think) artificial intelligence. The view of reading that will emerge will undoubtedly owe something to existing reader response theory, but it is already clear from existing studies that the behaviour of actual readers bears little relationship to the readers postulated by Fish, Riffaterre, Barthes, or Culler. It is already becoming clear that, on the one hand, readers vary far more, one from another, than the major theories would allow (except, once again, for Holland and Bleich); that, on the other hand, textual features seem to play an important determining role in directing response, initiating certain interpretive strategies that have so far received little attention. But for me the most interesting finding has been the significant contribution to literary response of the reader's feelings. Feeling is not just an outcome of reading, an after-effect: it appears to play a central role in the interpretive process itself.

To attribute a constructive role to feeling is, of course, to cut across a long-standing and still current debate about the place and role of emotion among psychologists. The standard view has usually been to associate emotion with disruptions of the cognitive system: for example, the "interrupt" model, most recently elaborated by George Mandler (1984, p. 46); another recent and more sophisticated model in this tradition is that of Oatley and Johnson-Laird (1987), who claim that emotion comes into play during the transition between one cognitive process and another. In literary response, by contrast, feeling appears to be the primary mode for registering a response and for its subsequent development. There are two major reasons for seeing emotion as primary in relation to literary texts.

First, while a literary text draws upon our world knowledge, or schemata, it also calls such schemata into question. The concepts and values by which the reader understands the world are being put in a different light: what was familiar and unquestioned——the way the world is——becomes defamiliarized. It is this sense of the inadequacy of the familiar schemata that, in part, drives reading, because the reader is now obliged to *create* a perspective in which the unfolding narrative becomes meaningful. Given such uncertainty, the reader appears to have recourse to feeling to provide a context within which to develop an alternative perspective.

Second, it is apparent that the diction of literary texts (most obviously poetry, but also other genres) contains features, such as alliteration, ellipsis, or metaphor, that diverge from normal language use——a property that Mukarovsky called foregrounding. Readers' sensitivity to foregrounding in narrative has been shown in several important studies by Russell Hunt and Douglas Vipond, who called a range of such story features "evaluations" (see for example, Hunt and Vipond, 1986). In a study of response to foregrounding we are carrying out here at Alberta (with Don Kuiken of the Department of Psychology) we have found a high correlation between readers' ratings of story segments for feeling and the presence of foregrounding in the segments. Since the initial response to foregrounding is defamiliarizing, it seems probable that the key feature of defamiliarization is feeling.

Defamiliarization is often cited as a central effect of literary texts: critics from Coleridge (1817/1965), through Shklovsky (1917/1965), to Roger Fowler (1986) have argued that one function of literature is to dehabituate perception. For example, according to Coleridge (in a well-known passage of the *Biographia Literaria*), the intention of Wordsworth's poetry is to arouse the reader

> by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us; an inexhaustible treasure, but for which, in consequence of the film of familiarity and selfish solicitude, we have eyes yet see not, ears that hear not, and hearts that neither feel nor understand. (Coleridge, 1965, p. 169)

But more important, having established a response, the evidence suggests that feeling then organizes cognitive functioning to support or elaborate it. To illustrate this, here is another comment by Coleridge. He is talking here, in his notebook in 1803, about the emotion of grief, but what he says is true, I think, quite often of other emotions as well. It is best to talk of a grief, he says, since

> Unspoken Grief is a misty medley, of which the real affliction only plays the first fiddle——blows the Horn, to a scattered mob of obscure feelings &c. Perhaps, at certain moments a single almost insignificant Sorrow may, by association, bring together all the little relicts of pain & discomfort, bod·ly & mental, that we have endured even from Infancy. —— (Coleridge, 1957-73, I:1599)

As this suggests, emotion is able to transcend the normal logical boundaries by which we categorize experience: I call this the cross-domain power of emotion. The stories we tell about ourselves often follow this quite different logic of emotion: having established a certain emotion, a series of different, otherwise unconnected events are brought in as evidence to extend, augment, or justify it.

Another feature of this aspect of emotion is this: that in organizing and relating memories or ideas below the level of consciousness, changes in ideas may take place in advance of our conscious awareness of them (perhaps some cannot be made conscious). In this sense, emotion anticipates trains of thought that become conscious only later. And

perhaps, by linking certain memories and ideas, new connections and new implications may be generated in thought (although this probably doesn't happen in a significant way very often). Thus emotion anticipates, and helps to guide, a cognitive process.

Given the importance of affect in organizing cognitive functions (if you accept the argument so far), it has also seemed to me probable that what we call the self must be defined primarily in terms of the emotions. The predominantly cognitive account of the self provided in social psychology——the self as schema——seems too static: it makes better sense to conceptualize the self in more dynamic terms, embodied in emotions which, through their power over the memory and their anticipatory function, present issues for action. To put it simply, a given emotion anticipates a future state of the self, and this requires action either to avoid it or to bring it into being.

The work of McCoy (1977) within Personal Construct Psychology is helpful here. She takes further Kelly's account of emotion, suggesting the specific issues that the main emotions present in relation to the self. Speaking of the self as the core construct system, McCoy then shows systematically how the emotions arise in relation to this system. For example, love is "validation of one's core structure;" fear is "awareness of an imminent incidental change in one's core structure," etc. The advantage of this approach lies in its fertility for suggesting the agenda of significant experiences, memories, and ideas, that are likely to be implicated by a given emotion (see also Miall, 1989a).

In summary, there are three functions of affect that can help to explain the process of reading. In the empirical work I have been doing with readers, I have begun to obtain evidence for each of these functions. First, affect is cross-domain: where a significant affect has been elicited by the text for a given scene, for example, other information to account for the affect is available from the reader's own experience——information which may normally be unavailable to interpret the schemata relevant to the scene. In this way the reader is impelled to re-evaluate the schemata currently in use (Miall, 1989b). The cross-domain work of affect also serves to relate narrative elements across conceptual boundaries. Common examples in narrative are the transfer of mood from the weather or some other aspect of the setting to interpret the meaning of a meeting between two characters or a given event.

Second, affect is anticipatory. During reading the meaning of the text as a whole (probably several alternative and conflicting meanings) is created at a level beyond the contributory values and schemata: this is kept on-line, as it were, by a series of affective controls over relevant information and implications. Through stories, as William Doty put it, "we extend ourselves towards becoming other than we are" (Doty, 1975, p. 94). It has also been shown empirically that readers of narratives anticipate, but that readers of ordinary discourse don't (Olson, Mack, and Duffy, 1981). This affective sense of the potential whole acts something like a hypothesis, guiding the reader to seek for evidence to support or disconfirm it.

Thirdly, affect is self-referential. By arousing affect in the first place, the text draws into play some of the major concerns of the self, perhaps concerns that would normally remain hidden. Through the defamiliarizing work of the text, the reader is required to some degree to re-evaluate her aims and her self concept. Given that the concerns of the self are reshaped by the text, it can be seen how each reader tends to create her own text during reading. Whatever the ostensible meaning of the narrative the reader knows that the story being told didn't happen in reality. The real, but submerged, plot of every literary narrative is the changing of the self of the reader: that shift in the position and meaning of the self that an attentive reading of a literary text brings about.

There are several reasons for thinking that further research on reading will be rewarding. First, research findings in this domain will enable us to develop more effective teaching and learning strategies in the classroom. Second, if a better grasp of the mental processes underlying literary reading is obtained, then our understanding of psychology will also benefit; we may see more clearly the continuities of literary reading with other human processes or what differentiates reading from such processes. Third, it may help us to see better the social place of reading, the "ecological" role it fulfils in the life of the individual and in a culture such as ours——a potentially transforming role, as Coleridge put it in the epigraph to this essay. Through reading, he tells us, we somehow "become that which we understandly behold & hear."

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## WRITING PROGRAMMES AND CANADIAN UNIVERSITIES
/ / / Katherine McManus

Helping students to form and organise their thoughts into articulate statements, paragraphs, and essays has become the work of student and faculty tutors at writing labs, centres, or programmes in many Canadian universities. In these programmes students work to improve their writing skills either with the help of a member of faculty, or with the help of a graduate or undergraduate student-tutor. According to David King of Innis College, at the University of Toronto, the first writing lab in Canada was opened in 1964 at Innis.[1] Responses from a questionnaire sent to as many writing programme coordinators as I could locate, indicated that the tutorial approach to teaching writing in Canada is active and growing, and seems to exist across the country—up to the border of British Columbia. I received completed questionnaires from fifteen writing programme coordinators at eleven universities.[2]

Since the mix of standards, students, and budgets is unique for each campus, the programme each campus develops reflects its own needs and fiscal reality. For example, the service itself, that is—who is helped and how that help is provided to the student—varies from a coordinated programme of courses in writing skills at the University of Manitoba, to both a programme of courses and tutorial help at the University of Winnipeg, to tutorial help alone at most other universities. When universities decide to offer courses to help students improve their basic writing skills they are frequently offered separately from the English Department. At the University of Manitoba the writing programme coordinator arranges courses for four to five hundred students a year. The courses vary in focus from "Writing About Literature" to "Intermediate Writing and Research." These composition courses include a classroom component supplemented with one-to-one conferences and small group "peer" workshops. In order to prepare the teachers of these courses, the programme offers a course to graduate students and new faculty called "Teaching Composition at University."

At the University of Winnipeg a comprehensive programme of interdisciplinary courses, one-to-one tutoring in the Writing Centre, and computer-aided instruction combine to help the students pursue academic excellence. Winnipeg's programme is also separate from all other disciplines and has its own faculty. It is the most comprehensive and well-equipped writing programme in a Canadian university. In addition to being a resource for students who need help, it is also a source of experience for student tutors who plan a career in

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[1]David King supplied information about the history of the Innis Writing Centre, its guidelines, and promotional information sent to students along with his completed questionnaire.

[2]The university coordinators who responded, roughly from west to east: University of Alberta, University of Calgary, University of Manitoba, University of Winnipeg, Trent University, Queen's University, University of Toronto (Innis, Woodsworth, and University College), York University (Glendon, Atkinson, and York faculty of arts), Concordia, University of New Brunswick, and Memorial University of Newfoundland.

teaching. The Programme's undergraduate student tutors are able to earn credits toward their education degree as well as gain valuable experience while working in the programme's writing centre and microcomputer lab.

Many other universities offer only a tutorial service. These vary from the kind of programme that uses faculty from the English Department to tutor a few hours each week from their offices, to a programme that has its own funding and its own space and equipment, and which uses graduate and/or undergraduate student tutors.

There are now two writing programmes among the fifteen that have identical kinds of staff. The staff in all of the programmes is made up from a combination of full- and part-time faculty, student tutors, and/or full- and part-time administrative staff. For example, five of the programmes do not have student tutors at all. At the University of Manitoba, University of Alberta, Mount Allison, Atkinson College-York, and Trent, the tutoring is done by faculty who were either hired to work in the programme or who spend part of their time in the programme and part of it in the classroom. On the other hand, at Innis, University of Calgary, Glendon College-York, there is a complete staff, but graduate students are also hired each semester to tutor. Six other schools have a small permanent staff; often the coordinator alone is permanent, and the remaining staff is comprised of graduate and/or undergraduate tutors.

The common factor for all of the programmes is perhaps the sense of urgency each has to find solutions to the many problems students have thinking critically and writing. As we work with students in conferences, one-to-one, it is evident that one of the more prevalent difficulties they have with writing is their loss of their own voice in the midst of the large institutions we have created. In our role as tutors we struggle to mitigate the effects of an impersonal education through our attempts to help the student gain her voice and sense of social connection to the other voices around her. As Gary Olson stated in *Writing Centers: Theory and Administration* (1984), "The chief pedagogy of writing centers, tutoring, recognizes that writing is at once the most personal and the most social task students engage in" (intro, xi).[3] Although seeming at odds with each other, the student's ability to articulate his own ideas, then communicate them with a sense of another's needs (his audience) helps him learn through writing and revising. The tutor's ability to help the student through this process is developed, in part, from the tutor's own personal and social involvement in a writing programme that provides a model for learning that reflects this philosophy of engagement.

The responses to my questionnaire revealed that writing programme coordinators have many concerns about their ability to deliver a programme that truly engages the students on a personal and social level. For instance, few of the programmes have enough staff or space to welcome students to one-to-one conferences as often as the student needs help.

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[3]Gary Olson's book is published by NCTE. Although it is now a bit dated, it contains useful information and a carefully articulated view of the "liberatory" writing centre.

Also, at some universities faculty or administrators limit the kind of help a student is allowed to receive, thereby limiting the student's opportunity to learn about learning.

Even though writing programmes do not enjoy liberal funding and on many campuses they are relegated to the "continuing education" role of remedial learning, their numbers continue to grow. According to a recent survey of writing instruction in Canada completed by Roger Graves, "[f]orty-five percent of all faculties [during the 1980s] established some kind of writing instruction, and over half enhanced or added to their current offerings."[4] This growth is the result of a critical need to help students learn to learn though writing. A need that writing programme coordinators, as well as their counterparts, within the disciplines, will be responding to on an increasing number of campuses in the next few years.

*Writing Centre*
*Memorial University*

### NOTICE

I am still attempting to gather information about writing programmes or centres at Canadian universities, colleges, and junior colleges. If you coordinate tutorial services on your campus, or know someone who does, please write to me. I will ask you to complete a questionnaire and return it to me so that I can continue to compile data on writing programmes in Canada. Write to me at: Katherine McManus, Coordinator, Writing Centre, Science Building, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, NF, A1B 3X9 or bitnet your address to me: KMCMANUS@MUN.

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## WHO SAYS THE REAL WORLD IS 'OUT THERE'?:
## A RESPONSE TO WAYNE LUCEY                      / / / LAURENCE STEVEN

"What good is a degree if you can't get a job?"

——Laurentian University Student General Association response to the proposed closing of the campus employment centre for students.

**W**ayne Lucey (in *Inkshed* 9.2) expresses dissatisfaction with "dummy runs through forms that would be of little value once [his] students were out in the real world," and continues: "What did it matter that they could write a short essay answer from regurgitated bits of information about setting in *Macbeth*?" (20). What does it matter? From one perspective, not much; from another, a great deal. Let's take the second first. Where would it be of value to know how to produce the formula answers Lucey laments of in relation to

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[4]Roger Graves distributed a summary of the results from his survey of writing instruction in Canada entitled "Who Can Know What Deans Think?!" which accompanied his presentation at the National Writing Conference in Winnipeg in November, 1990.

*Macbeth?*  Where but in his "buck stops here" real world.  The common genres there are the report, the case study, the clinical history, the memo, the proposal.  The student who has been trained to be one of Mr. Gradgrind's little "pitchers," waiting to be filled in order to pour the stuff out again, is (with relatively minor generic adjustments) suitably prepared for these genres, and so for the world that values them.  That "real" world writing occasion has purpose and audience with a vengeance, so much so that it leaves (*pace* Lucey) little room for the writer to "explore and shape in order to make sense" (20).

This confining quality of "real" world writing was evident in two quite different presentations at our October 1990 conference on "Contextual Literacy: Writing Across the Curriculum" at Laurentian [the proceedings are forthcoming; we'll announce them in *Inkshed*].  Graham Smart told us how the expectations of senior readers at the Bank of Canada determined what went into the reports and proposals presented to them to such a degree that Smart was able to articulate identifiable genres which the Bank could then teach to its new employees.  As a writing consultant hired by the Bank, this was his job; streamlining the process even further, to make it more cost effective one presumes.  Looking at the same process from a very different perspective, Kim Fedderson told us how community colleges in Ontario are committed (often despite resistance from their English departments) to "writing in the occupations."  The result, for the student, is indoctrination into what Fedderson terms "limited literacies," discourses of passivity and subordination.

Given these observations, there is a certain irony in Lucey's creating of a new assignment to help his students escape the dummy runs.  He hopes to show his students what writing is like in the real world, so he has his class observe the actual writing practices of elementary students.  While acknowledging that the "artificial nature may still be there," he stresses that "this was reality for those elementary students" (22).  Yet what did his students find?  "The young writers need a topic, instruction on how to do the task, to have identified what was wrong with the text, praise and a grade from the teacher" (21).  And his students find this routine a problem.  Yet how different from this is Smart's Bank of Canada employee or Fedderson's community college student?  Or even the secondary school classroom regurgitating "bits of information about setting in *Macbeth*" that Lucey so deplores?  Writing in Lucey's "real world" *is*, very often, a matter of actualizing the dummy runs learned at all levels of the school system, university included.  Clearly, the school system *is* preparing students for the world outside, real or not.

Don't mistake me; I fully agree with Lucey that the dummy runs are a distortion of what English teachers (and by extension, teachers of writing) should be doing.  At the outset I said there were two perspectives on how much the dummy runs mattered to the "real" world.  So far I've simply been trying to point out that to turn to "real" assignments as he has done is tautological since the students move from *doing* dummy runs to *observing* them being done; the supposed real world values them.  However, from another perspective, formula teaching appears antithetical to the *real*ising aspect of education.  We discover this more liberating avenue of response when we identify the characteristics of "reality" that Lucey values:  genuineness; purpose; liveliness; exploration; shaping; making sense;

collaboration; independence; discovery; personal voice; self-realisation. To *realise* these values we need not transform our students into quasi-scientific ethnographers, armed with notebooks to record observations; rather we need only entice our students into exploratory, heuristic encounters with language, within whose horizons any human reality comes to be.

George Whalley is worth listening to on this:

> although language suffers monstrous distortion and sad erosion in careless hands, it is at its best the vehicle of an inexhaustible and fruitful inventiveness. It may be that it is through language as much as anything else that we discover integrity of purpose and integrity of action, recognising that by taking irreversible acts of judgement and decision we change and make ourselves from inside (for better, for worse) . . . (199-200)

> I do not say that the study of English language and literature is the only line along which these ends can be realised. I merely say that this study provides an exceptional opportunity and privilege—in being able to concentrate attention on the language we speak and use, upon the literature made in our language, and upon the educational resources that these disclose to us. (200-201)

> Literature . . . by its very nature . . . is the opposite of an escape; imagination is a realising-process, making the world real, making us real; in this way, poetry is—as Collingwood has said—not an enchantment but a disenchantment. (199)

> These propositions probably sound "unrealistic," "out of touch with the modern temper," useless in an "age of computer technology." Nevertheless, I believe that it is our duty to see our responsibilities as clearly as we can and to carry them out. It is not, I think, the business of a university to mirror modern circumstances, but rather to secure the habit of looking at those circumstances narrowly and critically—if need be with mockery, even self-mockery. (201)

To push this inquiry a bit further I'd like to look briefly at a case; and given Lucey's initial reference to *Macbeth*, I'll follow suit by quoting Samuel Johnson on *Macbeth*. Encapsulated here, I think, we find both the formulaic "dummy run," and the recognition of the heuristic nature of language:

> When Macbeth [the speaker is actually Lady Macbeth] is confirming himself in the horrid purpose of stabbing his king, he breaks out amidst his emotions into a wish natural to a murderer,
>
> > — —Come, thick night!
> > And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,
> > That my keen knife see not the wound it makes;
> > Nor heav'n peep through the blanket of the dark,
> > To cry, hold, hold!— —
>
> In this passage is exerted all the force of poetry, that force which calls new powers into being, which embodies sentiment, and animates matter; yet perhaps scarce any man now peruses it without some

> disturbance of his attention from the counteraction of the words to the ideas . . . . we cannot surely but sympathise with the horrors of a wretch about to murder his master, his friend, his benefactor, who suspects that the weapon will refuse its office, and start back from the breast which he is preparing to violate. Yet this sentiment is weakened by the name of an instrument used by butchers and cooks in the meanest employments; we do not immediately conceive that any crime of importance is to be committed with a *knife*; or who does not, at last, from the long habit of connecting a knife with sordid offices, feel aversion rather than terror? (V: 127-128)

Johnson's surety here never fails to evoke laughter in my students; it is so clearly (and anachronistically) a case of prior sense of what is appropriate disabling the reader from encountering something new. Johnson proceeds through the dummy run: Macbeth is a nobleman committing regicide; the genre is tragedy; consequently "knife" is obviously wrong. Johnson, at this point, sounds like Rymer castigating Shakespeare because Iago is not a "proper" (i.e. Aristotelian) soldier. But Johnson is not Rymer; in fact it is Johnson more than anyone before Coleridge who enabled us to recognize Shakespeare's genius, to *read* him. Rymer could never have talked about poetry as a force calling new powers into being, embodying sentiment, and animating matter. Here we have Whalley's view of language as a *real*ising power. Johnson is exemplary because he at once manifests a heightened sensitivity to language, and a debilitating blindness to it. Why can't he see that Shakespeare's use of knife is supremely right? Isn't it appropriate for a butcher to use a butcher's tool? Shouldn't a sordid deed employ a sordid instrument? Isn't regicide the meanest of mean employments? For Johnson's sensitivity to language to enlighten his blindness he would have had to allow the various voices of Shakespeare's heuristic art to lead him into even newer territory. But Johnson could not make sufficient allowances. The uncouth tone of many of these voices was something his Augustan sensibility—*his* "real" world of decorum, propriety, and elegance—could not finally countenance.

Interestingly, Michael Hoechsmann's article on Bakhtin (also in *Inkshed* 9.2) pulls together a number of the threads I've strung out here. Johnson's Augustan sensibility, Lucey's formulaic literature classroom, the formulaic elementary classroom his students observed, Fedderson's limited literacies, Smart's Bank genres—all of these tend to monologism in their denying of the "realising process" of language and imagination. On the other hand, the "multi-languaged consciousness realised in the novel" (Bakhtin in Hoechsmann 15) bespeaks that genre's dialogic nature, its heteroglossia and polyphony. Thus it is that the novel "has become the site for our culturally significant narratives" (15). In the novel we have a focused occasion to discover who we are. Hoechsmann sums up his note on heteroglossia in Bakhtin by saying "heteroglossia distinguishes the novel from the epic, and, in our time, the novel from ethnography" (15). As I understand this he is saying that whereas the novel enacts the many cultural voices and languages, in fact *is* these in dialogue, ethnography, while methodically observing a culture, strives to remain deliberately outside it in order to preserve scientific objectivity.

Here, then, we come back to Lucey's assignment. His students, as neophyte ethnographers, saw the limits of the teacher-student relationship they were observing.

"They sensed there was a genuine need for these young writers to grow away from the teacher . . . to pursue their own interests and write for more than the teacher" (21-22). These observations are good ones, but where do his students go from here? To help them escape from dummy runs, Lucey gave them a "real" assignment which turned out to be the observation of dummy runs. Once the students come to this realisation they have largely exhausted the potential in the occasion for their own self-discovery. Because the elementary classroom displays a monologic relationship with a teacher filling a number of (willing) Gradgrindian pitchers, the dialogue of voices and languages which might engage or entangle the young ethnographers in a realising process is absent. They may be prepared "for the next level of education" since they have experienced "what education students will be involved in in the field" (22), but surely this begs questions about the field.

I suggest that Lucey might find real writing assignments in a return to literature; not literature as a compendium of forms, themes, images, settings, etc. to be ferreted out, but as "the site of our culturally significant narratives," a world to be encountered. Literature thus confronted by students, according to Whalley, "will begin to initiate the processes of self-education and the widening and clarifying of their awareness" (205). He goes on (and I'll give him the final word):

> This is clearly not what most students expect; it is not what their pervious experience leads them to expect; it is not what "society" shows any signs of wanting them to expect. And many will run for cover when it becomes clear that the undertaking is neither self-indulgent nor reducible to formula, and that the placid absorptive qualities of a sponge will not quite serve the purpose. (205)

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## Research Reports

Currently I am conducting a study of what happens when a literary theory course organised as a collaborative investigation is conducted on a computer network. Such a course is one in which there are no lectures, no textbook, and few teacher-led class discussions. Its primary activity is the investigation by students, primarily in the library, of the field of "literary theory." The investigation is essentially a repeated cycle of question generation, library research to produce written reports which are read and dialogically responded to by, the student. In this course, students compose and share their reports, engage in written conversations with the instructor, and participate in written "bulletin board style" discussions on literary theory, the organization of the course, and the computer medium itself, through the medium of a local area network. The network is structured to allow them to access common word processing, bibliographical database, mail, and bulletin board programs. The project is a joint study with IBM, which is partially underwriting the hardware and software costs and providing some consultation on administering the network.

RUSS HUNT
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My primary research field is British Romantic poetry, in particular Coleridge. I have been studying Coleridge's interest in psychology as this is reflected in his poetry and his prose writings, especially the Notebooks. I direct the biannual Coleridge Conference, held in Somerset in England. I also work on reader response theory, where I have been carrying out experimental work with readers investigating the role of emotion in structuring response to narrative (I am currently collaborating in this with D. Kuiken in the Psychology Department at Alberta). In addition I am interested in the development of computer methods for research and teaching. Now that Alberta has a well-equipped Arts Computing Lab I am able to hold sessions of my regular English courses in the lab, where I introduce students to text analysis, data bases, and hypertext. I have also been trying to develop alternative learning methods in the literature classroom, where the main focus is on students working in small groups and carrying out projects.

DAVID MIALL
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## THESIS: Historical Figures of the Body *in* Rhetoric/ Re-membering the Body *of* Rhetorical History

For my doctoral thesis, I undertake a revisionary analysis of a heretofore marginalized area of the discipline of rhetoric: the rhetoric of the *body*. My study's primary objectives are a) to re-claim the body as an effective communicator and affective knower, and b) to develop a new critical paradigm for the rhetorical analysis of the body as figured in rhetoric, and of bodily figurations implicit in the re-membering of rhetorical history.

Three sets of questions guide my analysis: 1. What is the epistemological role and status of the rhetor's body? In particular, what is the interplay between the body perceived as an unmediated, natural source of sensual, non-verbal communication, and the body understood as culturally constructed and historically mediated through symbolic language? 2. What rhetorical tropes and techniques inform the descriptions of the speaker's or writer's body in the selected texts? Specifically, a) what are the gendered properties of their languages about the body, and b) how do the stylistic, or rhetorical "bodies" of the texts themselves interact with the rhetor's body figured in the texts? 3. How do the results of the above analysis provide new insights and critical tools for deciphering the historiographic desire to re-member the disciplinary "body" of rhetoric as a whole?

My study has two main stages. First, I respond to questions 1 and 2 by conducting a comparative analysis of texts from two culturally divergent moments in the history of bodily rhetoric. From the 18th and early 19th century elocutionary movement in Britain, I examine the art of gesture as discussed in the works of Gilbert Austin (*Chironomia* 1806), Thomas Sheridan (*A Course of Lectures on Elocution* 1762), and John Walker (*Elements of Elocution* 1781). I compare these treatments of the body in rhetoric with articulations of the feminine/lesbian body as a powerful textual, rhetorical process in the works of Quebecoise feminist Nicole Brossard (*The Aerial Letter* 1985, *These Our Mothers or: The Disintegrating Chapter* 1977), and French feminist Hélène Cixous ("Castration or Decapitation?" 1976, "The Laugh of the Medusa" 1975, *The Newly Born Woman* 1975).

In the next stage, I address my third guiding question through an analysis of the 18th century elocutionists' desire to rehabilitate the mutilated corpus, or body of rhetoric by filling out the missing fifth canon of *actio*. I then examine the bodily figurations implicit in contemporary attempts by rhetoricians Susan Jarratt, James Murphy, and John Schilb to re-member the discipline of rhetoric. Lastly, I discuss what figurations of the body—whether the body in rhetoric or the body of rhetoric—suggest themselves for the future of rhetorica studies.

PHILIPPA SPOEL
*University of Waterloo*

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## THESIS: Toward a Concept of Literacy: An Analysis of disciplinary perspectives and their implications for an educational concept of literacy

This thesis is a response to the general lack of agreement among educators about what is entailed in becoming literate, what cognitive effects literacy produces, and what and whose purposes literacy should serve. It assumes that literacy in a culture is a complex phenomenon and that educational practice intended to foster literacy should be informed and driven by an articulated and comprehensive concept. In order to answer the general question of how educators might conceptualise literacy, the thesis investigates four interconnected dimensions of its development: the nature of the relations 1) between orality and literacy and 2) between the development of literacy and the forms and uses of writing; 3) the effects of literacy on thinking and development of knowledge in the individual and the culture and 4) the conditions under which these effects are achieved.

The thesis draws from the disciplines of classical studies, anthropology, cultural history, sociology, and psychology a cluster of works which examine the development and effects of literacy from their particular disciplinary perspectives. By means of these works, the thesis explores the dimensions of literacy development,

using as a point of departure the claims for its cognitive effects which derive from profiles of the classical Greek transition from orality to literacy. These claims are set against the studies of anthropologists which are seen to qualify the extreme claim that writing affects thinking processes and to suggest a commonality of those processes across cultures despite diversity of forms of expression, diversity which may in part be accounted for by the technology of writing and the uses to which it is put. The particular attitudes, beliefs, meanings, and uses which characterise literacy in Western culture are shown to have been developed gradually and in response to evolving socio-political conditions, the potentialities of the technology being realised in responses to the diverse needs it generates. Whether and what kind of needs it generates indicates the degree and quality of the literacy and, of course, the nature of the social context. Ethnographic and empirical studies in sociology were used to illuminate the factors which affect the role of literacy and govern access, mode of acquisition, and the value of literacy. The individual, inheritor of whatever cultural-textual knowledge and technical competencies are made available, becomes literate in social settings which psychological studies suggest should be characterised by engagement, intention, and use of the imagination.

To achieve a critical literacy is to learn to relate to the world and experience in a particular way but does not imply attachment to a particular canon or linguistic dialectic. Rather, to be literate is to engage oneself with the forms of textual competencies and to use that knowledge and skills to act upon and within the social world. Becoming literate seems to involve being deeply immersed in the multiple genres that express cultural meanings and in a social context characterised by the values of community rather than colony. What this means for teaching practice is that it will offer constant demonstrations of the attitudes, beliefs and values of a transformative, critical literacy, will discourage dependence on rule-governed learning, and will be coherent with the manner in which the child's imagination and consciousness is, at different stages, able to understand and grasp the world.

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# CALL FOR PAPERS

The *Canadian Journal of Education* (*CJE*) is planning a special issue on feminist pedagogy to be published in 1992. Submissions are invited from persons working in the foundational disciplines including sociology, psychology, philosophy and history or in interdisciplinary fields such as curriculum studies, women's studies, policy studies, and administrative studies. We are especially interested in articles that move beyond the experiential to theorise feminist pedagogy and to situate it analytically in relation to critical pedagogy, progressive education, popular education, and feminist theory.

Length:  25 pages (double spaced)

We are also planning a special section which will include shorter descriptive accounts of specific attempts to engage in feminist pedagogical practices in the classroom, and notes on research-in-progress.

Length:  5 pages (double spaced)

We encourage you to submit an indication of interest in the form of a brief abstract as soon as possible. Final deadline for submission is 15 June 1991. Please submit 7 copies and follow Instructions to Authors to be found in Volume 15, Number 3 (Summer 1990), or any later issue of the *CJE*. The *CJE* is a refereed journal and the usual review procedures will apply. Please send any abstracts, queries, and/or papers to: Linda Briskin (York)/ Rebecca Coulter (Western), Guest Editors of Special Issue on Feminist Pedagogy, c/o *Canadian Journal of Education*, Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia, 2125 Main Mall, Vancouver, B.C., V6T 1Z5.

# PROGRAM: INKSHED 8

## MONTRÉAL, APRIL 12-14, 1991

**FRIDAY EVENING** (Opening session will begin at 8:00 p.m.)

Lorri Neilsen: "Chrysanthemums and Open Spaces: Inkshed 8."
Phyllis Artiss, Lester Faigley, Russ Hunt, and Jim Reither: "Identification and Identity in Writing (and Other) Classrooms." (Part One)

## SATURDAY

Allan Neilsen: "Perplexity and the Culture of Inquiry."
Deborah Schnitzer and Catherine Taylor: "Making the Snow House Bigger: Traditional Forms of Assessment in a Non-Traditional Setting."
Michael Hoechsmann: "Fast Times: How Schooling is 'Lived' in a Consumer and Media Culture."
Joan Wasserman: "The Culture and Reflection of Rap, Heavy Metal, and Lou Reed: Poetry and Talk for the Classroom of the City."
    Artiss *et al.*: Part Two.
Fran Davis and Arlene Steiger: "The Language of Cultural Hierarchies in Academic Discourse."
Rick Coe: "The Plain Language Movement: Alternative Types of Reform."
Margaret Hundleby: "Errors and Expectations Across the Curriculum."
Susan Stevenson: "Teaching More than Writing in a Discipline."

## SUNDAY

Nan Johnson: "Teaching a Canon of Great Writers: Elitist Culture in the Composition Class."
Claudia Mitchell and Anne Cheverie: "Language, Literacy, and Popular Culture: New Research Perspectives."
Jane Ledwell-Brown: "Reader Response in a Business Setting: A Progress Report."
Susan Drain: "The U of T is Another Culture."
Janet Giltrow and Michele Valiquette: "The Outsider is Called In: Audiences in the Disciplines."
Artiss *et al.*: Part Three.