



*News (and)
Notices*

From the executive directors

The Society for Critical Exchange, Inc.
Founded 1975; incorporated 1976

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Board of Directors

Jonathan Arac, English, University of Pittsburgh
(term ending December 31, 1990)

David Downing, English, Indiana University of Pennsylvania
(term ending December 31, 1992)

Barbara Harlow, English, University of Texas at Austin
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(term ending December 31, 1992)

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(term ending December 31, 1992)

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(term ending December 31, 1990)

President

Richard Ohmann, English, Wesleyan University
(term ending December 31, 1991)

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Gary Lee Stonum, English, Case Western Reserve University
Martha Woodmansee, English, Case Western Reserve University
(unspecified term, by appointment of the Board of Directors)

Gary Lee Stonum
Martha Woodmansee

Assistant to the Directors

Lisa Maruca, English, Case Western Reserve University

Welcome to all new, returning, or soon-to-be members of the Society for Critical Exchange. This is the first issue of the newsletter since the Society's offices moved to CWRU at the beginning of 1990, and also the first since the current membership campaign began in April.

We are still updating the more fugitive lists of old members, so it is just possible that this will be the first time you have heard from us. Not wanting to leave anyone out, we have mailed this *News and Notices* to all of you who been involved with the Society over the last two years.

Subsequent issues will go only to current members, however. If the mailing label line reading "1990 member:" ends with "n" [for no] rather than "y" [for yes], please return the form on the inside back cover. (The "n" could also mean that your renewal has only recently arrived here or that we have screwed up the records.)

Speaking of future issues, items for the Fall/Winter newsletter should reach us by Oct. 1. As you can see, the current issue dutifully catches up on more than 18 months of activities. For the next issue, however, we wouldn't be averse to the irreverent, the scandal-mongering, or the scurrilous. Why should *Lingua Franca* have all the fun?

The number of current members has now passed the 250 mark, which seems to be an all-time high, and international applications have only begun to arrive. This growth suggests that SCE has attained a certain estimable stature, which bodes well for the coming days. May our works then flourish as our numbers have.

Call for nominations

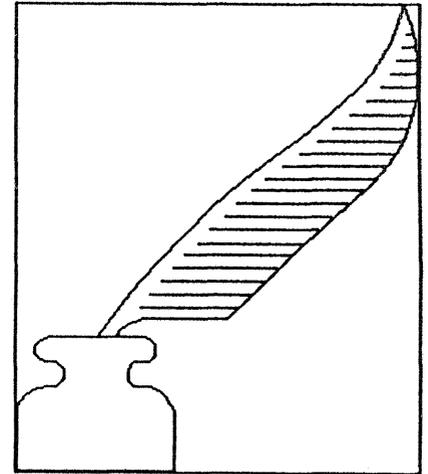
Nominations are now open for four seats on the SCE Board of Directors, three with regular four year terms running through December 31, 1994 and one replacement running through December 31, 1992. [Heather Murray (Toronto) resigned her seat earlier this year.] All SCE members in good standing (i.e., those who have paid dues for the current year) are eligible to nominate or to run.

The by-laws require nominations to include 1) a letter of nomination signed by the nominee and at least one other member of the Society and 2) a brief resume or curriculum vitae of the candidate. Nominations must be received at least 90 days before the annual meeting (held at the MLA convention), which for this election would be September 28, 1990. This will also be the final day for receipt of 1990 dues. The existing board will then elect a new board from among the nominees.

The by-laws put two restrictions on a member's eligibility to serve as a director. One is that the board cannot be composed entirely of directors in a single academic discipline or professional field; for the upcoming election that is a moot point, since the two continuing directors are from different disciplines. The other restriction is that no more than two directors may hold professional appointments at the same college or university.

Nominations or questions about the election should be directed to Gary Lee Stonum.

From the Mailbox



Our mention of a project on the pedagogy of cultural studies in the membership mailings drew a number of responses, expressions of interest and requests for more information. At the moment, however, there is no project and no one has really stepped forward to set one up. We are still looking around and would appreciate any ideas and offers of help. Meanwhile, as part of the *Ask SCE* section of the Electronic College we will set up an ongoing list of those who are interested in the subject or have particular questions. If you do not have access to the College and want to leave your name or a query on this list, write to us and we will post the message.

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R.K. Meiners, editor of *The Centennial Review* at Michigan State, writes to invite contributions for several special issues: "Computers, Knowledge, and Disciplines," "The University and Aesthetic Production," and "Discourses of Mourning, Survival, and Commemoration." Inquiries are requested by August 1, 1990. [The full Call for Papers on each of these topics is to be posted to the Calendar section of the Electronic College; it is also available from the editor.]

* * * *

Responding to the SCE's interest in exploring or renewing relations with regional MLA organizations, Patrick M. Murphy, chair of this year's criticism section of the South Central MLA, writes to say he would like to help strengthen the presence of theory at SCMLA meetings. Members in the

region may hear from him about such plans, and he welcomes inquiries and proposals addressed to him at the English Department of Northeast Louisiana Univ.

* * * *

A number of interesting suggestions about future SCE projects have come in during the last few months. At the risk of omitting equally worthy ideas that are in earlier stages of development, let us mention a few that seem on the way to fruition. Andrew Lakritz (English, Miami Univ.) is organizing a symposium on Walter Benjamin's work and its uses in contemporary culture, intended to be held at Miami Univ. in 1991. David Damrosch (English, Columbia Univ.) has suggested two activities: investigating the theory and practice of interdisciplinary study and preparing a practical handbook on conference organization. Inquiries about either suggestion can be directed to us in Cleveland as well as to Damrosch.

What is an SCE project . . . and why?

How does a person get involved in SCE-sponsored research? If you are interested in an already established project, the answer is simple: write to the project director. However, if you want to explore some new topic, the answer is a little more complicated and a lot more important. The SCE is proud of its record of encouraging new ideas and fostering the intellectual and professional development of its membership, so it is very important to us that you know how to take full advantage of Society resources.

As long as the work concerns literary theory in any form and it involves collaboration with other scholars, it is a candidate for SCE assistance. Usually then the first task is

locating others interested in the topic. If you can send us an initial description of the research, we can often put you in touch with others who have the relevant interests and talents. Leaving an announcement on the Electronic College can also help.

The scale of the enterprise can vary considerably, from a topic with a very specific or limited focus, which might require only a single meeting of the participants, to work that might go on for years and in many locations. Among recent SCE activities, the symposium on Barbara Herrnstein Smith exemplifies the first sort, and GRIP the second.

Both GRIP and Problems of Affirmation in Cultural Theory are official SCE projects, to use what is something of a technical term for the Society. That is, they have been officially endorsed by the Board of Directors and thus become eligible for financial support from SCE's (limited!) general funds. By contrast, neither of the panels at the 1989 Midwest MLA was a project--call each an "activity"--and the work on theory in an electronic age is also not, at least not yet. The point is that a good many activities go on before or without being endorsed as projects. Moreover, these activities can receive a number of kinds of organizational support, either before or in lieu of seeking project status.

For example, in addition to help in initially identifying collaborators or organizing the project, the SCE can help you arrange for presentation of the work at conventions and symposia, and it can aid in obtaining institutional support. For example, recommendation by the SCE might help you secure courseload reductions, research assistance, and other forms of local support. It might also help with applications for external funding. (A warning: you should be aware that an SCE blessing condemns you as a Berserker in the eyes of some agencies.) In addition, the SCE can help arrange for publication of the work.

To apply for project status, you normally need to submit a detailed proposal, including a budget and a list of participants. To apply for less formal kinds of SCE sanction and assistance, a less formal request will usually suffice. For further information contact Gary Lee Stonum or Martha Woodmansee.

Coming events, 1990-91

SCE PANELS AT MLA

SCE will sponsor two sessions on "Problems of Affirmation in Cultural Theory" at the 1990 MLA Convention in Chicago. On Thurs., Dec. 27, from 7:00 to 8:15 pm, David Downing will chair a panel including:

- David B. Downing (Indiana Univ. of Pennsylvania) and James Sosnoski (Miami, Ohio): "Problems of Affirmation"
- Laura Donaldson (California State Univ., Fresno): "Critical Theory and the New Mestiza: a Deconstructuralism for the 90s"
- Paul H. Smith (Carnegie Mellon): "Asserting the Agent: Pedagogy and Culture"
- John Brenkman (Northwestern): "Contingent Values and Political Commitments"
- Philip Goldstein (Delaware): response

On Sun., Dec. 30, from 12:00 to 1:15 pm, James Sosnoski will chair a panel including:

- Robert Miklitsch (Tufts): "Resisting Negation: the Work of Affirmation"
- Patrick D. Murphy (Indiana Univ. of Pennsylvania): "Affirmation and Agency in Ecofeminist Dialogics"
- Evan Watkins (Washington): "When I Win the Lottery"
- Betty R. McGraw (Kansas State): response

SCE PANELS AT MMLA

The SCE is sponsoring two panels at the Midwest MLA in Kansas City. Gary Lee Stonum will chair "Theory and Theory-Work in an Electronic Age," Thurs., Nov. 1, 4:00 to 5:30 pm.

- N. Katherine Hayles (Iowa): "Bodies Under Construction: Biological and Electronic Texts"
- Helen Schwartz (Indiana Univ., Indianapolis): "A New Rhetoric for Computer-Mediated Communication"
- Leroy Searle (Washington): "Technology and Theory"

The second panel, an investigation of the greeting card, takes note of the fact that Kansas City is the home of Hallmark Cards. Following presentations by Hallmark author Barbara Loots and sociologist Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi (SUNY, Stony Brook), Martha Woodmansee will lead a discussion on the light that greeting-card production, distribution, and consumption shed on our concepts of writing and reading. The program is scheduled for Fri., Nov. 2, 4:00 to 5:30 pm.

SCE AT SAMLA

Kenneth Watson (Southern Mississippi) will chair a panel on "Critical Space: Painting/Music/Architecture/Dance" at the South Atlantic MLA, Thurs., Nov. 15, 2:00-3:45, in Tampa. Papers include:

- Robert Mielke (NE Missouri): "Body McCarthyism and/or Neo-Aestheticism: Recent Painting"
- Gary Wiesel (Duke): "Pierre Boulez and the Language of New Music"
- Michael Speaks (Duke): "Postmodern or Deconstructivist: Architecture and the Ideology of Space"
- Martina Sciolino (Southern Mississippi): "Nationalist Modernism and the Hysterics of Archetypal Form: Martha Graham"

FORTHCOMING SCE CONFERENCES

The Role of Theory in the Undergraduate Literature Classroom: Curriculum, Pedagogy, Politics

September 21-23, 1990, in Indiana, Pennsylvania. Panelists and speakers include James Berlin, Don Bialostosky, Gerald Graff, Beverly Guy-Sheftall, Cary Nelson, Richard Ohmann, Susan Stewart, Catharine Stimpson, Paula Treichler, and Gregory Ulmer. Co-sponsored by Indiana University of Pennsylvania's Graduate Literature Program. For information regarding registration, contact David B. Downing, Chair, Theory/Pedagogy Conference Committee, 110 Leonard Hall, IUP, Indiana, Pennsylvania 15705.

Intellectual Property and the Construction of Authorship

April 19-21, 1991, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio. Co-sponsored by the Washington College of Law,

American University. This interdisciplinary conference will explore all aspects of the social and cultural construction of authorship in relation to the evolution of proprietary rights in ideas. Send papers or abstracts by October 15 to Martha Woodmansee, Department of English, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH 44106.

Electronic College Opens

The SCE's on-line clearinghouse, seminar, textworks, and coffee house officially opened in April. We'd be the first to admit, however, that the Electronic College of Theory has only limped along since then. Like any computer bulletin board, it needs to gather a critical mass of participants in order to generate sufficient traffic in news, gossip, and schmoozing. Only then can it become what it is intended to be, a self-sustaining enterprise directed by the interests of those who use it.

By the time this newsletter appears in your non-electronic mailbox, however, things should be improving. We here in Cleveland will at last be able to start priming the pump: posting enough messages, instructional material, and substantive news that the College can begin generating some momentum.

Currently active parts of the College include the *Open Forum* (a bulletin board in which messages, gossip, and queries of any sort may be posted and read), the *Calendar* (calls for papers, conference announcements and schedules, publishing opportunities, etc.), *Reports from Correspondents* (informal summaries of conferences, lectures, and other activities of interest to theorists), *Ask SCE* (a help line for the College and for other SCE activities), and the Newsletter (an archive for *News and Notices* and other official documents). Existing so far only as items on the menu are *Critical Exchange* (on-line copies of the SCE journal), the as

yet invisible *Textworks* (private work space for specific collaborative projects), and *The Year's Work in Theory* (an ambitious but probably still distant project of reviewing all major books and articles in the field). These areas are all available from one or another menu in the College; for assistance, check the instructions in *Ask SCE*.

Accessing the College: With telephone and modem call 216-368-3888 (set your communications software to no parity, 8 data bits, 1 stop bit, and full duplex). Once connected, hit Enter (or Return) twice, then at the "CWRU-TS1>" prompt, type "Connect FreeNet-A". [Alternatively, from an Internet node Telnet to Freenet-in-a.cwru.edu.] You will be asked if you are a registered user or a visitor. Answer appropriately and you will soon get to some system announcements and then the main FreeNet menu. For help with FreeNet type "go help" at any arrow prompt. To get to the College type "go sce" at any arrow prompt, then choose from the on-screen menus. FreeNet, and hence the College, is normally open at all hours except for a regular Friday morning maintenance period.

Joining the College/Becoming a registered FreeNet user: As a visitor you can read messages from (almost) anywhere on FreeNet. To send and receive mail, post messages, and access the members-only parts of the College, you must a) be a member in good standing of SCE and b) register with FreeNet to obtain a userid and password. [Cleveland FreeNet, landlord for the Electronic College and flagship of the National Community Telecomputing Network, is a free, public bulletin board system and "cybercasting" station.] Contrary to what we've said elsewhere, the fastest, easiest way to register is to sign up on-line during the logon procedure. (This is one of the choices when you tell the system you are a visitor.) The FreeNet administration will then send you a userid and an initial password; it may take them a couple of weeks to do this. Once you have a userid, then logon, go to the Post Office section of FreeNet, and send e-mail to SCE (xx124@po.cwru.edu) telling us you are now official.

That last step, saying "howdy" to us, identifies your userid as that of an SCE member, thereby providing you access to restricted areas of the College.

Annual report: 1989

[Catchy title, innit? Actually, the following will have to serve instead of an official, mandated annual report, but we hope it includes most of the Society's doings for the year.]

David Shumway served as acting executive director for 1989, his principal activity being to conduct a search for a new institutional home for the SCE. After hearing expressions of interest from at least one other university, the Board of Directors voted in the fall to accept a proposal from Case Western Reserve University. Under the proposal CWRU has committed itself to a minimum of five years of support for the Society.

In addition to activities described elsewhere in the newsletter, the SCE sponsored a symposium at Miami University devoted to the work of Barbara Herrnstein Smith, who served as President of the SCE for the 1987-89 period. Included in the meetings of March 24-26 were papers from Eric Reeves, Colleen Lamos, and Morse Peckham, plus responses from Barbara Herrnstein Smith, Don Bialostosky, David Bleich, David Konstan, Elizabeth Wilson, Tim Newcomb, Susan Stewart, Joseph Valente, and Britton Harwood. Jim Sosnoski was principal organizer of the symposium.

Material from the symposium is scheduled to appear in the Fall/Winter 1989 issue of *Pre-Text* (volume 10, numbers 3-4), which is due out later this year. For further information about this double issue write the editor, Victor Vitanza, English Dept., Box 19035, Univ. of Texas, Arlington TX 76019-0035.

The SCE also sponsored two panels at the November meeting of the Midwest MLA in Minneapolis. David Shumway chaired "Displaying History: Cultural Critique and Public Spectacle," which included:

- Linda Mizejewski: "Staging and Framing Female Spectacle: The Choreography of Film and Theater Criticism"
- Katie Trumpener: "Should the Folk Museum be Burned Down?"
- James Knapp: "The Exotic on Exhibition"

James Knapp chaired "Snap-Shot: The Discipline of English in 1950 as Seen through its Journals," which included:

- Craig Dionne: "The Institution and its *ELH*: A Brief History of Literary English"
- Sally Magargee: "*The Kenyon Review* and New Criticism: Foundations of Theory as the Object of Literary Studies"
- Lorraine Higgins and Suzanne Smith: "Composition Finds a Voice: The Professionalization of Composition, 1948-1952"
- Karen O'Kane: "Humanism and *PMLA*"
- David Shumway: "*American Literature* and American Civilization"
- Arthur Geffen: response

The final sessions of the Sites and Sources of American Cultural Criticism project were held at the annual MLA meeting in December 1989. William Cain chaired "African-American Cultural Criticism," which included

- Pancho Savery: "J. Saunders Redding and the Roots of African American Literary Criticism"
- Selwyn Cudjoe: "C.L.R. James as Intellectual"

Arthur Casciato chaired "American Woman of Letters," which included:

- Mae Henderson: "Gender and Genre, Race and Revision"
- Carla Kaplan: "The Poetics of Accountability: Adrienne Rich's 'Politics of Location'"
- Lynn Wardley: "Bachelors in Paradise: Bachelor Women in Literature"

Finally, the SCE committee at the South Atlantic MLA presented a panel in November 1989 on 17th-century thought and contemporary theory. Chaired by Richard Rand, the session included papers by Marc Geisler, Catherine Creswell, and Amy Wygant and a response by Barbara Guetti.

At the annual meeting of the Board, held during the MLA meeting in Washington, D.C., Richard Ohmann of Wesleyan University was unanimously elected President for the 1990-92 term. A long-time SCE member and supporter, Ohmann is author of *English in America* and *The Politics of Letters*.

In other business the Board heard reports on the GRIP project, the Problems of Affirmation in Critical Theory project, and the Sites and Sources of American Cultural Criticism project. It discussed the future of *Critical Exchange* but reached no firm decision on whether the journal should continue as an inexpensive report of work in progress or become a more polished journal and whether its coming availability on-line should supplement or replace normal publication.

In the short run both the two issues that are in press (The PRISM Project, edited by Patricia Harkin, and Literary Theory and Textual Scholarship, edited by Arthur Casciato) and a projected issue on Sites and Sources of American Cultural Criticism will appear under the old format.

News from GRIP

The Group for Research into the Institutionalization and Professionalization of Literary Studies, is the largest and longest active SCE project. Having grown to include over 300 persons, GRIP has now begun issuing its own newsletter, and it has also established a steering committee: David Downing (IUP), Steve Fuller (VPI), Ellen Messer-Davidow (Minnesota), Steve Nimis (Miami of Ohio), and David Shumway (Carnegie Mellon). Since not everyone belonging to SCE also belongs to GRIP, we include below some highlights from the first issue of *Grip News*. For further information write to David Shumway.

Papers from the 4th annual GRIP meeting, "Episodes in the History of Criticism and Theory," have appeared in a special issue of *Poetics Today* (Vol. 9, 1988). Forthcoming issues of *Social Epistemology* and *Poetics Today* will publish papers from GRIP's 1989 seventh annual meeting, organized by David Shumway and Ellen Messer-Davidow at the Univ. of Minnesota.

GRIP is currently investigating sites and topics for future conferences, especially for Spring 1991. Those interested in hosting future meetings should contact David Shumway.

If your mailing label says "1990 member: n," please return the form below. Otherwise, feel free to pass it on to a colleague or friend.

Application for Membership in the Society for Critical Exchange

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Department and Institution Address (if different from above): _____

Telephone work: _____ home: _____

Areas or projects of interest: _____

1990 dues (\$10 regular, \$15 joint, \$5 student, part-time,
retired or unemployed, \$15 outside North America) \$ _____

Optional Donation _____

Total (remit to The Society for Critical Exchange, Guilford
House, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland OH
44106) _____