

# Research Reporter

Scholarly, research and creative activity

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Brock University

Careers begin here!

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## Welcome to the first issue of *Research Reporter*



Dr. Michael Owen

*Research Reporter* is a student-written periodical that focuses on the scholarly achievements of Brock faculty, as individual scholars and as members of research teams. As Brock's

faculty complement expands to fulfill our goal of becoming a comprehensive university, we need new ways to inform ourselves about the excellence of the scholarship of our colleagues and their student associates in all disciplines. We anticipate that this will allow greater communication amongst faculty scholars and lead to collaborations and successful applications to external funding agencies.

In addition to providing brief stories on the achievements and ongoing scholarly, research and creative activities of Brock faculty, *Research Reporter* will provide an annual update to the Brock community on current provincial and federal policy issues related to scholarly, research and creative activity, and sponsored research, and profile scholarly books authored by our colleagues.

We are very pleased to have Erin Kaipainen as our first student writer. Erin is completing her BA (Hons) in English Literature and Language and her second BA in International Studies.

*Research Reporter* is a collaborative initiative between the Office of Research Services and the Office of External Relations. It is anticipated that *Research Reporter* will be published six to eight times per calendar year.

**Dr. Michael Owen**  
Director, Office of Research Services  
Brock University  
Tel: 905-688-5550, ext. 3127  
Fax: 905-688-0748



Dr. Susan Spearey

## Exploring a nation in transition through literature

As an Associate Professor with the Department of English Language and Literature, Susan Spearey's work has focused on the ideas of violent upheaval, displacement and dispossession in literary texts spanning "a range of historical periods, genres and cultural traditions."

Recently, her focus has shifted more specifically to post-apartheid literature. This new direction of her research emerged while attending a conference on the centenary of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* in South Africa in 1998. At the time of the conference, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Human Rights Violations hearings were under way. Spearey says her concentration on post-apartheid and South African literature really began when she realized that the issues from her previous research were being discussed outside of the academic setting in the streets of South Africa.

"All of the theoretical issues with which I had been grappling over the previous decade were being explored in the public forum of the Commission's hearings in the media, in conversations in the street." She says, "I became fascinated by their currency in public discourse, and began to wonder how (or whether) contemporary South African literary texts were taking up these questions and speaking to their complexities."

While the focus of her upcoming research is on the literature of post-apartheid South Africa, Spearey also looks at the work of "geographers,

architects, policy makers, historians and commentators in the mass media. In examining the changing role of culture in post-apartheid society, it is no longer possible to deal just with literature as text or artifice because suddenly, testimony is about real people's stories." For this reason she explains, the role of the TRC continues to be of central importance to her research. "The Commission attempts to give a voice in a public forum to previously silenced histories, to initiate a process of healing in response to traumas both personal and public, and to address questions of ethical responsibility. The TRC begins to create spaces for dialogue between previously segregated communities and continues to serve as a significant reference point(s) for anyone, including its harshest critics, involved in engaging with these issues."

Spearey links the work of the TRC to her literary studies in allowing that "the dissemination and circulation of its work [the TRC] in the mass media provide important points of comparison to the ways in which its central concerns are addressed in literary texts."

She outlines that the entire heritage industry in South Africa is changing in response to the end of apartheid. For example, an exhibition at the South Africa Museum in Johannesburg documenting the Treason Trials has revolutionized the conventional museum design and opted for a more participatory approach that not only

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# Exploring a nation

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brings history to its visitors but also allows visitors to bring history to the museum. This design allows the museum experience to focus on both collective and individual histories.

Spearey's current work draws on anthropologist Michael Taussig's examination of 'nervous systems'. Taussig looks at how we assume that we live in stable systems and what happens to things such as fear if we live in a 'nervous' rather than a 'stable' one. She illustrates that "Taussig's use of the bodily metaphor is deliberate; he explores not only the conditions of agitation obtaining within contexts of catastrophe, but also investigates the ways in which existence within these metaphorical nervous systems impacts upon the literal nervous systems of individuals struggling to survive by their wits, the ways in which such existence inscribes itself upon their bodies and psyches."

Spearey is also particular about how the findings of her current research are communicated. She is concerned with ensuring that her research reaches others in her field, and for this reason, she hopes to publish her work in South African journals. She explains that her work is more of a curiosity here whereas it is more important in South Africa. "The question of access is a crucial one, particularly in the light of constraints upon resources in many South African universities which are hindered by a poor exchange rate and the prohibitive expense of books and journals published overseas."

She says publishing journal articles in South Africa will also keep her work current there and allow her to participate in debates as they develop and unfold. Spearey hopes to also publish her work in book form and to communicate her research in the public sphere both in Canada and in South Africa, through the World University Service of Canada (WUSC), the Direct Action Centre for Peace and Memory,

and the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation.

Part of Spearey's proposed research includes the development of an interactive web-based research tool and a CD-ROM that will include a "selection of multimedia materials that provide a context for, and dialogue with the primary texts in important ways." While access to the Internet remains a problem for the general population in South Africa, it allows researchers like Spearey to reach places like South African universities, where most students have access to the Internet. Spearey allows that "Web technology can be used in very insidious ways but it can also be used against the grain in ways that are enabling rather than disabling."

While her recent work is focused on the literature of Post-Apartheid South Africa, Professor Spearey explains that making sense of the situation in South Africa is important because its resonance can be felt around the world. ●

# Research grants

The following researchers have received nearly \$30,000 in seed grant funding through the Brock University SSHRC Internal Grant Programs (SSHRC Institutional Grant and SSHRC New Faculty Competitions).

## APPLIED HEALTH SCIENCES:

**Brent Faught and John Cairney**, Community Health Sciences – "Screening for Developmental Coordination Disorder in Children"  
**Brian Jeynes**, Community Health Sciences – "Foundation Investigation to Establish Bioethical Standards and Protocols for Application to Community Based Human Research Investigations in the Centre for Aging and Mobility Disorders"

**Kelly Lockwood**, Physical Education – "Evaluation of Success in Competitive Figure Skaters: A further examination of validity in judging"  
**James Mandigo**, Physical Education – "Using a whole-child approach to examine children's motivation in a Teaching Games for Understanding (TGFU) environment"

**Ana Sanchez**, Community Health Sciences – "The Impact of Health Education in the control of Taenia solium infections"

## BUSINESS:

**Mohammed Ayadi**, Accounting and Finance – "Mutual Fund Performance, Persistence, Characteristics, and Investor Behaviour"

**John Walker and Kojo Saffu**, Management, Marketing and Human

Resources – "A Comparative Study of Consumer Ethnocentrism in Canada and Russia"

## EDUCATION:

**Sandra Bosacki**, Education, and **Zopito Marini**, Child and Youth Studies – "School Bullying Narratives and Drawings in Preadolescents"

## HUMANITIES:

**Jane Koustas**, Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures – "Robert Lepage, Theatre of Non-Translation"  
**Hans-Georg Moeller**, Philosophy – "Niklas Luhmann and the Systemic Turn: A Philosophical Introduction to a Theory of the Post-Humanist World"  
**Martha Nandorfy**, Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures – "Hispanic

Visions of the New (Hu)Man"

**Donna Patrick**, Applied Language Studies – "Language Use Among Inuit Adolescents in Arctic Quebec"

## SOCIAL SCIENCES:

**Michael Ashton**, Psychology – "Validation of the Six-Dimensional Personality Inventory"  
**Kathryn Bezanson**, Sociology – "Justice, Charity and Public Policy: The Third Sector and the Changing Canadian Welfare State"  
**John Sorenson**, Sociology – "Gender and Reconstruction in Eritrea"  
**Russell Johnston**, Communications, Popular Culture and Film – "Popular Electronics: Radio Amateurs and the Development of Canadian Broadcasting"

## Sponsored Research Funds Awarded FY 1999/2000 to FY 2001/2002 (YTD)

	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002 (YTD)
CFI .....	1,645,342	316,729	332,121
CIHR .....			100,000
NSERC .....	1,189,361	1,483,389	1,867,305
SSHRC .....	492,704	545,090	604,211
Other Federal .....	186,770	907,746	1,621,879
Ontario .....	1,793,646	860,188	795,402
Foundations .....	113,398	118,066	184,140
Industry .....	127,118	150,105	191,621
Miscellaneous .....	160,506	318,028	248,876
<b>Total Sponsored Research</b>	<b>5,618,846</b>	<b>4,699,341</b>	<b>5,945,556</b>

▲ This chart provides a summary of agencies and jurisdictions from which faculty members, graduate students and staff obtained sponsored research funding (grants, contracts and contribution agreements). In-kind contributions made by sponsors are not included in these numbers. Internally funded projects are not included in these numbers. The FY 2001-02 number is an estimate of awards made to mid-January. Recent funding announcements or awards have not been included.



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