SESSION II: Theories and research and intervention methodologies: Studying for transforming?

June 19th , 14:30 -16:30

The methodologies used by the SHS are very diversified, often providing an insight into internal tensions. Debate in this area has often focused on the dichotomy between quantitative and qualitative methodologies, primacy being granted to a paradigm of technicist rationality which marginalizes considerations as to its own nature and political consequences. Thus it becomes necessary to question the extent to which the methodologies used by the SHS have challenged (and can do so in the future) this paradigm of technicist rationality; how can the questions we pose, the objects we choose, the methods we use and the forms of "devolving" results – how can they render our research more emancipatory? To this end, it will be necessary to analyse the new configurations of a paradigm of political rationality (engaged, collaborative, solidaristic, participatory), as well as their boundaries. Such an analysis should also question that which changes in our view of knowledge, if we take into account the critic's subjectivity, desire and location.

On the other hand, SHS methodologies also display strong links to other areas and perspectives, where traditional boundaries have been breached, as is the case of literature and sociology, or theory and politics. The emergence of areas such as cultural studies and media studies are good examples of this cross-fertilization between fields and disciplines. The expansion of the concepts of culture, on the one hand, and of text, on the other, have opened up new theoretical and methodological horizons; besides the visibility accorded to subordinate groups and the recognition of new cultural objects, cultural studies have been able to legitimize the political character of criticism. In turn, within the study of digital cultures, the hypertext has given new encouragement to critical and literary theory, as a laboratory recreating the traditional concepts of epistemology, agency and ethics. Analysing the transformations introduced by virtual means to the economy of writing, reading, research and communication has revealed a broad field of issues. The interaction which characterizes digital practices demands the renewal of our understanding of what is an author, a reader, a text and also what is meaning.

Lastly, the exhausting of the national scale of analysis has changed the framework of relations obtaining between knowledge production and social intervention, making us

re-think the role of the public intellectual. The multiple dynamics of trans-nationalization, which include the trans-nationalization of the professionals themselves, opens up the possibility for the SHS to sever links with the State and choose other partners for intervention, creating new contexts of political struggle. This possibility is all the more promising at a stage when the University is undergoing thorough transformations which challenge the continuity of its role in affirming public intellectuals and in the social prominence and credibilization of knowledge within the SHS. In fact, we ask ourselves to what extent these changes may enable the renewal of theories and methodologies and lead the SHS to overcome the traditional stalemate between critical analysis and political transformation.

Mary Layoun | "Maps of the Now and Here: Envisioning the After-Now and After-Here"

The metaphor of a map for our ways of knowing and seeing and acting in the world is a particularly rich one in reflecting on scholarship and social transformation. The inherent spatialization of a map – no matter its contours – allows for a situated understanding of diverse terrains for which every position is differently located and therefore differently abled and dis-abled. It underscores the pervasiveness of perspectives and understandings beyond a single location. It structurally points at – if only implicitly – a collective position beyond individual location.

Fredric Jameson astutely observed, over a quarter of a century ago, in reflecting on a neo-Freudian nostalgia for some ultimate moment of cure, in which the dynamics of the unconscious proper rise to the light of day and of consciousness and are somehow "integrated" in an active lucidity about ourselves and the determinations of our desires and behavior, that "the cure in that sense is a myth." So too, he continues, there is an "equivalent mirage within a Marxian ideological analysis."

Namely, the vision of a moment in which the individual subject would be somehow fully conscious of his or her determination by class and would be able to square the circle of ideological conditioning by sheer lucidity and the taking of thought. [1]

If Jameson's Political Unconscious focuses rather inordinately on the individual critic or analyst or scientist and her tasks of analyzing and theorizing to the near exclusion of her engagement in a material world with others, the insight of Jameson's cautionary note is nonetheless a valuable point of departure in a consideration of the ways in which study and analysis implicates change or transformation – of that which we study, of those with whom we learn and study, of ourselves. "We are changed by what we pursue," notes the young American activist, Rachel Corrie, in an email some days before she was crushed and killed by a U.S. Caterpillar-made Israeli bulldozer.

In "Maps of the Now and Here: Envisioning the After-Now and After-Here," I will draw from the rich lessons learned while studying social justice efforts to transform the political, social and cultural life of Cyprus and of Palestine / Israel to offer some small reflections, not only on "the critic's subjectivity, desire and location" but also

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[1] Fredric Jameson, "The Dialectic of Utopia and Ideology" in his *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Cornell, 1981), 283.

[2] As in *B≅∴0Φ4H* as creative making.

[3] As in B△ç>4H as action, B≅84946 H̄ as of the community member or citizen.

on ways of knowing and acting to transform that are collaborative, diversely participatory, and poeticas[2] well as practical and political[3].

José Manuel Mendes | "Beyond Narratives and Technologies: Unutterable Networks and the Role of Resistance'"

As a response to Andrew Abbot's questioning article 'Against Narrative. A Preface to Lyrical Sociology', this paper enquires into whether socio-technical analysis, player-network theory or the sociology of translation can convey the particularities of social situations and the dilemmas facing social players and social scientists. It further enquires into the possible need to incorporate emotions and the imponderable nature of the social.

If discourse is essential for the performance of the social, it is of crucial importance that we ask ourselves about the limits of narrative and that we activate a sociology of absences. What makes analysis of socio-technical networks invisible? How do researchers tell their readers about their hesitations with regard to subjects and objects of study? What temporalities are presented and how are same sequenced into their narratives?

Drawing on the analysis of situations of catastrophe or of extreme events, I propose to add the notion of disposable groups to involved groups and to orphan groups, as defined by Michel Callon. The designation, put forward by Henri Giroux bearing on the impact on New Orleans of hurricane Katrina, leads us to the political work which places beyond social networks, as being irrecoverable, all those who are not constructed as holders of rights. Can these groups be enunciated in terms of social or socio-technical networks?

This paper aims to enquire into whether the social sciences can contribute – in a humble, critical way and within a logic of resistance and starting from indices, breaches in socio-technical networks, hesitations, the unsaid in narratives – to pondering disposable groups and discerning a fluid reality, made up of partial connections, ever unstable crystallizations of power devices, a reality which can be worked politically.

In contrast to Foucault's perspective, power is not seen as the structural matrix which conditions and produces technologies for control over bodies, groups and communities, but rather as a response, a production, a reaction to actions, bodies, emotions, groups and collectives which call into question hegemonic forms of knowledge and practices. Hence the importance of an analysis and of methodologies capable of heeding the breaches, the fissures, small and great acts of resistance, the ductility of bonds, of commitments and of life-styles.

About the Participants

Chair:

Virgínia Ferreira is Assistant Professor at the School of Economics, Coimbra University, and Permanent Researcher at the Center for Social Studies. Since 2004, she has been a member of the European Commission Expert Group on Gender and Employment network. She specialises in the sociology of the social relations of sex, labour and employment and public policies aimed at equality between women and men. She is the author of numerous Portuguese and international publications, such as *Sexo ou Género? A definição das mulheres e dos homens como colectivos sociais*, Celta Editora (in press).

Speakers:

Mary Layoun is a Professor at the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and a specialist in Comparative Literature. Her areas of interest include East-West relations, the literatures of the "Third World", politics and culture, visual culture, narratives, rhetoric and nationalisms. Among many other titles, she is the author of *Wedded to the Land? Gender, Boundaries, & Nationalism in Crisis,* Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2001.

José Manuel Mendes is Chair of the Scientific Council at the Centre for Social Studies and Assistant Professor at the School of Economics, Coimbra University. His areas of interest are risk and social vulnerability, territorial planning, social identities and social inequality. Among other titles, he is the author of *Do ressentimento ao reconhecimento: Vozes, identidades e processos políticos nos Açores,* Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 2003.

Comments:

Cláudio Torres an archeologist and Islamist, director of the Mertola Archeological Site, is noted for the remarkable research which has brought to light the importance of this village during the Islamic occupation. He was the recipient of "Prémio Pessoa" (1991) and of "Prémio Rómulo de Carvalho" (2001). He represents Portugal on UNESCO's Committee for World Heritage. He is the author of, among other titles, *Portugal Islâmico – os últimos sinais do Mediterrâneo,* Lisboa, 1998 (with Santiago Macias).

Marisa Matias is a researcher at the Centre for Social Studies and PhD student at the School of Economics, University of Coimbra. Her areas of interest are the relationships between environment and public health, science and knowledges and democracy and citizenship. Among other titles, she has written "Rumo a uma saúde sustentável: Saúde, ambiente e política", *Saúde e direitos humanos, 3,* 2006 (with João Arriscado Nunes), and "Don't treat us like dirt: The fight against the co-incineration of dangerous industrial waste in the outskirts of Coimbra", *South European Society & Politics, 9,* 2004.