

RESPONSE

Some Post-Mortem Reflections on the Cancellation of University Programs in Canada's Prisons

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I taught university prison education programs ("PEP") in British Columbia throughout the 1980's: for three years in the University of Victoria Program at Matsqui Medium Security in Abbotsford and then for six years at Kent Maximum Security in Agassiz as the Coordinator of the Simon Fraser University Prison Education Program. In retrospect, it might appear ironically fitting that after completing a dissertation on Samuel Beckett at the University of Reading I should spend the next decade learning how to read and write gaol. At the time, however, it was simply a disorienting immersion in a strange, new world with its own particular languages and distinct dialects. Teaching at Matsqui in the early 1980's was much more a case of ivory bunker than tower. First off was the Matsqui Riot of summer 1981. The institution was heavily damaged in its living unit areas and the Academic Centre was for a period occupied by the prisoner population before it was moved out to the sports fields and the infamous Tent City. The university library was left intact, protected by students in the Program, thereby transgressing that venerable prison tradition of torching the last buildings occupied during a riot. The university students led the return from Tent City to the institution proper and played an important role in getting things back to normal (so to speak). We returned to academic time with its semester rituals of various course offerings, time-tables et al., only to be faced in 1983 with Ottawa's cancellation of the University Program. After many months of political manoeuvring, intense lobbying, and strong vocal support from Adult Education groups across the country, the Program was reinstated.

The Riot and the Cancellation dramatize the ways in which the University Program was always threatened by various forces within and without the institutions in which it operated. And that very strange hybrid - a university prison education program - did manage to function, often very successfully, by establishing its own identity as an alternative community in which student and teacher could engage in a critical dialogue with a liberal arts curriculum and its commitment to the humanities. The University of Victoria Prison Education Program had started out as a pilot project at the B. C. Penitentiary in 1972 and, after its

closure in 1980, the Program was established in the new cluster of high-tech prisons throughout the Fraser Valley - Kent, Matsqui, Mountain, as well as at William Head on Vancouver Island (thus giving us more or less comprehensive coverage of the system, since upon sentencing a prisoner would typically begin his time at Maximum Security before proceeding to "cascade" to lower security institutions and then to parole). It was at this point that I entered the prison scene; I left in 1990 to take up another appointment for by that time the writing was clearly on the wall: a series of budget cut-backs and the movement towards a therapeutic model that stressed quick-fix courses in "cognitive skills" marked the beginning of the end. The Program was cancelled in 1993 and this time the cries for its reinstatement fell on deaf ears. So ended a remarkable 20 year venture: an internationally acclaimed prison education program which had served as the model for similar programs in the United States and Great Britain was terminated.

Several years later (and a couple of books on Beckett later) and I still could not get prison out of my head. The cancellation of the Program supplied the impetus for the completion of *Life-25: Interviews with Prisoners Serving Life Sentences*, which is reviewed in this issue of *Journal of Prisoners on Prisons* ("JPP") and *Sentences and Paroles: A Prison Reader*, an anthology which documents the development of prison writing in B.C., projects which I had started working on while teaching in prison. All prison literature is, in a way, a form of testimony, bearing witness to an experience of having been there which is individual yet also part of a collective experience. During the years I taught in prison, I had become increasingly interested in prison literature, that is, writing which employed the carceral image, as well as the writings generated by prisoners themselves, and I developed courses on prison literature which I taught in the prisons and also at the Simon Fraser University ("SFU") campus in Burnaby. The Program also published *Prison Journal* whose central aims were to provide a forum for the voices of those who are imprisoned and for all those concerned with carrying out a serious examination of the phenomenon of the prison. As an editor of *Prison Journal*, I was necessarily involved with the production of prison writing, collecting various materials, commissioning work on various topics (from in-house as well as outside contributors), and working with prisoner-students on their own writing. With the cancellation of the Program,

Prison Journal ceased publication and an important organ for the voices of prisoners was silenced.

I still wanted to be more directly involved with prisoners' writing and this led me to take time out from a Research at Small Universities Conference I was attending in Hull in May 1997 in order to meet in Ottawa with Robert Gaucher, the editor of the *JPP*, and to volunteer my services. There were a number of links between the Program I had taught, the journal I had edited, and the *JPP*. In his editorial for the very first issue of the *JPP*, Howard Davidson states how he met with Henry Hoekema, the Coordinator of the SFU Program, who agreed to encourage our students to submit papers on prison abolition (Davidson, 1988, p. 1). Also, Liz Elliott, who had taught criminology courses in SFU-PEP, was on the editorial board of the *JPP*, as was Steve Reid, who had been a student in SFU-PEP at Kent Maximum Security when he was revising his novel *Jackrabbit Parole* (1986) and when I was Coordinator of the Program there.

When I was asked to write a response, there was really only one issue which I had no choice but to address: the termination of university programming in Canada's prisons. This is an issue which still rankles me and one of which I had to try to make some sense. The issue has not yet been discussed in the *JPP*, although the very thorough and in-depth discussion in the preceding issue (1997) by J. M. Taylor, "Pell Grants for Prisoners Part Deux: It's Déjà Vu All Over Again," does touch on a number of related issues concerning the attack on university-level programming within the American context. Taylor points out that when President Clinton signed the Crime Bill in September 1994, prisoners became ineligible for Pell Grant Disbursements. Taylor's detailed analyses of the tortuous rhetoric of right wing ideologues whose "misinformation campaign" led to this unfortunate consequence emphasize how prisoners were convenient "scapegoats" in this political campaign: "The elimination of prisoner Pell Grant eligibility effects the closure of post-secondary correctional education opportunities in the United States" (Taylor, 1997, p. 62). (In this regard, note the recently released documentary *The Last Graduation: The Rise and Fall of College Programs in Prison* which eloquently advocates reinstatement of college programs by letting the educators and prisoners tell their own stories; it also listens in as "show-'em-no-mercy" legislators make their

case in the halls of Congress). Whilst this is indeed a crippling blow to university programs in prison, it pales somewhat in contrast to the outright cancellation of such programs in Canada. Moreover, the rationale given by the Correctional Service of Canada ("CSC") for the cancellation of university programming represents a much more insidious and fundamental attack on post-secondary prison education than the Pell Grant fiasco, and is one which promises to have further repercussions within the U.S. (*déjà déjà vu?*) since many American prison programs have been so heavily indebted to the theoretical premises of the SFU Program.

The Canadian Government's justification for its actions is clearly stated in the cancellation letter sent to Dr. Evan Alderson, the Dean of Arts at SFU, by M.J. Duggan, Deputy Commissioner, Pacific, March 24, 1993:

I am writing to advise you that we have decided not to retender the post-secondary program following expiration of our contract with you on June 30, 1993.

It is with considerable regret that we make this decision, given the excellent service provided by Simon Fraser University and the dedication of your staff to our Service.

However, as we identify and prioritize the needs of our offender population, we conclude that we must reallocate our scarce resources to priority needs such as programming for violent offenders and substance abusers which more directly targets the criminogenic factors facing offenders.

I very much appreciate your ongoing support over the past contract period and look forward to your support in achieving a smooth transition in programming.

Here is laid out the corpse of university programming in Canadian prisons, awaiting autopsy or critical dissection. The always handy excuse of budget shortfalls hardly bears scrutiny since the monies allocated for university programming were minuscule to say the least in terms of CSC budgeting. What is really central here is the underlying assumption that

university programming is not “core” to the CSC mandate whose primary responsibility is protection of the public; that it is merely a frill or needless luxury which can be easily dispensed with; that Adult Basic Education (“ABE”) is the educational priority of the Service since over 80 percent of all prisoners test lower than a grade ten level. Such is the gist of the response to Claire Culhane, who had challenged on behalf of the Prisoners’ Rights Group the fiscal argument and proposed instead a more “equitable allocation of funds,” by John Rama, Assistant Commissioner, Executive Services in a letter dated May 7, 1993.

However, just as J.M. Taylor pointed out with reference to “piercing the fog” of the Pell Grant fiasco, the economic argument is really only a cover for a number of ideological determinants. And in Duggan’s letter to Alderson they are transparent: namely, a power play whereby the CSC would re-take control of its programming (a control which it had willingly relinquished during the aftermath of the “nothing works” period of the 1970’s); armed now with a new sense of confidence in its mandate, the CSC would “more directly target the criminogenic factors facing offenders.” That is to say, they could do a better job at doing what prison university programs had always claimed to do with a success rate that correctional programming could only envy from afar: to reduce dramatically the rates of recidivism and to enhance the prospects of rehabilitation. Most disturbing of all is Duggan’s last phrase in which he says he is “look[ing] forward to your support in achieving a smooth transition in programming,” as if this were nothing more than a “friendly” corporate take over! The implication is that the CSC is now fully equipped with its own theoretical precepts and has thereby superseded the role of the university programs since it is much more “direct” and efficient about achieving those goals. What this means in practice is that CSC staff will now deliver their own short courses on “cognitive skills” which will address the aforementioned “criminogenic factors.” In short, here is, for the lack of a better word, a massive “deprofessionalization” of programming in prisons. Instead of Michel Foucault’s (1979) image of the modern prison “swarming” with technicians and professionals vying for their own discipline’s hegemony, we now have the spectacle of inadequately trained CSC personnel delivering short courses designed to deal with “targeted” cognitive deficits.¹ In the virtual reality of prison programming, it would seem that even pseudo-knowledge is power.

The next and most difficult dissection in this post-mortem is to determine to just what degree prison university programs might be deemed to have been complicit, however inadvertently, in their own demise, how they might be said to have conspired in their own downfall by means of the very theoretical premises whereby they sold their programming to the CSC in the first place. These very questions were broached in Vol. 4, No. 1 of the *JPP* (1992) in articles by Ray Jones and Brian D. MacLean which focus upon the theoretical premises of university programming as set out by Stephen Duguid, the Director of the SFU Program, whose work builds on and extends the pioneering work of Douglas Ayers and T.A. Parlett when they established the University of Victoria Program that was later taken over by SFU.

Noting that “post-secondary education is flourishing in the prisons of Massachusetts,” Jones goes on to determine that this situation is “more the product of an often contradictory and haphazard evolutionary process than a carefully implemented plan for meeting educational needs” (Jones, 1992, p. 4). He then proceeds to offer a critique of the theory offered by Duguid (and adopted by prison educators such as Elizabeth Barker at Boston University) that “most prisoners are simply deficient in certain analytic problem-solving skills, interpersonal and social skills and ethical/moral development” (ibid, p. 13) and that prison education should deal with appropriate rehabilitative development in these areas. Jones’ conclusion is that such programming has “essentially reformative aims” and thereby confronts its “principal dilemma,” namely “its unintended collusion with the penal apparatus, which arises from the coincidence of interests it shares with the Massachusetts Department of Corrections” (ibid, p. 17). Brian D. MacLean’s critique goes one step further. He regards the cognitive-moral premises of the SFU Program as virtually working hand-in-glove with the aims of the prison administration, concluding that the post-secondary educational programs should be regarded “as a strategy of control by prison administrators under the guise of liberal, rehabilitative ideology. ... In short, prisoner education posited as moral education is first and foremost an effective form of social control masked as a form of rehabilitation and evaluated not on its pedagogical merit, but on its efficacy of reducing recidivism” (MacLean, 1992, p. 27).

This would indeed be a devastating indictment of such university prison education programs if it were in any way an accurate and just

depiction of how these programs actually operated. In practice, the situation was much more complex and for that reason much more interesting in a theoretical sense as well. MacLean poses what he regards as merely a rhetorical question: “it should be asked that with all this emphasis on the efficacy of the UVic program to improve the level of moral development and thereby reduce the rate of recidivism, is anyone concerned with the value of education itself?” (ibid, p. 26). I, for one, and several of my colleagues were “concerned with the value of education itself.” Both contingents were well represented in the program - there were those who advocated the cognitive-moral development strategy and those like myself who worked on the principle that the critical thinking dimensions of what I taught, whether it be Shakespeare and Wordsworth, or Victor Serge and Jean Genet, more than justified themselves. Hence there was a dynamic and stimulating tension between these different views which enriched and vitalized the program. In the classroom, in that refuge within the enclosing dystopia of the prison, I taught what I wanted, the way I wanted, in conformity with the standards of the university, not the dictates of the penal institutions. Granted, the university programs in these penal institutions did serve the interests of the administrations in so far as they did offer some means of “social control.” But only if one adopted a dogmatically “purist” approach such as MacLean’s could this be seen as somehow morally reprehensible. Let’s be realistic: anyone who has been involved in programming initiatives in prison knows, and, after all, it is brutally self-evident that they are there by the grace (or bureaucratic whim, call it what you will) of the prison authorities. The cognitive-moral deficit argument was, in its time, a very useful rhetorical ploy whereby an ostensible “coincidence of interests” effected a *modus vivendi* which allowed for a creative tension between the prison’s mandate of social control and the prison’s program’s essentially subversive questioning of those very tenets. In endless conversations with hundreds of students, I and my colleagues talked directly about these issues: there was no “masking” of some kind of hidden agenda; on the contrary, there was a conscious effort made at its deconstruction so that issues of larger import could be raised, such as education as an ‘agent of social control’ in the world at large outside the prison walls.

In *Cognitive Dissidents Bite the Dust - The Demise of University Education in Canada’s Prisons* (1993), Stephen Duguid focuses on the historical background to the CSC’s new programming initiatives and

concludes with a consideration of the moral and pedagogical dilemmas such “targeted” programming presented for university prison educators. The Sawatsky Report (1985) had declared that the university program, while it might benefit long term and/or maximum security inmates, was “not essential, not core, and could be reduced if necessary.”

The Sawatsky Report did not spring forth in isolation. It was, however, the first powerful indication from the correctional bureaucracy that a change was coming and that ‘nothing works’ was over. Ironically, the origins of these initiatives came in part at least from the university program they were eventually to bury. In 1979, at the instigation of local CSC staff, a research study was undertaken which showed that students from the then UVic Program had a significantly lower rate of recidivism than those of a comparison group of non-students. At the same time, Robert Ross at the University of Ottawa and his colleagues Paul Gendreau and Elizabeth Fabiano were engaged in an exhaustive study of the effectiveness of prison programs in general. In reference to the university program in British Columbia, Ross stated in 1985 that: “Nowhere else in the literature can one find such impressive results with recidivistic adult offenders.”

Having conducted an autopsy of the death of the behaviourist model in corrections in a 1978 article, Ross and his colleagues subsequently used the university program and several others as the cornerstones for their argument that something works with some people and that the basic element of success is the attention paid to thinking - or cognitive factors. By 1985 this research had been codified in the seminal text *Time to Think: A Cognitive Model of Delinquency Prevention and Offender Rehabilitation* and Ross and Fabiano had begun the process of actually creating model programs that utilized the cognitive approach. Observers outside Canada were already talking about the new Canadian paradigm of correctional education, linking research connected with the UVic/SFU program with the contributions from Ross, Fabiano, Gendreau and others (Ross and Fabiano, 1985, p. 58).

While Ross et al. certainly did not intend for their programming to displace wholesale the university programs to which their own theories were so obviously indebted, it was clear that their work did prepare the way for the CSC to declare the university programs redundant. At this

point Ray Jones and Brian D. MacLean would probably say that this “demise” could have hardly come as a surprise: after all, if you sleep with the enemy, what can you expect; in this view, university prison programming in Canada was fittingly “hoisted by its own petard,” namely, a highly problematical theory of cognitive-moral development.

The twists and turns in Duguid’s remarkable closing paragraph warrant a closer examination for in it he draws a number of conclusions which, ironically enough, would seem to have some features in common with the critiques of Jones and MacLean, foremost of which is a commitment to a “purity” of theory that can claim the moral high road:

Suddenly, it seemed, an era was at an end. The university, representing education as perceived in the community, was now being asked to adopt correctional goals and to identify the criminogenic factors that it thought its courses addressed. The tension that had existed within the program between those who stressed the pure educational goals of the program and those who were interested in its habilitative or developmental objectives was now irrelevant. The task, should the educators have chosen to accept it, was to embrace overtly correctional goals and in doing so transform the curriculum in ways that would address behaviours such as violence, sexual deviancy, and drug addiction. Abandoned along with this embrace would be the idea of an alternative community within the prison and most of the theoretical constructs that had given the program its rationale and explained its effectiveness. Mercifully, the decision or the confrontation was aborted by the CSC’s arbitrary decision to terminate the program by the convenient excuse of fiscal shortages (Duguid, 1993, p. 63).

A number of competing and contradictory metaphors are evident here. The title phrase “cognitive dissidents bite the dust” telescopes images of political resistance (perhaps with particular echoes of the Soviet Gulag and its “correction” of deviance) with those of a good old-fashioned ideological shoot-out at the O.K. Corral. This title phrase is, however, displaced by a number of metaphors of quite a different nature. The word “embrace” (used twice), employed in reference to the university program being asked to adopt “overtly correctional goals,” punningly suggests

(intended or not) that such an overture (proposition?) could lead to a fate worse than death. That is, the supposed purity of the program's theory would thus be defiled by the unwanted advances of CSC programming thrusts and initiatives. The very last sentence of this 'Rest-In-Peace' paragraph changes yet again the metaphors which underlie discussion of various theoretical options open to the university program with reference to its continued existence within Canadian prisons: "*Mercifully*, the decision or the confrontation was *aborted* by the CSC's arbitrary decision to terminate the program by the convenient excuse of fiscal shortages" (Italics mine). The death imagery that runs throughout, from "bite the dust" to "an era was at an end," here goes through a final series of transformations: the university program's demise is depicted as a "mercy killing" (a sort of euthanasia) and as the termination of an unwanted offspring. What conclusions can be drawn from this? The demise of university education in Canada's prisons resulted, in part, by its too doctrinaire adherence to its own theory. This was always problematic even as it was a convenient rationale whereby it could sell itself to prison administrations. *Mercifully*? Hardly. The university program in Canadian prisons (as, indeed, anywhere else) was already compromised by the very contexts within which it worked (Jones and MacLean are correct in this regard); but this need not have prevented it from adapting to and subverting such constraints. Contrary to Duguid's conclusion, I would maintain that the university program could have "embraced" the development of its own programming, its own curriculum to deal with behaviours such as violence, sexual deviancy, and drug addiction.

Missing in all these discussions are the views of the prisoner-students themselves. As Howard Davidson stressed in his Editorial Note for Vol. 4, No. 1, 1992 of the *JPP*, "with rare exceptions those who write about prison education are not prisoners or former prisoners. For the most part, it is educators who dominate the discourse" (Davidson, 1992, p. 2). Davidson then goes on to state that the issue on prison education he is editing is "an attempt to overcome the one-sidedness of the discussion on prison education" (ibid, p. 2). I would like to conclude these reflections upon the reasons behind the cancellation of university prison programming in Canada by letting the prisoners give their own views, letting them act as their own ethnographers, as Robert Gaucher put it in the key note article of the very first issue of the *JPP* (1988). In many ways, the student-prisoners, who obviously had the most to lose if

university programming was terminated, also had the most pragmatic view and insightful understanding of the “theory” of the university program. A very sensible view, one which would be echoed by many prisoners I talked to over the years, was put forward by Bob MacDonald, a prisoner at William Head Institution, in a letter to the editor of the *Victoria Times-Colonist*, Wednesday May 12, 1993, the last three paragraphs of which read:

Many people have tried to squeeze theories out of the success of the university program. Some say it reduces cognitive and moral deficits, others say it opens the mind and broadens the horizons. No doubt there is a degree of truth in all of these proposed theories.

We must not, however, think of “prison education” as though it were a corrective thing designed to fix broken people. We should instead think of “education in prison” and accept the fact that a liberal arts education has an intrinsic value of its own and just happens to have a rehabilitative aspect. Let us stand on the record of success.

Canadian taxpayers recently spent \$8.2 million for new living units at William Head. The design emphasized integrated living, where prisoners do for themselves rather than have things done for them. With this concept Canada leads the world in penology. Time alone will gauge its success. The CSC has now decided to cancel this international model for prison education, at the same time it is retaining and increasing funding for programs that are demonstrated failures. Sadly, on July 1, this forward-looking institution will take a giant leap ahead into the past.

Perhaps the most penetrating piece of writing I came across in the archival dossier supplied to me by my former colleague Wayne Knights was a letter signed R.M., Vice-President, External Relations, Mountain SFU Student Council, and published in the SFU student newspaper *The Peak*, December 3, 1992. As it deals in-depth from a prisoner’s perspective with many of the issues previously discussed in this response, I have reproduced it in its entirety.

I have written this letter to *The Peak* in order to draw attention to the recent decision made by the Correctional Service of Canada to delete the post-secondary Prison Education Program offered by Simon Fraser University. I am a concerned citizen who feels that new policy to displace education as an optional component of a prisoner's rehabilitation "plan," to replace it with unilaterally administered treatment programs, is seriously flawed in theory and will prove to be ineffective in practice. My contention relies on the premise that for "rehabilitation" to occur a person must be allowed to learn what type of changes are required and how to take part in the process so that the outcome is mutually satisfactory to both the individual and society. The Prison Education Program which has existed for the past 20 years - of which this writer has been a participant for the last six - has effectively provided such an interactive medium as it has enabled prisoners the power to learn on their own behalf and to offer arguments and assertions that are respectively evaluated and measured according to scholastic merits as opposed to administrative objectives. The current drive to displace university education with treatment programs cuts the tenuous linkage between convicts and society and undermines the development of individual skills and abilities and replaces these with positivist prescriptions for proper thinking, proper feeling, and proper living. This in turn produces either a compliant non-entity unable to think for him or herself or provides a catalyst for the instruction of under socialized offenders who simply memorize norms as opposed to actually "learning" them.

The introduction of Bill C36 and its program of streamlining has ushered in a type of prison programming which reverts back to the medical model that was used in the 1960's - albeit with a new "cognitive" emphasis. Under this model, criminals are deemed sick and in need of a cure; however, the medicine is merely the unilateral administration of treatment programs which attempt to teach the offender through role playing, the memorization of acronyms for "proper" cognitive processes, and timely participation in the various programs deemed necessary by correctional staff. There are many problems with this type of programming. First, when an offender is incarcerated, a needs

analysis is done by psychologists and correctional staff who have a vested interest in establishing a long lasting and costly treatment plan. Second, once this needs analysis is done its prognosis must, by definition, perpetuate itself as further treatment invariably finds further character flaws and necessity for more programs. Third, this type of administrative system exacerbates the already monumental problem of patronage that exists within Canadian Corrections. It is just too easy for some underqualified staff member to gain access into the veritable cornucopia of needs that an offender has and a position to administer the programs that will fulfill these needs. In addition, cons will be required by a new institutional pay system to participate in these programs, thereby solidifying and legitimating the process. The ultimate consequence is that prisoners will become dependent on others for their own social, moral, and psychological definitions: they will actually create through a process of reification in which national policies, correctional programs, and positivist morality are legitimated. I am not suggesting that programs designed to assist the offender should not be applied but rather I am saying that their unilateral administration by a closed system which answers to itself is downright dangerous.

In contrast, it is this writer's opinion that prisoners must be taught a means to assess and define themselves through both individual education and correctional programs. This approach can fulfill needs of the individual and those of society by providing both individual education and correctional programs. This approach can fulfill needs of the individual and those of society by providing both these components as opposed to merely one or the other. It must be emphasized that prison university programs provide a cognitive basis for effective therapies and correctional programs in that they enable prisoners to decipher the underlying meaning and objectives of such programming. The knowledge gained through university courses allow "cons" to take part in programs as confident, understanding, and interactive participants rather than as merely recipients of an unclear set of operating principles internalized in rote form. The chief point is that convicts need to learn the principles that

govern social processes rather than to memorize what a good, adaptive person does and what a bad, maladaptive person does in a given situation.

The central point that I have stressed in this letter is that university and correctional programming do not have to be antagonistic but must work together in an interactive synthesis. I have received both institutional programming and a comprehensive university education which together have opened innumerable doors and have given me instruments with which I can understand the contradictions within society and within myself. My education has been one of defining self through both individual and social processes and educational and correctional programming. It has made me an individual proud of the successes and understanding of the failures, it has broached the barrier of fear and pain to release the prisoner that has dwelled inside and that perhaps dwells inside all of us.

For me there is also a personal note associated with R.M.'s letter. R.M. was one of the first students I had in my English classes at Kent Maximum Security in Agassiz. I can still remember vividly those classes and his first efforts to apply critical thinking skills and rhetorical strategies in his first year composition course. Unfortunately, the university program at Kent was cancelled in 1991 (the CSC strategy seemed to be picking off programs one by one, and not the more dramatic across the board cancellation of 1993). I had already by this time left the Program, but Liz Elliott, who was teaching criminology there at the time, has described the last graduation ceremony to me. Students and teaching staff were waiting around for the SFU Program Coordinator, Henry Hoekema, who was bringing in book prizes and pizza for a meal following the ceremony. It was at this point, most unceremoniously, that a lockdown was declared (there had been several of these over the semester - unannounced and unexplained). The CSC Educational Officer ordered all students to return to their cells immediately. At this point Henry arrived, weighted down by pizza boxes and books. Students each grabbed a box and were ushered to their cells. This sorry spectacle makes T.S. Eliot's "not with a bang but a whimper" sound like a positively festive occasion.

The termination of university prison programming in Canada's prisons was a great loss for all concerned, above all for the prisoners who are now denied this important option, one which has undeniably been of invaluable assistance to others. You do not need statistical analyses of recidivism rates to know this. Perhaps some of my comments here will contribute to further discussion and reassessment of the means whereby we can protect prison university programs and indeed lobby for their reinstatement. In that regard, it is vital that in this post-mortem period in Canada we clarify the theory, goals, and practice of such programming. The quixotic tilting at prisons must continue. I am pleased to be able to offer my services to the *JPP* and look forward to working with prisoners on their own writings.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Recently the CSC announced it was hiring over 1,000 new correctional officers. Not one new hiring was made for either social workers or educators.

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Pen Prison Writing Education Program

Information about correspondence courses available to prisoners is published by the PEN Prison Writing Program. It is a list of 59 institutions providing courses that can lead to high school or college diploma, degree programs or paralegal certificate. Many prisoners have shown an interest in continuing their education, but the opportunities to do so are limited. The list will be sent free on request.

PEN Prison Writing Program also publishes an Information Bulletin for prison writers. It is available free on request. It contains information about the annual contest with prizes for poetry, fiction, non-fiction and drama, as well as basic English, manuscript preparation, a directory of small magazines that consider new voices for publication and a list of pen pal organizations.

The above booklets may be ordered by writing to: PEN American Center, Prison Writing Program, 568 Broadway, New York, NY 10012. Please ask for: 1. List of Correspondence Courses, 2. Information Bulletin, or 3. Correspondence course list and Information Bulletin.

[Prison Writing Program - Jackson Taylor, Coordinator]