

**SCE NEWS AND NOTICES**

The Society for Critical Exchange  
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**SCE NEWS AND NOTICES**  
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NEWS FROM SCE HEADQUARTERS

Recently, I received a letter from Wallace Martin of the University of Toledo from which I would like to quote because it raises an important issue:

. . . a question that has been on my mind during the past year and that I think deserves your consideration and that of the Board of Directors [is:] What is the relationship between the SCE membership and the activities sponsored by SCE? When MLA recently undertook reorganization of its bibliography, for example, it solicited suggestions, and I'm sure many of us forwarded them. Bureaucratic as it inevitably is because of its size, MLA manages to maintain a minimal interaction with individual members through letters published in PMLA, the Newsletter, and other means. At one time I felt SCE was far more cohesive and interactive an organization than MLA. But recently, I feel that the membership of SCE is simply informed of the publications, conferences, and projects undertaken in the name of the organization, without their suggestions or participation being sought. In fact at present, I feel that membership in SCE is in effect a subscription to SCE reports [now **Critical Exchange**]  
—an interesting periodical, but one that does not solicit contributions from members or others.

Like Professor Martin, I believe that SCE should not have the character of a country club in which membership signifies little more than a specific status in the community and offers only minor privileges such as using the golf course. Instead, I believe SCE should have a character more like that of a political party in which membership signifies a set of responsibilities that arise from a commitment to particular

social actions. Ideally, to be a member of SCE means to participate in its projects. However, it is not my place to decide what character SCE should have other than to remind the membership of how it is currently characterized by its bylaws:

**ARTICLE ONE: GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR THE CONDUCT OF SCE**

**Section 1. PURPOSES AND GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR POLICY**

(a) The Society for Critical Exchange . . . is a not-for-profit corporation, formed under New York State Law, for the purpose of encouraging and advancing intellectual inquiry and discussion in criticism. All policies adopted by the Board of Directors, and all projects undertaken by the Society shall be consistent with this purpose.

(b) Activities of the Society shall be conducted in a cooperative spirit, with the understanding that the advancement of intellectual inquiry depends upon the good faith and best energies of a community of inquirers. All projects sponsored by the Society, singly or in cooperation with other organizations and institutions, shall be conceived and evaluated according to the contribution they might reasonably make toward the exchange and communication of innovative concepts, methods, and insights to a larger community of critics and scholars.

(c) Services provided by the Society to its members or to other organizations or institutions shall be guided by the principle that inquiry is continuous and subject to unexpected change. Accordingly, all projects, activities, and policies of the Society shall be subjected to

careful review on a regular basis by the Board of Directors or any special committees established by its authority.

Since its inception, SCE has sponsored a number of projects developed by its membership. Those of you who attended the reception for Ralph Cohen at MLA will remember that he called our attention to several ongoing SCE projects: a bibliography project directed by Jeffrey Peck, the editing of a volume on teaching theory directed by Leroy Searle, and the GRIP project administrated by Steve Nimis, David Shumway and me. In his address to the assembled membership, Professor Cohen suggested that the Society undertake a project to edit a dictionary of theoretical terms (see below). In addition to these projects SCE sponsors a conference on various theoretical issues which is co-directed by David Bleich, John Aiken and Brian Caraher of Indiana University. There are also one or two other projects on the drawing board.

In the discussions between Patricia Harkin, Leroy Searle and me during the spring and summer of 1975, a central concern in the founding of SCE was that the Society, as an organization, should provide a base from which projects might be initiated, especially by scholars interested in theory who were either un-/under-employed or not supported by their home institutions.

I believe SCE should develop through EXCHANGES among its members. Its goals, given its charter, and its structure are the same: critical exchange. Thus, following Professor Martin's suggestion, I would like to publish regularly in **CEx** "letters to the editor" on the question of what SCE should be. What is the nature of "exchange"? How do groups wishing to be "critical" exchange views given differences in their critical languages? What programs should SCE pursue? These are questions we should address communally. I think we should begin planning for a national SCE conference that would bring the membership together to exchange their views, an occasion on which the various participants in SCE projects gathered

annually. Rather than rationalize sessions at MLA or its regionals in order to meet or rather than take on the burden of funding and organizing special events at their home institutions, the members of SCE projects could convene with a minimum of effort and funds. Of course, some member has to organize the "project" of such a conference. I believe that Professor Martin's remarks are a very timely reminder of what SCE was founded to do, but it is not the case, as he has begun to feel, that "the membership of SCE is simply informed of the publications, conferences, and projects undertaken in the name of the organization, without their suggestions or participation being sought." Our problem lies in the opposite direction: we cannot get enough suggestions or participation from the membership. We should try not to allow SCE to become another academic "country club." Let's begin by **exchanging** views on what SCE is, was, should be and might be.

I would like to end by suggesting that one of the worst features of the profession of literary studies for many is the sense that its administrators are so thoroughly entrenched in its institutionalization that every suggestion for change is greeted with: "that's a great idea, I only wish we could do it, but its not feasible." This attitude is carried over into many professional organizations whose executives simply pass on longstanding "do-lists" to their successors who then do "what's always been done," altering only the time, the location and other minor trappings like topics. I'd argue that SCE should be characterized by a different attitude: this is an exciting project, how can we do it?

Exchange entails change.

James J. Sosnoski  
Executive Director, SCE

### SCE Dictionary of Critical and Theoretical Vocabularies

Members on hand for the installation of Professor Ralph Cohen as President of the Society may recall that his agenda of projects appropriate to SCE included a dictionary or glossary of terms current in literary theory and criticism. Since the compilation of **loci classici** for such glossaries has traditionally entailed the sort of collaborative effort characteristic of SCE undertakings, and since we have in place a network of readers uniquely familiar with the literature from which citations for this glossary would have to come, the project appears to be a natural for SCE.

Members interested in helping to set up an editorial staff or in serving as one of the many consultants we should need may write to The Society for Critical Exchange, P. O. Box 475, Oxford, Ohio 45056, attention: R. L. Wadsworth Jr., Associate Editor. There will be an organizational session, we hope with Professor Cohen in attendance, at the SCE fall meeting in Bloomington during the first week of November, 1984.

### UPCOMING SCE EVENTS

APRIL 2 ,3

A Symposium with  
EDWARD SAID  
Miami University  
Oxford, Ohio

APRIL 27 - 28

A Symposium with

JACQUES DERRIDA  
 Miami University  
 Oxford, Ohio

MAY 18-19

A Conference on  
 "Critical Institutions:  
 Literary Study in the University"  
 the University of Washington  
 Seattle, Washington

For information on these events write to Sallie R. Wadsworth,  
 Administrative Associate, SCE, P.O. Box 475, Oxford, Ohio,  
 45056.

FORTHCOMING IN **Critical Exchange**

**CEx 15**  
 "The Institutionalization  
 & Professionalization  
 of Literary Studies"  
 STANLEY FISH  
 RICHARD OHMANN  
 DAVID SHUMWAY  
 PAUL SMITH  
 SAMUEL WEBER

NOTE: We are sorry to inform you that the publication of CEx 15  
 has been delayed until the Fall. As a result, we plan to  
 distribute CEx 16 this Spring, hoping that to our responsive  
 readers this special issue (an extra issue in the sense that we

normally publish two issues of CEx in a membership year) will soften the thwarting of your expectations.

**CEx 16**  
A Special Issue  
on  
"The work of  
Wulfgang Kullmann,"  
a noted Homerist

We are very happy to announce that SCE will publish this coming Fall (CEx17) a special issue on the work of Jacques Derrida, featuring an interview with him.

**CEx 17**  
Fall, 1984  
"The Work of  
JACQUES DERRIDA"  
Edited by James Creech

We are also very happy to announce that SCE will publish next year (available to 1985 members) a special issue on Edward Said, featuring an interview with him:

**CEx 18**  
Winter, 1985  
"The Work of  
EDWARD SAID"  
Edited by David Shumway

Our present plans are to follow this issue with one on "Current Feminist Theory" publishing the critical exchange Paul Smith is

organizing between proponents of present currents in feminist theory who are women and their male counterparts, men who are proponents of some currents in present feminists theory. We will keep you informed on developments.

#### IN THE SPIRIT OF EXCHANGE:

A call for suggestions for future CEx issues and MLA or regional programs!!

(Write to James J. Sosnoski)

#### Of Note:

#### TWO IMPORTANT NEW JOURNALS:

#### WORKS AND DAYS

**Works and Days**, coedited by David Downing, Eastern Illinois University, and Brian Caraher, Indiana University, will publish essays which critically explore, often from multidisciplinary approaches, the relations between the arts and their socio--historical and socio-cultural contexts. Subscribers, prospective contributors and the curious are encouraged to correspond with the Editors, **Works and Days**, Department of English, Coleman Hall, Room 304, Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, Illinois 61920. [The Editors welcome **abstracts** of or **proposals** for articles, which will be responded to immediately.]

#### CULTURAL CRITIQUE

The primary goal of **Cultural Critique** will be to examine and critique received values, institutions, practices and discourses as much in terms of their origins, genealogy and evolution as in terms of their cultural, social and political effects and influences. The journal, to be published three times a year, will give priority to sophisticated practical analyses that are lucidly informed by contemporary theory. It will draw upon a large and sophisticated international group of corresponding editors who will channel articles to the journal and will write "review" articles examining intellectual trends in their parts of the world. **Cultural Critique** will thus attempt to cut across national and cultural boundaries as well as across disciplines. For information or for submission of articles, send to: **Cultural Critique**, English Department, University of Minnesota, 207 Church St. S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55455.

#### MORE ON MISSISSIPPI REVIEW

No sooner had we announced in the last newsletter that **Mississippi Review** had begun to publish literary theory than we received Issue 33. The contents may be of interest to SCE members: in addition to individual pieces by Rob Dyer, Mikhail Bakhtin, Jonathan Goldberg and Luce Irigaray, there are two collaborations, one by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, the other by Jean-Francois Lyotard and Jean-Loup Thebaud. To obtain a copy, please send \$4.50 to **Mississippi Review**, Southern Station, Box 5144, Hattiesburg, MS 39409. Subscriptions, for three issues a year, are \$10. Inquiries or submissions should be sent to Robert Brinkley, Associate Editor.

## OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

**The Politics of Theory** (Proceedings of the Essex Conference on the Sociology of Literature, July 1982), including essays on the work of Mikhail Bakhtin, Edward Said and Fredric Jameson, is available from the Liaison Officer, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester CO4 3SQ, Essex, England. The cost is seven pounds plus \$1 US per book for handling, payable to "The University of Essex."

Joseph Natoli is looking for contributors for a collection of essays, **Literary Theory into Practice**, which he describes as "a kind of praxis volume derived from my **Influences on Postmodern Literary Theory and Criticism**." For further information, write Joseph Natoli, Libraries, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824.

On April 13 and 14, the State University of New York at Stony Brook will sponsor **Authors and Readers: Perspectives on the Rhetoric of Fiction**. Speakers include Wayne Booth, Thomas Flanagan, John Hagopian, Peter Rabinowitz and Susan Suleiman. For further information and registration forms, contact Homer Goldberg, Department of English, State University of New York at Stony Brook, Stony Brook, NY 11794.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Jeffrey Peck, University of Washington (Seattle), is editing an annual SCE bibliography on developments in theory which will be published in **New Literary History** each Spring. If you are interested in participating in this project, contact Jeffrey Peck, Department of Germanics and Comparative Literature, Denny Hall (DH 30), The University of Washington, Seattle, WA 98195.

CALL FOR PAPERS. **CEx 18** will feature an interview with

Edward Said. We are interested in essays on Said's work in both literary theory and cultural criticism. Please send inquiries, proposals or papers to David Shumway, Department of English, Miami University, Oxford, OH 45056.

CALL FOR PAPERS. The SAMLA conference in Atlanta November 8-10, 1984, will include a double session sponsored by SCE and the SAMLA Section on Literary Criticism. The topic is Marxism and Literary Criticism, and papers or abstracts are invited on any aspect of the relationship between Marxism and the study of literature. Address inquiries to Gregory S. Jay, Department of English (Drawer AL), University of Alabama, University, AL 35486.

SCE WORKSHOP. The NEMLA convention, March 29-31 in Philadelphia, will include a workshop on the topic of Women as Professional Readers. Chair is Susan Merritt Elliott, Keuka College; Secretary is Marshall Grossman, Fordham University/Lincoln Center; Panelists are Elizabeth Flynn, Michigan Technological University; Laura Menides, Worcester Polytechnic Institute; Lauren T. Cowdery, Keuka College; and Patricia Harkin, Denison University. The workshop is scheduled for Friday morning, March 30, 8:30-10:00.

## SCE CALENDAR

- March 29-31: SCE Workshop at MEMLA, Philadelphia
- April 1-3: Edward Said's visit to Miami University
- April 27-28: Jacques Derrida's lecture & seminar at Miami University
- May 18-19: GRIP related conference at University of Washington, Seattle
- August 31: Deadline for news and notices for Fall newsletter
- October 30-31: SCE conference on "Teaching Theory" at Bloomington, IN



November 1-3: SCE sessions on "Teaching Theory" at MMLA, Bloomington, IN

### SCE News & Notices

Any correspondence concerning **SCE News & Notices** should be sent to Sallie R. Wadsworth, **SCE N&N**, The Society for Critical Exchange, P. O. Box 475, Oxford, Ohio 45056. We will be happy to announce events, sessions, projects and information of interest to SCE members in this newsletter. **SCE N&N** is published by The Society for Critical Exchange.

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### MEMBERSHIPS

You will find enclosed a membership form for 1984. Memberships will now coincide with the calendar year and entitle members to the issues of **CEx** published during that calendar year, **SCE News and Notices**, and other communications concerning research in progress, conferences . . . Only paid members will receive **CEx**.

Please fill out the membership form and return it promptly to help us reduce the cost of mailing.

The number "84" on the last line of an SCE mailing label indicates membership is paid through December 1984. If you are confused about the status of your membership, just send money. It will be well spent.