Salutations!

As you read through this edition of the SCE’s News and Notices, you’ll see a large range of current activities. Projects of long standing are expanding their directions and initiatives. The Intellectual Property and Construction of Authorship project is continuing its work on the international implications of intellectual property law (p. 7). A volume of essays from the first New Economic Criticism conference will appear this spring from Routledge; the project also sponsored a second conference on “Culture and Economics” (the program is printed on pp. 3-6), and has spun off panels and a second edited collection on “The Question of the Gift” (see pp. 2 and 10-11). Woman Nation Narrative has returned with an important initiative “Rethinking Anderson” (pp. 8-9).

And newer projects are continuing to grow: Cultures of Writing is gearing up for another conference (p. 9), and the SCE is co-sponsoring a series of panels on Cognitive Linguistics (p. 12).

You’ll find reports on all these activities, and on our doings at the regional and national MLAs, within this newsletter.

There is, of course, much room for more work, and for new projects by SCE members. With this in mind, we are working to elevate the SCE’s Website to the status of a project, and are seeking SCE members who would like to make this resource into a truly innovative electronic space for the pursuit of theory. On the last page of the newsletter you’ll find a fuller description of what we have in mind.

And on the very last page of the newsletter, you’ll find your handy annual dues notice. This is the only dues notice you’ll receive. Please clip the page and send it to us with the appropriate amount, so that the SCE can continue to put on conferences, publish collections of essays, and press ahead with new and innovative projects.

Yours most sincerely,

Martha Woodmansee
Director

Max Thomas
Associate Director
CURRENT PROJECTS OF THE SCE

The SCE runs several standing projects which operate through meetings at the national and regional MLA conventions, through special conferences, and through publication initiatives. The SCE is an affiliated organization of the national MLA and of the five regional MLA organizations. In many cases, this means the SCE has standing panels at conventions, through which it is possible for members to organize and carry out sessions on a wide variety of topics. The SCE will assist in coordinating such sessions, and in expanding them into continuing projects when appropriate. There is no limit to the number of concurrent projects; please do contact the directors with ideas and initiatives.

The following pages include reports on each of the continuing SCE projects, on SCE-related panels at conferences, and on other SCE activities both present and future. The SCE's website will continue to accumulate information about these projects; for more information, contact either the SCE Directors or the Coordinators of the individual projects.

NEW ECONOMIC CRITICISM PROJECT REPORT

Coordinators: Mark Osteen, Martha Woodmansee

The New Economic Criticism project is devoted to the steadily increasing intersection between economic considerations in literary studies and the importance of theory in economic studies. 1998 was a busy year for NEC, including sponsoring two panels on "The Question of the Gift" at the MLA convention, and co-sponsoring, with the University of Exeter, an international conference on "Culture and Economics" in Exeter, England. A volume of essays from the first NEC conference, entitled New Economic Criticism: Interrelations between Literature and Economics and edited by Martha Woodmansee and Mark Osteen, will be published by Routledge in the Spring of 1999. A collection of essays from this summer's conference is being assembled for journal publication. Details about the conference, including the full program, can be found below. Details about the MLA sessions can be found under the MLA activities report, on page 10.

Regenia Gagnier and John Dupré collaborated with Mark Osteen and Martha Woodmansee to mount a conference on "Culture and Economics" at the University of Exeter, July 23-26, 1998. This meeting brought together an international array of literary scholars and economists to further consider the interrelations of their disciplines. Building on the conference held in 1994, this meeting aimed to sharpen study in several areas: new theories of production; theories of consumption and alternative economies; feminist economics; the history, and pre-history, of economic discourse; formations of value, both monetary and non-monetary; and the various forms of the market.

If the 1994 conference suggested that certain paradigms and assumptions about economics and about literary theory needed rethinking, this conference suggested a number of the forms that such rethinking might take. Notably, a mini-conference on the Nineteenth Century, prompted by an extraordinary cluster of papers focused on that time period, presented a broad view of the period not so much as one of consolidation of grand economic/authorial narratives, but as one of extraordinary contestation regarding the relation of the human subject to the forces of social structures. And, in his plenary address to the conference, Terry Eagleton suggested that this rethinking might well necessitate a revitalization of the Marxist theory of base and superstructure itself.

Thus, the papers from the conference represented a putting-into-practice of the ideas preliminarily discussed in 1994, and suggested that the issues raised about cultural production are only becoming more pressing.

The conference program is included on the following pages.

Plenary Session: Overviews
Welcome by Martha Woodmansee, Case Western Reserve University, Society for Critical Exchange; Opening comments: Regenia Gagnier, Exeter University and Mark Osteen, Loyola College, "Economics and Culture"; Diana Strassman, Rice University, "Feminist Economics"; Jack Amariglio, Merrimack College, "Postmodern Economics"

Feminist Economics 1
Drucilla Barker, Hollins University, "Real Bodies and Rational Agents"; Prue Hyman, Victoria University of Wellington, "The Uses and Limits of Orthodox Economics: Concepts of Value Towards a Feminist Valuation"; Marjolein van der Veen, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, "Beyond Commodification: Rethinking Prostitution"
Consumption 1

Early Modern Economics

Gifts and Symbolic Objects

Feminist Economics 2

Consumption 2

Political Economy
Jack Vroman and Uskali Maki, Erasmus University, Rotterdam, “How Far is Chicago from Frankfurt? From Diskursethik to Sprachethik, or from Arguing to Marketing”; Scott Meikle, Glasgow University, “The Metaphysical Construction of the Economic Realm”; Ian Hampsher-Monk, Exeter University, “Prices as Descriptions; Reasons as Explanations”

Postmodern Economics

Nineteenth-Century Political Economy

Money

Nineteenth Century 2

Economics of Authorship 1
Peter Jaszi, Law, American University, “Economics Versus Authorship”; Martha Woodmansee, Case Western Reserve University, “Economics of Authorship”; Ruth Towse, Exeter University, “The Lottery of Art: Risk and the Artist”

Work
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF AUTHORSHIP PROJECT REPORT

Coordinators: Peter Jaszi, Martha Woodmansee

Work on the SCE's Intellectual Property and Construction of Authorship project is proceeding on several fronts, but especially in the realm of international issues surrounding intellectual property.

This project was launched at an interdisciplinary conference on "Intellectual Property and the Construction of Authorship" in 1991, and has since been carried forward in diverse venues, including a seminar sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation in 1993, which brought together twenty-five lawyers, cultural historians, policy makers, anthropologists, development specialists, and representatives of culture industries from the developed and developing worlds to ponder "Cultural Agency/Cultural Authority: Politics and Poetics of Intellectual Property in the Post-Colonial Era."

The "Bellagio Declaration" that emerged out of this seminar illustrates one of the objectives of our collaborative project: to operationalize the "critique of authorship." By renewing the conversation between the law and literary theory that seems to have broken off in the nineteenth century, we aim to foster the development of more equitable models of intellectual property protection (a copy of the Bellagio declaration is available on the SCE website: http://www.cwru.edu/affil/sce/Bellagio.html).

The moment for such change may be at hand. In December 1996, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) convened a Diplomatic Conference to consider proposals to update the Berne Convention through the creation of several supplemental international agreements. On the agenda for this meeting were a set of proposals relating to the protection of literary and artistic works in cyberspace. While most of these issues had been under discussion at preparatory meetings for the best part of a decade, at what amounts (in the chronological scheme of international diplomacy) to the last minute, the United States and the European Union pressed for a significant addition to the work program of the conference. Beginning in the Spring of 1996 their representatives had begun to urge that the delegates should consider and conclude a new treaty guaranteeing international legal protection for compilations of information—so-called "databases"—in electronic and print media.

When the delegates to the WIPO Diplomatic Conference took up the draft treaty that had been crafted for their consideration on the basis of the U.S. and EU proposals, the discussion took an unexpected turn. In addition to policy concerns raised by representatives of information consumers alarmed about the progressive enclosure of the "public domain," another class of objections was raised by delegates of developing countries: why, they wondered, was the relatively new issue of data rights before the Diplomatic Convention, while that of protection for "folkloric" works, which had been discussed intermittently at the international level for at least two decades, was not? In effect, the developing countries insisted on "linkage": if the international intellectual property system was to expand to take in non-original data compilations, it should be possible
for it to embrace traditional cultural materials as well. At the very least, work on new international agreements covering the former should be coordinated with efforts to provide meaningful protection for the latter.

The Diplomatic Conference ended without any action being taken on data rights; however, the issue remains on the medium-term agenda of WIPO, and new impetus has been given to the question of how best to incorporate the cultural heritage of indigenous peoples into the scheme of international intellectual property.

It is this problem that is now at the forefront of research on intellectual property, and the SCE is continuing its research in this area with an upcoming conference on the intersection of indigenous and “western” aims. This small, working conference will be held in Washington, D.C. in the Fall of 1999.

WOMAN, NATION, NARRATIVE
PROJECT REPORT
Coordinators: Wendy Kozol, Mary Layoun, Anuradha Dingwaney Needham

The Woman, Nation, Narrative project organized a mini-conference entitled “Revisiting Anderson” at the 1998 Midwest Modern Language Association convention in order to address the following questions:

Although nationalism continues to inform, indeed determine, material conditions in the world, why does it appear to have stalled as a subject of scholarship? Is this because the terms and framework for discussion—including Benedict Anderson's influential concept of “imagined communities”—envisage narrative as the most appropriate modality? Has this focus on narrative become disabling for discussions that need to be anchored in materialist explanations?

The program for these sessions was as follows:

Session I: Materializing Nationalism: Race, Sex, and the Trauma of Citizenship
Chair: Mary Layoun, Comparative Literature, U of Wisconsin, Madison
Discussant: Anuradha Dingwaney Needham, English, Oberlin College

“Nationalist Narratives and (Dis) Appearing Women: State-Sanctioned Sexual Violence,” Anna Agathangelou, Women’s Studies and Politics, Oberlin College

“Nationalism Without Patriotism: Frida Kahlo Remaps the Nation,”
Steven S. Volk, History, Oberlin College

“Our Nation’s Attic: Creating American Identity at the Smithsonian Institution,” Tasslyn Frame, History, Case Western Reserve U

Session II: Is the Model Open or Closed? Rethinking Anderson
Chair: Mary Layoun, Comparative Literature, U of Wisconsin, Madison
Discussant: Wendy Kozol, Women’s Studies and History, Oberlin College

“Respecting the Existence of Marks: Mary Prince, Libel, and National Identity,” Kathryn Temple, English, Georgetown U

“Representative Subjects: Modes of Representation in Anderson’s Imagined Communities,” Larry Needham, English, Lakeland Community College

“Unimaginable Communities: Limits and Openings in Discourses of Nationalism,” Helen Hok-Sze Leung, Comparative Literature, U of Wisconsin, Madison

CULTURES OF WRITING PROJECT REPORT
Coordinators: Larry Needham, Andrea Lunsford, Martha Woodmansee

This project is designed to address the perceived incoherence of English Studies, rooted in the ever-widening gap between literary/cultural studies and composition. At its inaugural conference held at CWRU in 1997 participants were invited to explore the implications of re-defining English Studies in terms of the study and teaching of writing in all of its aspects, including its material bases—its diverse technologies, sites, and economies, its pedagogies, forms, conventions, practices, and uses, both contemporary and historical. Subsequent panels at the 1997 MLA and MLA conventions have carried forward the historical dimensions of the project.

By strengthening connections between our programs, the project aims to address a series of questions about the future of English Studies:

Could such a redefinition of English Studies enhance composition programs intellectually, while grounding literary and cultural studies more practically?
Could it improve the training of graduate students in all areas of English Studies, producing more flexible PhDs capable of obtaining a variety of academic and non-academic jobs?
Could it also slow the secession of composition from English departments, a trend that serves none of us well but only exacerbates the social marginality of literary and cultural studies while reducing the status of composition to mere technical training.
Could it better serve the vast and ever-growing need for expertise in writing, especially as technological changes and market demands are changing the function of a University education?

Another dedicated conference which further considers these issues is in the works.

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL MLA CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES

SCE panels at the national and regional MLA conventions were varied and extensive in the past year. Several of the panels coincided with continuing projects; others were independent activities, spanning the range from interdisciplinary work to high-theory to emerging areas.

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Modern Language Association  
Contact: Martha Woodmansee, English, Case Western Reserve University (maw4@po.cwru.edu)

Recent Activity:  
As an affiliated organization of the MLA, the SCE operates two, often interrelated, standing panels at MLA conventions. This year saw panels emerge from the New Economic Criticism Project, devoted to "The Question of the Gift":

The Question of the Gift I  
Chair and Respondent: Paul Alec Marsh, Muhlenberg College

"African Americans, Slavery, and the Gift," Tyrone Williams, Xavier University  
"The 'Gift' of Death," Carole-Anne Tyler, U of California, Riverside

The Question of the Gift II  
Chair and Respondent: Max W. Thomas, U of Iowa

"True Gifts and Bad Faith: Emersonian Selfhood and Melville's The Confidence Man," Jennie L. Stearns, Rice U
"Gift or Commodity?" Mark Osteen, Loyola College

The papers as a whole suggested a number of ways to theorize gifts which moved beyond recent impasses in theoretical and anthropological thinking. Response to the topic was strong enough, in fact, that Mark Osteen and Max Thomas are moving ahead with a collection of essays on the subject, which should be completed by the end of 1999.

Upcoming MLA Panels  
In 1999, the SCE is sponsoring a double session on "Humanities Futures," designed to examine the condition of the humanities at the turn of the millennium. The call for papers is as follows:

Possible missions, and their prospects, in an era of downsizing, outsourcing, and students turned "customers" who seek practical job training. How will the humanities shape and be shaped by universities driven increasingly by market demands?

If you are interested in participating, please contact Martha Woodmansee, or send vita and abstract by March 15.

§  
Midwest Modern Language Association  
Contact: Max W. Thomas, English, University of Iowa (max-thomas@uiowa.edu)
The SCE sponsors two consecutive standing panels at M/MLA conventions, producing a “mini-conference”--a morning-long session devoted to a single topic. The 1998 sessions were given over to a reconsideration of the work of Benedict Anderson (see the Woman, Nation, Narrative project report on p. 8).

In 1999, the SCE will again sponsor a double session at the M/MLA. Coordinated by Todd Oakley, it will address Cognitive Approaches to Literacy, and is part of an ongoing initiative in linguistics, which included a forum session at the 1998 MLA (“Historicizing Cognition: Literature and the Cognitive Revolution”).

Recent work in rhetoric and composition theory, education, as well as cultural and media studies has approached the question of literacy by focusing on the material conditions of the production, dissemination, and comprehension of texts. Examining the social, political, and economic settings in which individual rhetorical agents write and read is clearly indispensable to understanding acts of writing and reading. Equally important, however, is an understanding of language structure and use as these relate to human psychology.

Recent activity in linguistics and cognitive science has produced a family of approaches to language structure known collectively as cognitive-functional linguistics. While many of its sibling theories vary in scope and method, they unite around a common assumption that language structure is a composite of cognitive and social communicative activities emerging from basic psychological operations of perception, attention, memory, categorization, and metaphorical mapping. Thus, an account of language structure must address such issues as how individuals perceive the world, how they make use of their limited cognitive resources, and, as important, how they lay claim to the limited cognitive resources of other individuals—which entails having a theory of memory, categorization, and metaphorical mapping consistent with present research in the behavioral and brain sciences. This family of approaches to language structure may be a useful complement to current discussion of the material, cultural, and historical conditions that motivate literate practices.

The aim of this seminar is to explore the possibility of combining cognitive-functional approaches to language structure with cultural-material approaches to literacy (broadly defined). Individual contributors may wish to address (but are not restricted to) the following issues:

- the metaphors specific cultures use to conceive acts of writing and reading;
- whether or not specific conceptual stands toward writing can be inferred from existing texts, and whether or not these conceptual stands form identifiable styles of writing;
- the limits of working- and long-term memory and how those limitations affect the development of specific kinds of textual production (literary or otherwise);
- the relationship between words and images in texts;
- how categorization affects reading;
- the relationship between writing and speech;
- meaning and context in the undergraduate essay;
- how readers construe intent from writing.

Deadline for abstracts: 1 April 1999; deadline for full papers: 31 August 1999. Send abstracts via e-mail to "tv02@po.cwru.edu" or to this postal address: Professor Todd Oakley, Department of English, Case Western Reserve U, Cleveland, OH 44106-7117

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Northeast MLA
Contact: Scott DeShong, English, Quinebaug Valley CTC (QV_deshong@yuban.com)

NEMLA underwent a restructuring in 1996 which eliminated all standing sessions. Although the SCE no longer has a running session as an affiliated organization, SCE members are still encouraged to submit either papers or panel proposals. The SCE will be pleased to coordinate members’ submissions; please contact Scott DeShong for details. The 1999 NEMLA will be held April 16-17 in Pittsburgh; the 2000 NEMLA will be held April 7-9 in Buffalo.

§
Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association
Contact: Marilyn Edelstein, English, Santa Clara University (medelstein@scuacc.scu.edu)

Marilyn Edelstein reports:
Until recently, PAMLA has not had standing panels for affiliated organizations. There has been a standing (regular) session on Critical Theory (occasionally referred to as “Literary Theory” in some years’s programs). This year’s PAMLA will be held November 5-7 at Portland State University in Oregon. If you wish to participate in the 1999 session, two-page proposals and 50 word abstracts (the latter of which are printed in the program) are due to each session’s chair by March 15. Other sessions of possible interest to SCE/ECOT members would be “Literature and Ethics” and “Rhetorical Approaches to Literature.” The chair for the Critical Theory session in 1999 will be Ray Fleg, (rflee@mailer.fsu.edu; Department of Modern Languages & Linguistics, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 32306).

In the past PAMLA hasn’t had a policy for organizations becoming affiliated with it. However, there is now a new policy for special sessions and for other organizations to sponsor a special session. Such proposals need to be submitted by December 15 to the program chair. If any SCE or ECOT members are interested in proposing a special session topic for the year 2000--one that could be sponsored by SCE--please let me know, since proposals would be due by December 15, 1999.

Information on these and on joining PAMLA is available at the PAMLA website: http://www.pamla.org. NEMLA has a reciprocal membership agreement with PAMLA.

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South Atlantic MLA
Contact: Mark Osteen, English, Loyola College (osteen@loyola.edu) or John Clifford, English, U of North Carolina at Wilmington (cliffordj@uncwil.edu).

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South Central MLA
The SCE is presently without an SCMLA coordinator. Members interested in organizing programs under SCE sponsorship should contact the Directors.

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Rocky Mountain MLA
Contact Melvin Hall, English, Washington State University (melhall@wsu.edu)

The SCE has two open panels at the 1999 RMMLA (to be held October 14-16 in Santa Fe, New Mexico). Please contact Mel Hall by 1 March if you wish to make use of the SCE’s available slots.

Any members who wish to make use of the SCE’s standing panels are welcome to do so. We would be happy to assist in coordinating at any of the regional MLAs and to help develop them into standing projects.

ELECTRONIC SCE

The SCE’s electronic components include a website, maintained at Case Western Reserve University’s server, and a discussion group, the Electronic College of Theory (ECOT), run through the University of Iowa.

Our website address is http://www.cwru.edu/affil/sce
The address for ECOT is sce-ecot@uiowa.edu.

The SCE’s website is underutilized at present. We have terrific raw materials: a G3 server; software for website maintenance and, especially, for synchronous and asynchronous discussion and chat; and the technical and financial support to make the thing sing. What we don’t have, unfortunately, is someone with both the drive and technical expertise to take the site from its current level, which is primarily informational, and push it to the bleeding edge.

We had originally envisioned that the chat and bulletin board functions would provide a place for heated exchange, and while some of that has occurred, the site remains a largely untapped potential--an add-on to the SCE rather than the intellectual and theoretical experiment we had hoped for.

Thus, we’re looking for an SCE member or prospective member who’s interested in making a full-fledged project out of the electronic site. Ideally, this person would view the site as both an electronic resource and as a new medium of theoretical inquiry and exchange. Because we have the
resources for basic maintenance of the site, this wouldn’t be a curatorial job, but an imaginative and scholarly one. The person who takes charge will have a seat on the SCE board and the full range of SCE resources to draw upon, as well as the freedom to re-design and innovate.

Check out the site as it stands. We’re working on bringing it up to date, and streamlining some of its functions. But let us know how you think it might become a truly inventive and important site.

You can e-mail either of the directors (Max Thomas at max-thomas@uiowa.edu; Martha Woodmansee at maw4@po.cwru.edu), or ECOT (sce-ecot@uiowa.edu), with questions, ideas, or enthusiasm.

ECOT was established as an electronic discussion group and conference for all aspects of literary theory, from matters of professional interest to matters of theoretical debate. In the past year, its role has been largely the former, as it distributes, with varying frequency, calls for papers and conference announcements. It remains a viable means for discourse on other levels as well, and the SCE encourages contributions, speculations, and/or queries.

In its current version, ECOT 3.0, is sent on Fridays during the academic year (or more frequently when necessary) to approximately 450 subscribers. Typical postings include announcements and calls for papers, but all manner of discussion is welcome as well.

To subscribe or contribute to ECOT, send e-mail to sce-ecot@uiowa.edu. New subscribers should include brief information about themselves (name, mailing address, institution, areas of interest) in their message.

Contributors should signal the content of their message in the subject line.

UPCOMING SCE DEADLINES

1 March: 1999 RMMLA (see p. 15). Proposals for papers due to Melvin Hall (Washington State U)
15 March: 1999 MLA panel: “Humanities Futures” (see pp. 11-12). Abstract and CV due to Martha Woodmansee (Case Western Reserve U)
1 April: Cognitive Approaches to Literacy (see p. 13). Abstracts or Papers for M/MLA mini-conference due to Todd Oakley (Case Western Reserve U)
15 December, 2000: PAML A (see p. 14). Proposals for an SCE sponsored panel at the PAMLA convention