Controlling Language and the Language of Control in Government Discourse

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Dans cet article, nous analysons le « langage de la domination » — les stratégies discursives particulières employées pour agir sur les récepteurs en limitant le nombre de paramètres de réponse — dans un document sur le financement des universités publié par le Conseil ontarien des affaires universitaires. Publié en 1994, ce document nous éclaire encore sur la façon dont le discours organisationnel (dans le cas présent les politiques et les priorités du COAU et, par extension, du gouvernement provincial) peut pénétrer un texte à tous les niveaux. Bien qu'ostensiblement un « document de travail/discussion paper », en « discutant » de la situation de financement, ce document, en fait, bâillonne l'opposition et les vues des universités. Une analyse systématique de la dynamique du pouvoir et des « réalités » exprimées dans le texte révèle la façon dont ce bâillonnement est effectué par le « langage de la domination ».

As provincial governments continue to push us to defend the status of higher education in general, and as we strive to insist on the value of the Humanities and disciplines like our own in particular, it behooves us to continue to de-mystify the posturing mechanisms about "efficiency" and "deficit reduction." But this is not just an exercise in self-preservation; it also makes worthy study for ourselves and our students. For this type of government discourse is rich in contradictions and difficulties that professional writers encounter every day: the difficulties inherent when the stated form and function of a document are in fact at odds with the document's underlying goals, such as a government "discussion paper" that seeks not to discuss but to dictate. Thus, I turn back to August 1994, when the Ontario Council on University Affairs published a document entitled "Sustaining Quality in Changing Times: Funding Ontario Universities — A Discussion Paper." The date on the document is

1994, but the strategies employed therein strike one as eerily familiar. This document provides a revealing and useful template with which to analyze the language of control at the heart of current government discourse on education.

This document, like its counterparts in many other provinces, undertook an analysis of the university funding situation and proposed changes to funding policies. However, far more than a numerical analysis, the OCUA's "discussion" paper is a carefully crafted work of organizational policy: a composition designed to implicate all "discussion" participants in the reproduction of organizational discourse prerogatives. A systematic analysis of this document reveals that a decision had already been made regarding funding policy; rather than offering any spectrum of proposals, this document asserts controlling parameters delimiting the scope of any imagined response to the question of funding. This document can be seen as a useful study tool for ourselves and our students because it exemplifies the tension that can exist between a stated genre and its actual manifestation. But I do not dwell on the issue of genre in this paper; I am not undertaking a genre-based analysis. However, I believe that what follows does highlight, in an interesting manner, the problematics of genre for technical writers — in particular, the difficulty in writing (or reading) generic labels as transparent markers of a document's nature. My analysis suggests that — viewed in the context of this document and its discursive strategies — the label, "a discussion paper," is not a descriptive label at all but rather a rhetorical gesture intended to "soften the blow" of the document. The label would more accurately read "a position paper." Although the term "discussion paper" would seem to imply discussion over various options and opinions and invite debate from all participants, in fact what takes place in the text is an articulation and justification of government policies. The tension between the stated medium and the actual message emerges, upon analysis, in terms of quite salient textual strategies designed to "naturalize" the organizational discourse in the document and to project its assumptions upon all participants in the "discussion."

One useful tool for examining such textual strategies is critical discourse analysis. This approach reveals the precise nature of a document's textual manoeuvres, allowing us to see the links between language strategies and ideological imperatives. There are many different approaches to discourse analysis and so my own methodological choice should be clarified. I am following in the footsteps of recent studies that draw, as a foundation, on Halliday's three "metafunctions" of language: ideational, interpersonal, and textual (Halliday, 1978). The functional approach has been used fruitfully in analyses similar to that which I am undertaking; that is, in analyses using close reading to identify the traces in language use of larger social and institutional structures that form the wider contexts of documents (see for example, Lemke,

1995 and Stillar, 1998). However, for my specific analysis model, I have used Fairclough's triadic model of discourse functions that, though following after Halliday (and others), makes one particular alteration that is relevant for the purposes of this paper (Fairclough, 1989). Specifically, Fairclough does not include the "textual" function in his triad — he deals with the importance of formal textual features elsewhere in his system. Instead, Fairclough divides language into relational, experiential, and expressive functions or "values" (in this sense, textual features can themselves have relational, experiential, and expressive values). I have chosen Fairclough's particular functional model precisely because it is not my intention, in this paper, to provide an analysis of the textual features of the document; I do not discuss the impact of formal textual features such as the visual presentation, use of headings, the numbering system used in the document, a comparison of one section of the document to another in terms of textual features, and so on. (This is not to deny the importance of such textual features; rather, they are beyond the scope of this paper.) For this reason, Fairclough's model is a better "fit" for my analysis of the OCUA document.

Fairclough describes the discursive function of language as a struggle toward "the establishment or maintenance of certain ideological assumptions as commonsensical" (p. 90). Fairclough answers the question, then, of how ideological struggle is enacted in a text: by "naturalizing" the assumptions written through and into the language, the dominant discourse deflects interrogation of its ideology. In analyzing a document such as the OCUA paper, the objective is to explore the ideological dimensions of the text, to reveal the power relations and political narratives inscribed in the language. Yet these aspects of the text will be "disguised" by the perceived legitimacy, the "commonsense" currency, of the operating discourse. This obscuring action of the discourse is central to its power:

> ... in the naturalization of discourse types and the creation of common sense, discourse types actually appear to *lose* their ideological character. (p. 92)

If the reader is dulled to the ideological underpinnings of the language of the text, the discourse will read unchallenged and uninterrogated. We can clearly see Fairclough's indebtedness to many who have examined the operation of ideology in language, from Althusser to Foucault (in fact, discourse analysis on the whole is quick to acknowledge these links: see for example, Lemke, pp. 1–17). But, rather than a more general discussion of ideology, what I wish to emphasize in this study is the particular usefulness of employing Fairclough's three functions to divide the OCUA document into specific discursive strategies, and link those strategies to the overall ideological impetus of the document (the articulation and justification of the OCUA's policies and priorities).

Fairclough's three functions of discourse — relational, experiential, and expressive — provide an effective means of dividing the text into its discursive "parts," while not obscuring the interrelations among the three functions. While the definitions of each function will be revisited below, they can be briefly described as follows: the relational function encodes and enacts social relationships in the text; the experiential function represents "reality" in the text; the expressive function evaluates that "reality" (Fairclough, p. 112). At the three functional levels, the writing strategies in the document can be highlighted, in this case at the supra-sentential level, and deciphered in terms of how they work to inculcate organizational policy. On a relational level, the assumptions of the document are legitimized by the inscription of power relations in the text, where the university community is depicted as a subject of the provincial government's power and control, rather than, for example, an empowered extension of the public's support for higher education. On an experiential level, the document uses the language and conventions of economics, "empirical" evidence, and notions of the "environmental," "external," and "natural," in order to present a version of "reality" that suggests that results presented in the paper are unavoidable, rather than caused by human agency. Finally, on an expressive level, the document establishes a "classification" or formula, a way of organizing the variables of the funding debate, that operates to move agency and blame for the problem away from the government and to the universities — actually reversing the formula of the debate so that, rather than seeking solutions to a funding problem, funding changes are asserted as a "solution" to problems within the university community.

The first function I will address is the relational. The relational aspect of discourse is the way in which the text enacts and depicts social relations:

> ... how a text's choice of wordings depends on, and helps create, social relationships between participants. (p. 116)

The relational function can be read immediately in the title of the paper, which promises a certain relational stance: that of discussion. Is this a promise the document will keep? Again and again the social relations in the document are expressed as hierarchical, not co-operative. The introduction sets up this power relation:

> In November, 1993, the Minister of Education and Training asked the Ontario Council on University Affairs to review the current funding mechanism for universities in the province ... The Minister also asked the Council ... to consider a number of important policy objectives including:
>
> - increased accessibility;
> - a stronger emphasis on teaching;

- enhanced transfer of credits among universities and between colleges and universities;
- enhanced cooperation, rationalization and sharing to increase quality and accessibility to universities;
- a funding system which encourages accessibility, adaptation and restructuring. (p. 1)

The significance of this relational strategy is twofold. First, a power structure is established, with the "highest" academic power in the province — the Minister — endorsing the document. Second, the very terms of the "discussion" are apparently not debatable. The Minister's policy objectives, which will direct the entire document, are handed down in a direct line of power: from the Minister to the OCUA to the university community. Thus, although the document makes a claim for "discussion," for collective decision making, the power relations written into the document are part of a textual strategy designed to limit the parameters of the discussion according to the agenda of its architects.

A brief mention of the identity and role of the OCUA is useful here, and not only for the benefit of those outside the Ontario system who may be less familiar with the Council: when we take a closer look at the OCUA's mandate and activities in the year this discussion paper was published, we gain insight regarding the wider context of the document and other participating discourses. In its annual report for 1994–5, the OCUA describes itself as "an agency of the Government of Ontario" and "an advisory body" with "no statutory executive powers" (p. 3). The 21 members of the Council are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario. Regarding membership:

> ... a recent review recommended that the university community be represented on the Council, but that a majority be community-at-large members reflecting the economic, social, regional, ethnic and linguistic makeup of the population. (p. 3)

Under the heading "What Does The Council Do?" we read:

- acts as an intermediary **between the autonomous institutions and the provincial government to promote system-wide development;**
- advises on **such matters as the Minister might, from time to time, request;**
- recommends on funding **of universities and the allocation of operating funds between institutions and among funding programs;**

- regulates support of university academic programs **by providing advice on which undergraduate professional, quasi-professional, special and graduate programs should be approved for funding purposes;**
- serves as an agency for public education **by bringing policy issues pertaining to universities to the attention of government.** (p. 3 — emphasis in original)

In my introduction, I refer to "organizational policy" and "organizational discourse prerogatives." The above description of the OCUA should assist in defining those and help to sketch the wider context of the discussion paper. At the risk of suggesting a rather polemical relationship, I do think it is worth noting that, although the OCUA describes itself as "an intermediary," it is in fact an agent of the government. As well, the Council wields considerable power over the universities precisely because it makes key recommendations to the government regarding what funding the universities will receive.

Although the OCUA's mandate, as stated, is fairly broad, if we look at its activities for the year as reflected in its research and publications, there is an unmistakable emphasis on fiscal matters and, in particular, the fiscal issues raised in the discussion paper. The OCUA's publications for 1994–5 are reprinted in the annual report and they are as follows:

> "The Allocation of Government's Operating Support for the University System in 1994–95,"
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> "Graduate Student Bursary Program Advice,"
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> "The Allocation of Government's Operating Support for the University System in 1995–96,"
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> "Sustaining Quality in Changing Times: Funding Ontario Universities, August 1994," (discussion paper)
>
> And, finally, the background papers for this discussion paper:
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> > "University Funding Mechanisms: An International Comparison, July 1994,"
> >
> > "Undergraduate Teaching, Research and Consulting/ Community Service: What are the Functional Interactions? A Literature Survey, August 1994,"

"An Analysis of the Costs of Teaching, Research and Community Service: An Estimation Model for the Ontario University System, August 1994," and

"The Structure of Academic Work, August 1994."

These publications provide a sense of the wider, intertextual context of the discussion paper. Again, at the risk of sounding polemical, it is important to note that as well as the general focus on fiscal matters in the OCUA's research (thereby reducing the discussion of the future of the universities to a purely economic one), all of the background papers are cited as *supporting* references in the discussion paper. Thus, the existence of any contradictory discourses or dissenting voices is marginal, if available at all (I refer to dissenting voices within the organization, its policies and its research milieu; there were many dissenting voices in the universities' response to the paper). Following the publication of the discussion paper, further background papers were published pertaining to "Resource Allocation." They are:

"Ontario University Funding System, September 1994,"

"Increasing the Emphasis on Teaching in Ontario Universities, November 1994,"

"Some Perspectives on Academic Freedom, Autonomy and Accountability, March 1995," and

"University-Government Relations in Ontario 1945–1995: A Summary of Selected Initiatives and Recommendations Related to System Coordination and Planning, March 1995."

With the role and mandate of the OCUA in mind, I would argue that, in terms of the relational functioning of the text, the Council takes its authority from the Minister and proceeds to rigorously guide the "discussion" according to its own priorities. We can see this clearly in the OCUA's insistence, in the introduction, that any response to the document take place within the framework of "focusing questions." As we will see in retrospect, these focusing questions merely duplicate the priorities of the document; thus they function to maintain the power of defining the argument in the realm of the authors, not the readers. We are reminded of the contribution of social theory to discourse analysis; theorists like Bourdieu or Hodge and Kress observe that hierarchical relations consistently control who is authorized to speak and

who is not, particularly in institutional contexts (Bourdieu, 1991; Hodge and Kress, 1988). Hugh Mehan, in "The Role of Language and the Language of Role in Institutional Decision Making," observes that committee meetings "do not have the features routinely associated with 'decision making'" (p. 147). Specifically, he notes that there is a very limited range of alternatives, and that these alternatives are "presented" rather than "debated." The limited arena of debate is supported by a "stratification of talking arrangements":

> Speakers of officially higher rank and who spoke with their authority grounded in technical expertise, presented their information, while speakers of lower rank, who spoke with authority based on first-hand observations, had information elicited from them. (p. 153)

This is the relational dynamic of the OCUA document — the relations of power inscribed in the text give the OCUA the authority to define the parameters of the argument; at the same time, of course, by limiting readers' ability to respond to the document, the authors reinforce the dominance of the organization's discourse in the debate.

The relational strategies in the text are most marked in the document's opening, where they serve to legitimize the authors' rigid control of the "discussion." However, throughout the document there are reminders of the hierarchy, which have a similarly controlling effect on the "discussion" at hand. For example, in Section 2.0, in a general discussion about federal transfer payments, the document shifts suddenly to an "example" regarding the provincial governments in Alberta and Nova Scotia, which responded to cuts in federal payments by slashing university budgets and closing university programs (p. 4). This seems a not-too-subtle reminder that the power to force solutions on the university community lies in the hands of the government. At the end of Section 2.0 this stance is articulated with even greater clarity:

> There is ... a trend towards more explicit statements by governments everywhere of expectations of university behaviour and performance. Implicit in this trend is a move away from the notion of publicly funded institutions receiving their annual grant of public monies as entitlements to one which sees them earn these funds through the provision of defined services .... In looking at the desirability of universities becoming more responsive to public policy priorities, the issue that may need to be considered is whether the administrative autonomy of universities legitimately or appropriately provides them with independence from government policy

> objectives ....Those who argue for limits on autonomy believe ... that individual institutions, because of their collegial nature, are unable to make difficult decisions. (p. 6)

This passage seems nearly audacious in its barely veiled threat to university autonomy. However, the inscriptions of power occurring throughout the document suggest that the government — as represented in and through the OCUA — is quite serious in its assertion of power over the universities. These relational inscriptions of power are probably the most overt and transparent textual strategies that the writers at the OCUA use to legitimize the organization's discourse in the document. A somewhat more covert use of textual features to inculcate organizational discourse in the document occurs within the experiential function of language.

The experiential aspect of discourse is the way the text represents "reality": "how ideological differences between texts in their representations of the world are coded in their vocabulary" (Fairclough, p. 113). Beginning with the document's title "Sustaining Quality in *Changing Times*" the notion that the proposed changes to the relationship between universities and government are simply part of a "changing environment" is a frequent representation in the document — as if these changes are unavoidable and without agency like the changing weather. There are two parts to this textual strategy: first, the use of "empirical" data and the conventions and language of economics to provide "evidence" regarding the need for government action; second, the alignment of funding shortfalls and policy changes with other environmental situations as if they are equivalent in nature. We see the first aspect of this textual strategy emerge prominently in Section 2.0, where "the changing environment" is considered in depth. The description of "the changing environment" gains legitimacy from the language and conventions of economics and the use of "empirical" data. For example, part of the strategy of "naturalizing" the government's action is the use not only of jargon such as GDP and "relatively flat real grants" but also of charts and graphs that apparently depict supporting evidence. The Figures in Section 2.0 merely relate information about funding: "Figure 1 indicates that universities have experienced relatively flat real provincial operating grants for over a decade and a half" (p. 3). The role of the charts is interesting, for they merely restate what has already been related in the document: that there is a funding shortfall. Figure 1 on page 4 shows that indeed provincial funding has remained flat and has even dropped; Figure 2 on page 4 shows that federal transfer payments have dropped. These experiential depictions use conventions of economics, which are often assumed to be neutral, true representations of reality, to support the assumption that a funding shortfall is unavoidable.

But of course the language and numerical data of economics, like any other discursive formations, are not neutral or "natural," as Robert Heilbroner notes in "Economics as Ideology." Heilbroner argues that the language and assumptions of economic discourse operate to support and formulate existing socio-political relations:

> ... behind the often remote, abstract, and socially detached terms in which the economy is described lie the realities of provisioning activities and of means of coordinating these activities whose purpose is to sustain a given sociopolitical configuration. The specifically "ideological" aspect of economics consists in its normal depiction of these activities and means in terms that ignore or conceal the sociopolitical structure whence they spring and which they serve. (p. 107)

The OCUA document's use of economics conventions and "empirical" depictions sets up claims of veracity that must be interrogated as a part of the discursive strategies projecting the organization's ideology. For example, Section 3.0 assesses "University Funding in Ontario and in Selected Jurisdictions." It is ostensibly descriptive, but what the text and charts show is that the bulk of university funding, as it is depicted here, comes from the Ontario government. In a document engaged in the "naturalization" of a specific organizational discourse, the impact of this plain "empirical" data is to justify the government's prerogative to control the "discussion." A similar strategy is used in the Section 5.0 Tables.

As well as this use of economics conventions and "empirical" data, there is a second aspect to the experiential strategy operating in the document: the alignment of funding shortfalls and policy changes with other environmental situations as if they are equivalent in nature. This textual strategy is both more covert and more pervasive: present in every section of the document yet embedded in a process of explanation that is ostensibly objective. There is a constant reiteration, rewording, and replacement of supposedly "synonymous" or interchangeable concepts throughout the document, until the "external environment" defined later in the document is significantly altered from its earlier definition. This constantly shifting vocabulary — using consistent triggers such as "changing times," "pressures," and "realities" — yet with a shifting list of which "pressures" exactly are being referred to at any one time, is part of the strategy of linking "environmental" or "natural" aspects of reality with the authored, interested purposes of the document. For the document is not really talking about environmental pressures but about policy changes that would most certainly be contested by the university community. This process begins in the introduction. The Minister's directive states that the OCUA should "review the current

funding mechanism for universities ...[and] consider a number of important policy objectives." Later in the introduction, the OCUA defines its purpose as a "desire to help universities manage their response to the changing cultural, economic, social, technological and fiscal environment." Funding is now grouped with a series of other "issues," rather than standing alone, as it did in the Minister's directive, as the root cause of this "discussion" paper. This is a subtle shift in the vocabulary, but it is a shift that will occur again and again throughout the document: always moving toward the suggestion that policy decisions are somehow inevitable and unavoidable, thus concealing the government's agency.

This shift is repeated at the beginning of Section 2.0, when the concept of a funding crisis is placed in a list of "realities." This list reads:

- financial constraints limiting government transfer payments;
- social and demographic changes creating the potential for significant enrolment increases and an increasingly diverse student population;
- demand for research and highly skilled personnel in a highly technical milieu;
- *changing public policy priorities and the increasing emphasis on accountability*; and
- a continuing need for Ontario universities to be globally competitive. (p. 3 — my emphasis)

First, a government decision to limit transfer payments is aligned with arguably "external" factors such as population growth. More important, in this list we see the inclusion of "changing public policy priorities and the increasing emphasis on accountability." Like the mention of financial constraints, it is included in a list of external "realities" as if it has equivalent status — that is, as if it is external, without agency, beyond our control. This is the essence of the textual strategy deployed along the experiential axis of the discourse; government choices such as funding reductions and policy changes are made equivalent to environmental events like demographics. This strategy continues to Section 4.0, which begins with a list of "*challenges facing the Ontario university system*"(p. 10 — my emphasis). The list reads:

- Accessibility
- Quality
- Balance among teaching, research, and community service
- Restructuring and professional program rationalization
- Responsiveness and accountability.

The "pressures" on the university system keep shifting to include more and more "policy objectives," with fewer and fewer ties to arguably "external" features such as demographic changes. Let me note that I am not saying the document makes overt claims that these shifting lists are equivalent; what I am saying is that these recurring lists represent a subtle textual strategy. They have a cumulative effect: we are presented with an initial idea of external pressures on the university system, but by the end of the document the idea of pressures has shifted to focus on quite different criteria. This shift, as we will see, has significant results for the discussion at hand.

It is important to note that these "changing public policy priorities" are not even external in the sense that they are part of wider government policy inexorably making its way into education issues. On the contrary, these are policy changes apparently engineered by the government in response to the funding shortfall; they are policy changes being introduced and justified to the university community in this document. With this experiential strategy there is an attempt to introduce the policy changes in a way that removes the space for discussion and interrogation. Because of embedding, a list of policy changes *reads* like a list of external, "natural" factors. In the earliest articulations of "external pressures" the notion of policy changes never emerged. Then they are introduced embedded in these lists. This embedding or "overwording" operates to diffuse the most controversial aspect of the document: its introduction and justification of dramatic and arguably inappropriate policy changes to deal with a funding situation. Fairclough points out that re-wording or "overwording" reflects ideological anxiety:

> We sometimes have 'overwording' — an unusually high degree of wording, often involving many words which are near synonyms. Overwording shows preoccupation with some aspect of reality — which may indicate that it is a focus of ideological struggle. (p. 115)

Why all this struggle to align government decisions with the "external"? The "naturalization" of these policy issues and funding decisions on the experiential level of the discourse is essential to the success of the expressive strategies in the document.

The textual strategies operating at the expressive level of this document represent the most subtle and the most influential assertion of the organization's discourse. If the experiential function of discourse essentially *describes* "reality," the expressive function of discourse *evaluates* that reality:

> A speaker expresses evaluations through drawing on classification schemes which are in part systems of evaluation. (Fairclough, p. 119)

As we have seen, the relational values encoded in the document give the writers the authority to dictate the parameters of the "discussion." The discussion's parameters are further defined by the experiential values of the document, which make certain government decisions seem inevitable or "natural." These textual strategies ultimately support the legitimization of the document's expressive content. How is reality *evaluated* in the document? What classification schemes about this "crisis" are encoded in the language of the document? Whereas one interpretation — for example, the interpretation of the university community — might place agency for the funding shortfall with the government and its refusal or inability to maintain traditional funding, the document asserts a formula, a way of organizing the variables of the debate, which operates to move agency or causality for the problem away from the government and to the universities. The document actually reverses the formula of the debate so that, rather than seeking solutions to a funding problem, funding changes are asserted as a solution to problems *within the university community.* This expressive strategy, initiated in the introduction, gains increasing currency as the document unfolds. What happens in this reversal is that attention is diverted away from the root problem of fiscal need — a problem not caused by the universities — and toward university policy issues — a problem for which the universities can be blamed.

Fairclough identifies the manipulation of agency and causality as integral to the legitimization of a given discourse: "who is represented as causing what to happen, who is represented as doing what to whom" (p. 51). The university community will be depicted as having significant problems with certain issues, and this will *cause* the government to intervene with policy changes in order to solve the *universities'* crisis. Mention of the fiscal shortfall is not obliterated from the text but is embedded, as we have seen, merely as part of the "changing times" or changing environment. The expressive reversal of the problem-solution formula both supports and is supported by the relational and experiential strategies we've already looked at in the document. But it is this expressive classification of reality, this framing of the problem, that carries the real power of the document as a discursive act, for once locked into this framework it is very difficult for the reader to resist the organizational ideology encoded in the text. In tracing the development of Section 2.0, the impact of the expressive strategy of the document is increasingly evident. The persuasive power of the OCUA argument centres on its expressive classification of funding as the *solution,* universities as the *problem.* For example, in the subsection "Social and Demographic Changes" we read: "Despite limited public funding, demand for university-

level education continues to increase"(p. 4). Remarkably, the implication is that the problem lies, not with a funding shortfall, but with an increase in demand that is out of line with the funding shortfall.

We can infer the motivation behind the expressive reversal of the document. How can the document justify massive university policy changes — changes that impact on areas like pedagogy, research, and mission — in order to deal with a problem essentially fiscal? The subsection just quoted above concludes:

> The challenge for the university system is not simply how to cope with the potential enrolment increase, but how to do so while enhancing the *quality and accessibility* of university education for today's heterogeneous student population .... (p. 5 — my emphasis)

If it were just a matter of coping with increased enrolment, the logical answer would be to look at increasing funding to continue the universities' current practices. On the other hand, if the document can assert that there is something wrong with the universities' current practices — that *quality and accessibility* are at stake — and if the document can use this "wrongness" to justify policy changes that are in the interests of its fiscal agenda, then the document has succeeded in inscripting its specific ideological concerns in the language of the "discussion." What is essentially a fiscal crisis is re-written as something else, as illustrated in the next subsection, "Changing Public Policy." The subsection opens relatively innocuously:

> Public policy must reflect changing values and demographics of Ontario's society. Accessibility and equity will continue to be major issues in the future for universities .... Universities must respond to accommodate individuals of diverse backgrounds as well as non-traditional age groups. (p. 5)

What is significant is the subsequent movement, later in the section, away from this demographics issue to an articulation of extreme policy changes that go far beyond "accessibility."

After a brief history of accessibility policies in the province, the section continues:

> In considering this issue, in a time of financial constraint, it is also incumbent on the Government to mediate between competing expectations and needs, not only to maximize the return on public investment, but also to ensure that its investment generates the greatest benefit to the greatest number. (p. 6)

Here, the issue of accessibility is linked to the need for government involvement. But what is notable is not this connection itself; indeed, many have argued that a certain amount of government involvement may be justified when it comes to accessibility,

and the preceding paragraphs actually do a fair job in outlining such arguments. What is a notable and quite astonishing change in direction is what follows, in bold type:

> **Council believes there will be increasing public pressure for government to concern itself with and be accountable for the quality, responsiveness and relevance of public and publicly-funded services.** (p. 6)

The text no longer refers to accessibility issues; the text now refers to accountability for "the quality, responsiveness and relevance" of university education. There is no corresponding shift in the discussion to explain this sudden inclusion of a very broad accountability — one moment the text is considering accessibility and the next "quality, responsiveness and relevance." Again, there is a specific, expressive textual strategy designed to shift blame toward the university. The writers begin with an "external" factor — shifting demographics — and they use this factor as an opening to turn the "discussion" to much broader, more dramatic policy changes. In this way, any imagined response to the funding situation is rigidly controlled by a classification scheme — a way of evaluating the world — that repeatedly points the finger at universities as somehow flawed.

We can see another clear illustration of this strategy in Section 4.0. As noted earlier, Section 4.0 begins with a list of "challenges" facing the university system:

- Accessibility
- Quality
- Balance among teaching, research, and community service
- Restructuring and professional program rationalization
- Responsiveness and accountability.

We have already seen how the document's experiential strategy suggests that these "challenges" are "external" and unavoidable. But also in the section — as each challenge is described in depth — the document utilizes the expressive strategy of shifting the blame to the universities. For example, repeatedly the writers assert the need for more programs and more enrolment, but without corresponding budget increases. Clearly it is in the interests of the government to propose dramatic alterations to the traditional professorial role in order to accommodate enrolment. We read:

> In responding to increased enrolment demand within the context of fiscal constraint, institutions may be asked to expand the teaching function with neither a requirement nor the resources to increase their activity in research and community service. (p. 13)

In fact, the principal goal of Section 4.0 is the justification of an extreme revisioning of the professorial role. There is a comparison of the "Conventional View" of the tripartite teaching/research/community service role of the professor *versus* the "New View" of "Four Categories of Scholarship"(p. 13). The goal of this comparison is to redefine "teaching" as a form of research. Presumably, then, if one spends all of one's time teaching, one is after all engaged in research. Similarly, in a description (p. 15) of teaching and research, the document argues that there is not necessarily a link between teaching and research; that is, teaching excellence and research excellence need not go hand in hand. This description works to justify an increase in teaching activity and a decrease in research activity. Perhaps these issues deserve consideration, but they are not presented for debate. Rather, they operate in the document to show that the universities are misguided, and require government intervention. The essence of this expressive strategy is made clear at the conclusion of Section 4.0, in the articulation of the need for a new funding mechanism that would dictate professorial time amongst teaching, research, and community service:

> The current funding mechanism for universities does not spell out clearly what the public is buying for its investment in universities. It does not say how much teaching, how much research, and how much community service the public is purchasing for its investment. (p. 16)

What is most significant about Section 4.0 is how the problem of a funding shortfall has been shifted to an articulation of the universities' failure to "correctly" envision the professorial role. This expressive strategy of blame shifting represents an essential way that the document works to promote the organization's discourse prerogatives: justify policy changes to accommodate new (reduced) funding formulas.

In the last part of the document, Section 5.0, we finally see the comparison of alternative funding models to the current funding model. It is perhaps not surprising to find that these models are evaluated primarily in terms of their ability to support policy objectives. Table 7 (p. 19) illustrates the current funding model's performance. In looking at the table it is immediately clear that the "failure" of the current funding system occurs in terms of policy; in other words, it is only when measured against these policy objectives that the funding model fails at all. At this point in the document, the notion that the universities face "external," environmental pressures

has entirely disappeared. Instead, the universities are held accountable for an inability to fulfill policy goals. Changing the funding mechanism is offered as the solution to the universities' failure in this regard. That the document has succeeded to this extent — that it has completely redefined the notion of a funding crisis into the notion of a funding solution — indicates the degree to which organizational ideology has been encoded at every level of the text. In the latter part of Section 5.0, the document is surprisingly salient about its agenda:

> With a possible significant increase in demand for the next decade and the reluctance of some universities to enrol additional students for only the fees they pay, there is concern that the current funding allocation system may hinder response to such demand increases. (p. 19)

And later:

> The conclusion drawn from Table 7 is that the characteristics of the formula system that are potentially the most significant deterrents to achieving the objectives in the table are the requirement for additional funds to be provided to the system to fund upward corridor shifts. (p. 20)

In other words, the essential problem is that the government wants enrolment to increase substantially without a corresponding increase in funding — thus, the revisioning of the professorial role and other policy changes.

There is a reason that this degree of directness is not present earlier in the document. For the purposes of the OCUA discussion paper, justifying a new funding system means first justifying a series of significant policy changes. Section 5.0 goes on to present three possible funding models. However, at this point in the document the specifics of the models are practically insignificant because the ideological purpose of the document has presumably been achieved: the need for creative solutions to a funding problem has been replaced by the need for government intervention to solve policy crises in the universities. In all three proposed models, these apparent policy crises are addressed by increases in enrolment and teaching load (without corresponding increases in funding). The justification for this approach has been carefully constructed, carefully inscribed throughout the relational, experiential, and expressive strategies of the text. On a relational level, the assumptions of the document are legitimized by the inscription of hierarchical, silencing power relations in the text. On an experiential level, the document presents "reality" using the language of economics, "empirical" evidence, and ideas of the "environmental" or "external." This strategy both links policy changes to unavoidable states and circumstances, suggesting an analogous relation, and also confines the discussion primarily to the fiscal

arena, where the government has the most power and control. Finally, on an expressive level, the document establishes a classification scheme that shifts agency and blame, reversing the formula of the debate so that, rather than seeking solutions to a funding problem, funding changes are instead asserted as a solution to problems within the university community.

Thus, the OCUA document provides fascinating reading: it is first and foremost an illustration of how organizational discourse (in this case the policies and priorities of the OCUA and, indirectly, the provincial government) can permeate all levels of a text. In "discussing" a given situation, this document serves to effectively silence university opposition, not only because of (relational) power dynamics, but also because the "realities" (experiential and expressive) expressed in the document place the universities inside a formula of blame, thus limiting their ability to respond critically or creatively. This returns us to my framing observation about the problematics of genre: clearly generic labels and categories can represent useful critical points of entry for more involved readings of documents. In this case, as students and teachers we might ask ourselves, do the power relations and the ways reality is defined and organized in the text in fact permit "discussion" (dialogue, negotiation) as suggested by the label "a discussion paper"? On the contrary, in its scope and strategies this document would seem to demonstrate the authors' anticipation of, and defence against, opposition and debate from the university community; use of the term "discussion paper" merely masks the document's quite substantial strategies to encode and legitimize organizational goals.

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