Academic Matters

THE JOURNAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION
LA REVUE D'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPÉRIEUR

An OCUFA Publication May|Mai 2009

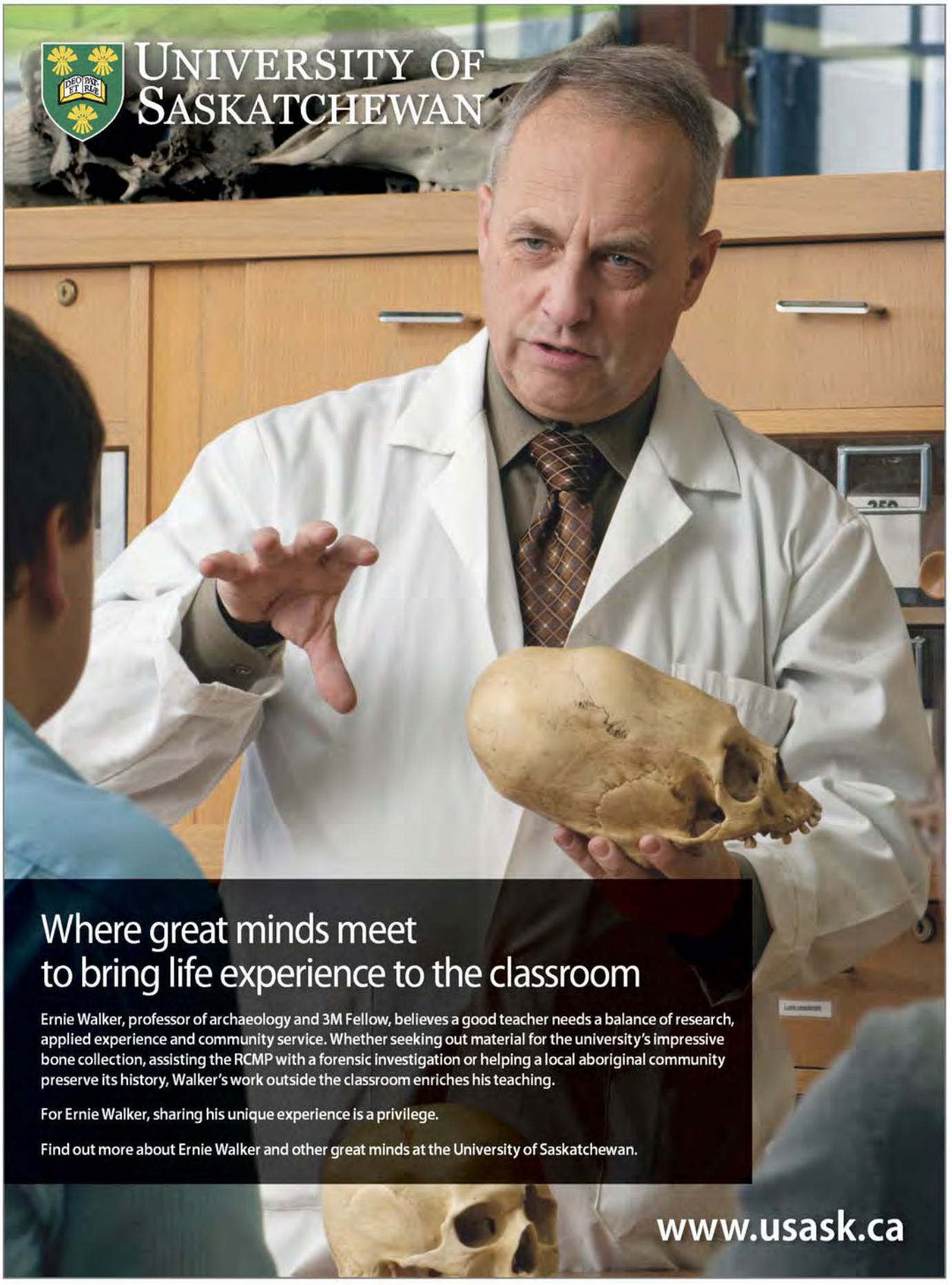
Ethics in the Academy

Margaret Somerville
Facing up to the dangers of the intolerant university

Sergio Sismondo
Medical publishing and the drug industry: Is medical science for sale?

Tom Flanagan
Academics in politics

Karen Dubinsky
Polytechnique: The film, the event, the interpretation


UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN
DEO ET REGE
Where great minds meet
to bring life experience to the classroom
Ernie Walker, professor of archaeology and 3M Fellow, believes a good teacher needs a balance of research, applied experience and community service. Whether seeking out material for the university's impressive bone collection, assisting the RCMP with a forensic investigation or helping a local aboriginal community preserve its history, Walker's work outside the classroom enriches his teaching.
For Ernie Walker, sharing his unique experience is a privilege.
Find out more about Ernie Walker and other great minds at the University of Saskatchewan.
www.usask.ca

OCUFA
Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations
Union des Associations des Professeurs des Universités de l'Ontario

Cover illustration: Marie-Claude Carignan

Academic Matters

THE JOURNAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION
LA REVUE D'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPÉRIEUR

Academic Matters is published three times a year by OCUFA, and is received by 24,000 professors, academic librarians and others interested in higher education issues across Canada. The journal explores issues of relevance to higher education in Ontario, other provinces in Canada, and globally. It is intended to be a forum for thoughtful and thought-provoking, original and engaging discussion of current trends in post secondary education and consideration of academe's future direction.

Readers are encouraged to contribute their views, ideas and talents. Letters to the editor (maximum 250 words) are welcome and may be edited for length. To provide an article or artwork for Academic Matters, please send your query to Editor-in-Chief Mark Rosenfeld at mrosenfeld@ocufa.on.ca.

Academic Matters accepte volontiers des articles écrits en angalis ou en français.

Publisher:
OCUFA; Hentry Mandelbaum, Executive Director

Editor-in-Chief:
Mark Rosenfeld, Associate Executive Director

Associate Editor:
Wendy Cuthbertson

Art Direction:
Eva Kiss, Neglia Design Inc., www.NegliaDesign.com

Editorial Board:
Valerie Davidson, Glen Jones, Minelle Mahtani, Jeff McNairn, David Armstrong, Vinita Srivastava, Geoffrey Stevens, Marie-Josée Therrien

Advisory Committee:
Bert Bruser, Kim Echlin, Lee Gowan, David Scott, Jason Wong

National Advertising Sales:
Dovetail Communications
30 East Beaver Creek Road, Ste. 202
Richmond Hill, ON L4B 1J2

Sales Manager:
Beth Kukkonen, bkukkonen@dvtail.com
Phone (905) 886-6640 ext. 306

Account Manager:
Chris McPhail, cmcphail@dvtail.com
Phone (905) 886-6640 ext. 327

ISSN 1719-010X

For subscription information, please contact:
OCUFA@ocufa.on.ca

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:
Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations
83 Yonge Street, Suite 300, Toronto, ON M5C 1S8

Phone (416) 979-2117 Fax (416) 593-5607
www.ocufa.on.ca www.academicmatters.ca

union logo here

Poet's Corner

A Path for Trees
BY DESI DI NARDO

There's a photograph of two rows of trees
and in between a path like a road
cosseted by the fleece of falling snow
impressed on us alone

I wonder how we can say with certainty
the trees were planted in this fashion
or why we choose to imagine a footpath
carved for us alone

When at the end of the open living space
our eyes are deceived by shadiness
under rows and rows of further pines
fixed for us alone

Nothing is said of our trodden thoughts
expect nothing on the far-off walk
except for the long and lone way out
for us and us alone

Hoar Frost
BY DESI DI NARDO

I learned the difference between a spruce and a fir
By noting the needles—
Your long grey fingers clasping
The softer not so conical shape of the fir
—Now my favourite evergreen
In the woods death is not so lonely or drab
Whisking past the brush in her damsel gown
A spectacle against the sepia terrain
Why wouldn't we pause here
In the crackling certainty of an exploration
Where we are amiss and straggling
As two sheared cowards slit from the neck down
We should depend on the tattling juncos
For our own incongruities
For the weeping birch on your shoulder
That grows forceps and claims the sparkle
Of each solitary crystal of cooling

Desi Di Nardo is a poet and author in Toronto whose work has been published in numerous North American and international journals. Her poetry has been performed in Canada's National Arts Centre, featured in Poetry on the Way *on the Toronto Transit Commission, selected by the Parliamentary Poet Laureate, and displayed in the Official Residences of Canada. Desi's poems have also been presented in schools across the country and translated into foreign languages. "Hoar Frost" can be found in her new book of poetry titled* The Plural of Some Things. *For more information, visit www.desidinardo.com*

In this edited excerpt from her Research and Society Lecture to the 2008 Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences, ethicist Margaret Somerville argues that universities are becoming forums of intolerance. Keeping the university as an intellectually open and respectful place is critical, she says, to finding the "shared ethics" essential to maintaining healthy, pluralistic democracies.

Facing up to the dangers of the intolerant university:

Bird on an Ethics Wire

by Margaret Somerville

Whom we bond with in terms of shared values and the way in which we find and affirm values is now undergoing major change. The current challenge is to find shared values that can allow us to be both a "me" and a "we" in our wired, interconnected, multicultural, pluralistic world.

To achieve that duality, we will need to balance the needs and rights of individuals and those of the community. In the recent past, depending on our own values orientation, many of us chose between strong individualism and strong communitarianism, with the former prevailing in Western democracies over the last 40 years. Today, we need a new integration of the "me" and the "we", which might be emerging as a "third way", one manifestation of which is the concept of "retro-progressive values".

That concept captures the idea that we make a serious error in simply abandoning traditional values for what we see as "avant garde" ones. We need to balance and blend the old and the new. That requires identifying traditional values we still need and integrating with them the new ones that will guide us into the future. To do that we must engage in an ongoing process that I call "searching for a shared ethics," which I discuss a little later.

In short, "retro-progressive values" represent a combination of the ancient wisdom and the new knowledge that we need if we and our world are to survive. It captures the wisdom of the First Nations, who look back seven generations (consulting human memory, that is, history) and look forward seven generations (using imagination as a way of knowing) in making important communal decisions. While much progress is good, worshipping it—that is, uncritically acclaiming the new and unhesitatingly abandoning the old—is not be the best way to survive into the future, either physically or morally.

Thinking about a shared ethics caused me to remember a cartoon I've often laughed at. It shows a line of birds on a wire all facing forward, except for one bird which faces in the opposite direction with his back to the viewer. The bird next to him says, "Can't we talk about it?" This image carries a powerful message in relation to ethics: First, that in searching for ethics often we are, indeed, balancing on a wire, in the sense that we must deal with complexity and uncertainty—we are in ethically grey areas. And second, it captures the idea that we need to talk to each other to find ethics and that we need to start from our agreements rather than our disagreements.

I believe it's important to protect our universities as spaces where open dialogue can be engaged in, especially in relation to ethics, and for us to be aware that those spaces are at substantial risk of being shut down in some of our universities, because of the impact of political correctness on Canadian university campuses.

Let me, however, make three preliminary points:

• First, I'm using the term "politically correct" as a shorthand term to cover a variety of identity-based social movements and the neo-liberal values that they espouse. I am not using it, as can sometimes happen, to describe people or their views or values derogatorily, which is not to say I agree with all of them.

• Second, I believe we are all people who want to avoid harm and do good, but when our values conflict, we don't always agree which of those two should be given priority in order to achieve that outcome—and that disagreement engenders conflict among us. It is essential, no matter how intense that conflict, that we always act with mutual respect.

• Third, we should keep in mind the concept of "moral regret." It requires that when, for reasons of ethics, something we do or stand for offends or hurts others—for instance, my opposition to same-sex marriage—we should deeply regret that our doing so causes others pain.

It is sometimes said that all movements go too far—but that might be necessary for them to have any impact at all. However, they need to pull back or be pulled back at a certain point, if they are not to do more harm than good. My specific concern is the negative impact of the various politically-correct movements on freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom of conscience, and academic freedom in our universities.

The paradox of intense tolerance

Many people are expressing their deep concern in these regards with the question, "What's happening in our universities?" One such happening is that an extreme of moral relativism is leading to a loss, on the part of university students, of substantive values, certainly shared ones, or even ethics nihilism, in the sense that ethics becomes nothing more than personal preferences.

Post-modernism is now *de rigueur* in the humanities and social sciences. Post-modernists adopt a relativistic approach. In ethics, moral relativism translates into a view that there is no grounded truth; rather what is ethical is simply a matter of personal judgment and preference. Moral relativism means that values are all of equal worth, and which ones take priority, when they conflict, is merely a matter of each person's perception and preference. That approach deconstructs values—they lose their substance. The result, paradoxically, is that "the equality of all values" itself, becomes the supreme value. This stance ultimately leads, at least in theory, to extreme or intense tolerance as the "most equal" of equal values. But does that happen in practice?

That is where political correctness enters the picture. It excludes politically incorrect values from the "all values are equal" stable. The intense moral relativists will tolerate all values except those they deem to be politically incorrect—which just happen to be the ones that conflict with their values.

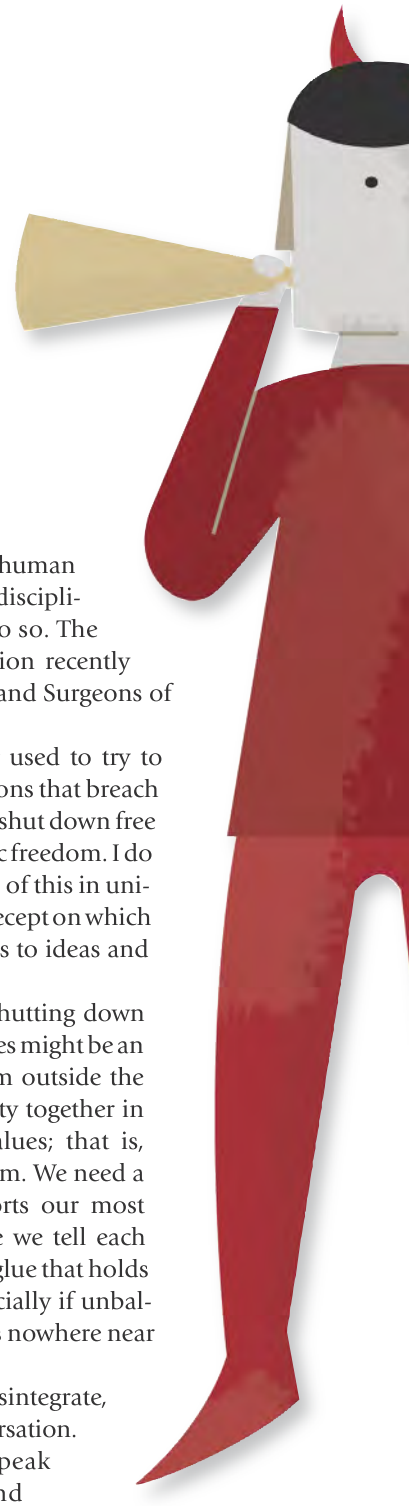
Political correctness operates by shutting down non-politically correct people's freedom of speech. Anyone who challenges the politically correct stance is, thereby, automatically labeled as intolerant, a bigot, or hatemonger. The substance of their arguments against a politically correct stance is not addressed; rather people labeled as politically incorrect are, themselves, attacked as being intolerant and

It is sometimes said that all movements go too far—

but that might be necessary for them to have any impact at all.

However, they need to pull back or be pulled back at

a certain point, if they are not to do more harm than good.



hateful simply for making those arguments. This derogatorily -label-the-person-and-dismiss-them-on-the-basis-of-that-label approach is intentionally used as a strategy to suppress strong arguments against any politically correct stance and, also, to avoid dealing with the substance of these arguments.

It is important to understand the strategy employed: speaking against same-sex marriage, for example, is not characterized as speech; rather, it is characterized as a discriminatory act against homosexuals and, therefore, a breach of human rights or even a hate crime. Consequently, it is argued that protections of freedom of speech do not apply.

Another part of the same strategy is to reduce to two the choices of position that are available: one has to choose, for example, between being either pro-choice on abortion and for respect for women and their rights, or pro-life and against respect for women and their rights. The possibility of being pro-women and their rights *and* pro-life is eliminated. That is not accidental; it is central to the strategy that has been successfully used in Canada to maintain the complete void with respect to having any law governing abortion.

Political correctness is being used as a form of fundamentalism, and fundamentalisms—especially "warring" fundamentalisms as manifest, for example, in the battles between religious fundamentalists and neo-atheist fundamentalists, such as Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, and Christopher Hitchens. Fundamentalists are a grave danger to democracy and, hence, to our Western democratic societies because they vastly widen the divides between us. They create an unbridgeable "us" and "them," when what we need is a "we."

We need to look at what "pure" moral relativism and intense tolerance, as modified by political correctness, mean in practice. So let 's look at the suppression of pro-life groups and pro-life speech on Canadian university campuses. Whatever one's views on abortion, we should all be worried about such developments. Pro-choice students are trying to stop pro-life students from participating in the collective conversation on abortion that should take place. In fact, they don't want any conversation, alleging that to question whether we should have any law on abortion is, in itself, unacceptable.

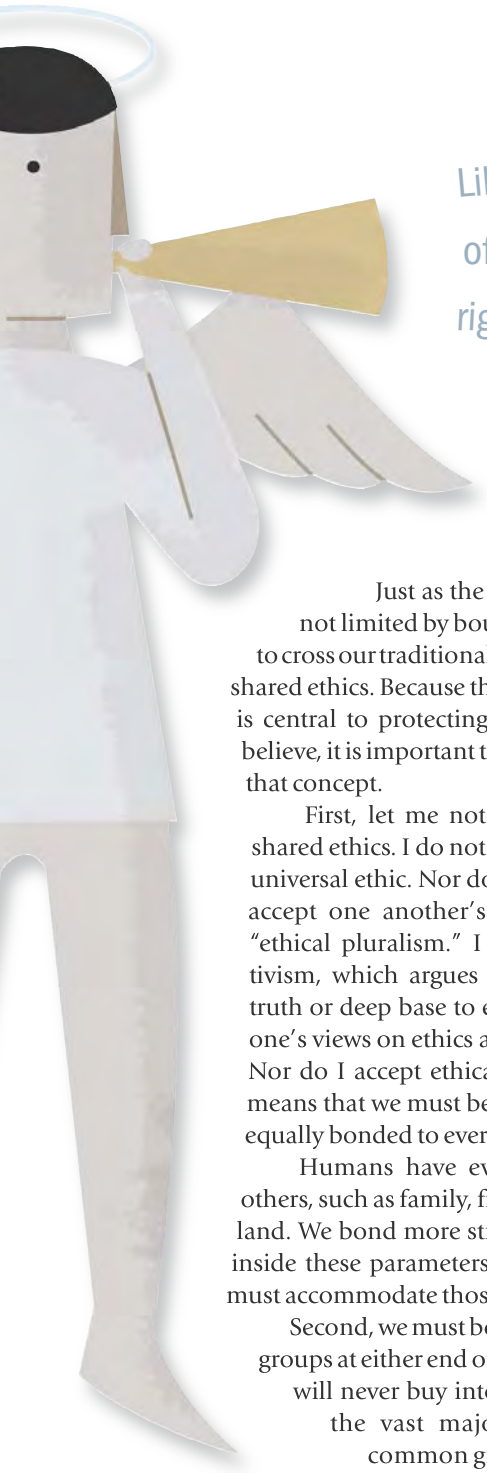
In some instances some people are going even further: they want to force physicians to act against their conscience under threat of being in breach of human rights or subject to professional disciplinary procedures for refusing to do so. The Ontario Human Rights Commission recently advised the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario to this effect.

Political correctness is being used to try to impose certain views and even actions that breach rights to freedom of conscience; to shut down free speech; and to contravene academic freedom. I do not need to emphasize the dangers of this in universities. The most fundamental precept on which a university is founded is openness to ideas and knowledge from all sources.

The further concern is that shutting down freedom of speech in our universities might be an example of a much larger problem outside the universities. We can't hold a society together in the long-term without shared values; that is, without a societal-cultural paradigm. We need a story about ourselves that supports our most important values and beliefs, one we tell each other and all buy into, to form the glue that holds us together. Tolerance alone, especially if unbalanced by other important values, is nowhere near enough to be that story.

To ensure our story does not disintegrate, we must engage in respectful conversation. The public needs academics to speak freely—respectfully, openly, and without threat of repercussions—about contentious, important, societal problems. That requires academic freedom, which is meant primarily for the benefit of the public by allowing academics to feel confident that they can speak the truth, as they see it, to power.

Our universities should be models for narrowing the divides that separate us, not for widening them, as presently seems to be happening. In our contemporary pluralistic democracies, we must engage in respectful conversation across those divides. To do so, we need to search for a shared ethics.



Likewise, we need to extend the scope of our analyses to consider the needs and rights of future generations.

Searching for a shared ethics

Just as the birds on the ethics wire are not limited by boundaries, we need to be able to cross our traditional divides, if we are to find this shared ethics. Because the concept of a shared ethics is central to protecting the world of the future, I believe, it is important that I explain what I mean by that concept.

First, let me note what I don't mean by a shared ethics. I do not mean that we will have one universal ethic. Nor do I mean that we will all just accept one another's ethics—what is called an "ethical pluralism." I do not accept moral relativism, which argues that there is no grounded truth or deep base to ethics and, therefore, everyone's views on ethics are as good as anyone else's. Nor do I accept ethical cosmopolitanism, if that means that we must be equally concerned for and equally bonded to everyone.

Humans have evolved to bond to special others, such as family, friends or pets, or to a homeland. We bond more strongly or in a different way inside these parameters than outside them. Ethics must accommodate those realities.

Second, we must be realistic and recognize that groups at either end of a broad spectrum of values will never buy into a shared ethics. However, the vast majority of people can find common ground. Universities are one of the most important places in which to learn and model how we can do that. That means we must actively preserve them as intellectually open spaces.

In order to do that, we need to be careful not to confuse liberal values with open-mindedness or traditional or conservative values with close-mindedness, as is common in the mainstream media. People can have liberal values and be close-minded and conservative values and open-minded.

Third, I propose that we must start our conversation from consensus and move to disagreement, not, as we currently do, focus entirely on our disagreements. That will set a different tone for our interaction. Searching for a shared ethics from that starting point will help us to emphasize what we have in common and allow us to experience belonging to the same moral community. In the past, when we took commonality for granted, we could afford the luxury of focusing on our disagreements, but this is no longer our situation.

Fourth, we must recognize that we are all trying to do the right thing, trying to be ethical, and where we disagree is what that is. The vast majority of people are not evil. That designation must be reserved for cases in which there is no doubt it applies.

Fifth, we need to balance intense individualism with a robust concern for the community, and we need to consider the collective impact of our individual decisions. In our interconnected world, an order unavoidably emerges from thousands of individual decisions. For example, Quebec is proposing to offer all pregnant women screening for Down's Syndrome. Whether or not, as individuals, we think that is good and ethical, the *cumulative* effect at the societal level of each woman's individual decision (including the decisions not to abort when the fetus is "normal") is to implement a 21st Century form of eugenics. Only the decision not to abort when the fetus has Down's Syndrome is not a eugenic decision.

Likewise, we need to extend the scope of our analyses to consider the needs and rights of future generations. And we must hold in trust for them, not just our physical world, but our metaphysical one—the values, principles, beliefs, and stories that create and represent the "human spirit," that which makes us human. In light of the unprecedented power of the new techno-science to radically alter the nature of Nature, including human nature, we must address the question, "What is the essence of our humanness that we must not destroy?", which is a far from easy question to answer.

Sixth, not only can we, but we must, cross the secular/religious divide, the science/religion divide and the divide between religions, if we are to find a shared ethics. This is where I believe both the fundamentalist religious people and the fundamentalist neo-atheists are wrong because they demand that we choose between religion and science. We must accommodate both.

Some would like to reduce religion to being seen as nothing more than a personal fantasy or superstition. But that's not realistic. At best it will fail; at worst it will do serious harm because it will exacerbate the acrimony of the values

conflicts and make it more likely, not less likely, that religion will become a focus of serious conflict. Also, because culture and religion are linked, even within democratic, multicultural, pluralistic Western societies, it will increase the number and intensity of the current values clashes and may contribute to culture wars.

Shared ethics means establishing a base or starting point that consists of ethical concepts and values that we already share and on which we can build; I am **not** suggesting that we all have to agree on everything. Rather, I'm looking for limited areas where some of us can agree. Who constitutes a group will vary with each issue. The idea is to find what we have in common ethically so that we can experience ourselves as belonging to the same moral community. As those experiences accumulate we will be more able to find common ground.

Engaging in a collective search to find those limited areas is likely to produce greater agreement. Getting all of us to agree on everything is a utopian goal, not a realistic one. Unrealizable goals create a loss of hope, and cynicism about ethics and the need to be ethical.

I am proposing a thick overlap of borders concept—that we might start from different poles, but there is a big (one hopes) overlap of common territory in the middle, in which we all are, in fact, "at home." Common humanity and universal responsibility link us. But much of the time we act as if this is not the case—we are in denial as individuals and societies. We need to search for a shared ethics for an interdependent world. The survival of the world of the future, at least as the kind of world most of us would want to live in, may well depend on our success in achieving the goal of finding a shared ethics.

As academics, especially in our engagements with students, we have an enormous privilege and responsibility to contribute to realizing that goal and serious obligations to ensure that we do not do anything to thwart it. That means we must hold both our physical and metaphysical worlds in trust for future generations, which does not mean that we must not change them. Rather, we have to be certain that if we do so, we are ethically justified in making those changes.

Can the future trust us? AM

Margaret Somerville is Samuel Gale Professor in the Faculty of Law and a professor in the Faculty of Medicine at McGill University and is the founding director of the McGill Centre for Medicine, Ethics and Law. In 2004, she received the UNESCO Avicenna Prize for Ethics in Science and in 2006 delivered the prestigious Massey Lectures.

Medical publishing and the drug industry: IS MEDICAL SCIENCE FOR SALE?

by Sergio Sismondo

Sergio Sismondo asks whether medical researchers and journals are too close to the pharmaceutical industry for comfort—or patient safety.

Observation #1

I recently looked at the c.v. of a distinguished professor of medicine and saw that he had authored (most usually had co-authored) about 800 articles in peer-reviewed journals, an average of nearly 30 per year over his career. His publication rate has accelerated over the years, reaching 40 articles per year in the past decade. How can a scientist author and publish 40 articles in a year? Year after year? In my fields (Science and Technology Studies, Philosophy, Sociology), five peer-reviewed articles in a year is a lot, and most researchers would be happy to write one truly good article each year.

Observation #2

I recently looked at the articles published about one blockbuster drug (i.e. with sales over $1 billion per year). The PubMed database contained over 700 articles in the "core clinical journals" that showed drug's generic name as a keyword. There were more than 3,200 articles on the drug in medical journals as a whole. Other blockbuster drugs have similar profiles. Why do these drugs merit such attention?

This double mystery has a single solution, albeit a partial one. Pharmaceutical companies sponsor a considerable amount of research, typically performed by for-profit contract research organizations (CROs). On the basis of that data and the publicly available medical research, drug companies and their agents produce a significant percentage of the manuscripts on major current drugs. These manuscripts are then "authored" by academic researchers, whose contribution ranges from having supplied some of the patients for a clinical trial, to editing the manuscript, to simply signing off on the final draft. The companies then submit these manuscripts to medical journals, where they fare quite well and are

published. The published articles contribute to accepted scientific opinions, but the circumstances of their production remain largely invisible. When the articles are useful, the marketing departments of the drug companies involved will buy thousands of reprints, which sales representatives (reps) can give to physicians.

I call this whole process the "ghost management" of pharmaceutical research and publication.[1]

Some of the process is difficult to observe. A study of industry-sponsored research showed that statistician contributors were usually unacknowledged in the publications that flowed from that research, as were the creators of trial designs and protocols.[2] Although we know that pharmaceutical company statisticians and medical directors do work, there are no obvious ways of investigating their activities.

Yet some of this process is quite open. The manuscripts are produced under the guidance of publication planners, who tend to work for independent agencies rather than for pharmaceutical companies. More than 50 agencies advertise publication planning on the Internet. Many of these are straightforward about what they do. Publication planning, says the director of one agency, is "gaining product adoption and usage through the systematic, planned dissemination of key messages and data to appropriate target audiences at the optimum time using the most effective communication channels."[3] These channels are such things as: "publications, journal reviews, symposia, workshops, advisory boards, abstracts, educational materials/PR." That is, the industry markets products via the core scientific media.

How much of the literature is ghost-managed? From the few cases where we have hard data, it appears that roughly 40 per cent of medical journal articles on major in-patent drugs are parts of individual publication plans on the drugs.[4] (It is possible that additional articles are also sponsored by the pharmaceutical companies but are handled differently.) Forty per cent is a very substantial amount, certainly allowing a company to attract interest in a drug and shape the perception of it, under the names of apparently independent authors.

The 40 per cent figure might seem at first to be implausibly large, but upon closer examination, it is reasonable. First, pharmaceutical companies sponsor some 70 per cent of all clinical trials, and 70 per cent of those are run by CROs that have no interest in publishing the results under their own names—they produce data that is wholly owned by their sponsors. Thus, pharmaceutical companies have complete control over roughly half of all clinical trial data. Second, the publication planning industry is substantial. Some of those 50 agencies visibly advertising planning services boast of having hundreds of employees and handling many hundreds of manuscripts per year. The industry is large enough that there are two competing international associations of publication planners that organize meetings and seminars; there are other associations of medical writers. There are also for-profit organizations that organize similar meetings and seminars.

I attended one of the society meetings, the 2007 annual meeting of the International Society of Medical Planning Professionals (ISMPP) and learned much. The 2007 annual meeting of the main competing organization, the International Publication Planning Association, looked similar, and the line-up of speakers overlapped slightly. About 400 people attended the ISMPP meeting, most of them publication planners who, from my conversations with them, were handling dozens of manuscripts per year. One planner told me that she was in charge of a campaign involving more than 100 manuscripts and conference presentations! Thus, the 40 per cent figure is plausible.

Generating bulk research

A common complaint in scientific publishing is the division of research into "least publishable units" and the publication of overlapping or redundant analyses. These practices fill journals with articles that have the advantage and disadvantage of making only one point each. Academic authors are well versed in the art of multiplying papers and, also, with complaining about it. However, in the pharmaceutical industry each publication is part of a marketing campaign and has an expected return. The professionalization and commercialization of publishing makes a science out of the multiplication of papers.

At the ISMPP meeting, the director of medical publishing for one of the world's largest academic publishing companies chided his audience: "You don't help when you take your research and you do your primary publication and then you follow it with 20, 30, 40 secondary analyses. This is alarming publication and it is actually contributing to the whole peer review process grinding to a halt." He was probably exaggerating for effect. However, the salami slicing to which he pointed was promptly corroborated by another speaker, a pharmaceutical company employee who explained how to better multiply articles:

> "There are more publication ideas coming from my medical team than we can handle even if we had 15 agencies and 20 people focused solely on publication for this one area. That's one of the bigger challenges, 'cause it adds more analyses. And now I need more statisticians, I need more investigators, I need more authors. I need more writers, whether they're agency writers or external physicians doing the writing."

Her eventual point was that it is important to winnow ideas early, to optimize production. She didn't object to multiple publications but wanted to make sure that they are

Academic authors are well versed in the art of multiplying papers and, also, with complaining about it.

all merited. There comes a point when another article is not cost-effective.

Medical journals participate

It is unsurprising that a publisher was on the list of speakers at ISMPP, as several publishing companies own publication planning agencies. The agencies advertise that the connections create synergies by increasing access to journals and networks of key opinion leaders (KOLs). For example, Carus Clinical Communications offers "world class innovation and experience supported by the unmatched depth and breadth of Elsevier's worldwide medical publication resources."[5] Such connections may also benefit the journals, by providing high quality papers, by providing papers that will be sold as reprints, and by generating advertising.

Also addressing the conference were four editors of highly respected medical journals, one of whom was representing an association of journal editors. The publisher and one of the editors took the opportunity when at the podium to promote their journals, soliciting manuscripts from the audience; the others merely mentioned their journals frequently. None of the editors were critical of publication planning, and one thanked planners for producing better manuscripts than academics do on their own: "We appreciate it as editors because we have to read a lot of papers and we can tell which ones have had expert writers participate in their development." All the editors framed misconduct as either an abstract problem or a problem for authors, not the pharmaceutical industry and its agents: "An academic researcher needs to insist on early active involvement in the research project. They should decline any offers to sign off on already-written manuscripts, particularly in review articles. They should insist that the article reflects their own interpretation of the evidence. They have to be adamant about full disclosure ...."

These editors are well aware that many manuscripts are funneled to them via publication planners. A document obtained by the clinical psychiatrist and scholar David Healy in a court case made it clear that planners, not authors, are the journals' primary contacts on many manuscripts.[6] In addition, journal editors recognize that the publications have a market value. One said, "The way to get an article published easily, which is what our goal is and yours, is to avoid practices that are going to... slow the period of time before you can start enjoying the acclaim and the revenue that comes with successful publication in a big journal." Publication earns money for the industry.

It also earns money for the journals, through advertising and reprint fees. Although some editors have taken strong stances against the pharmaceutical industry's research and publication practices, they are too dependent on the industry for material and revenue to refuse industry manuscripts.

Those industry manuscripts are very successful, probably reflecting the resources behind them. Medical journals have high rejection rates, as high as 94 per cent in the case of such journals as the *Journal of the American Medical Association* and the *British Medical Journal.* Meanwhile, publication planners claim to have very high acceptance rates; for example, an "acceptance rate on first submission of 94% for abstracts and 78% for manuscripts."[7]

Authors and plagiarism

Key opinion leaders (KOLs), as one speaker defines them, are well-known specialists who "can influence other physicians." In practice, the term is applied to a specialist with existing relations to the industry, not simply to a prominent expert. Publication planners make KOLs their authors on articles and their speakers at conferences and other events. Actually, in the process they make KOLs themselves, by making some specialists more prominent as experts.

Undoubtedly, authors of industry manuscripts perform amounts of work that vary considerably. However, it is clear that they typically play very limited roles. One ISMPP speaker objected to the practice of only showing authors the penultimate draft, which he claimed was the most common practice. (His complaint concerned efficiency rather than ethics:

When authors make substantial changes to completed manuscripts, work has to be done a second time.) This fits well the individual cases that have come to light, either because of litigation or because approached authors have stepped forward. To take only one example from among many, Dr. Adriane Fugh-Berman describes being asked by a medical communications firm to author a paper on the negative interactions of dietary supplements and warfarin (a blood thinner). The sponsor had developed a competitor to warfarin and wanted to set the stage for its eventual arrival on the market. After Fugh-Berman declined the offer, the same article was submitted to a journal under the name of another author.[8]

At the ISMPP meeting, there was a serious debate about whether authors should be allowed to see data. The debate was occasioned by the discussion of a scandal involving Dr. Aubrey Blumsohn, a researcher who became a whistleblower when he suspected that the conference presentations and articles he was authoring were distorting data, data that he had helped to generate but to which he was not given access.[9] A pharmaceutical company scientific director, speaking carefully, reminded the audience of how complicated the analysis of data is, and how individuals might misinterpret it.

> "I'm aware of cases where amateurs have tried to analyze databases and failed to match up IDs, for example, when they are merging variables from different places and you end up with complete garbage. You wouldn't be able to identify that if you weren't already familiar with the database. It puts the sponsor in a position where they have to go back and verify any analysis that is done outside, which is time-consuming and can result in disputes that are very, very hard to resolve."

Thus, pharmaceutical companies commit themselves only to showing authors a "summary" of the results.

Among themselves, planners portray authors as lazy, greedy, and prone to miss deadlines. Planners would like authors to make some contributions to manuscripts, for the sake of legitimacy. However, authors need to be coaxed and coached. One speaker recommended very specific questions as a way of eliciting a contribution, a sound pedagogical technique: "You can actually guide them to where you want feedback. So don't just say, 'Here's a first draft, and can I have your comment.' Say, Here's a first draft, and I've tried to figure out the methodology, to fit within the word requirement. However, I feel, could you pay some attention to *this*, and have I picked up the right point?'"

In these circumstances authors are unlikely to make major contributions to the analysis or writing of an article. They are shown well-crafted manuscripts that have been reviewed by many scientists, writers, and marketers. They are not given access to the data. They are asked their views on very specific points. They are given short deadlines. Thus, authors of industry manuscripts are largely sidelined from the process of analyzing, writing, and publishing research.

Conclusions

Among the standard ethical problems associated with academic publishing, the most generally discussed are plagiarism and the mis-allocation of credit. For as long as there has been academic publishing, some authors have found it convenient to copy work of others, and some authors have taken credit for work done by their students and juniors. For the most part, concern about plagiarism is about fairness, as some people's work is exploited while other people gain unearned credit. The pharmaceutical industry, always an innovator, has developed a different form of plagiarism, involving only willing participants. Moreover, it has created new reasons for concern: the hiding of interests that drive research and publication and the possible harm to patients that this may create. When sales reps bring reprints of articles to the offices of physicians, prescribing nurses, hospital staff in charge of formularies, and other drug gatekeepers, those articles may look like independent confirmation of the reps' pitches. Plagiarizing KOLs lend their good names to the pitches.

Another much-discussed issue in the ethics of publishing is over-publication. We are buried in masses of literature, making it difficult to find what is valuable. Publication hides as much as it reveals. Every year, library budgets increase at well above the overall rate of inflation. This is caused in part by publishers increasing the prices of journals, and in part by the increasing number of journals. The ghost management of pharmaceutical research and publication plays a role within the medical sciences, as industry planners calculate how many new articles bearing key messages they need to affect perceptions and sway those who prescribe drugs.

What can be done? The solutions involve pulling apart research and marketing.

Physicians and others who prescribe drugs should not read scientific articles provided by sales reps, because they are apt to become confused about the roles of those reps. In fact, no one should read sponsored research, because no one can tell, in general, the difference between commercially-driven and merely sponsored research.

Would-be KOLs should refuse to be authors on manuscripts unless they have made genuine and substantial contributions to the analysis and writing and, of course, have worked with the data. Medical journals already have clear guidelines for authorship, which are routinely ignored by authors.

So far, I am simply moralizing, because there is little hope of convincing huge numbers of physicians to change their habits and their desires, just as there is little hope

of the pharmaceutical industry changing its practices unless it is compelled to. Elsewhere in the system there is some potential.

Medical schools should punish plagiarists severely, for the usual reasons plus the fact that plagiarists put patients' health at increased risk. They should also stop valuing pharmaceutical company sponsorship of research.

Medical journals should require authors to describe in detail their contributions to articles and should scrutinize those descriptions. They should stop dealing with publication planners or anybody other than authors. They should also stop pandering to the industry for important manuscripts. More controversially, they should stop publishing sponsored research altogether: the 10 or so most important medical journals have such a lock on prestige that together they could step away from the pharmaceutical industry and show off their clean hands.

Finally, governments should sequester drug research and marketing.[10] We cannot assume that drug companies will end the use of research for marketing on their own. Governments could take clinical trials out of the hands of drug companies, funding necessary ones through taxes on those companies. Or they could redefine the allowable scope of drug companies, dividing them into research entities and marketing entities. Such solutions would take enormous political will, but might solve many problems.

Until such measures are taken, we might ask, with a widely circulating joke, is medical science for sale? No, its current owners are perfectly happy with it. AM

---

[1] Sismondo S (2007) "Ghost management: How much of the medical literature is shaped behind the scenes by the pharmaceutical industry?" *PLoS Med* 4(9): e286.

[2] Gøtzsche PC, Hróbjartsson A, Johansen HK, Haahr MT, Altman DG, et al. (2007) "Ghost authorship in industry-initiated randomized trials." *PLoS Med* 4: e19. doi:10.1371.

[3] Bohdanowicz H (2005) "A guide to strategic communication planning." *Pharmaceutical Executive Europe.* Available at: http://www.pharmexeceurope.com/europharmexec/article/articleDetail.jsp?id=180670. Accessed 22 August 2007.

[4] Healy D, Cattell D (2003) "Interface between authorship, industry and science in the domain of therapeutics." *Br J Psychiatry* 183: 22-27; Ross JS, Hill KP, Egilman DS et al. "Documents From Rofecoxib Litigation Related to Rofecoxib: A Case Study of Industry Guest Authorship and Ghostwriting in Publications." *JAMA* 299(15): 1800-12

[5] Carus Clinical Communications (2007) http://www.carusclinical.com (accessed 29 November 2007).

[6] See Healy D, Cattell D (2003) Op. cit.

[7] Gardiner-Caldwell Group (2007) http://www.thgc-group.com/ (accessed 29 November 2007).

[8] Fugh-Berman A. (2005) "The Corporate Coauthor." *Journal of General Internal Medicine* 20:546-548.

[9] Blumsohn A. (2006) "Authorship, ghost-science, access to data and control of the pharmaceutical scientific literature: Who stands behind the word?" *AAAS Professional Ethics Report* 29(3):1-4.

[10] E.g. Schafer A (2004) "Biomedical conflicts of interest: A defence of the sequestration thesis—Learning from the cases of Nancy Olivieri and David Healy." *J Med Ethics* 30: 8-24.

Sergio Sismondo is a professor of philosophy at Queen's University.

We do know insurance for the education community — it's what we do!

If you work in the education community, our business was built to serve you.

We offer specialized hours, a live receptionist and comprehensive products and services specifically designed for our members. We are here to ensure an excellent service experience from buying a new policy through to making a claim. Our unprecedented member satisfaction rating proves that we are the best in the business.

Experience for yourself what a specialized insurance provider can offer you — call us today.

OTIP RAEO®

Insurance solutions for the education community

Home | Auto | Life | Living Benefits

Call 1-877-277-6847 or visit our Web site at www.YouAreOTIP.com.

Academics in Politics

by Tom Flanagan

If academics succeed in politics, it's not because of their academic achievements, says political scientist and former Conservative campaign manager Tom Flanagan.

Politicians aren't engaged in formulating consistent theories and testing hypotheses. Their stock in trade is rhetoric, not logic.

The new president of the United States, Barack Obama, once taught constitutional law at the University of Chicago's law school. That makes him unusual in American politics. The only other president or major-party presidential candidate ever to have had a background in university teaching was Woodrow Wilson, who was a distinguished political science professor and president of Princeton University before going into politics.

Canada has had more political leaders with academic backgrounds. William Lyon Mackenzie King, Lester Pearson, Pierre Trudeau, Stéphane Dion, Michael Ignatieff, Ed Broadbent, Jack Layton, and Stephen Harper were all university teachers at one time or another. Maybe this says something about differences between our two countries, but the more striking fact is that only a couple of these leaders—Woodrow Wilson and Stéphane Dion—had university careers in the sense of devoting themselves full time to teaching and academic research for a substantial period of years. The rest all taught briefly at the beginning of their careers and then went on to make their mark in politics, government service, or the media.

There are obvious practical reasons why relatively few university people go into electoral politics in North America. For one thing, the compensation package for a senior professor is equal to, or better than, that of an elected politician, except at the very highest levels of cabinet minister or party leader. University teaching, moreover, offers far greater job security. How many tenured professors want to give up their virtual guarantee of well-paid employment to take a flyer in the political marketplace, where you're always only one election away from unemployment? And then there's the re-entry problem. Outside of a few fields such as political science, if you're off doing politics for 15, or 10 or even five years, it can be almost impossible to go back to teaching and research; you get too far removed from the literature of your field and the routine of academic life.

But there's also a deeper incompatibility between academic life and politics. Those of us who pursue a university career are dedicated to the creation and transmission of fields of knowledge. Ultimately, our mission is to distinguish truth from falsehood, recognizing that truth varies widely in character. At one end lie answers to simple questions about matters of fact: What is the chemical formula of salt? NaCl. Who won the Canadian general election of 1911? Robert Borden's Conservatives. At the other end lie subtle tests of hypotheses derived from sophisticated theories: Can the path of electromagnetic radiation be bent by the force of gravitational fields? Yes. Does the introduction of proportional representation lead to the multiplication of parties in the legislature? Almost always. The intellectual tools at work in academic disciplines are rational analysis and empirical investigation. Terms must be clearly defined and then linked together in logically consistent propositions in order to derive predictions that can be tested against data from the external world.

Politics is an entirely different enterprise. It consists of building coalitions to take power and manage the apparatus of government. To paraphrase Tina Turner's question, "What's truth got to do with it?" Very little, is the answer. Politicians aren't engaged in formulating consistent theories and testing hypotheses. Their stock in trade is rhetoric, not logic. As Aristotle pointed out in his lectures on rhetoric, it contains an element of logic, but logic is far from dominant. Effective persuasion in the public domain depends not only on *logos* (reason), but also on *ethos* (the character of the speaker) and *pathos* (the emotion roused by speech). Ultimately, the test for political leaders is not whether they are right or wrong about the real world, but whether they can get their supporters to trust them, thus holding their coalitions together. The truth of propositions is pretty much beside the point. Of course, in the long run policies based on erroneous propositions will fail, as Soviet agricultural policy failed because it was based on Lysenko's theory of the inheritance of acquired characteristics. But that's a problem for the long run, and politicians considering the prospect of re-election have to take their stand with John Maynard Keynes: "In the long run we are all dead."

Looking at politics from afar, academics of both the left and the right tend to see it as a field for implementing intellectual designs. They often measure their society and their system of government against some abstract standard; in fact, they want not just to measure it, but to make it "measure up" to their intellectually conceived expectations. But a practising

politician is doomed to failure if he tries to proceed this way (unless he can seize total power in the manner of Lenin or Mao). A politician must take people as he finds them and try to bring some of them together in a coalition to gain power. The test of success is not the logic of his thought but the appeal of his rhetoric to those he would lead. Politicians rarely get to implement their own ideas in any straightforward way. More commonly, they end up brokering compromises among different factions of their supporters, ending up with second—or third-best solutions that can be legislated without provoking a violent reaction from their opponents.

I don't agree with Plato that philosophers would make the best rulers, and I don't agree with Aristotle that the *bio theoretikos* (contemplative life) is in some way higher than the political life. Such rankings are typical conceits of brilliant thinkers. I think that the intellectual and the political life are equally beneficial, necessary, and challenging. The important point is that they are different, so that achievement in one is in no way a qualification for achievement in the other. Some academics may also have political ability and may choose to enter politics; but if they succeed there, it will not be because of, and may in fact be in spite of, their academic achievements.

I had to learn all these lessons through practical experience in my own involvement in politics. I have never run for elective office, but I spent two years (1991-92) as director of research for Preston Manning and the Reform Party and almost five years (2001-06) as campaign manager and chief organizer for Stephen Harper and the Conservative Party.

When I went to work for Manning, I saw the Reform Party as the perfect vehicle for my conservative views on the economy (smaller government, lower taxes, privatization, deregulation, competitive markets, free trade, etc.) and on the Canadian political system (decentralization, direct democracy, opposition to special treatment for Quebec). As director of research, I produced reams of material trying to derive Reform policy positions from what I saw as the first principles of conservatism. But I had little appreciation for the difficulty of developing policies that could win votes.

Though it was far from the biggest issue in my mind, I still have a vivid memory of the Reform convention of 1992, when Manning brokered an essentially meaningless compromise resolution on supply management. I thought then (and I still do in an abstract sense) that supply management is a bad policy that should be ended as soon as possible, with appropriate compensation for producers who have had to purchase dairy quotas. But the political reality was that if Reform was ever going to break into Ontario, it would be in rural constituencies where support for supply management was and is a litmus test of bona fides.

After a couple of years, I had too many disagreements with Preston, so I went back to the university. It's all laid out in my book *Waiting for the Wave: The Reform Party and Preston Manning* (second edition forthcoming imminently). When I look back on those years now, I can see that I simply didn't have enough feeling for real-world politics to be a political adviser. If I were a liberal, I could blame Preston for hiring me; but as a conservative I should at least appear to take responsibility for my own failings!

My second venture into politics was rather different. As described in *Harper's Team: Behind the Scenes in the Conservative Rise to Power* (second edition also forthcoming imminently), several friends and I volunteered to help Harper get started in the fall of 2001 when he decided to contest the Canadian Alliance leadership race. We put together a campaign team, but when it didn't work very well I volunteered to step in and manage the campaign. (It's always

easiest to volunteer to do some something when you don't know anything about it.) When we were successful in that venture, Harper asked me to go to Ottawa with him. I thought he would want me to be his policy adviser, but he wisely asked me to play a different type of role, first as director of operations, then chief of staff, then campaign manager for his Conservative leadership race and for the Conservative campaign in the 2004 general election. After doing the basic organizational work for the next election, I returned to the university, although I did go back and work in the war room in the 2005-06 election campaign.

Throughout these years, I had nothing to do with policy, and very little to do with strategy and communications, even though these are the three areas of politics that normally appeal to academics. I left all these to the leader's supervision while I busied myself with the mundane tasks of raising money, hiring and supervising staff, leasing space, negotiating contracts with suppliers, and finding all the specialists who are so necessary to modern politics—pollsters, advertisers, direct mail consultants, and telemarketers. I discovered a modest managerial ability that would have remained hidden if I had stayed cloistered in the university, but I never developed any policies, created any ads, wrote any speeches, or made any strategic decisions. I just said to the leader, "Tell me what you want done and I'll make it happen." I was the Mussolini (and every political organization has to have one) who made the trains run on time.

During these years academic acquaintances would sometimes approach me to say, "I'd like to help out." "What would you like to do?" I would reply. Almost without exception, they would volunteer to be a policy or communications adviser. "That's nice," I'd say, "but where we really need some help is in raising money (working phone banks, pounding in signs, knocking on doors, etc.)" That would usually be the end of the conversation. Graduate students were willing to do such jobs but not full-fledged academics. I'm glad I posed the dirty-work test to would-be volunteers because it weeded out those to whom (like myself in an earlier incarnation) politics seemed like a sparkling opportunity to implement their grand intellectual designs.

There are, of course, two sides to this coin. Academics are toxic in democratic politics unless they can let go of their intellectualized visions, and political life is a threat to academic integrity. As researchers, our role is to seek relentlessly for the truth (we may not live up to the ideal, but it would be worse if we didn't have the ideal to guide our investigations). As teachers, our job is to convey to students the best knowledge at our disposal and to answer their questions honestly. But the purpose of politics is persuasion and coalition-building, not truth and honesty. Even in the absence of outright falsehoods, half-and quarter-truths abound. Questions are a threat to be met with talking points and a plan for "bridging away" to other topics. You can never admit you were wrong, at least not until so long after the event that it doesn't matter, because your opponents will immediately jump upon an admission of error as a sign of weakness. You quickly learn that the most effective response to attacks is not a reasoned reply but a quick *ad hominem* smear. So I'm happy I returned to the academy before political practices totally infected my brain.

Politics was exhilarating, albeit exhausting, compared to the genteel lifestyle of academia. The hours are not necessarily longer in politics, but the pace is frantic. Everything is an emergency, and there's lots of reason to worry but little time to think. Preston Manning was right when he said that as soon as you get involved in politics you start to draw down your intellectual capital with little chance to replenish it.

Did I accomplish anything in politics? My fingerprints are not on any laws or policies, but I did help to create some essential political infrastructure. We put together an entire new campaign team for the Conservative Party, including a state-of-the-art operation in voter identification and fundraising, which played a substantial role in the Conservative victories of 2006 and 2008. Ten years ago, everyone was lamenting that Canadian politics had become uncompetitive because the right had splintered and no one could beat the Liberals. *Über*-pundit Jeffrey Simpson wrote a book entitled *Our Friendly Dictatorship*, with a cover picture of Prime Minister Jean Chrétien dressed as a Latin American military dictator. Today, Canadian politics is hypercompetitive, with neither the Liberals nor the Conservatives able to open a long-term, decisive lead over the other party.

The result is an unprecedented period of minority government. We've had three elections since 2004, each ending without a majority victory, and most pundits are predicting another election in 2009, as the Liberals try to take advantage of the recession to unseat the Conservatives, just as the Conservatives took advantage of Adscam to unseat the Liberals. But as long as the Bloc Québécois can hold its ground in Quebec, it would probably be another minority government, even if the Liberals did manage to come back under Michael Ignatieff's leadership. Now we can move on from fretting about the pathologies of one-party domination to worrying about the inability of minority governments to make the tough decisions demanded by the global recession.

I wasn't hoping for this outcome when I went off to spend five years with the Conservatives, but the results of any political initiative always emerge in complex interaction with the responses of all the other actors who are involved. If you want to control the results of what you do, you can go paint a picture, compose music, or write a poem. Politics is a spontaneous art form like improv theatre or dancing without a choreographer.

You can make permanent contributions to intellectual life. You can prove a mathematical theorem, or discover a new species in the jungle, or edit the papers of a famous poet. The value of your work will remain, even if others build on it. But accomplishment in politics is much more transitory. Most political careers end in defeat, and most political arrangements are eventually undone. Yet we are drawn to politics, like moths to the flame. As Aristotle said (and he was right about this), human beings are "political animals." Academics are welcome in the political zoo, but don't expect any special treatment from the untenured animals! AM

Tom Flanagan is a professor of political science at the University of Calgary and a former Conservative campaign manager.

Equity, ethics, academic freedom and THE EMPLOYMENT OF CONTINGENT ACADEMICS

by Linda Muzzin

The long strike at York University this year, writes Linda Muzzin, challenges everyone in the post-secondary sector to address the situation of contingent academics ethically and equitably.

The recent York University strike by contingent faculty has provided a focal point for discussion in my evening graduate course, "Faculty in Colleges and Universities" at the University of Toronto's Ontario Institute for Studies in Education this winter.

Among us are practising professionals, including a contingent faculty member, a college administrator, corporate lawyer, two high school teachers, and a physician, so it is not surprising that the ethics of professional practice, which I teach, are often on the table. For example, how do we reconcile the need of the administrators to be able to pick up the telephone and call a contingent faculty member to fill in for a class left suddenly without an instructor just before the class starts tomorrow with the reality that these "just in time" faculty are poorly paid and routinely treated as second-class citizens? And what are the ethics of an administrator determining which contingent faculty to recruit to teach a course?. Is the most eligible chosen, the most available or, perhaps, the admimistrator's favourite? The increasing unionization of contingent faculty might be expected to address such inequities through a seniority system. But isn't a seniority system incompatible with hiring the "best and the brightest"?

It helps that I recently led a research project that involved interviewing 160 administrators, as well as both tenure-stream and contingent faculty at Canadian universities and that I am currently involved in a similar study in Canadian colleges. As a feminist and anti-racist, I take every opportunity to emphasize the equity aspects of the situations we discuss, in the terminology of mainstream ethics, "social justice." We distinguish "equality" (based on individual rights and choices) from "equity" (that prescribes structural interventions when individuals and groups are not on a level playing field in terms of power).

For example, in the first half of the course, we review the faculty demographics that show women are not making it to the upper levels of the academic hierarchy to the extent their numbers would warrant. We also note the growth of the contingent faculty group, which contains fewer white men, proportionately, than there are in the tenured and tenure-stream groups. We deplore the failure of Statistics Canada to

As a result, permanent, second-class faculty pools of sessional workers have developed in otherwise "excellent" and "academically free" postsecondary institutions.

gather data on contingent faculty because we would like to examine this inequity. Why isn't this data collected routinely? Is it merely an oversight? Or is there a conspiracy to hide inequities in postsecondary institutions? Or is contingent faculty just a phenomenon that we didn't expect to be around much longer than the downsizing of the 1990s? Or is it, as at least one administrator in the class has suggested, that contingent faculty are a small, ephemeral group of people who don't appear on any institution-wide lists because they are only around for a short time?

We know this last claim isn't true, because contingent faculty members were a large enough a group at York University to have supported the recent strike. How large is the group? In the U.S., estimates vary, depending on who is included, but experts agree they are well over half of all faculty. Non-tenured academic positions are bewilderingly diverse, ranging from permanent affiliations (teaching stream and clinical faculty) through contractual (full-time term with or without benefits and administrative responsibilities) to sessionals or part-timers (paid by the hour for classroom time only). Arguably, these groups face similar problems with respect to job security and academic freedom, so they can be referred to collectively as "contingent." This word denotes "of uncertain occurrence" and "incidental to," in this case, the academic enterprise. The Oxford dictionary explains that a contingent is composed of "troops contributed to form part of an army." This definition is particularly informative for this discussion, in that military service, distinct from other types of professional work, implies obedience to authority and a lack of autonomy that is necessary in order to function successfully.

Still, it is worth exploring the differences among these groups of contingent faculty. In Canada, as Indhu Rajagopal first pointed out, there are well-established professionals, such as corporate lawyers, who teach upper-level legal practice at law schools over a relatively long and stable career and whose primary income is from their professional practice. Rajagopal's data shows this group to be more white and male than other contingent faculty. Presumably it is easy to keep track of this stable group, and we might not expect to hear about issues of social justice concerning its employment. (Although, research shows, law faculty of colour and the vast majority of nurses who teach professional practice experience problems.) But the important point to note is that Rajagopal's—and my more recent data—show that the other group of contingent faculty differs markedly from the law professor cohort: the other group has a smaller proportion of white males and a larger proportion of older females with PhDs, who depend completely on their teaching assignments to make a living.

When searching for contingent faculty in my research, it was not unusual for me to go through a telephone list with a senior faculty member and have him point out that a good description of senior faculty was: "We are all old white guys." In the telephone list, there would be only a few faculty of colour (and virtually no Aboriginals) either in the just-hired probationary tenure stream category or even in the contingent category. Moreover, sometimes these faculty of colour would be heading equity units.

When I interviewed contingent faculty , they expressed hope for an eventual tenure-stream job. Either they were graduate students, delaying the completion of their degrees for financial reasons because they lack the time to finish these degrees owing to their helter-skelter ("freeway-flying") teaching assignments. Or they had completed a PhD some time ago and were teaching courses while they waited for the job market to open up; that is, when a white male member of the lingering baby-boom generation retires.

Poor economic conditions for faculty hiring have prevailed on and off since the 1990s. As a result, permanent, second-class faculty pools of sessional workers have developed in otherwise "excellent" and "academically free" postsecondary institutions. As one administrator put it, "As long as the administration can pay sessionals, why would they give a term appointment? They can get everything done sessionally. It is cheaper... I think that people are surprised when they find out how bad it really is. Especially 15 years with no job security or benefits." Another added, "I think that the non-tenured faculty will likely be a category that we will end up with. I'm not sure if we'll ever be able to get rid of it." But, one member of our class would like to see the actual data on the "cost savings" of having a large cadre of contingent professors. He wonders whether better

planning could contribute to curbing the exploitation of contingent faculty?

Contingent workers can be found throughout today's labour force, not just at its lower rungs, so, as Jonathan Church argues, social class is no longer the great divider in our society, since there are also contingent professionals. In the current economic meltdown, it may be difficult for us to become passionate about the human rights of contingent faculty. After all, are they really in any worse a situation than laid-off auto workers, small business employees, or downsized manufacturing and oil patch employees? Perhaps they are, as contingent teachers relying primarily on their teaching income were paying to get a PhD while delaying earnings when manufacturing workers were earning. Plus, long-time contingent faculty may have faced a difficult labour situation for half their careers.

Worse, there is a stigma attached to being a long-time contingent faculty member. They are often regarded as faculty members who are not good enough to make it as "real" academics. But my research showed that contingent faculty rejected this research-teaching split as devaluing the importance of teaching. Administrators claimed that contingent faculty may not even be good teachers., but the contingent faculty I interviewed were, in many cases, award-winning teachers. They pointed out how they had become experts in effective teaching under adverse circumstances, such as when they were, routinely, faced with organizing very large classes. The majority felt they would also excel at research and publishing, if given the time to pursue these activities. As one said, "You aren't a researcher, your teaching is under-valued... And you are only there because, obviously, you are not capable of doing high level research, which is crap." Overall, I could not distinguish the early-career curriculum vitae of non-tenured from tenured and tenure-stream faculty. Arguably, tenured faculty members are overworked, too, but the contingents do the work tenured faculty do not want to do, or cannot do, since they must have some time for research.

But back to the York University strike. One full-time college faculty member rolled her eyes and sighed at the prospect that college faculty might be in a position to strike soon. But, at the same time, we read Neil Tudiver's account of the historic 1995 University of Manitoba strike, in which he argued that there can be some positive outcomes for faculty in taking collective action. Our class reviewed the acrimonious history of labour relations in universities and colleges in Canada and the U.S. We noted that academic freedom was fought for long and hard over the past century and that challenges to it have been taken seriously. The acrimony has been hard on faculty. We could not fail to notice, though, that it was only rarely that agreement was not finally reached between the sides in this long series of battles between administrators and faculty.

Then we pondered how the recent York University strike was different, in that government legislated York's newly-unionized contingent faculty back to work as there had been no rapprochement in this strike.

In our class, there is a graduate student who participated in the strike and whose essay for the course will address the question of why the mainstream media failed to notice that many of the contingent faculty involved were graduate students. The media, instead, emphasizing that undergraduate students were being disadvantaged by the strike, focused on the partial reimbursement of their fees. Our student activist worries this may have been the result of what she calls a "failure of the student movement," but the striking union's—Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 3903—Internet literature declares that it received undergraduate student support, posting a picture of a student holding a sign reading, "I love TAs (GAs, RAs, Contract Fac's, etc)." Students, as much as faculty and administrators, are divided on issues such as labour relations.

Some members of my class will take my course examining academic capitalism and the academy next year, so that we can continue to explore what is happening on our campuses. We will focus more closely on what has come to be called the "corporate" post-secondary institution, so characterized in part because contingent faculty are seen as a "flexible" workforce.

In the end, what is the significance of the back-to-work legislation of contingent educational workers? One revelation our class reached is that academic freedom is largely non-existent for contingent faculty at Canadian universities. As the literature published about contingent faculty repeatedly emphasizes, non-tenured faculty are "invisible" in a

The ranking of postsecondary institutions by "excellence" is usually related to the excellence of their faculty.

system of exploitation that resembles colonial systems. In a particularly riveting article, "Laboring in the dream factory", Church points out that he only became visible when he eventually got a tenured position.

The ranking of postsecondary institutions by "excellence" is usually related to the excellence of their faculty. However, on our campuses, "excellence" more and more depends on an army of contingent academics who do the work that supports this colonial-like system. Is such a system ethical? In ethical reasoning, this might be posed as the question of whether an ethical situation exists if one child is sacrificed so that all the others may grow. The answer in traditional ethics to this problem of stunting is "no." The challenge for all of us is to bring the situation of contingent faculty into view, and to address it ethically and equitably. AM

Linda Muzzin, associate professor in the University of Toronto's Ontario Institute for Studies in Education's higher education program, was assisted in preparing this article by Angela Cuddy, Saron Ghebressellassie, Maureen Gottesman, Paula Green, Duncan Hill, Janie Lin, Kelly McKnight, Suzanne Miller, Franz Nentwich, and Chris Sparks.

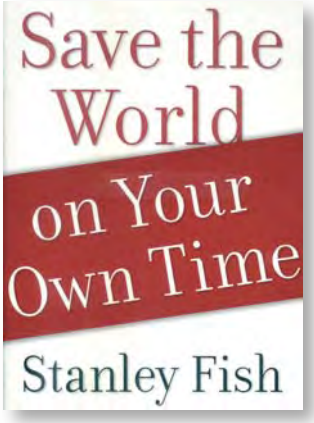
Reading Matters

Jeffrey G. Reitz

How to Save the University

A review essay of Stanley Fish's, *Save the World on Your Own Time* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

"NEITHER THE UNIVERSITY as a collective nor its faculty as individuals should advocate personal, political, moral, or any other kind of views except academic views" (p.19). This is the primary message of law professor and former University of Illinois-Chicago Arts and Sciences Dean Stanley Fish in his *Save the World on your Own Time.* On "their own time," professors can be as political as they like, presumably including when they write books such as the one Professor Fish himself has written. But in class, the professorial mandate is to "introduce students to bodies of knowledge and traditions of inquiry" and to "equip those same students with analytical skills that will enable them to move confidently within those traditions" (p.18).



Such strict academic professionalism is hardly a new idea. Over 90 years ago, German social science giant Max Weber spelled out a similar philosophy of teaching in his classic and eloquent essay "Science as a Vocation" (1918). "Politics," he says, "is out of place in the lecture-room... The true teacher will beware of imposing from the platform any political position upon the student, whether it is expressed or suggested." To this he adds, "The prophet and the demagogue do not belong on the academic platform." Instead, "the task of the teacher is to serve the students with his knowledge and scientific experience and not to imprint upon them his personal political views."

One reason given by Weber is the simple unfairness of taking advantage of students, a captive audience, there mainly to advance their careers. More importantly, advocacy interferes with the academic function, since it necessarily pushes factual disputes to the background: "Whenever the person of science introduces his personal value judgment, a full understanding of the facts ceases... The primary task of a useful teacher is to teach his students to recognize 'inconvenient' facts—I mean facts that are inconvenient for their party opinions."

Debating such issues has new relevance today, as universities have become more central institutions in society. University expansion both in student enrollments and in funded research activity, and the emergence of a vast array of professional schools, has led to far more inter-connections with society in all aspects—politics, economy, and culture—than existed even a few decades ago. There is much greater tension between academia and politics, and much greater difficulty neatly separating the two. Universities need money, lots of it, and to get it, they are pressed to demonstrate relevance to students and their parents, to corporate executives, and to politicians. As well, philosophically, more academics believe that easy separation between the world of value and politics, on the one hand, and the world of fact and analysis, on the other, is somewhat artificial and should be questioned.

Fish and Weber both decry political advocacy by faculty, so it's important to ask: how much political advocacy actually goes on in university classrooms today? Weber in his time cited "some highly esteemed colleagues" who felt they must necessarily bring their policy views into the classroom. For today, Fish clearly thinks it has become quite common, since the main purpose of his book is to remind faculty to stick to academic basics. It is perhaps surprising, then, that he provides no direct evidence from the classroom at all, much less that university teachers actually try to save the world by preaching their own "personal, political, or moral" views in their classes. No professors are even quoted as advocating such activity. So I wonder about the factual basis for Fish's complaint. The dust jacket blurb announces that "professors now routinely bring their political views into the classroom and seek to influence the political views of their students," but the book itself fails to back that up.

Direct evidence on political advocacy in class might come from course outlines, student course evaluations, or informal commentary among colleagues or students. Fish didn't tap into any of this. As a professor, I have some personal exposure to this type of information, and I know of some instances of faculty engaging in political advocacy in class, but I would hardly call it "routine." Course evaluation forms generally do not include specific questions on this point; perhaps they should. I gather that students don't like preachy faculty (any more than Fish does), but since overall student course satisfaction is fairly high, one might infer that such faculty conduct is not a major irritant for students.

Fish's own evidence is not from the classroom. He begins by deploring the civic-minded tone of some university "mission statements." Wesleyan University, for example, is faulted for pledging to "cultivate a campus environment where students think critically, participate in constructive dialogue and engage in meaningful contemplation," and to "foster awareness, respect, and appreciation for a diversity of experiences, interests, beliefs and identities" (p. 10). He finds the word "respect" particularly irksome in this context, since it is a moral issue, and he notes the absence of the word "evaluation." But university mission statements are not directives to faculty. (My own university probably has a mission statement, but if so I'm not at all familiar with it. I could be wrong but I don't really believe my dean will be too concerned by my public admission of this fact.) Rather, they are advertisements to the public extolling the public uses of a university, possibly including that education could be a civilizing experience. One hopes that it is. But such mission statements definitely do not indicate that faculty members try to influence the political views of students.

Another item in the thin inventory of Fish's facts is a documentary movie *Indoctrinate U* directed by Evan Coyne Maloney. The point of the movie is that university faculty in the United States are mainly left-leaning supporters of the Democratic party, and as a result, university students are exposed to and heavily influenced by left-wing ideology. Although Fish acknowledges that party affiliation is not necessarily linked with political advocacy, he takes the movie as evidence for his position, noting that the failure of universities to more clearly enunciate a non-political ethic invites criticism. Again there is no information about political advocacy in university lectures.

The extent of faculty political advocacy is an issue, but perhaps the most interesting questions addressed in Fish's book concern *how* universities and their faculty can enhance their academic objectives. One set of suggestions concerns rules for faculty, the other concerns funding for universities.

For faculty, avoiding advocacy does not mean avoiding policy issues altogether. "No question, issue, or topic is off limits to classroom discussion so long as it is the object of academic rather than political or ideological attention" (p. 15). Fish says this rule is easy to follow, but I am not so sure. It was acceptable to tell his students that he voted for John Kerry, since it was an anecdote not persuasion (p. 30). But distinguishing academic attention from ideology in general might pose thorny problems. "Ideology" is in the eye of the beholder; it's a term more frequently applied to others than to oneself. Rather than rules for figuring out what is "political or ideological attention," he gives examples to show how easy it is, but they could show the opposite. He suggests, for example, that it is inappropriate to discuss in a university class whether George W. Bush was the worst president in US history, and better to discuss what he considers more academic questions such as why such rankings might be undertaken, or why Americans are fascinated with rankings. What Fish says he is doing here is detaching the topic from a real-world agenda, and "academicizing" it. Apparently he considers the question of whether Bush is the worst president to be part of a political agenda and therefore best avoided. Others might argue that assessing the contributions of presidents is standard fare for historians and political scientists, so assessing Bush in that regard would fit an established academic tradition. From this standpoint, what would be inappropriate would be to simply state that George Bush was the worst president without presenting any supporting evidence or documentation, and without considering what Weber called "inconvenient" facts. Fish's example seems to illustrate the difficulties, not the ease, of sticking to the purely academic. It's hard to be sure exactly what that means.

University finance is a second topic on which Fish offers opinions about enhancing the academic function. Fish opposes "ethical" restrictions on university investments, since in his view professors have no business deciding what is ethical. He also believes that sources of funding have no impact on the academic process so long as they do not control research findings. This ignores the steering effect of funding on the choice among various academic topics or questions. External funding agents—both government and private—definitely influence the research agenda, and through the funding of professorial chairs, they affect the teaching agenda of the university. They affect what academic questions will be pursued; that is their purpose. And because of this, individual faculty members may actually avoided asking certain types of questions, for fear of alienating possible sources of funding. Such forces can have a powerful political, mostly conservative, impact on university campuses. In other words, the danger may be not only that professors abuse academic freedom by proffering their political views in class, there may also be a danger that professors *fail* to exercise their academic freedom, in order to enhance their funding opportunities. Addressing this problem in universities today is by no means a trivial challenge.

For academics, these questions of *how* to ensure that academic goals are paramount in a university will remain urgent and important, and not subject to easy solutions. Fish's views on these policy questions may be controversial, but he does agree that these are exactly the type of policy issues on which faculty should be actively engaged in all phases of their work. "Saving the University" can be done appropriately on university time. AM

Jeffrey G. Reitz is R.F. Harney Professor of Ethnic, Immigration and Pluralism Studies at the University of Toronto.

Polytechnique: WHAT WE REMEMBER, WHAT WE INVENT, WHAT WE FORGET

by Karen Dubinsky

Queen's University historian Karen Dubinsky raises disturbing questions about Denis Villeneuve's new film *Polytechnique*, released two decades after the murder of 14 women at Montreal's École Polytechnique.

Some say Denis Villeneuve's film, *Polytechnique*, about the Montreal Massacre of 1989, opens old wounds. But for many of us the wounds have never fully healed. We carry this event with us in different ways, especially, but not only, on the sixth day of December. This is true for many people, but it is particularly true for women. And it is even truer for women who had even a passing acquaintance with, or connection to, the education system in the late 1980s. Ask an educated Canadian woman over the age of 40 what she was doing December 6, 1989. We remember these events as vividly as others recall the Kennedy assassination or September 11.

Scholar Sharon Rosenberg has written thoughtfully about what she terms the "ambivalent public memory" of the Montreal Massacre, so perhaps it's no surprise that two new interventions in the long conversation about this day have also raised controversial questions.[1] Villeneuve's film was preceded by Marc Lépine's mother's memoir *Aftermath*, and both tell the story we thought we knew in new ways.

How does one represent the horrific? This question consumes artists, academics, and film makers the world over. Villeneuve and his collaborators, including the actor-producer Karine Vanasse, have opted to combine a documentary sensibility with something more akin to TV-drama-of-the-week clichés to fill in the characters.

Aside from Lépine, who barely speaks, there are two main characters in *Polytechnique*. Vanasse herself plays a composite, everywoman engineering student. At first, she promises a bit of complexity. She needs help transforming herself from jeans-wearing student to skirt-and-heels-wearing

female for a job interview, and at the interview she endures the casual sexism of a middle-aged professional man who questions her commitment to femaleness and its sacred signifier, motherhood. Yet at the end, she dissolves into one of the most banal clichés of our day: the woman who "has it all." She survives a massacre but is redeemed by her engineering job, snappy haircut, husband, and baby-to-be. She declares her intention to teach strength to her daughter and love to her son. I'm not one to spurn the happy ending, but can mass murder really be resolved by such a trite redemption story?

Polytechnique also introduces a new character, the male engineering student consumed by guilt and remorse. This character is based on one we've heard less about, a Polytechnique engineering student named Sarto Blais, who killed himself after the shootings. At Villeneuve's hands, this young man becomes another cliché: the good German, the guilty survivor. When ordered out of the classroom by Lépine, he casts a long, brooding look at his female classmates. We witness the results of the rampage through his pained eyes: he dashes to the emergency first-aid cabinet for band-aids (band-aids!), he grabs the hand of a female friend on a stretcher and murmurs, "I'm sorry." Later, after a strangely cleansing scene in his mother's kitchen (eating pie), he kills himself. At the end of the film, the credits pay tribute to the 14 women killed that day, and the name Sarto Blais is included on the list.

I don't believe women own this grief. Sarto Blais belongs on a casualty list, but does he belong on the same list as the 14 women? Of course Lépine's actions extended beyond the deaths of 14: his own sister died of a drug overdose some years later, and Sarto Blais's parents killed themselves after the death of their son. But my concern isn't just practical; that is, where do we end the list of the victims. It's also political. This is the first major depiction of this story in Canadian popular culture. What are the implications of narrating the emotional impact of the day through the eyes of a guilty male survivor? To me, it feels like those Hollywood movies about the civil rights movement, or apartheid-era South Africa, in which the murder of black people becomes a prop for the emotions of white people.

Ironically, Villeneuve's depiction of Lépine's rampage undermines his own argument about the equivalence of horror. The strength of this film, and the reason I could imagine using it in the classroom (under the right conditions, i.e., small classes) is that Villeneuve has a documentary-like, razor-sharp eye for detail. It's filmed in black and white. It looks like a university in 1989: people smoke indoors, familiar '80s music sounds occasionally, students line up to pop dimes in photocopy machines. When Lépine starts shooting, we see on the screen what has been in our collective imagination for 20 years. I didn't realize how powerful this was until a few days after I'd seen the film, when I was meeting a student in a Queen's café housed in an engineering building. As I walked through the building and saw students milling in common areas and heading towards classrooms, images from the film, and with them a jolt of fear, came back. I don't think this would have resurfaced in, say, a humanities building, but even more so, this is a deeply gendered fear. Villeneuve shows that Lépine went hunting for women. His rifle eschewed some people, men, in favour of others, women. When women ducked, or ran, he chased them. He didn't chose people wearing red sweaters or carrying blue backpacks and he didn't choose everybody. He chose women, and he left a note to tell us why.

To me, it feels like those Hollywood movies about the civil rights movement, or apartheid-era South Africa, in which the murder of black people becomes a prop for the emotions of white people.

For 20 years feminists have argued that this was an extreme but "emblematic," to use Rosenberg's phrase, act of patriarchal violence. But Monique Lépine's harrowing memoir raises another issue, which potentially adds another layer of complexity to this story. In the film Lépine is not named. But neither is Gamil Gharbi, Lépine's birth name, inherited from his Algerian Muslim immigrant father, Rachid Liass Gharbi. According to Monique Lépine, Rachid was a violent, destructive man who "survived" the Algerian War. I think it's worth considering this.

Most people who want to talk about Gamil Gharbi live in the right-wing blogosphere. Right-wing Canadian males seem eager to name Lépine as Gharbi, because to them this means he was a product of North African, not North American culture. This proves the foreignness of Lépine/Gharbi's misogyny and tells us everything we need to know about Algerians, Muslims, and the rightness of the War on Terror. "Canadian males in general resemble Mr. Lépine," writes one such blogger, "about as closely as we do the September 11 terrorists."

This logic is absurd, but there is, I believe, a reason to consider Gamil Gharbi's history. Monique Lépine gave Marc a legal name change as a fourteenth birthday present. Certainly he wanted to put distance from his abusive father, who abandoned the family when Lépine was young. But, according to his mother, he also suffered the stigma of "for-

eignness" in 1970s Montreal. "He was," she writes, "fed up with being called an Arab by some of the kids at school." The story is further complicated by Rachid Gharbi's history. According to Mme. Lépine, her ex-husband had been the victim of electric shock torture during the Algerian War. Students of decolonization will recall that this conflict provided psychiatrist Frantz Fanon with the inspiration for his classic *The Wretched of the Earth*, which outlines how the brutality of torture dehumanizes both the torturer and the tortured. I don't know what happened to Rachid Gharbi, in Algeria or in Canada. But when Fanon, after listening to testimony from torturers and the tortured, argued that wars of national liberation can become a "breeding ground for mental disorders," and when contemporary feminists argue that militarism promotes narrow, aggressive hypermasculinities, I think men like Rachid Gharbi are who they have in mind.

Let me be clear: I'm not suggesting that the Algerian Civil War, or racism in Quebec, caused the Montreal Massacre. But perhaps this is a bigger, more global story than we've imagined. Perhaps it began in the complex history of colonization, anti-colonial war, and torture and was carried, as surely as skin tone, "funny name'' and accent, by an immigrant to a country – Canada – with its history of racist intolerance and which was, and remains, a contributor to a violent world. That this man visited his demons upon his family, who in turn visited them upon themselves and many others, is an old story. What remains to be explored are the connections between the generalized violence of war, the violence within Lépine's family, and his own specifically misogynist acts. In trying to imagine the trail from the bodies of tortured Algerians in the 1950s to murdered young women in Montreal three decades later, we can use Fanon's analysis of colonization and racism. But we also need, crucially, the analysis feminists have provided about war and gender. Wars are, as Cynthia Enloe has written, never just "over there."[2] AM

---

[1] Sharon Rosenberg, "Neither Forgotten nor Fully Remembered: Tracing an Ambivalent Public Memory on the Tenth Anniversary of the Montreal Massacre," in Annette Burfoot and Susan Lord (eds.), *Killing Women: The Visual Culture of Gender and Violence* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006), 21-46.

[2] Cynthia Enloe, *The Curious Feminist: Searing for Women in a New Age of Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004). See also the insightful analysis of the impact of the Algerian War in Aaronette M. White, "All the Men are Fighting for Freedom, All the Women are Mourning Their Men, But Some of Us Carried Guns: A Raced-Gendered Analysis of Fanon's Psychological Perspective on War," *Signs,* vol.32, no. 4, 2007.

Karen Dubinsky is professor of history at Queen's University.

The Disappeared

KIM ECHLIN'S THIRD NOVEL is an inaugural title in Penguin Canada's new literary imprint, Hamish Hamilton, and has been sold in 17 countries.

It tells the story of a love affair between a young girl in Montreal and a Cambodian student. They meet in a Montreal jazz club during Pol Pot's time of terror, before the lover, Serey, must return home to find out what happened to his family.

"Despair is an unwitnessed life," writes Anne as she searches for the truth, about her lover, and about herself. "If we live long enough, we have to tell, or turn to stone inside."

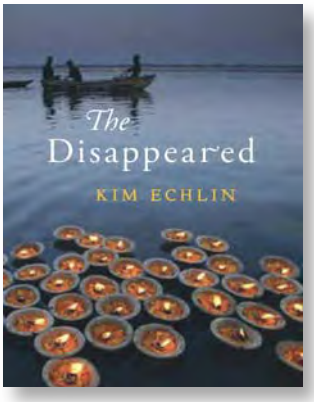
The following is an excerpt from *The Disappeared*.

Montreal

Mau was a small man with a scar across his left cheek. I chose him at the Russian market from a crowd of drivers with soliciting eyes. They drove bicycles and tuk tuks, rickshaws and motos. A few had cars. They pushed in against me, trying to gain my eye, to separate me from the crowd.

The light in Mau's eyes was a pinprick through black paper. He assessed and calculated. I chose him because when he stepped forward, the others fell back. I told him it might take many nights. I told him I needed to go to all the nightclubs of Phnom Penh. The light of his eyes twisted into mine. When I told him what I was doing, the pinprick opened and closed over a fleeting compassion. Then he named his price, which was high, and said, I can help you, borng srei.

Bones work their way to the surface. Thirty years have passed since that day in the market in Phnom Penh. I still hear your voice. I first met you in old Montreal at L'air du temps, where I went to hear Buddy Guy sing "I Can't Quit the Blues." I was sixteen, and it was Halloween night. Charlotte and her friends did not wear costumes, but I used the occasion to disguise my age by putting on a shiny red eye mask decorated at the temples with yellow and purple feathers. My long kinked hair was loose and I wore a ribbed black sweater, my widest jeans, leather boots. As soon as we were past the doorman, I pulled off my mask and I saw you looking at me. We took a round table close to the stage in the smoke-filled room. All through the first set I rolled cigarettes and passed them to the girls at my table and listened to Buddy Guy pleading the blues, eyebrows way up, eyes wide open, singing "Stone Crazy" and "No Lie," then squeezing his eyes shut he sang about homely-girl-love and begging-for-it-love, and I kept glancing over to see if you were looking at me.



I did not avoid your mud dark eyes. Between sets you stood, lifted your chair above your head and walked through the crowd toward me. You were slim and wiry and you wore a white T-shirt and faded jeans and your black hair was tied back at the nape of your neck. Your leather jacket was scuffed and your runners worn. You shifted sideways to let a tray go by and you said to the girls at my table, Can I join you? I brought my own seat.

The girls looked at each other and someone said yes and you put your chair in beside me, its back against the table. Charlotte said, You play in No Exit, I've seen you at the pub. What's your name?

Serey.

They poured you a beer from the pitcher and you talked in your soft voice to all of us. Asked, What are you studying? When you turned to me I had to say, I'm still in high school.

Charlotte said, I'm her Latin tutor. Her name is Anne Greves. You asked, Is Latin difficult? A girl across the table liked you and she said, I study Latin. You said you tutored math at the university. Said you'd seen them around, but not me.

Charlotte said, Her father teaches there and she doesn't want to be seen.

You smiled again and your front tooth had a half-moon chip and you said, Cool, in a strange accent of Quebec and English and something else I could not place.

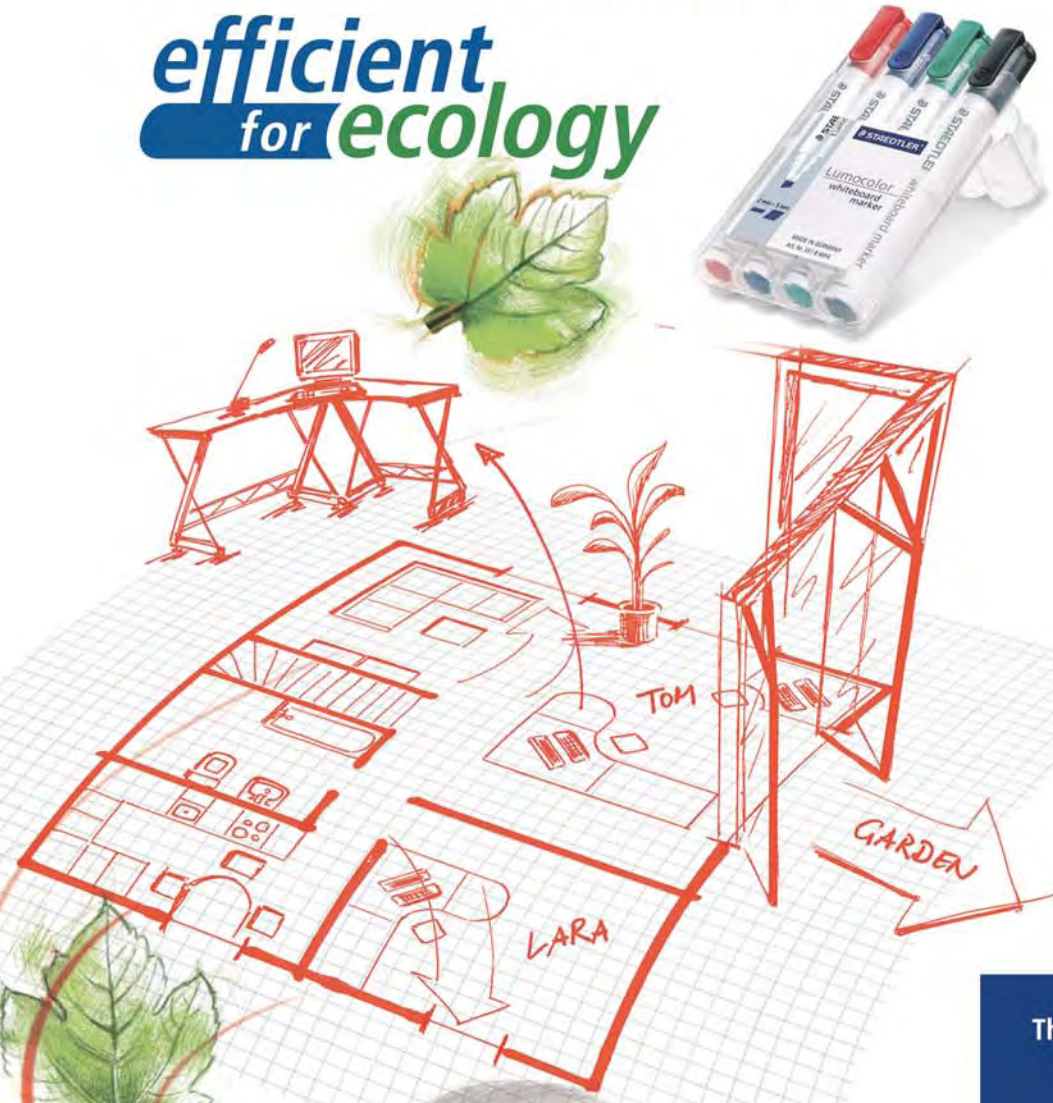
The house lights went down. You leaned close and whispered, I want to touch your hair.

You spoke with the mix of interest and inattention I was familiar with in men. Your excited eyes flickered to the stage, to the table you came from, to me. You wanted to know who was watching you. You wanted to see Buddy Guy and the horns and guitars up front. You wanted to watch me.

Years later you said, Do you remember in those days, the shock of an Asian guy with a white girl, or a black with white, or a French with English, all of us pretending nothing was forbidden? I never had the courage to ask a white girl until you, that night at L'air du temps.

Lumocolor® markers

efficient for ecology



The environmentally friendly choice!

Outstanding results for every application and almost every specialized surface.

From dry "twisters", OHP pens, whiteboard, dry-erase, flipchart markers, CD/DVD pens and multi-purpose pens and markers

Lumocolor pens and markers are completely refillable with our famous DRY-SAFE ink. Up to 2 weeks cap-off time without drying up.

PP barrels and caps for long service life
No harmful ingredients.

Award winning STAEDTLER Box for high tech storage.

STAEDTLER®
your inspiration!

www.staedtler.ca

Buddy Guy walked out for the last set in a green jacket that he took off while he played, hammering and pulling and bending strings with his left hand as he shook the right arm free, his right-hand fingers plucking and picking so he could shake off the left sleeve. His jacket fell to the floor and he grinned out at us when we clapped at his clowning. His mother had died that year and he said he was going to get a polka dot guitar in her honor but he did not have it yet. He played sounds he had heard other places and other times, horns and fiddles, concocting a New Orleans gumbo, a little of this, a little of that, paying homage to Muddy and B.B. and Junior. And then he got down to his own work. He sang about Lord-have-mercy-blues in "One Room Country Shack" and impatient love in "Just Playing My Axe," and with that great big charming smile he sang "Mary Had a Little Lamb," and about asking for a nickel from an angel and about strange feelings and broken hearts and, with a shake of his head, about women he could not please but we all knew he could please anyone, and I wished the lights would never come up. You put your muscled arm around my shoulder and pulled me close and you asked in a soft, soft voice, Can I take you home? A few people were dancing on the sides and you took my hand and pulled me up to dance too and you could sway at the hips but you had this way of moving your hands that was not rock and roll and not the blues but a small graceful bend backward in your wrist at the end of a beat. Charlotte and the girls at my table were putting on their coats, pulling bags over their shoulders, flipping their long hair from inside warm collars like shirts flapping on a clothesline, and I said to them, See you.

We walked north on cobbled streets through the chill autumn air. You said, Would you like to come and see my band?

Maybe, I said. Where do you come from?

Cambodia.

Halloween revelers passed us, laughing and calling to each other in joual, hurrying through the darkness wrapped in black capes and devil masks and angel wings. Cambodia? I pulled my eye mask down.

You touched the feathers and said, Anne Greves, I like it here. Things are unimaginably free here.

I knew from that first walk home.

Outside my father's apartment on l'avenue du Parc I turned to face you and drew you under the iron staircase. You put your lips on my lips and I remember your eyes through the holes in my mask and the touch of your hand against my skull. You pulled me to you and I felt the first touch your fingers on my skin. Through the gratings on the stairs I sensed the movement of a neighbor boy with his Halloween basket, staring at us from the shadows, chewing on a candy-kiss. I caught his eye and said, Jean Michel, pourquoi tu n'es pas au lit? Then I looked at you and said, O malheureux mortels! O terre déplorable! You laughed and released me, said, I want the whole world to see, and reached your hand up as if you were going to steal the boy's candy. Then we joined the child on the steps and you took a piece of string from your pocket and showed him a trick. There we were, an exile, a small boy and a girl-almost-woman, together in the darkness. I still hear your voice singing Buddy Guy's "I Found a True Love," and I remember how we sat that night and watched the clouds roll in across the moon. AM

After completing a doctoral thesis on Ojibway story-telling, Kim Echlin travelled in search of stories through the Marshall Islands, China, France, and Zimbabwe. On her return to Canada she became an arts documentary producer with CBC's The Journal, and a writer for various publications. Her first novel, Elephant Winter, *won the TORGI Talking Book of the Year Award and was shortlisted for the 1997 Chapters/Books in Canada First Novel Award. Her previous novel was* Dagmar's Daughter. The Disappeared *was published by Penguin Canada in March, 2009. Copyright Kim Echlin 2009. Printed with permission Penguin Group (Canada).*

Humour Matters

Steve Penfold

Academia and the good life: Just *so* last millennium

I ALWAYS THOUGHT academia would mean more liquid lunches. As a child, the great god television taught me that professors spend their time drinking dry martinis at midday and scaring the wits out of undergraduates. That rather comfortable groove, I figured, would evolve nicely into that post-tenure rut and, by the time of my early retirement (at 55, naturally), I would be inhabiting a veritable canyon of lethargy and inertia. (Of course, my "retirement" would be strictly rhetorical and highly theoretical, since I would merely pass from one sort of inactivity to another).

Living the professorial life has certainly disabused me of those childhood notions. Undergraduates turn out to be far scarier than I am. They are also surprisingly demanding. Many of them assume that I ought to behave according to normal, "real world" standards of competence, attending to tasks in a timely fashion, returning emails promptly, and giving useful comments on returned papers. A few have the annoying habit of complaining when I don't do these things, and others even assume that I ought to dress professionally, at least judging by the fashion tips I get on student evaluations.

Can someone explain the source of these strange ideas? Surely it can't be television? I'm a serious devotee of the medium, but I have yet to come across an HBO special titled, "My Well Dressed Professor". Nor, to my knowledge, has a hip-hop group raced up the charts with their latest download, "The Historian Who Was On Time". So why don't undergraduates realize that it's a major innovation just to be sober during that 1 pm lecture?

And speaking of dry martinis, my lunch hours are typically spent wolfing down cold pizza while checking email, polishing off that crappy lecture, and reading over drafts of dissertation chapters. This level of multi-tasking requires marshalling all four appendages at once, so to fit in a dry martini, I'd have to be a penta-pus. No doubt my colleagues in biology are already working on a way to improve the human design, while the Research Office is developing a plan to commercialize the innovation. In the meantime, however, I'm left with pizza stains on my lecture notes.

And early retirement? Oh, please. With the economic downturn and the recent lack of university hiring, this doesn't seem likely. By the time I hit my mid-50s, they will have instituted mandatory non-retirement, where you qualify for a pension if your age and years of service total somewhere around 288.

Yes, martinis at noon, intimidated undergraduates, and early retirement are so last millennium, but the academic good life resists all efforts at updating. Last month, I tried to "go acoustic" by actually speaking to students and colleagues on a regular basis, but almost all our conservations began with, "Why haven't you answered my email?" Next, I did an experiment in "mono-tasking" (doing one thing at a time, perhaps even doing it properly) and ended up at the front of a lecture hall with nothing but a piece of pizza in my hand. Nor was my department warm to my plan for a scholarly "cap and trade" system, so that conference-going, frequent-publishing keeners might sell off their excess output to post-tenure rutters like me.

Yes, almost a decade into the new millennium, a new basis for the academic good life remains shockingly elusive. It's really too bad. Right now, I could definitely use a drink.

Steve Penfold is Academic Matters' *humour columnist. He moonlights as an associate professor of history at the University of Toronto. His most recent book is* The Donut: A Canadian History *(University of Toronto Press, 2008).*

Editorial Matters

Mark Rosenfeld

The ethical challenges in academia

IN ILLINOIS, state ethics legislation requires all public employees, including university faculty, to participate in ethics training and to be examined annually on the material. Last year, two Southern Illinois University professors were threatened with discipline for completing their exam too quickly and, by implication, "cheating" on an ethics exam. The charge of non-compliance with state legislation was eventually dropped by Illinois' inspector-general's office, but the issue of ethics testing remains intriguing.

Can a formal, multiple-question ethics exam encompass all the ethical challenges and dilemmas encountered in the modern university? And can the answers speak to the nuanced responses sometimes necessary when struggling with the academy's ethical concerns?

In two key areas of academic activity—research and teaching—there are myriad ethical issues. Sergio Sismondo's article in this issue highlights one such ethical consideration. He exposes the ghost writing and management of medical research and publishing by the pharmaceutical industry, noting that the academic researchers whose names appear as authors of these ghost-managed articles provide corporate research with an aura of independence and integrity. This research, therefore, serves to market pharmaceutical products and to extend the influence of pharmaceutical corporations on medical research. At issue is not only the ethics and validity of the research conducted but also patient safety.

Research supported by other industries has also raised concerns. Should a university accept funding from the tobacco industry, with its history of misleading research and carcinogenic products? The ethics of taking funding for research for the Department of National Defense or the Pentagon has also been questioned, particularly when such research leads to lethal innovations. For some, ethical considerations require a ban on these sponsorships. For others, such ethical considerations are deemed naïve. Moreover, does restricting research on the basis of the funding source violate academic freedom by curtailing the ability to do research?

The ethical issues involved in corporate-sponsored or managed research are but one area of concern for academic researchers—and the public. As scientific research extends its capability, questions about appropriate limits become more pressing. Bio-ethicists have voiced concerns about cloning and the creation of interspecies hybrids. The use of animals in medical research has become an ethical flashpoint between animal-rights advocates and researchers who reject claims of inhumane treatment and cite the necessity of such research for medical advancements.

University research is not conducted in a vacuum. As ethical concerns regarding research have become more pronounced, so too has regulation. Ethical guidelines and committees govern research involving human subjects and research sponsorships, although the efficacy of this regulation is open to debate. Critics who otherwise support guidelines question whether their application might be so narrow they inhibit research in controversial or sensitive areas, such as those involving the disabled or terminally-ill, or topics such as euthanasia.

Another area of ethical consideration for academia is explored in Margaret Somerville's provocative consideration of intolerance on university campuses. She writes that "universities should be models for narrowing the divides that separate us, not for widening them, as presently seems to be happening" and looks to the creation of a "shared ethics" where "respectful conversation across those divides" can take place. Universities, ideally, are forums where controversial ideas can be examined dispassionately, without fear of censure. This is not always the case. Universities are not a world unto themselves, and they grapple with how to respond to political, ideological, and economic pressures.

Outside of teaching and research, there are other ethical considerations that confront the university. Should a university invest in companies or funds that directly or indirectly benefit a government under international sanction? What are the ethics of investing endowment money in high-risk equities that promise high returns but also jeopardize an institution's ability to provide student assistance if the funds collapse? How does a university balance the student's right to privacy with concerns about behaviour that could endanger the student or others?

In all these areas, universities need to be guided by an ethical compass that speaks to the ideals of higher education. In practice, this ethical compass is a work in progress.

Mark Rosenfeld is editor-in-chief of Academic Matters *and associate executive director of OCUFA*

BOOKMARK THIS!

Academic Matters is now on the web!

Academic Matters has launched a website featuring the electronic version of the print magazine and much, much more: web-exclusive articles, reviews of films, books, fiction section and university job postings.

The website also gives readers access to lively blogs written expressly for our website by opinion leaders in the academy—on topics ranging from the art of teaching to the work/family life of a mid-career academic; from university architecture to public policy and higher education; from the impact of new media on the academy to a confessional from a sessional.

And since we want to create a space for people interested in higher education to become involved, our readers are welcome to comment on articles and blogs.

www.academicmatters.ca

OCUFA

Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations
Union des Associations des Professeurs des Universités de l'Ontario

YORK 50

YORK TO THE POWER OF 50. Fifty years ago a dream began. A vision of bringing together researchers, teachers, students and partners from different disciplines to tackle real-world issues. This is the essence of our interdisciplinary approach. For fifty years now, York University has looked to the future and discovered answers along unconventional paths. As we look back on our first fifty years, we believe there is no limit to what can be accomplished in our next fifty. yorku50.ca

YORK UNIVERSITÉ UNIVERSITY U50

redefine THE POSSIBLE.

Presenting Sponsors:

TD Bank Financial Group ENBRIDGE CINEPLEX ENTERTAINMENT

Media Sponsor:

CTVglobemedia