

Inkshed

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Newsletter of the Canadian Association for the Study of Writing and Reading
Volume 6, number 1. February 1987.

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Invention is a *dialectical process* in that the inventing individual(s) and the socioculture are co-existing and mutually defining. Their relationship is analogous to the relationship between Martin Buber's I and Thou (You): "I require a You to become; becoming I, I say You." New ideas are created by this dialectical partnership. Individual human agents always act in the context of their interconnections with others, as John Dewey has told us: "Individuals still do the thinking, desiring, and purposing, but *what* they think of is the consequence of their behavior upon that of others and that of others upon themselves." What is unique about the individual inventor is his or her particular way of interacting with others and with socioculture—as Dewey puts it, "a *distinctive* way of behaving in conjunction with and *connection* with other distinctive ways of acting, not a self-enclosed way of acting, independent of everything else." (35)

Karen Burke LeFevre, *Invention as a Social Act*, NCTE
Studies in Writing & Rhetoric (Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1987).

Inkshed

6.1 February 1987

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

1 September, for 15 September
15 October, for 1 November
1 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 (though 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.

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The great art of writing is the art of making people real to themselves with words.
Logan Pearsall Smith, *Afterthoughts*.

Inkshedders at CCCC, Atlanta (19–21 March 1987)

First, this most welcome announcement from *Inkshed* Consulting Editor **Phyllis Artiss** (Memorial University of Newfoundland):

This year the Canadian Caucus, in addition to holding its informal session, is sponsoring a full panel—on **Friday, March 20, from 5 to 6:30 p.m.** (The idea was kicked off at last year's CCCC in New Orleans and tossed about further in May at the Inkshed and CCTE conferences.) The session:

The Politics of Evaluation in Some Canadian Contexts

Catherine Foy-Schryer (University of Guelph and University of Louisville) will present the first paper, "The Process of Evaluation: Formative and Summative," drawing on a distinction made by Friere.

Kenna Manos (Nova Scotia College of Art and Design) will speak on "The Threat of Mass Testing: How Do We Prepare?"

The third presentation will be given collaboratively by **Katherine McManus** and **Jacqueline Howse**, both of the Memorial University Writing Centre. Their topic: "Evaluation in the Writing Centre: An Unresolvable Dilemma?"

Jean Chadwick (Memorial University of Newfoundland) will present the final paper, "A Bakhtinian Approach to Evaluation."

Anne Hungerford (Simon Fraser University) will be Recorder for the session; **Kent Walker** (Humber College) and **Phyllis Artiss** will Co-Chair.

(Phyllis says, "Thanks, Inkshedders, for ideas and encouragement.")

Further additions to last issue's list:

Jean Sanborn (Colby College, Waterville, ME) and former *Inkshed* Consulting Editor **Chris Bullock** (Alberta) will be empaneled together in a CCCC session. Check the program for session title, topics, time, and place.

Wendy Strachan (University of British Columbia) will be in Atlanta, at CCCC, but I'm not sure if she's presenting. Watch for her.

Inkshed Consulting Editor **Judy Segal** (Waterloo) will be presenting a paper entitled "The Role of the Technical Writing Teacher in the Literacy Education of Science and Technology Students." She tells me she'd sure like "to see some friendly faces" at her session—H17, scheduled for Friday afternoon from 1:45–3:00.

Then, in addition to the Pre-Convention Workshop he's chairing on "Teaching Writing as a Social Process" (on Wednesday), *Inkshed* Consulting Editor **Rick Coe** (Simon Fraser) will be giving a paper on Kenneth Burke. Again, check the program for details. (Check, too, the latest issue of *College English* (49.1 [January 1987]: 13–28) for Rick's lead article, "An Apology for Form; or, Who Took the Form Out of Process?")

Remember the Canadian Caucus session: Thursday, 19 March, 5:30–6:30p.m.

Finally, **Nan Johnson** (UBC)—whose article "Origin and Artifact: Classical Rhetoric in Modern Composition Texts" was published in the last issue of *English Quarterly* [19.3 (Fall 1986): 207–215]—will speak on "Future Directions in Rhetoric and Composition Studies" on a panel organized by Gary Tate: "The State of the Discipline." That session's scheduled for Thursday, 19 March, 10:45a.m.–12:00noon.

(And, by the way, two other Inksheddors also published articles in that issue of *English Quarterly*: Paul Nay-Brock's article is entitled "There will be a weeping and gnashing of teeth . . ." [186-195]; Marion Crowhurst's is entitled "Revision Strategies of Students at Three Grade Levels" [217-226].

I say: If you aren't a member of CCTE, you aren't [I presume] getting *EQ*; and if you aren't reading *EQ*, you're missing some important stuff. What's in those articles might not show up as citations in our own writing or talking, but they might well show up as traces in our thinking. That's where it all starts. That's how we get to know who we are. That's how we construct ourselves. Now, who will tell me the Latin for "End of Sermon"?)

Call for Papers

/// Rick Coe

The U.S. journal *College English* will in 1988 devote a special issue to Canada, and, more particularly, Canadian literature. Articles should be written in a way that Canadian specialists would find engaging, even provocative, but with an awareness that most *College English* readers know little about Canada and Canadian literature. The guest editors would like to receive proposals and manuscripts on the following topics:

- a. the Anglo-Canadian identity, explaining the cultural differences that may be said to make that identity different from the American;
- b. the French-Canadian identity, explaining the historical evolution of the French fact, and its role in the Canadian mosaic;
- c. a brief history of the development of English studies in Canada, with particular contrast to how the subject developed in the U.S.;
- d. an overview of Canadian literature, identifying and contextualizing the major literary texts and tendencies;
- e. an overview of Quebec literature, identifying the major texts, with special reference to those available in translation;
- f. discussion of strategies for introducing and teaching Canadian literature in post-secondary institutions in the U.S.;
- g. discussions of periods or schools in Canadian literature (in various genres);
- h. contemporary Canadian rhetoric and/or the teaching of composition in Canada today.

The editors would also like to receive new Canadian poems for this special issue.

Ideal length for article manuscripts: 12 typed pages.

Contributors wishing preliminary response to proposals or outlines should submit them by June 1, 1987; completed papers must be received by September 1, 1987. Send to one or the other of the guest editors—Peter Buitenhuis or Rick Coe, Department of English, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC V5A 1S6.

News from Nova Scotia

/// Susan Drain

Advanced Composition—Success and Setback

This fall we got approval for a second-year "Advanced Composition" course which will focus on logic, argument, style, and other aspects of writing only touched upon in our present "Theory and Practice of Writing." However, a proposed third-year "Seminar on Writing Theory" was put on hold, partly but by no means entirely for financial reasons.

The discussions brought out an interesting aspect of the ongoing debate about the place of composition in the university. Although I had been asked to "develop" the department's writing program, the direction of that development was not unanimously accepted outside the department. Some people criticized the proposed courses as elitist (if I understand the point correctly), because the courses had prerequisites and were clearly intended for students who were interested in writing and who probably already wrote quite well. It seemed that, for these critics, expansion of the writing program should mean providing more, and perhaps more specific, first-year service courses such as technical writing or business writing.

This point of view I take as an expression of our colleagues' concern for their students' writing competence, and their recognition that our present one-term course cannot eradicate all perceived incompetence. Clearly, a seminar in writing theory wouldn't directly attack that problem, and so, in a time of particular financial constraint, the course was shelved as insufficiently practical. Nevertheless, the delay is a setback in our ongoing attempts to win recognition for writing/composition/rhetoric as a valid intellectual study and practice, rather than as a necessary evil only tolerated for its utility.

Anyone else meet these reactions? Any comments? Advice?

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When a Writer Can't Write: Studies in Writer Block and Other Composing-Process Problems, ed. Mike Rose (New York: Guilford P, 1985. xii; 272.

Preface. 1. Donald H. Graves, Blocking and the Young Writer; 2. Reed Larson, Emotional Scenarios in the Writing Process: An Examination of Young Writers' Affective Experiences; 3. John A. Daly, Writing Apprehension; 4. Cynthia L. Selfe, An Apprehensive Writer Composes; 5. Stan Jones, Problems with Monitor Use in Second Language Composing; 6. Lynn Z. Bloom, Anxious Writers in Context: Graduate School and Beyond; 7. David Bartholomae, Inventing the University; 8. Muriel Harris, Diagnosing Writing-Process Problems: A Pedagogical Application of Speaking-Aloud Protocol Analysis; 9. Robert Boice, Psychotherapies for Writing Block; 10. Donald M. Murray, The Essential Delay: When Writer's Block Isn't; 11. Mike Rose, Complexity, Rigor, Evolving Method, and the Puzzle of Writer's Block: Thoughts on Composing-Process Research. **Name Index. Subject Index.**

News from Newfoundland

/// Phyllis Artiss

Two items. First, this: Memorial University of Newfoundland is now offering its first graduate course in rhetoric—English 7022: A History of Rhetoric.

The course presents an overview of major currents in rhetorical theory and practice from classical Greece to the late nineteenth century, including selected works by Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, Augustine, Alcuin, Francis Bacon, George Campbell, Hugh Blair, Richard Whatley, and Alexander Bain.

It will examine changing conceptions of rhetoric (including its relationship to logic, grammar, poetics, and other forms of metadiscourse); some important functions of rhetoric (e.g., in literature, law, politics, education, and religion); the rise and fall of the reputation of rhetoric in different epochs; and the role of rhetoric as antecedent of twentieth-century studies in English.

The blurb distributed to students and colleagues includes the following paragraph:

Recent decades have been marked by a resurgence of interest in rhetoric. Today, however, the term implies much more than the study of style (in the Sophistic tradition) or the study of persuasive discourse (in the Aristotelian tradition). Modern developments in linguistics, philosophy, and the social sciences have forged a new perception of the relationship between language and experience, and given a new dimension to the term rhetoric. The discipline of rhetoric now embraces the study of all language in context, analyzing not only how language reflects and illuminates human experience, but also influences and shapes it.

The course is now in full swing, with a healthy enrollment and considerable support from colleagues in Departments of English, Classics, Folklore, French, Philosophy, and Sociology—some of whom intend to participate in seminars, and others to act as resource people for students taking the course.

Plans are afoot to offer further graduate courses in Rhetoric and, if all goes well, a graduate degree in English with a Rhetoric specialization.

The second item: Despite Mike Moore's dispiriting account of his attempts to survey writing programs in Canadian post-secondary institutions (reported in *Inkshed* 5.4:3), I'd like to conduct an informal survey of Rhetoric courses, both graduate and undergraduate, in Canadian universities. Would Inkshedders please send me any information they have about such courses (*at least* about those courses called "Rhetoric"; but I'd also be interested in information about courses or programs they think can properly be so labelled). (Phyllis Artiss, English Department, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, NF A1C 5S7.)

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Reconceiving invention as a social act does not mean simply that we assemble a group of atomistic individuals—"add people and stir"—who later resume their private search for knowledge. (49)

Karen Burke LeFevre, *Invention as a Social Act*,
NCTE Studies in Writing & Rhetoric (Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1987).

Cohort Report

Kenna Manos (NS College of Art and Design) and Susan Drain (Mount Saint Vincent) want us to know that they will be co-chairing a special session on composition at this May's ACUTE conference. Here's what they proposed to conference organizers:

Despite the increased attention that most of us are now giving to our students' writing (both in the proliferating courses devoted exclusively to composition and in our literature courses), few sessions at the annual ACUTE conferences have addressed the subject of composition. Opportunities for discussion with our colleagues in other universities have generally been available only at other conferences: Canadian Council of Teachers of English, *Inkshed*, or the Conference on College Composition and Communication. None of these conferences, however, provides the national Canadian forum of university teachers that the ACUTE conference does.

What is needed, initially, we think, is an information session. What are our colleagues in other universities doing with writing? How extensive are the course offerings? Is the focus primarily remedial? Do departments offer advanced writing courses or service courses for, say, business or engineering students? What is the pedagogy for such courses? How are they rationalized within the traditional English department?

An information session would be the best way, we think, to initiate ongoing discussion about these questions. Rather than restricting the session to the three-paper format, then, we would encourage the participation of all attending the session. Those interested in composition would be asked, in the next issue of *The Acute Newsletter*, to bring along their course descriptions and syllabi for distribution at the session and/or to give a short presentation about how composition is taught in their universities. We hope that this would be the first of regular working sessions on issues in composition at the ACUTE conferences.

ACUTE has not previously shown much interest in sessions on composition. It would be great if people made special efforts to attend this session and to ensure that it demonstrates the rigorous kinds of scholarship, theory, and theory-grounded practice *Inkshed* has always advocated.

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... we are unlikely ever to get unanimity about the readability of writing, as judgement is entirely subjective. . . . the readability of a text is affected by many factors besides the choice of language. Obviously, the reader's background knowledge of the subject affects his capacity to comprehend what is being said. The intrinsic difficulty of the concepts being expressed is important. The reader's motivation is also significant: does he *want* to read the text or is he being forced to? Does he want to scrutinize the text closely or is his aim merely to skim it superficially? To make a full analysis of a reader's response to a text, we should take into account a wide range of psychological and even physical elements in the context in which the reading is taking place.

John Kirkman, *Good Style for Scientific and Engineering Writing*
(London: Pitman, 1980) 124. (Thanks to Nancy Carlman.)