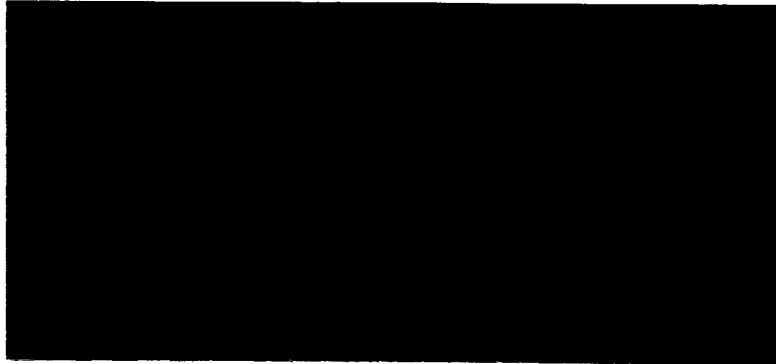




TRANSFORMATIONS
comparative study of social transformations



CSST
WORKING PAPERS
The University of Michigan
Ann Arbor

TAKING STOCK:
THE FIRST YEAR OF CSST

GEOFF ELEY

CSST Working
Paper #21

CRSO Working
Paper #384

February 1989

When I introduced the inaugural session of the Seminar this time last year, I described the most serious obstacle to successful inter-disciplinary exchange as disjunctivitis--or the failure to recognize properly and understand the disjunctions among and within our respective disciplinary modes of understanding. That is: the different intellectual cultures around which the three disciplines are structured and the different intellectual histories that underlie their formation; the plurality of different and frequently opposing traditions and outlooks that compose each discipline; and the multiplicity of variously composed agendas that coexist around this table. Now--these disjunctions are both impediment and incentive for our collective agenda, it seems to me. They both get in the way and provide one of the best bases for fruitful intellectual exchange--not with the purpose of subsuming differences or homogenizing understanding, as if the cumulative effect of our fortnightly discussions turned out to be some kind of final glutinous synthesis of the lot, a bit like one of those Irish stews that stays on the stove for a week with a few ingredients added each day till it turns into the equivalent of hot mud--so not with the purpose of subsuming differences, but with the goal of understanding and specifying their reach. We're interested in different things, and we should allow that at one level such differences will be irreducible.

But it's not clear that the best way of allowing such differences of topic and orientation is disciplinary, as opposed to some more catholic notion of significance based on a variety of cross-disciplinary problematics. I think our activities have been predicated on the belief that in principle there can be as much that unites different groups in one discipline with cognate groups in another as there is that unites the respective disciplines as such or as a whole; and that this becomes clearer as we focus on significant problems [e.g. cultural studies, state-making, the study of everyday life, sexuality, the labour process, and so on] rather than getting hung up on existing professional disciplinary demarcations. Proceeding from the latter too easily preempts the kind of exchange we're trying to promote, even though the structured forms of disciplinary understanding necessarily influence the kind of discussions we're able to have, and even though at the end of the day we may want to maintain some kinds of disciplinary boundary and some formal lines of

disciplinary emphasis. Existing disciplinary boundaries certainly don't describe any homogenous intellectual space, but nor obviously are they completely devoid of real or useful meaning.

Now, in trying to summarize the course of last year's discussions, I'm not sure what or how much I should say and, as I've said, it's of the nature of the enterprise that different people take different things away from the process. So I'll confine myself to a few bland and uncontentious observations:

*** Much of the first term's discussion was fairly amorphous, and it was by no means clear exactly what we were trying to achieve. We spent most of the early time worrying that issue, much as a cat worries a rat. We were very tentative and suspicious, concerned mainly with positioning ourselves and getting a fix on each other. However, without being very sure about what we'd tangibly achieved, by the end of the term we felt that the process had been extremely worthwhile. Basically, I think we were developing a good grasp of the nature of the disciplinary disjunctions--simply at the level of regular and cumulative cross-disciplinary contact the seminar provided opportunities that were quite exceptional.

*** By the start of the second term we were also seeing some positive intellectual convergence--not in terms of across-the-board intellectual agreement, but in terms of recognizing the common issues that either troubled or excited us, sometimes both. I think we can see this in the shifting of the agenda that occurred between the latter part of the fall and the early part of the winter semesters. We'd begun (perhaps unavoidably) in an excessively formalistic way by treating the programme too much like a graduate seminar and organizing the discussions around a series of classical texts and core concepts--"culture," "class," "gender." By the second term we completely abandoned our original plans to continue in that vein, and reorganized the readings to accommodate the emerging agenda. Now--in what did that inchoate agenda (which presented itself through a glass extremely darkly) consist? I would say the following:

- (a) The term which focused most of the interest and dissatisfaction, and to which our discussions invariably returned, was discourse. Much of the revised agenda consisted of trying to clarify the context, meaning, and implications of discourse-theoretical departures and the so-called linguistic turn of much recent social and cultural theory--particularly in respect of Foucault, literary theory, and the post-structuralist family of francophone influences. There was also much knowing reference to postmodernism.
- (b) As well as the more elementary process of clarification, there was also much discussion of the epistemological issues such theories raise for earlier established strategies of social explanation--for "old" as opposed to the "new rules of sociological method," just to use the title of the reading by Giddens we used for one of the second term's sessions. This focused much of the later discussion on the question of causality and causation. More generally, the problem of reductionism and the possible compatibility of post-structuralist analysis with established forms of materialist analysis in Marxism, sociology, and social history became a recurring theme of discussion.
- (c) This sense of intellectual flux encouraged a lot of reflection on the earlier history of the disciplines--on how they were constituted into distinct fields of knowledge, and how the theoretical and methodological certainties were shaped that are now being brought into question. This led Terry McDonald into the portentous and overblown concept of "the historical turn in the human sciences" that's now been foisted on us as the first of our conferences.

*** If these were the positive outcomes, there were certainly large areas of discussion that remained unresolved. Again--I'm sure we each have a somewhat different shopping list of great unresolved questions, but I'd mention the following as major loose ends, each of which dangled mainly from a particular disciplinary camp:

- (a) First, some of the sociologists had the most difficulty with discourse--hardly surprisingly, given that historically speaking the discipline has been centered around the kind of procedures and epistemology that post-structuralists have been seeking to dissolve. Now these issues were aired exhaustively in the seminar last term, and in fact the sessions after the one on Feb. 4 were set up basically to try and deal with them explicitly, and, while they've hardly been finally resolved, I think most of us felt that we'd gone about as far as we could get with them in the seminar-discussion format.
- (b) Secondly, the anthropologists still seemed to me to be asserting an excessively proprietary relationship to the discussion of culture, and responded somewhat allergically to discussions that sought to deal with culture in a different way. In particular, by the end of the year the dialogue with British cultural studies still had a long way to go.
- (c) Last, but certainly not least in terms of the intellectual deficits involved, there was remarkably little specification during the year of what the historical component of this triangular exchange actually is. If the sociologists seemed the most disconcerted by the extra-disciplinary discussion, and the anthropologists the most comfortable within their given disciplinary problematic or problematics, then the historians were the ones that seemed to be without a coherent disciplinary stance to call their own. Their motto seemed to be "go with the flow." But at a time when both anthropology and sociology seem to be turning increasingly to history, it's unclear what history as such would want to tell them, apart from getting your facts straight.

So--where do we stand? I think we felt that we completed an extraordinarily stimulating and fruitful year, that a long-term agenda had begun gradually to come together, but that we'd taken the salient discussions about as far as we could in the large group format. Certain questions were not resolved, but the effort at resolving them in a large group was showing increasingly

diminishing returns. In order to move further on, therefore, we thought that it made sense to try something new.

FACULTY SEMINARS
Fall 1987

September 17, 1987

First Faculty Seminar

Williams, Raymond. "Base and Superstructure",
"Determination", "Productive Forces", "From Reflection
to Mediation", "Typification and Homology", "Hegemony",
"Traditions, Institutions, and Formations", "Dominant,
Residual, and Emergent", "Structure of Feeling", and
"the Sociology of Culture," Marxism and Literature.
Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1977. 76-141.

October 1, 1987

Second Faculty Seminar

Bourdieu, Pierre. "Structures, habitus, power: basis for a
theory of symbolic power," Outline of a Theory of
Practice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1977.
pp. 159-197.

Levi-Strauss, Claude. "Overture," The Raw and the Cooked.
New York: Harper & Row. 1975. pp. 1-32.

October 15, 1987

Marshall Sahlins' visit

Sahlins, Marshall. Historical Metaphors and Mythical
Realities.

October 29, 1987

John Urry's Visit

Disorganized Capitalism?

Lash, Scott and John Urry. The End of Organized Capitalism.
Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987. chapters 1,4,7, and 9.

November 12, 1987

Fifth Faculty Seminar

Contemporary Theories of Class

Przeworski, Adam. "Proletariat into a Class: The Process of
Class Formation," Capitalism and Social Democracy.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1985. pp. 47-98.

Wright, Erik Olin. Chapter 3: "A General Framework for the
Analysis of Class," and Chapter 4: "Implications and
Elaborations of the General Framework," Classes.
London: Verso. 1985. pp. 64-135.

December 3, 1987

Eric Hobsbawm's Visit

The Historical Formation of Class

Hobsbawm, Eric. "The Making of the Working Class, 1870-1914," Workers: Worlds of Labor. New York: Pantheon Books. 1984. pp. 194-213.

December 17, 1987

Seventh Faculty Seminar

General Discussion: Where have we been? Where are we headed?

Sewell, William. McDonald, Terrrence. Paige, Jeffery. Ortner, Sherry. "Program in the Comparative Study of Social Transformations," CSST/CRSO Working Paper Series. May 1987. CSST #1, CRSO #344.

**FACULTY SEMINARS
Winter 1988**

JANUARY 7, 1988

FIRST FACULTY SEMINAR

The Historical Formation of the Working Class Revisited

Giddens, Anthony. New Rules of Sociological Method, Conclusion

Sewell, William H. "How Classes are Made: Critical Reflections on E.P. Thompson's Theory of Working-Class Formation," E.P. Thompson: Critical Debates. Eds. Harvey J. Kaye and Keith McKelland. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, forthcoming 1988.

Thompson, E.P. The Making of the English Working Class. London: Gollancz. 1963. pp. 9-14.

JANUARY 21, 1988

SECOND FACULTY SEMINAR

Ortner, Sherry B. and Whitehead, Harriet. "Introduction: Accounting for Sexual Meanings," Sexual Meanings--The Cultural Construction of Gender and Sexuality. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1981. pp. 1-27.

Scott, Joan W. "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," The American Historical Review, Volume 91, No. 5, December 1986: 1053-1075.

FEBRUARY 4, 1988

THIRD FACULTY SEMINAR

Gender

Gilligan, Carol. "Woman's Place in Man's Life Cycle,"
Feminism and Methodology. Ed. Sandra Harding. pp. 57-
73.

Luker, Kristin. "World View of Activists" and "Motherhood
and Morality in America," Abortion and the Politics of
Motherhood. pp. 159-215.

Weedon, Chris. "Principles of Poststructuralism" and
"Discourse, Power and Resistance," Feminist Practice
and Poststructuralist Theory. pp. 35-42 and 117-127.

FEBRUARY 18, 1988

FOURTH FACULTY SEMINAR

Power and Discourse

Foucault, Michael. "Truth and Power," The Foucault Reader.
Ed. Paul Rabinow. New York: Pantheon Books. pp 51-75.

--- "Objective," The History of Sexuality,
Volume I: An Introduction. Vintage Books. pp. 81-102.

Said, Edward. "Criticism Between Culture and System," The
World, The Text, and The Critic. Faber and Faber:
London. 1984. pp 178-225.

Taussig, Michael. "Culture of Terror--Space of Death. Roger
Casement's Putomayo Report and the Explanation of
Torture," Comparative Studies in Society and History.
Vol. 26, No. 3, July 1984: 467-497.

MARCH 7, 1988

MICHAEL BURAWOY'S VISIT

Burawoy, Michael. "Two Methods in Search of Science: Skocpol
Versus Trotsky."

MARCH 24, 1988

SIXTH FACULTY SEMINAR

Gramsci/Culture

Hall, Stuart. "Notes on Deconstructing 'the popular'," Culture Studies. pp. 226-240.

Sider, Gerald M. "The ties that bind: culture and agriculture, property and propriety in the Newfoundland village fishery," Social History. Volume 5, No. 1. pp. 1-39.

APRIL 7, 1988

SEVENTH FACULTY SEMINAR

Brenner, Robert. "1. Agrarian Class Structure and Economic development in Pre-Industrial Europe," Past and Present. 70 February 1976: 30-75. Reprinted in The Brenner Debate. Ed. T.H. Aston and C.H.E. Philpin, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1987. pp 10-63.

Halfpenny, Peter. "Laws, Causality and Statistics: Postivism, Interpretivism and Realism," Sociological Theory. 5, Spring 1987:33-36.

Stinchcombe, Arthur. "Preface," Theoretical Methods in Social History. New York: Academic Press. 1978. pp ix, 1-25.

APRIL 28, 1988

EIGHTH FACULTY SEMINAR

Where we are, where we have been, and where we might go

No readings.

PUBLIC LECTURES
(sponsored or co-sponsored by CSST)
Fall 1987

MARSHALL SAHLINS	THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5-4:00 PM
JOHN URRY	THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29-4:00 PM
ERIC HOBSBAWM	FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4-4:00 PM

PUBLIC LECTURES
(sponsored or co-sponsored by CSST)
Winter 1988

DANIEL VALENTINE	FRIDAY, JANUARY 8-4:00 PM (co-sponsored with Anthro.)
RICHARD EVANS	MONDAY, JANUARY 11-4:00 PM (co-sponsored with History)
EMILY MARTIN	FRIDAY, JANUARY 22-4:00 PM (Co-sponsored with Anthropology, Sociology, and The Center for Human Growth & Development)
PATRICIA MARY THANE	MONDAY, FEBRUARY 15-4:00PM (Co-sponsored with West European Studies)
JEAN-CLAUDE SCHMITT	TUESDAY, MARCH 1-4:00PM
MICHAEL BURAWOY	MONDAY, MARCH 7-12 NOON
BILL MASON (Dept of Sociology & Population Studies)	WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9-7:30 PM (Colloquium of Comparative Method)
REBECCA SCOTT (Department of History)	
PEGGY SOMERS (Dept. of Sociology)	

PROGRAM ON THE
COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATIONS
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

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The Program on the Comparative Study of Social Transformations is an interdisciplinary research program at the University of Michigan. Its faculty associates are drawn primarily from the departments of Anthropology, History, and Sociology, but also include members of several other programs in the humanities and social sciences. Its mission is to stimulate new interdisciplinary thinking and research about all kinds of social transformations in a wide range of present and past societies. CSST Working Papers report current research by faculty and graduate student associates of the program; many will be published elsewhere after revision. Working Papers are available for a fee of \$1.00 for papers under 40 pages and for \$2.00 for longer papers. The program will photocopy out-of-print Working Papers at cost (\$.05 per page). To request copies of Working Papers, write to Comparative Study of Social Transformations, 4010 LSA Building, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1382, or call (313) 936-1595.

- 1 "Program in Comparative Study of Social Transformations," by William H. Sewell, Jr., Terrence J. McDonald, Sherry B. Ortner, and Jeffery M. Paige, May 1987, 15 pages. Also CRSO Working Paper #344.
- 2 "Labor History, Uneven Development, and the Autonomy of Politics: The Dockworkers of Nineteenth-Century Marseille," by William H. Sewell, Jr., July 1987, 45 pages. Also CRSO Working Paper #346.
- 3 "Coffee, Copper, and Class Conflict in Central America and Chile: A Critique of Zeitlin's Civil Wars in Chile and Zeitlin and Ratcliff's Landlords and Capitalists," by Jeffery M. Paige, September 1987, 10 pages. Also CRSO Working Paper #347.
- 4 "In Search of the Bourgeois Revolution: The Particularities of German History," by Geoffrey Eley, September 1987, 61 pages. Also CRSO Working Paper #350.
- 5 "The Burdens of Urban History: The Theory of the State in Recent American Social History," by Terrence McDonald, May 1988, 50 pages. Also CRSO Working Paper #355.
- 6 "History, Sociology, and Theories of Organization," by Mayer N. Zald, May 1988, 42 pages. Also CRSO Working Paper #357.
- 7 "Have Social Historians Lost the Civil War? Some Preliminary Demographic Speculations," by Maris A. Vinovskis, May 1988, 55 pages. Also CRSO Working Paper #358.
- 8 "Revolution and the Agrarian Bourgeoisie in Nicaragua," by Jeffery M. Paige, 42 pages. Also CRSO Working Paper #363.
- 9 "Nationalism and Class as Factors in the Revolution of 1917," by Ronald G. Suny, October 1988, 42 pages. Also CRSO Working Paper #365.

- 10 "The Original Caste: Power, History, and Hierarchy in South Asia," by Nicholas B. Dirks, October 1988, 30 pages. Also CRSO Working Paper #367.
- 11 "The Invention of Caste: Civil Society in Colonial India," by Nicholas B. Dirks, October 1988, 24 pages. Also CRSO Working Paper #368.
- 12 "Sociology as a Discipline: Quasi-Science and Quasi-Humanities," by Mayer Zald, October 1988, 43 pages. Also CRSO Working Paper #369.
- 13 "Constraints on Professional Power in Soviet-Type Society: Insights from the Solidarity Period in Poland," by Michael D. Kennedy and Konrad Sadkowski, November 1988, 37 pages. Also CRSO Working Paper #371.
- 14 "Evolutionary Changes in Chinese Culture," by Martin K. Whyte, November 1988, 20 pages. Also CRSO Working Paper #372.
- 15 "World Market, Class Conflict, and Rural Coercion in Post-Colonial Buenos Aires," by Karl Monsma, November 1988, 22 pages. Also CRSO Working Paper #373.
- 16 "Ritual and Resistance: Subversion as a Social Fact," by Nicholas B. Dirks, December 1988, 39 pages. Also CRSO Working Paper #375.
- 17 "Social Transformations of Gender in Andean South America: A Working Annotated Bibliography," by Janise Hurtig, December 1988, 24 pages. Also CRSO Working Paper #376.
- 18 "Labour History--Social History--Alltagsgeschichte: Experience, Culture, and the Politics of the Everyday. A New Direction for German Social History?" by Geoff Eley, January 1989, 85 pages. Also CRSO Working Paper #378.
- 19 "Notes on the Sociology of Medical Discourse: The Language of Case Presentation," by Renee R. Anspach, January 1989, 32 pages. Also CRSO Working Paper #379.
- 20 "World War Two and the Deradicalization of American Labor: A 'Deviant Case' Study," by Howard Kimeldorf, February 1989, 45 pages. Also CRSO Working Paper #383.
- 21 "Taking Stock: The First Year of CSST," by Geoff Eley, February 1989, 7 pages. Also CRSO Working Paper #384.
- 22 "Immigration Research: A Conceptual Map," by Silvia Pedraza-Bailey, February 1989, 15 pages. Also CRSO Working Paper #385.

