

Invisible Adjunct

From the margins of academe:

Occasional thoughts on higher education, campus politics, the use and abuse of adjunct faculty, the academic "job market," and various other absurdities.

By an invisible adjunct assistant professor of history.



Wednesday, 11 August 2004

Comments

may be posted here

Posted by Invisible Adjunct. [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(29\)](#)

Wednesday, 26 May 2004

Notice

I plan to take this site down two weeks from today (i.e., Wednesday, 9 June).

UPDATE (June 4):

I have received many requests to keep the blog up, or at least to allow mirroring. I haven't yet decided what to do.

In any case, the site should eventually be archived at the [Internet Archive](#). I requested a

Invisible Adjunct Channel

Thanks to Seb, there is now an Invisible Adjunct Channel.

Weblog Policies

I encourage readers to post comments. Please see the posting policies.

Email

Contact me at ia at invisibleadjunct dot com.

Recent Entries

[Comments](#)

[Notice](#)

[Signing Off](#)

[History Papers](#)

[Nice Work!](#)

[Mansfield Park Poll](#)

[Professor Plum, in the Library, with the Candlestick "Micromanagement at its Worst"](#)

[Fly Away with You](#)

[Casting Call](#)

[Conference Calls](#)

[Three Wives and Three Hundred Scholarly Articles \(The Good Life\)](#)

[New and Improved Austen Poll](#)

[Poll: Your Favourite Austen Hero](#)

[How Repulsive was Mr. Collins?](#)

[Death of Okin](#)

crawl over two months ago and I know the Alexa crawler has since visited my site. The results do not yet turn up, but apparently this can take several months.

Posted by Invisible Adjunct. [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(52\)](#)

Tuesday, 23 March 2004

Signing Off

Gentle Readers,

A few months ago, I made a vow to myself that this would be my last semester as an invisible adjunct. Since I've failed to secure a full-time position in my final attempt at the academic job market, what this means, of course, is that I made a vow to leave the academy. Six more weeks of teaching, and I head for the nearest exit.

Though I must inevitably feel a sense of loss and sadness, it's thanks to this blog and its readers that I don't feel the kind of life-twisting bitterness that I might otherwise have experienced. I'll take with me, among other things, a knowledge of XHTML (which I never thought I could learn!), an undiminished

Recent Comments

- [Bruce Miller](#): Greetings - I thought this anecdote mig [\[Comments\]](#)
- [cwd](#): Wow, "cialis" that was so creative and o [\[Comments\]](#)
- [cwd](#): God, I detest, despise, loathe, hate SPA [\[Comments\]](#)
- [Brian Ulrich](#): Some of these comments appear to be spam [\[Comments\]](#)
- [Jerry](#): An adjuncts' union does make sense. Col [\[Comments\]](#)
- [Steve Marsh](#): Does anyone know of a site that carries [\[Comments\]](#)
- [Brian Ulrich](#): Gee, dude. Sorry we midwesterners aren' [\[Comments\]](#)
- [michael in pdx](#): What should you look for in trying to fi [\[Comments\]](#)
- [michael in pdx](#): re: regret? I wouldn't say I regret s [\[Comments\]](#)
- [Music Box](#): Well, even though I have a really nice p [\[Comments\]](#)
- [Steve Marsh](#): I'd say that one of the toughest things [\[Comments\]](#)
- [michael in pdx](#): Sorry about the lag in responding, but I [\[Comments\]](#)
- [Gollum](#): Well, how DO you like the world you're i [\[Comments\]](#)
- [michael in pdx](#): I got lucky. After deciding to serious! [\[Comments\]](#)
- [michael in pdx](#): gollum: "is it necessary to go back to [\[Comments\]](#)
- [ben wolfson](#): My idea of job security was basicall [\[Comments\]](#)

Academic "Job Market" Entries

[If You Insist on Graduate School, At Least Do Your Homework](#)

[Is Tenure a Cartel?](#)

[1 in 5: Thomas H. Benton Explains Why You Shouldn't Go to Graduate School](#)

[Skill Sets](#)

[Shipwrecked; Or, I Need Another Chance](#)

[A Market Solution to the History Job Market](#)

passion for the Scottish Enlightenment, and a heightened sense of life's possibilities.

In the meantime, I've decided to give up the blog.

I do so with both a good deal of reluctance and a certain sense of relief. Writing blog entries and reading and responding to comments has become such an integral part of my regular routine that it's very difficult to walk away. For the next few weeks, at least, I'm sure I won't know what to do with myself (novel-reading? I just finished rereading all six of them). But this weblog has always been a labour of love, and lately I find that my heart is no longer in it. I think the time has come to focus my energies elsewhere. Anyway, I guess I've pretty much said most of things that I wanted to say, and then some.

I've also received more support than I ever could have imagined or expected. Indeed, the response to the blog has been, quite simply, overwhelming. Since I can't even begin to express what this has meant to me as I've struggled over the past year or so to make sense of

Problem?

Where the Adjuncts Have Equal Status

James McPherson on the Old Boy Network

Still Thinking about Graduate School in the Humanities?

Adjunct as Activist? A Brief Introduction

Reshaping the Job Market?

Adjunct as Entrepreneur?

Ph.D. as Preparation for Nonacademic Careers?

Thinking about graduate school in the humanities?

Monthly Archives

August 2004

May 2004

March 2004

February 2004

January 2004

December 2003

November 2003

October 2003

September 2003

August 2003

July 2003

June 2003

May 2003

April 2003

March 2003

February 2003

Archives by Category

Academia

Academic Job Market

Blogging and Blog Maintenance

Current Affairs

History

Personal Musings

Polls

A Habermasian Public Sphere?

academicgame

Alas, a blog

Almost Tenured

ambivalent imbroglia

my experience in the academy, I won't even try. Instead, I'll just take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to all those who participated in the transformation of what began as "yet another me-zine" into something like an online community. To everyone who has read, linked, commented, and emailed: I thank you.

Yours sincerely,

IA

Posted by Invisible Adjunct. [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(212\)](#)

Monday, 22 March 2004

History Papers

Writing is unnatural. As is most of what we do, which unnaturalness is only natural.*

Timothy Burke has a [nice entry](#) on some of the problems and challenges commonly encountered in students' history essays. If you've ever graded student papers in any discipline whatsoever, you'll surely recognize some of the "smaller but important stylistic errors and misfires" that Burke enumerates here, though you may use

The American Street
(a)musings of a grad student
Angry Bear
Apt. 11D
ArchPundit

Baraita
Bellona Times
Michael Bérubé
Blogenspiel
blogorrhoea
Blue
Body and Soul
Brian's Study Breaks

Calpundit
campus press notes
Caveat Lector
Chun the Unavoidable
the chutry experiment
clew's reviews
Cliopatria
Cogito, ergo Zoom
Cold Spring Shops
Collected Miscellany
The Cranky Professor
Critical Mass
Crooked Timber
CultureCat

Brad DeLong
Discourse.net
dolebludger
Easily Distracted
Eschaton
Eszter's Blog
an eudaemonist
Europundit

Financial Aid Office
Foodgoat
Frogs and Ravens
A Frolic of My Own

slightly different descriptors (e. g., what Burke calls **endless unbroken paragraphs**, I term the **runaway paragraph** -- as in, for pity's sake, rein it in and assert some authorial control). I suspect the **choice of tenses** problem is, if not peculiar to, then particularly significant for history papers.

It reminds me that writing history essays is unnatural: that is, an impressively complex art and craft that takes practice, and that requires guidelines. By extension, the teaching of the writing of history essays must be likewise unnatural (which is to say, etcetera, etcetera).

*Adam Ferguson on the state of nature:

We speak of art as distinguished from nature; but art itself is natural to man. He is in some measure the artificer of his own frame, as well as his fortune, and is destined, from the first age of his being, to invent and contrive...
...If we are asked

ghost of a flea
Halavais
Kieran Healy
Household Opera

idols of the marketplace
I Know What I Know
In Between
Intelligent Life
In the Shadow of Mt. Hollywood
an invitation to the barbecue
IsThatLegal?

Jam Today
john & belle have a blog
Junius
Matthew G. Kirschenbaum
Mark A.R. Kleiman
Adam Kotsko

lago at errant dot org
languagehat
Lean Left
The Little Professor
locussolus
Long story; short pier
lundblog

making contact
mamamusings
mariwood
Marstonalia
Mildly Malevolent
misbehaving.net
mnemosyne
Modulator
My Irony
Nathan Newman
Outside the Beltway

Pedantry
Perverse Access Memory
philosophy.com
Photon Courier

therefore, Where is the state of nature to be found? we may answer, It is here; and it matters not whether we are understood to speak in the island of Great Britain, at the Cape of Good Hope, or the Straits of Magellan.

-- [An Essay on the History of Civil Society](#) (1767), I.i

Take *that*, Rousseau! (I'm only sort of joking).

Posted by Invisible Adjunct. [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(7\)](#)

Nice Work!

Congratulations to Rana! She's been offered [an internship](#) at the Smithsonian.

Posted by Invisible Adjunct. [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(2\)](#)

Friday, 19 March 2004

Mansfield Park Poll

Continuing with the Austen

Planned Obsolescence

PoliBlog

Professor K

this Public Address

ReachM High Cowboy Network Noose

READIN

Reading & Writing

Relevant History

Rhetorica

Hector Rottweiller Jr's Web Log

The Salt-Box

Sandhill Trek

schussman.com

SCSUScholars

Seeing the Forest

semantics etc.

Signal + Noise

Signifying Nothing

Silentio

ssuma's comprehensive mirror

Gideon Strauss

too many topics, too little time

UFO Breakfast Recipients

Uncertain Principles

Uncle Jazzbeau's Gallimaufrey

Unfogged

University Diaries

an unsealed room

vitia

Vlorbik

waggish

Waldchen vom Philosophenweg

Kevin Walzer's Blog

Wealth Bondage

Welcome to My World

Wonkette

wood s lot

S. Worthen

Yale Insider

Matthew Yglesias

reread theme (because this academic/adjunct stuff is bringing me down):

As an RC (though admittedly a sadly lapsed one), I've always been more than a little bit weirded out by the marriage of Fanny Price and Edmund Bertram. *Hello?* Not only were they first cousins, but they were raised in the same home, where they called each other brother and sister. Perhaps an impediment as far as the fourth degree was a tad harsh, but I must say I think the Church was onto something with those consanguinity laws.*

It's no use wishing for another ending, of course, and in lit. crit. terms, I'm sure such reification of fictional constructs must be deemed hopelessly naive. Nevertheless. What if Fanny had relented and taken Henry Crawford on board, thus clearing the way for a union between Edmund and Mary? Wouldn't both of our moral exemplars have been better off marrying outside the immediate family?

The not so subtextual subtext to this poll: is Fanny Price an appalling little milksop, or the fit

Zizka

I'd Like to Thank the Academy

Academe Online

AAUP, *Contingent Appointments and the Academic Profession*

American Association of University Professors
Thomas H. Benton, *So You Want to Go to Grad School?*

Michael Bérubé, *The Blessed of the Earth*[PDF]

Marc Bousquet, *Workplace Foreword: The Institution as False Horizon*

Gwendolyn Bradley, *Contingent Faculty and the New Academic Labor System*

Timothy Burke, *Should I Go to Grad School?*

Campus Equity Week

Richard P. Chait, *Rethinking Tenure*

Chronicle of Higher Education Career Network
Coalition on the Academic Workforce, *Who is Teaching in U.S. College Classrooms?*

Chris Cumo, *Part Time Purgatory -- The Loneliness of an Adjunct Professor*

Sara Davis, *Women and the Tenure Track*

Jordan Ellenberg, *The Great PhD Scam*

James Engell and Anthony Dangerfield, *The Market-Model University: Humanities in the Age of Money*

John Guillory, *Preprofessionalism: What Graduate Students Want*

H-Net Job Guide

Lynn Hunt, *Generational Conflict and the Coming Tenure Crisis*

Inside Higher Ed

The Irascible Professor

Robert D. Johnston, *Where Have All the Tenured Radicals Gone?*

Andreas Killen, *Going Adjunct*

Jackson Lears, *The Radicalism of the Liberal Arts Tradition*

Mary Ann Mason and Marc Goulden, *Do Babies Matter?*

Jack Miles, *Three Differences between an Academic and an Intellectual*

Richard Moser, *The New Academic Labor System*

and proper center of a properly centered moral universe? (or, to put it another way: is Mary Crawford a serpent in the garden, an actual force for positive evil, or just a slightly racier version of Elizabeth Bennett: EB on steroids, say?)

Mansfield Park Poll

Mary Crawford or Fanny Price?

Mary Crawford

Fanny Price

[view results](#)

[powered by blogpoll](#)

*Legal beagle question of the day: What kind of civil laws now take the place of the canon law in the area of consanguinity? I know there must be laws, I would assume they would vary from state to state. Not something I've ever really thought of before -- I suppose because, well, it's never occurred to me to want to marry one of my first cousins. (Note to singleton blogreaders: I do have a lot of first and second cousins, of both male and female persuasion, and some of them are still up for grabs. If you're over 21, have never been convicted of a felony, and are willing to relocate to Canada,

Mary Elizabeth Perry, *The Invisible Majority: Myths, Realities, and a Call for Action*

Phinished

Phoenix Rising

James Shapiro, *Death in a Tenured Position*

Eric L. Wee, *Professor of Desperation*

Joan Williams, *How the Tenure Track Discriminates Against Women*

Geoffrey Wilson, *Neurotic Structure in the Job Market*

workplace: a journal for academic labor

Zizka, *Can I Afford a Ph.D.?*

Zizka, *The Humanities in the University*

Exit Stage Left

Beyond Academe

Chris Cumo, *Out of Academe*

Matt Hall, *Why I Quit Adjunct Teaching*

Christine Kenneally, *Do what you want and the identity crisis will follow*

Kenneth Mostern, *On Being Postacademic*

Annalee Newitz, *Out of Academia*

Alex Soojung-Kim Pang, *Journeyman: Getting Into and Out of Academe*

Emily Peters, *Back to High School*

Peter Temes, *Learning to Love Life Outside Academe*

WRK4US

The Profession of History

American Historical Association

The Historical Society

History News Network

History News Service

Russell L. Johnson, *1998 Job Market: A Realistic Appraisal*

Ted. W. Margadant, *The Production of PhDs and the Academic Job Market for Historians*

James M. McPherson, *Budget Cuts and History Jobs: Many Problems, No Easy Solutions*

David H. Slavin, *Part-Time Labor and a Profession in Crisis*

Robert E. Wright, *A Market Solution to the Oversupply of Historians*

drop me a line and I'll see what I can do**).

**You know I'm only joking, right?

Posted by Invisible Adjunct. [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(18\)](#)

Professor Plum, in the Library, with the Candlestick

Well, we don't disagree too strongly, other than perhaps you gotta stop calling people 'Professor'-- I feel like a murder suspect in 'Clue.'

-- Timothy Burke to Matthew Yglesias, comments to "[We All Agree!](#)"

It's been years since I've played Clue. I used to love that game.

Posted by Invisible Adjunct. [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(7\)](#)

"Micromanagement at its Worst"

The sponsor

Clio's World Wide Web (of Online History Resources)

American Memory
The Bubble Project
Current Value of Old Money
Early Modern Bibliographies
Eighteenth-Century E-Texts
Famous Trials
Making Sense of Evidence
The Newton Project
Proceedings of the Old Bailey
The Spectator Project
Their Own Words
Voice of the Shuttle: History

The World Beyond the Academy (Otherwise Known as the World)

The American Prospect
Arts & Letters Daily
Boston Review
Economist.com
Gender, Work & Family
Guardian Unlimited
Literary Mama
London Review of Books
The New Yorker
The New York Review of Books
openDemocracy
Salon
Slate
The Times Literary Supplement
truthout

Weekly IA Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Field of Excellence (No Cash, Just Glory)

Thomas H. Benton
Joseph Duemer
John Bruce
Zizka
Rana

[Republican Shawn Mitchell] of a bill aimed at protecting the rights of conservative students on college campuses said today he would shelve the bill and allow state colleges and universities to prove that they are committed to protecting political diversity.

-- ["'Academic Bill of Rights' yanked before vote"](#)

The *Denver Post* reports that Rep. Mark Larson, a Republican, objected to the bill as "'micromanagement at its worst,'" and "said he had lined up enough votes to pass an amendment gutting it." Good for Larson for upholding the principle of limited government that Republicans are supposed to defend.

As proof of their commitment to "political diversity," the University of Colorado, Colorado State University, Metropolitan State College and the University

Timothy Burke
Carine Bichet
Chris
JW
Anonymous tt faculty member
sappho
Matilde
Robert Schwartz
J.V.C.
language hat

Copyright

@Invisible Adjunct

All materials at this website are copyright Invisible Adjunct. Please do not duplicate without permission or attribution.

Search

Search this site:

Recommended Reading

"Graduate school in the humanities is an extended struggle with shame and guilt for more students than anyone has dared to state in public. One cannot speak publicly about such things and remain a 'professional.'"

-- Thomas H. Benton, *Leaving the Big City for Small-Town College Life*

"Also, remember that most grad students start out as dilettantes, thinking they'll just hang out for a few years on a stipend. But eventually they become completely invested in the profession, unable to envision themselves doing anything else. A few years can become a decade or more. Meanwhile, everyone else is beginning their adult lives while you remain trapped in permanent adolescence."

-- Thomas H. Benton, *So You Want to Go to Grad School?*

"Should I go to graduate school?
Short answer: no."

of Northern Colorado have

agreed to make sure their grievance procedures address political diversity and that students know they can file a grievance against a professor who has discriminated against them because of their views.

Grievances, eh? Since the most common form of discrimination practiced by professors is that of discrimination on the basis of the quality of students' work, and since the most likely form of evidence to be cited in a grievance would be the grade received in a course, how might this play out in the actual world? Here's one scenario: Angry [lefty/liberal/conservative] undergraduate receives a C, and then files a grievance against the offending [lefty/liberal/conservative] professor, citing viewpoint discrimination. As parents threaten legal action, and case gets taken up by local media, university administrators persuade/cajole/coerce the professor to raise the grade.

-- Timothy Burke, *Should I Go to Grad School?*

"Not long ago, a colleague of mine was turned down for a tenure-track job because she was married. How do I know this was the reason? The head of the hiring committee said so.

My colleague, Jenny, applied for a tenure-track position in history at a respected public university. After a brilliant on-campus interview and a few days of lively conversation with colleagues, Jenny thought she had the gig nailed. On the last day, the hiring committee, as a group, sat her down. The chair -- a woman -- told Jenny that she was their top candidate, but added: 'We've been trying to figure out what your family situation is. What's the story?'"

-- Sara Davis, *Women and the Tenure Track*

"[Re:] The aside that 'one can debate elsewhere the pros and cons of using graduate students as teaching assistants at some stage during their Ph.D. years--is it chiefly to give them vital experience as future college professors, or to exploit them as graduate proles?' The job market for Ph.D.'s in the humanities collapsed in the early 1970s. Professor Kennedy and his peers have had 25 years to debate elsewhere just what they think they are doing in continuing to run their Ph.D. programs on a large scale. Yet they have somehow never managed to do so..."

-- Brad DeLong, *An Appalling Article on Graduate Student Unionization by Yale Historian Paul Kennedy*

"Remarkably, humanists have been active participants in their own subversion. Inner political and theoretical bickering in the humanities has contributed little wisdom to the political life of the country or local communities for two decades. Just as the cult of money was laying siege to the culture of learning, many beleaguered exponents of humanistic study divided into parties and embarked on a series of unedifying disputes, including ones that degraded the name 'humanist.'"

-- James Engell and Anthony Dangerfield, *The Market-Model University: Humanities in the Age of Money*

"With regard first to growth, graduate education

Can anyone doubt that such grievance procedures would take the logic of the consumer satisfaction survey student evaluation to a new level, exerting still more pressure to further inflate the grades? Who needs the hassle? I'd like to propose a new legislative amendment designed to save time, trouble and heartache (not to mention paperwork and lawyer's fees) all around: Every student who expresses a view has the right to an A; and any grade lower than an A is not only *prima facie* evidence of discrimination but is also by definition a violation of this constitutionally protected right.

Posted by Invisible Adjunct. [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(13\)](#)

Saturday, 13 March 2004

Fly Away with You

Spread your tiny
wings and fly away,
And take the snow
back with you
Where it came from
on that day.
The one I love
forever is untrue,
And if I could you
know that I would

appears now to be a kind of pyramid scheme. The prospect of its collapse has revealed something extraordinary, that the growth of literary study consists largely in the growth of graduate programs and in the transformation of graduate students into a public for literary criticism. Professors of literature now write and teach for graduate students; graduate students have become their constituency and collectively now exert a considerable pressure on the profession, moving it in certain directions, along the cutting edge of criticism. Hence the most symptomatic professional desire one can harbor today is expressed in the desire to teach graduate students in preference to undergraduates. It is this desire that in part drove the expansion of graduate programs in the 1970s and 1980s... One can see, then, how the pyramid scheme works, if to be fully professionalized means to teach graduate students."
-- John Guillory, *Preprofessionalism: What Graduate Students Want*

"One short interaction with such an administrator prompted me to get out of teaching for good. Near the parking lot one day, I introduced myself to the president of our community college. 'My name's Matt Hall,' I said. 'I teach English here part time.' Our president looked at me and said, 'Thanks for helping out.'

Helping out? I watched as he got into his brand-new Lexus and drove away."

-- Matt Hall, *Why I Quit Adjunct Teaching*

"Perhaps most problematic of all is the conundrum posed by the interplay between the tenure system and the end of mandatory retirement. If university faculty enjoy the same right to work as long as they want as other workers, then we may need to reexamine the tenure system, especially as it applies to retirement. Other workers can now work as long as they are qualified; the only definitive judgment of quality for university faculty comes very early on in a career and because of the tenure system, is virtually irrevocable. Why should *our* right to work be guaranteed for life rather than 35 or 40 years?"

-- Lynn Hunt, *Generational Conflict and the Coming Tenure Crisis*

Fly away with you.

-- "[Snowbird](#),"

Written by Gene

MacLellan,

Immortalized by

Anne Murray

Does it get any cheesier? My sisters and I once read an interview with Anne Murray (in a Canadian tv guide, maybe) in which she emphasized her down-to-earth quality by insisting, "I'm not the glamour puss that you see when I'm on the road." Well, I can't remember exactly how she said it, but she did say "glamour puss." *Glamour puss? Anne Murray? We found this highly amusing.*

Off to Florida to visit a colony of snowbirds, in the midst of which can be found my parents. Since area restaurants cater for these seasonal migrants, I may be able to order vinegar with my fries.* Blogging will resume next weekend.

*Why don't Americans put vinegar on their french fries? This is a serious question.

Posted by Invisible Adjunct. [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(74\)](#)

"I regret accepting [invitations to speak to graduate students about alternative careers] in the first place because, although I may have left behind a useful tip or two, I did the graduate students a disservice by lending credence to the view that American-style doctoral education makes sense as a preparation for a wide variety of careers. I doubt that it does. While it is difficult ever to say what portion of a man or woman's knowledge will *not* someday be useful, the full-blown humanities doctorate -- particularly if it is followed by long years of probationary appointments and then a negative tenure decision -- grievously delays a young person's entry into the general marketplace, burdens him or her with enormous debt, and inculcates over the years the self-destructive habit of constant subtle deference. Humane learning has many uses in the general marketplace, but the baroque peculiarity of American doctoral education produces an animal hyper-adapted to the baroque peculiarity of the American academic habitat."

-- Jack Miles, [Three Differences Between an Academic and an Intellectual](#)

"This multi tiered approach succeeded because it blunted opposition by promising not to affect existing constituencies. Yes, the evil genius of the multi-tier system is that it enticed tenured faculty with short-term benefits. We cooperated in our own demise. The good news about our complicity in this new system is that it depends on our complicity to continue. When we decide that having cheap labor on hand to teach our introductory courses or to provide inexpensive replacements for us while we conduct research is not worth risking the destruction of the university and our profession along with it, then the system will be reformed."

-- Richard Moser, [The New Academic Labor System, Corporatization and the Renewal of Academic Citizenship](#)

"Worrying that a search committee is going to deep-six your candidacy because you sent a Xerox rather than a reprint of an article is a sure sign that your professional future is pretty much outside your own control. My experience on the market didn't encourage me to think otherwise."

-- Alex Soojung-Kim Pang, [Journeyman: Getting](#)

Casting Call

He had very early an inclination to intemperance, which he totally subdued in his travels; but when he became a courtier, he unhappily addicted himself to dissolute and vitious company, by which his principles were corrupted and his manners depraved. He lost all sense of religious restraint; and, finding it not convenient to admit the authority of laws which he was resolved not to obey, sheltered his wickedness behind infidelity.

-- Samuel Johnson, ["The Life of Rochester"](#)

[Johnny Depp](#) is filming [The Libertine](#), in which he plays the lead role as the Earl of Rochester. Works for me.

into and Out of Academe

"Look at the fall crop of college catalogs and what do you see: a bearded professor lecturing to a circle of students under autumn trees. Or a beaming young woman advised by a kindly sage in his book-lined office. The captions: 'Teaching for Excellence,' or, maybe, 'Learning for Life.'...

...What you will get, in many cases, is something completely different."

-- William Pannacker, [The Adjunct Rip-off: 10 Reasons Why the Use of Adjuncts Hurts Students](#)

"Many people, both inside of and outside of academe, believe that the culture wars between 'tenured radicals' and traditionalists remain the greatest struggle facing the profession today. The fact that this stale battle is still news is testimony to the influence of the entrenched and aging foes on both sides. In the meantime, a much more brutal and costly war between the old and the young is being waged. Unfortunately, it is all but over. Thanks to scholars—of all ideological stripes—who are hanging on to tenure for too long, the young are on their way to defeat."

-- James Shapiro, [Death in a Tenured Position](#)

"Dear Professor Millington, Thank you for your letter of March 16. After careful consideration, I regret to inform you that I am unable to accept your refusal to offer me an assistant professor position in your department. This year I have been particularly fortunate in receiving an unusually large number of rejection letters. With such a varied and promising field of candidates it is impossible for me to accept all refusals..."

-- Turbulent P. Velvet to Herbert A. Millington

Syndicate this site (XML)

Powered by



Hosted by

TotalChoice Hosting

Posted by Invisible Adjunct. [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(5\)](#)

Conference Calls

1. Via [Electrolite](#):

[Michael Bérubé](#) has an idea for a conference on the conference:

One of these days I want to put together an academic conference that addresses the phenomenon of academic conferences. It will be called 'The Longer Version,' and will be distinguished by three features: one, every paper will have a respondent who, instead of waiting for the paper to end, will simply snort, harrumph, and blurt 'I think not!' at random moments during the paper. Two, questioners will be required to begin all questions by saying, 'this is really more of a comment than a question-- I

Listed at



TTLB Blogosphere Ecosystem

wonder if you could say more about X,' on the condition that X was either unmentioned in or tangential to the paper itself.

(Questions must be at least three minutes long.) And three, every speaker will be required to answer these questions by saying, 'I actually address this question in the longer version of this paper,' regardless of whether there is a longer version or not. (If the conference proceedings are published, they will consist only of sections of papers that were cut for time during the actual conference.)

I'd like to condition for just one more requirement: for every paper delivered, there should be at least one questioner the substance of whose remarks amount to, 'That's all well and good, but why aren't we talking

about *my* work?"

2. Via an anonymous reader:

Dr. Kevin Cramer, a member of the H-German discussion board, calls for "[more stringent vetting of conference announcements](#)" after "a rather unsettling episode":

In November of last year I responded to a call for conference papers under the rubric of 'Symposium on the Psychological Interpretation of War,' sponsored by the Library of Social Science in New York (Dr. Richard Koenigsberg, Director). As this invitation appeared on my professional list-serve, I had no reason to question the bona fides of this organization (their website was also innocuous). The other participants (around 20 total, in two sessions), from multiple disciplines and major

universities and institutions here and abroad, also learned of this conference through their professional list-serves and other networks. The conference took place last week.

The Library of Social Science, it turned out, was Dr. Koenigsberg's apartment living room in a run down corner of Elmhurst, Queens. The 'Library', it seems, was not much more than a vanity project and sometime vendor of academic books at various professional organization conferences around the country. Incidentally, a \$150.00 registration fee was charged. There were no stipends for travel or accommodations and no

meals were provided (other than candy, fruit, and bottled water.) Dr. Koenigsberg's doctorate is, I surmised, in psychology or psychoanalysis but, in his own words, 'he has been studying Hitler for 30 years.'

"Caveat emptor," says Cramer. Indeed. The dead giveaway here was of course the candy. Word to the wise: if you don't see, in the words of Alex Pang, that "peculiar academic reception food group" known as [the chunk o' cheddar on a toothpick](#), you should begin to suspect it's not really an academic conference.

Posted by Invisible Adjunct. [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(19\)](#)

Wednesday, 10 March 2004

Three Wives and Three Hundred Scholarly Articles (The Good Life)

Universalizing from his own experience -- "a wonderful life" that has allowed him to publish, teach, marry, have children,

travel, and attend the theatre, but that has apparently not done much to help him develop his capacities for sympathetic imagination -- [David Lester](#) purports to be "puzzled...by those who find the academic life to be so hard and so stressful." Such malcontents, he suggests, might "have benefited from spending eight hours down a coal mine in their adolescence." Worth reading as a remarkable instance of self-absorption and self-promotion, and especially noteworthy for the boast that he has "never had a federal grant" for his research (take that, you academic welfare bums!). The Little Professor has [more](#).

Posted by Invisible Adjunct. [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(49\)](#)

Tuesday, 9 March 2004

New and Improved Austen Poll

Because I left out Colonel Brandon in the one [just below](#).

Jane Austen's Male Characters

Your favourite male character in an Austen novel?

Henry Tilney

John Thorpe

Edward Ferrars

Colonel Brandon

Willoughby

Darcy

Mr Collins

Mr Bingley

Edmund Bertram

Henry Crawford

Mr Knightley

Frank Churchill

Mr Elton

Captain Wentworth

[view results](#)

[powered by blogpoll](#)

Posted by Invisible Adjunct. [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(7\)](#)

Poll: Your Favourite Austen Hero

These characters aren't really *heroes*, are they? (which I think is precisely Austen's point). But for the purposes of the poll, "hero" will do, though perhaps I should have said "your favourite male protagonist in an Austen

novel," or "your favourite male character who marries an Austen heroine."

Since this polling software only allows for five possible responses, I left out Edward Ferrars on the -- admittedly arbitrary and possibly mistaken -- assumption that nobody would choose such a dull and forgettable character. If you want to register a vote for Mr Ferrars, you'll have to 'fess up in the comments section.

Darcy or Knightley?

Your favourite Jane Austen hero is...

Henry Tilney

Mr Darcy

Edmund Bertram

Mr Knightley

Captain

Wentworth

[view results](#)

[CHNM Poll Builder](#)

Posted by Invisible Adjunct. [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(16\)](#)

How Repulsive was Mr. Collins?

Mr. Collins was not a sensible man, and the deficiency of nature had been but little assisted by education or society; the greatest part of his life having been spent under the guidance of an illiterate and miserly father; and though he belonged to one of the universities, he had merely kept the necessary terms, without forming at it any useful acquaintance. The subjection in which his father had brought him up had given him originally great humility of manner, but it was now a good deal counteracted by the self-conceit of a weak head, living in retirement, and the consequential feelings of early and unexpected prosperity. A

fortunate chance had recommended him to Lady Catherine de Bourgh when the living of Hunsford was vacant; and the respect which he felt for her high rank and his veneration for her as his patroness, mingling with a very good opinion of himself, of his authority as a clergyman, and his rights as a rector, made him altogether a mixture of pride and obsequiousness, self-importance and humility.

-- Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (1813)

I'm on a Jane Austen reread streak. And as I said a [couple of weeks ago](#), I wanted to take up the question of how repulsive was Mr Collins?, or rather, the question of Mr Collins was repulsive *how*? I don't really have the answer, just a couple of related questions.

[Continue reading "How Repulsive was Mr. Collins?"](#)

Posted by Invisible Adjunct. [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(19\)](#)

Monday, 8 March 2004

Death of Okin

Harry Brighthouse reports that Susan Moller Okin [died last week](#). This is very sad, a real loss to her profession.

Posted by Invisible Adjunct. [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

Sunday, 7 March 2004

What does Chun Mean?

That question has been raised more than once in the comments at this weblog. [The Little Professor](#) now has the answer (for background, see [Chun](#)).

Posted by Invisible Adjunct. [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(8\)](#)

The Gap between Civil Society and Academia

In the comments to "[Fighting Words from Fish](#)," Timothy Burke makes an observation that's worth putting upfront:

At this juncture in history, the problem is not state legislatures, insensitive to academic realities as they may be. It's the gulf between civil society and academic culture, between the public sphere and intellectual labor, between the people and the professors. Fish doesn't take that gap seriously at all, and therefore doesn't see how urgent the need to renew a covenant with American society is, how much we have to explain again, with fresh eyes and confident voice, why higher education matters, why the liberal arts makes our citizens stronger, why our economic future is tied into critical thought. That will take humility, it will take acknowledging where we fall short, where we have

settled for the dull
compulsions of social
inevitability, where
we have come to
doubt ourselves,
where we have
become hopelessly
inward turning. It
will take a
combination of mea
culpas and
unyielding challenges.

I wish *I* had said that. Luckily I
have readers to articulate what I
haven't yet figured out how to
say.

I think Burke is exactly right
about this. And I think Fish
mistakes the symptoms for the
underlying root cause. The social
compact has broken down.
Academics need to take seriously
the urgency of the task of
renewing (or recreating) that
social compact.

Posted by [Invisible Adjunct](#). [Permalink](#) |
[Comments \(31\)](#) | [Followups \(0\)](#)

Debates over Unionization

A reader who prefers to remain
anonymous has proposed the
following topic for discussion:

As a full-time Lecturer with a Ph.D. at a campus of a massive regional state university with a very strong faculty union, I've recently taken quite an interest in debates over unionization.

The topic I'd be interested in seeing discussed here is whether, in their efforts to win job security for Lecturers and other so-called temporary faculty, unions should make a distinction between adjuncts with Ph.D.s and those without. My university system does not, and the unfortunate effect of its advances in gaining job security for contingent faculty is that newly arrived Ph.D.s and ABDs are being squeezed out of the system during the current budget crisis (which is especially severe in my state) because

departments are required by the union contract first to accommodate Lecturers who have been working in the system for a while, regardless degree attainment. In this system, those tend to be terminal MAs, and Ph.D.s and ABDs are finding themselves losing work to faculty who, while playing an important long-term role in their departments that needs to be recognized, are not as qualified for their positions as the newer people.

I would be interested in hearing other people's thoughts on this issue, because most of the discourse that I read here (though I have to admit to checking in here only periodically) and elsewhere on the academic labor movement does not

explicitly address the disparity of qualifications that sometimes exists within the broad category of 'adjunct faculty,' which also varies dramatically between departments, especially at those institutions (and I speak here of four-year institutions, not community colleges) near the bottom of the so-called 'national hierarchy of colleges and universities.' I'm thinking here especially of Marc Bousquet's recent piece in the [Minnesota Review](#) ("[Tenured Bosses and Disposable Teachers](#)"), which presents the adjunct composition workforce as composed of underemployed Ph.D. s., rather than of terminal MAs. His version of the adjunct problem

seems only to represent the state of affairs at research schools and more elite colleges. In my state, Ph.D.s dominate the Lecturer category in the nationally recognized state research universities, but not in the regional teaching universities, where the adjunct workforce is in a state of transition and, while terminal MAs still dominate the Lecturer workforce and the discussion of the prospect of gaining job security for adjunct faculty, more and more Ph.D.s and ABDs are arriving, spat out from the research institutions who exploited their labor during their graduate training, which was (or is) much more lengthy and expensive than that of the terminal M.A.s.

So I'd be really interested in seeing a discussion of how the 'Academic Labor Movement' is to define its constituency. To what extent should a union that represents contingent faculty draw distinctions between employees based on degree attainment? How might those distinctions be made?

Not that anyone asked :), but since it's my blog, here's my opinion:

First, a union is supposed to be just that: a union. Once you start making divisions, you're undermining the potential strength your union, and helping management to follow a divide and conquer strategy.

Second, it's not at all obvious to me that terminal MAs are "not as qualified for their positions as the newer people." If we're talking about teaching, many of them are likely at least as qualified, if not more so.

Third (and I'll probably get flamed for this, but here goes), the academic profession is undergoing a process of deprofessionalization. I won't rehearse the grim statistics, which I've already cited *ad nauseam* (check under "Academia" and "Academic Job Market" in my sidebar). Suffice it to say that tenure-track lines are being eliminated in favour of part-time and short-term contracts, and that the bulk of teaching in the American college system is now performed by an untenured majority.

I believe that reprofessionalization would require an insistence that you don't teach at a four-year college or university without the PhD. Teaching assistantship, fine. Though it's obviously open to abuse, there is nothing inherently wrong with the notion that graduate students should serve a teaching apprenticeship by working as teaching *assistants*. But once you put ABDs in the classroom as primary instructors, what you're saying is that the Ph.D. doesn't much matter: those without can do it, if not as well, then at least well enough to allow the

administration to save a pile of money on labor costs.

I'm firmly convinced that one reason why we find ourselves in the mess we're in is that the profession has failed to behave like a profession, which is to say, failed to maintain guild-like restrictions on the point of entry. This is not some kind of romantic pining for a warm and fuzzy artisanal world we have lost. What guilds do is sometimes not very pretty. But that's how they maintain themselves as guilds.

Does my third point contradict my second point? No, not at all. I readily acknowledge that a terminal MA can be as good a teacher, if not a better teacher, than a Ph.D. My point is that a profession which claims the Ph.D. as the main form of certification must insist on the Ph.D. as the main form of certification. My husband worked for a law firm prior to passing the bar. There was a lot that he was allowed to do, but there were also some restrictions (eg, he couldn't represent someone in court). Did passing the bar somehow magically make his legal research and writing incalculably better? Of course not. Was he capable of

appearing in court even before he had passed the bar (even though he was not allowed to do so)? Of course. But he had to jump through that hoop and get that certification before he could assume all the relevant responsibilities over which his profession claims to have a monopoly. That's guildlike. That's how they continue to assert that claim.

Now, if I were Queen of the Academy for a day, I would bring in tight regulations and restrictions which linked practice to certification (okay, first I would have to create a binding regulatory body, the lack of which is precisely the problem). I would be careful to include some kind of grandfather clause, so that terminal MAs who had been teaching for more than a year or two would be exempt from the new regulations. The point would be to create the kind of restrictions that would allow the academic profession to reclaim a monopoly on their labor.

Posted by Invisible Adjunct. [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(16\)](#)

Saturday, 6 March 2004

Lecture versus Discussion

In the comments to ["We could hire God this year,"](#) David Salmanson asserts that lecturing is not teaching:

For those of you taping a lecture as an example of your teaching, don't bother. Lecturing is reading in a less interactive format. If they want to see a videotape, they want to see you interacting with students in a class discussion format: that is, teaching a class. That's the only reason I could think of for wanting to see a videotape. And incidentally, only semi-finalists would have to send the tape. I love this because you get to see what the applicant's definition of teaching is. My hope would be that everybody who sends a lecture gets tossed into the no on-campus interview

pile. Of course,
maybe this is why I
bailed on academia
for high school
teaching.

"Failed Again" replies as follows:

Discussion is the
only form of
teaching? Now, I
value a good class
discussion, and have
tried valiantly to use
that model for years,
almost entirely to the
exclusion of the
lecture model.

What I have found--
only quite recently,
at that--is that
except in very small
classes (15 or
fewer), students
overwhelmingly
despise the
discussion model. As
someone who is
quite dependent on
student evaluations
at this early stage of
a career, I have had
to pay close
attention to that
finding. What I have
come to discover is

that students (with the exception of the very small seminars) regard 'discussion' as a cop-out. They repeatedly have stressed in their evaluative comments that they want to know what **I** know about Early Modern literature, culture, history, theology, etc.--not what **they** know (which in many cases is not very much).

Discuss. (Or give a lecture).

Posted by Invisible Adjunct. [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(54\)](#)

Fighting Words from Fish

In the past few months I have been saying nasty things in these columns (and also on radio and television) about members of Congress, Illinois state representatives and senators, the governor of Illinois, the governor's

budget director, and the governor-appointed Illinois Board of Higher Education. I have called these people ignorant, misinformed, demagogic, dishonest, slipshod, and have repeatedly suggested that when it comes to colleges and universities either they don't know what they're talking about or (and this is worse) they do know and are deliberately setting out to destroy public higher education.

-- Stanley Fish,
["Make 'Em Cry"](#)

Stanley Fish takes on the Republican legislators (see [this](#) and [that](#)) and gets taken out for lunch:

In response they have sent me nice notes, trekked across the state to visit me in my office, invited me to talk with their colleagues, gone out

and bought my books (and actually read them), taken me to lunch, and promised to arrange a dinner with the governor. (Not likely to happen, for, as far I can see, there's nothing in it for him.)

For Fish, the lesson is clear: university administrators and academics must abandon their defensive posture in favour of something more aggressive and perhaps even more offensive:

They have been diplomatic, respectful, conciliatory, reasonable, sometimes apologetic, and always defensive, and they would have done much better, I think, if they had been aggressive, blunt, mildly confrontational, and just a bit arrogant.

I admire his spirit.

And I agree that academics should be more assertive, and

support the idea of "allowing no false statement by a public official to pass uncorrected and unrebuked."

But though I concur with Fish's suggestion that "defending the academy in bottom-line terms is a losing proposition unless you want to reach the conclusion that most of what you do should be abandoned," I'm troubled by the all-or-nothing stakes of the game he wants to play. If you're going to go down, Fish suggests, it's better to go down fighting:

Well, maybe nothing [will work]. Maybe we'll just have to learn to live (and perhaps die) in this brave new world where money is withdrawn from public higher education at the same time that ever more strict controls are imposed.

The problem is that Fish can imagine only two possible positions. On the one hand, the failed strategy of timid acquiescence to the bottom line: "redescribing the enterprise in

the vocabulary of what they do" by "retelling it in the vocabulary of business or venture capitalism." Fish is surely right that this won't work for the humanities: let's face it, English literature will never be a money-maker. On the other hand, an outright refusal to even attempt to translate the language of the academy into terms that might be understood by those outside academe:

Instead of trying to justify your values (always a weak position), assume them and assume too your right to define and protect them. And when you are invited to explain, defend, or justify, just say no.

I have to believe in the possibility of a compromise between these two positions.

Again, I believe Fish is right to insist that the first strategy doesn't work, and I think it's about time someone said so. Sure, academics can attempt to redefine the academic enterprise as a type of business enterprise,

but nobody will really believe them (they probably won't really believe it themselves), and when the axe falls, the humanities will be on the chopping block. But the second strategy won't work either. Yes, it might work for a celebrity academic, who might get to have dinner with the governor. But institutional viability depends on sustaining supportive relations over the longer term. And if academics don't even try to explain what they do to those from whom they seek support, how can they expect that support to continue? If the language of venture capital doesn't fit, does it then follow that there are no other languages and vocabularies available with which to explain the value of the academy to the world outside its doors?

Posted by Invisible Adjunct. [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(14\)](#)

Friday, 5 March 2004

"We could hire God this year"

More proof (as if more were needed) of the ["We could hire God this year"](#) syndrome. [Chun](#) cites an application requirement that I hope is an aberration and not the beginning of a new trend:

From a recent job
ad:

Semi-
finalists
will be
asked to
submit a
half-hour
video of
one of
their
classes
by April
12...

Was there ever a
sentence more
deserving of
academic censure? Is
this even legal?

I wonder if there *are* legal
implications to videotaping a
classroom full of students. Would
one require their written
consent? And how much would
this cost, anyway? Whatever it
cost, the burden clearly shifts
from the search committee to the
individual candidate.

Posted by Invisible Adjunct. [Permalink](#) |
[Comments \(38\)](#)

No Taxation without

Representation

Any faculty member on the tenure track is a potential ally. You might be surprised to find how many professors are former non-tenure-track faculty members themselves. You want any and all of their support because they can help persuade their colleagues about the rightness of your cause.

-- Charles Naccarato,
["Becoming Visible"](#)

Charles Naccarato reports on a successful campaign to gain faculty senate representation for nontenured faculty members at Ohio University. It's a fairly optimistic piece ("some modest good news" is how Naccarato puts it), which places its emphasis on positive pragmatic strategies. Still, he does issue the following warning:

Be prepared for things to get

personal. We academics like to portray ourselves as people who are above being swayed by personal attacks when judging the equity of an argument. If you've been in the academy for more than a few months, you probably know that this image differs somewhat from reality. It's quite natural for certain professors who are upset by change to start asking personal questions about the people making noise in the back row. Get used to hearing your name with the words 'disgruntled' and 'whiner' attached to it.

Posted by [Invisible Adjunct](#). [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(1\)](#)

Wednesday, 3 March 2004

I'd like to thank the academy...

...and the post-academy, and the would-be academy, and the anti-academy...*

Ogged notes that [Unfogged](#) is "one year old, as of sometime last week," and issues thanks to his readers and commenters.

Which reminds me that I should do likewise. Invisible Adjunct was a year old on 28 February. Sincere thanks to all those who read, comment, link, and email.

*As I write this entry, I must confess that I am not glamorously but tastefully attired in a ready-for-the-red-carpet ballgown. I was left in the lurch when my stylist eloped with my Pilates instructor, and I just couldn't decide between the Vintage Chanel and the Versace.

Posted by Invisible Adjunct. [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(8\)](#)

"Jilted Entitlement"

In a recent entry on "[Teachers Self-Evaluating](#)," AKMA takes issue with the "self-deceptive, self-destructive, partisan, hollow rhetorics of jilted entitlement." It's an interesting post, and I

think worth reading.

That said, I have to add that I'm a little surprised to find myself cited as Exhibit A in the proliferation of the above-mentioned "hollow rhetorics":

I read Invisible Adjunct's blog regularly, and I used to leave comments there but quit bothering to compose elegant, finely-crafted arguments after I never won the *Weekly IA Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Field of Excellence (No Cash, Just Glory)*. (No, not really.) I am accountable to my many, many underemployed colleagues, and IA helps keep my feet to the fire.

I have to make an untimely, unwelcome observation, though. In all my reading of IA and the other sites of

underemployed academics, the writers identify themselves as good (or "very good" or "excellent") teachers and scholars...

...From what I read, everyone unjustly relegated to adjunct status is a popular, diligent, effective teacher, and many are strong researchers; are all the best teachers laboring as adjuncts (or in exile from academic), leaving only the schlubs in actual academic positions?

A couple of quick points.

First, just for the record, I don't believe I have ever identified myself as a good, very good or excellent teacher and scholar (or, for that matter, as a mediocre, bad or very bad teacher and scholar). I can't speak for my readers and commenters, of course. No doubt some of them have, at some point or another, in some entry or another,

identified themselves in terms that conform to AKMA's characterization.

Second, it is not at all the argument of this weblog that wonderful teachers and scholars are adjunctified while mediocre teachers and scholars are tenure-tracked and tenured. And though, again, I don't speak for my readers and commenters, I have to say that I don't really see too many of them arguing this position either. I think AKMA is misinterpreting a sense of discontent, of grievance, of injustice, that is undoubtedly expressed in some of the comments here. What people object to, I think, is the perceived contingency of the process, the sense that the game amounts to a crap shoot. As pencil vania put it in the comments to [this entry](#):

My friends and I did all the right things--attended a top-ten program, taught a bunch of courses, published, tried to make dissertations that stand out--and all it amounted to was tossing dice at a craps table.

To make my position clear: I firmly believe that in today's job market, anyone who gets a tenure-track job must have some impressive credentials, and must have demonstrated at least the potential to become at least a good teacher and scholar. But that is not to suggest that anyone who doesn't land a tenure-track position does not have similar credentials and potential. In a situation where large numbers of candidates are chasing after a small number of positions, the measurement of merit can only take a search committee so far, and all kinds of other, more local and particular, criteria will enter into consideration. The more candidates there are for a given position, the more these criteria will matter.

For me, it's just obviously not the case that "all the best teachers [are] laboring as adjuncts (or in exile from academic), leaving only the schlubs in actual academic positions." Which brings me to my final point (and this is a point that I made repeatedly many months ago in a series of related entries that I'm too lazy to look up and link to at the moment): my argument is

that nobody who has acquired the credentials (a Ph.D.) and who performs at a minimum acceptable level should be adjuntified. To suggest or to imply otherwise is to make what I believe is a professionally suicidal argument about the value (or lack thereof) of the Ph. D. and of the credentialling process over which the profession purports to preside. Leaving aside the impact on individual lives and individual careers, this is a matter of serious concern for the future of the academic professions. I honestly cannot think of another comparable professions, the members of which would be prepared to argue that after years of intensive training, followed by certification, a significant proportion of the members of the profession would still be sufficiently lacking in merit, competency and potential as to deserve to work for minimum wage with no benefits.

To put it simply: if someone is good enough to be at the front of a classroom, that person should be working for a decent living. And if someone is not good enough to merit a decent living, that person should not be in front

of a classroom.

Posted by Invisible Adjunct. [Permalink](#) |
[Comments \(59\)](#)

Tuesday, 2 March 2004

Semi-Open Thread: Interdisciplinarity

While I was away, the recent [Jane Bast](#) thread turned into a conversation on the value (or lack thereof) of interdisciplinarity. What does it mean? What is it worth? An empty buzzword, or a bright and shining future for the humanities?

(Regular blogging will resume shortly.)

Posted by Invisible Adjunct. [Permalink](#) |
[Comments \(28\)](#)

