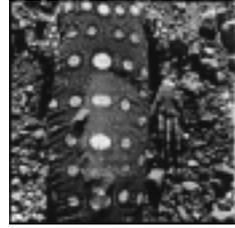


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Returning cultural studies to education

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If we are serious, we have to apply it to our own project, including the project of Cultural Studies. We have to look at what kind of formation it was from which the project of Cultural Studies developed, and then at the changes of formation that produced different definitions of that project. (Raymond Williams, 1983)

The splinter in your eye is the best magnifying-glass. (T.W. Adorno, 1974)

A rhetoric–reality gap

This Special Issue is dedicated to bringing into the open what Stuart Hall (1976: 8) described as ‘the *hidden* aspects’ of the ‘daily work’ of cultural studies by returning the attention of cultural studies to education. This is not simply to return education to the agenda of cultural studies but also to re-turn the focus of cultural studies to its own educational formations and contexts (cf. Wright, 1998). Taking the rhetoric of proclamation within cultural studies at face value, this might at first appear unnecessary; the perceived need for this shift of focus is nothing new. However, we argue here that there remains a gap between rhetoric and reality within cultural studies, one with real and potentially deleterious consequences for its aims. Though cultural studies remains rhetorically committed to reflexive analysis of itself as education, the reality is somewhat different. In terms of

education, we argue, cultural studies tends to emphasize intention over effect – a culture of commitment rather than one of consequence (Maton, 2002a). In so doing, the reality of cultural studies as education may be not only distanced from but even deleterious to the aims expressed in its rhetoric. For cultural studies to be truly serious about its aims, we therefore require a fuller awareness of the consequences of educational contexts and practices for what we are able to achieve. In this themed issue on Cultural Studies as Education, we are presenting contributions from an international cast of pedagogues and researchers who join us in addressing these issues. We begin here by contextually setting out some of the obstacles to realizing rhetoric and so achieving a more reflexive cultural studies.

Rhetorical flourishes

The call for the proper study of cultural studies has become a mantra within cultural studies. It is regularly emphasized that cultural studies is more than the teleological intellectual development recounted by idealist histories of the field. Actually existing cultural studies, we are recurrently reminded, comprises educational knowledge and practice located within institutional sites of production, recontextualization and reproduction. In an oft-quoted passage, Stuart Hall (1992: 290), for example, states:

When we talk about the institutional position of cultural studies, we often fail to talk about questions of teaching and pedagogy. . . . But the ongoing work of an intellectual practice for most of us, insofar as we get our material sustenance, or modes of reproduction, from doing our academic work, is indeed to teach.

Space precludes illustration here, but one may find *many* similar calls to arms throughout the subject's history – the reminder reappears regularly (see, for example, Miller, 1994). Such calls for returning the attention of cultural studies to its daily practices are not, however, simply one more plea for the restoration of a favoured *poète maudit* to the research agenda. Rather, they represent, we argue, recurring realizations of the significance of the issues raised by these practices for the project(s) of cultural studies.

Cultural studies is certainly *committed* to the reflexive analysis of relations between its own formations and formulations, and for good reason. There remains, however, a rhetoric–reality gap. Despite manifesto commitments to analyses of educational practices and contexts, rhetoric outweighs research.

Reality bites

The position of education within the research interests of cultural studies is neatly illustrated by two huge conferences. The first is the occasion for the

above-quoted reminder by Stuart Hall: the well-known 1990 conference in Illinois, USA. During a discussion following his presentation it was highlighted by three participants from the floor and by Hall himself that formal discussion of pedagogy had hitherto been absent from the conference (Hall, 1992: 290–4). (This exchange is typically not included in reprinted versions of the lecture – for example, Morley and Chen, 1998; During, 1999.) The second conference is the occasion for the articles included in this Special Issue: the *Third Crossroads in Cultural Studies Conference*, held in Birmingham, June 2000. Including the two panels from which the articles in this issue were drawn, the ‘Pedagogy’ strand attracted the second-least number of themed panel sessions (see Table 1). Although obviously a rough-and-ready measure, this does help illustrate the degree to which rhetoric outstrips research, while the subsequent interest generated by the panels has helped illustrate the felt sense of their necessity within the wider subject area.

This is not to say that cultural studies as education has been entirely absent from the intellectual discourse of cultural studies. Taking British cultural studies as an example, it is well documented that its emergence was first forged in the heat of adult education (Steele, 1997). An interest in education can be traced throughout the history of the subject area. Regular articles on curriculum, teaching and assessment punctuate, for example, the pages of the journal *Screen Education* throughout the 1960s and 1970s, although discussion typically focuses on the cognate subject areas of film, television and media studies and (especially during the earlier period) on

Table 1 Panel sessions at the Third Crossroads in Cultural Studies Conference, 2000¹

<i>Themes</i>	<i>Numbers of sessions</i>	<i>Hours of discussion</i>
Media, media cultures and film	27	52
Difference and identity	26	48.5
‘Cultural studies’ (mostly aspects of intellectual development)	26	47.5
Globalization and diaspora	18	29.75
New technologies	16	29
The city, space and place	13	22
Cultures of everyday life	11	16.75
Social and cultural theory	10	15
Consumer culture	8	14
Cultural policy	6	12.25
Cultures of work and organizations	6	10.5
Postcolonialism	5	8.75
Power and knowledge	4	7
Pedagogy	4	7
Culture and economy	3	3.5

such practicalities as the availability of films for study. As British cultural studies itself emerged, pedagogical innovation was central to the practice and later research agenda of the CCCS, although innovation was often more for pragmatic than purely pedagogic reasons (Hall, 1990; Johnson, 1997; Wright, 2001) and studies focused on school rather than higher education (CCCS, 1981, 1991). More recently, the growth of undergraduate degree courses has seen increased reflection on the experiences of cultural studies within individual institutions, although foci often reflect the mesmerizing influence of its intellectual history; studies of the Open University *Popular Culture* course, for example, rather than say Portsmouth Polytechnic (which in 1975 offered the first ever full, named undergraduate degree course in cultural studies in British higher education). Additionally, one can identify a continuing, albeit minority interest in cultural studies of education (although this area of study has not yet become an underlabourer to its parent subject), and a growth of interest in and debate with critical pedagogy (although this tends more towards the normative and programmatic than concrete discussion of cultural studies at the chalkface).

The recurring caveats entered within this necessarily brief and selective sample tell their own story. While the need for the analysis of cultural studies as education has become evermore accepted as a banal verity within the subject area, the gap between this rhetoric and the reality of research remains, and so in turn the need to re-turn our attention to education may be heard once more. A remark by André Gide (1891) seems peculiarly pertinent here: 'Everything has been said before, but since nobody listens we have to keep going back and beginning all over again'.

The splinters in our eye

A full exploration of the manifold reasons for this recurring rhetoric–reality gap is beyond our scope here, but two key areas within our grasp to change are worth highlighting. First, cultural studies itself can be reluctant to be under the very microscope of analysis it uses on others. As an object of study, higher education can be a neurotic, guarded and secretive place populated by one of the least studied cultural élites. Anyone attempting to research their fellow academics can on occasion feel as welcome as the police who police the police. Moreover, where knowledge is currency, access to the (re)producers of knowledge for the production of knowledge can be problematic. This can be particularly the case for a marginalized subject area which feels itself to be under constant attack. In cultural studies a siege mentality has at times developed, rendering analyses of cultural studies potential weapons in the struggle for survival and making access to its everyday pedagogic and decision-making practices difficult to attain.

A second intrinsic reason is that cultural studies has tended to focus more on who it hopes to empower or 'give voice to' than pedagogic questions of

what and *how*. As Bennett (1998: 20) argues, often ‘its relations to educational institutions and practices have been portrayed as less important than its relations to social movements of various kinds’. It is often considered that the voices of dominated groups are the absent voices of education, but what is absent from cultural studies is its own voice. It is as if cultural studies as education is simply a neutral relay through which others can speak (cf. Bernstein, 1990: 165–6). The focus has been on the message at the expense of the medium (Maton, 2000, 2002a); the question has been *who* is speaking and not *what* and *how*. The tacit assumption of this neglect seems to be that pedagogy is unproblematic, a position also implicated by the often abstract nature of discussion of critical pedagogies.

Durkheim distinguished among ‘education’ (the socialization of the young), ‘pedagogy’ (reflection on education which addresses not what is or has been but what should be) and ‘science of education’. Where ‘pedagogy’ comprises socially and historically decontextualized ideals, Durkheim’s ‘science of education’ would locate educational practices and pedagogies within their specific socio-historical conditions and explain how they are related to those conditions. Using this distinction (and putting aside Durkheim’s use of the loaded term ‘science’), one can say that cultural studies has engaged in the production of ‘pedagogies’ but neglected any form of ‘science of education’. This is reflected in turn in a lack of engagement with specialist studies of education in sociology and elsewhere. It is, for example, rare to find the work of Basil Bernstein or the educational research of Pierre Bourdieu extensively drawn upon in cultural studies. One could argue, quite reasonably, that cultural studies cannot do everything, but as a self-proclaimed interdisciplinary enterprise that (in at least the UK and US) often emerged alongside or within education departments, this represents unnecessary self-improvement.

In summary, while cultural studies has been valorized for its insights into everyday life and the ordinary culture of various social groups, it tends to shy away from any coherent, explicit analysis of its own daily practices. This represents, we believe, a failure of collective reflexivity (Maton, 2002b). One could say that an eye does not see itself. However, the recurrent rhetoric calling for the study of cultural studies as education suggests a continuing irritant – cultural studies repeatedly scratches at something it cannot quite reach and yet cannot ignore. These splinters in its eye are what we now turn to consider.

Three koans of cultural studies as education

The neglect of education by cultural studies leaves the subject area recurrently debating a series of questions that are unresolvable in the manner being discussed. We wish to highlight three such issues here:

institutionalization, disciplinarity and pedagogy. These three, we suggest, currently represent koans for cultural studies. The term 'koan' comes from Zen. A koan cannot be solved by intellectual discussion; it is not a riddle to which there is a clever answer attainable by reasoning but rather an unsolvable dilemma, a problem that is felt, experienced, lived and worked with. To achieve an answer to a koan one must leave speculation behind and engage directly with the matter at hand. Our argument here is that it is not a lack of moral courage, commitment or effort that leaves these issues unresolved, but rather that until a *systematic* and *sustained* analysis of the relations between cultural studies and its educational contexts and practices is engaged and maintained, these questions will necessarily remain koans. Moreover, we shall suggest here (on occasion playing the role of devil's advocate) that without such an explicit analytical engagement cultural studies may be engaged in practices with effects antithetical to its espoused aims; the means used in reality may confound, confuse or contradict the ends proclaimed in rhetoric. These three koans also serve as the framework within which to introduce the articles in this themed issue.

The koan of institutionalization

The traditionally dominant rhetoric in cultural studies holds 'institutionalization' to comprise moments of profound danger. Here, the term implies rebellion tamed, a condemnation of middle-aged capitulation to respectability; to become 'institutionalized' is to play the academic game and so commit oneself to its rules and dominant values and thus the status quo. This argument highlights the restrictions and confining limits that come with institutional positions and that threaten to stifle the radical ideas, critical thought and innovative creativity characterizing cultural studies. In contrast, the margins are said to afford opportunities to do radical work, free of the constraints incumbent on those at the centre. Recently, however, this position has become increasingly challenged as neglecting to register that institutionalization is already a fact of life for cultural studies, one that cannot be ignored or simply disdained (for example, Striphas, 1998). Yet, despite the long institutional history of cultural studies, anti-institutionalization maintains a lasting allure. Cultural studies is a peculiarly decentred subject area; no one readily admits to being at its centre.

This may not be as harmless as it might appear; the rhetoric–reality gap may be self-marginalizing in a manner which works against the aims of cultural studies. It can be argued that viewing institutionalization as merely negative fails to appreciate the possibilities it affords. The institutional authority that accrues from carving out a place in the sun represents, in other words, not merely external constraint but also agency; one has, as it were, access to the levers of power. This theme of institutionalization as

offering a new politics of hope runs throughout Annedith Schneider's article on the emergence of a cultural studies degree programme in Sabanci University in Turkey. Schneider argues that, in a context where politics has been explicitly removed from the academy, the creation of the private Sabanci University in 1999 represents a space for innovation. She argues that far from institutionalization dulling cultural studies, cultural studies could help repoliticize the Turkish academy and discusses how the course team have attempted to rearticulate the political project of cultural studies while trying to harness its engagement with the 'real world' as a means of appealing to vocationally minded students.

The tentative and fraught nature of moving from the margins to the centre also features in Jane Starfield's account of a cultural studies programme at Vista University in Soweto, South Africa. In this case, the shift is in wider society: the largest population group is marginalized but ostensibly being brought into the centres of economic and political power. Starfield outlines how changes in post-Apartheid South Africa, illustrated by the restructuring of higher education, have produced a need for the kind of 'critical space' for reflection a cultural studies course can provide. Located in the largest township in South Africa, Vista University cultural studies is intended to reach out and engage with local communities to help make sense of this very process of incorporation.

Institutionalization can, therefore, be represented as moments of both profound danger and profound opportunity. In his article in this issue Ted Striphias does just that in an analysis of the position of cultural studies in the publishing industry. Academic publishing has become inextricably linked with education – the textbook has become the publishing paradigm. Striphias shows how, on the one hand, developments in publishing are generating pressures towards a banal, anglocentric and politically apathetic cultural studies. On the other hand, he argues that not only have cultural studies intellectuals come to occupy positions of authority in publishing but that this represents a condition for change.

To be in a state of denial over one's institutional position is thus to deny one's own agency to effect change, the very aim ostensibly underlying the margins' magnetism. This argument, in short, holds that in order to change what is going on within the field, one has to enter the field; to change, to *persuade*, one must be recognized; to be recognized one must recognize the authority that bestows recognition. We have to acknowledge our complicity and engagement within the establishment if we are to change it; to realize our power we have to recognize it.

Put simply, the question institutionalization poses cultural studies is that of evolution versus revolution, one that recurs through a series of dichotomies: centre/margins; radical/conservative; resistance/incorporation; among many others. It is the question of whether cultural studies can work within the existing parameters of (typically higher) education to achieve its

goals, including changing those parameters, without compromising those goals in the very process of incorporation. In short: can cultural studies change education from within or will being within education change cultural studies? Can cultural studies really be, to borrow from Annedith Schneider's title, an institutional revolutionary? Cultural studies appears to be on the horns of this dilemma: if radical it must remain marginal, if effective it must become institutionalized. As Bourdieu (1994: 155) argued: 'Resistance may be alienating and submission may be liberating. Such is the paradox of the dominated'.

The koan of disciplinarity

The rhetoric of cultural studies regarding disciplinarity is a position of confused clarity: cultural studies is 'multi-', 'cross-', 'inter-', 'post-', 'trans-' or 'anti-disciplinary'; anything but a discipline. As 'undisciplined', cultural studies is said to be free from the suffocating grip of procedures specialized to a delimited object of study – the definition of 'culture' and how it should be studied are often either explicitly eschewed or held open. Related to this is an anti-canonical stance, valorizing cultural studies as not only free from the restrictions of a canonic tradition but also actively undermining established canons, including any nascent traditions of its own. Thus the rebirth of cultural studies, its multiple origins, and the decentring of past work are regularly announced and its intellectual development is portrayed as a series of critical 'breaks' and 'interventions'.

The reality of disciplinarity is somewhat different. First, programmes of study in cultural studies tend to take an inter-, rather than anti-disciplinary form (Striphas, 1998; Schneider, this issue). Second, the teaching of cultural studies has engendered a silent revolution in the field's disciplinary status. The mapping of curricula, publication of textbooks, proliferation of canonic 'Readers', setting of examinations – all work towards firming up boundaries around and control over the procedures and objects of study of cultural studies. Cultural studies could thus become an oxymoronic anti-disciplinary discipline. Alternatively, cultural studies practitioners could lead lives increasingly split between their roles as authors and teachers: as both producers of anti-disciplinary knowledge and reproducers of (inter-) disciplinary knowledge. Moreover, as McNeil (1998: 50) argues: 'The vague but reassuring notion that cultural studies is anti-disciplinary forecloses more substantive analyses of daily practices . . . that produce disciplinarity and of strategies that might address these contradictions'.

As McNeil makes clear, the refusal to acknowledge disciplinarity may enable its progression. However, one could also argue that disciplinarity may not be an entirely negative development. Lacking a strongly defined notion of what can and cannot be studied opens up the discourse and actors of cultural studies to being 'poached' (Maton, 2002a). One can, for

example, simply add on a 'cultural studies' module or lecturer to existing courses or use the term 'cultural' as an adjective, rather than develop a specialized course in cultural studies. Thus, any sense of shared project within cultural studies may become dissipated and dissolved. The cost of proclaiming that we should let a hundred flowers bloom may be that the project(s) that many within cultural studies currently hold dear may wither and die.

In his article in this issue on 'Cultural studies as a "hidden" discipline', Paul McEwan argues that anti-disciplinarity may come at a price. Looking at information on courses publicly available to prospective students in North America, McEwan shows how cultural studies is almost invisible. Paradoxically, it is therefore those very students that cultural studies most wishes to attract or engage with that cultural studies cannot reach. For, while cultural studies remains undefined, it can only be seen by those with the cultural capital and social networks that bring insider knowledge of higher education. Thus, anti-disciplinarity may lead to the creation of 'imaginary alliances' (Maton, 2000) with social groups, ones created in rhetoric but not in reality. McEwan argues that if cultural studies is serious about reaching out to marginalized social groups, then disciplinarity must be embraced to enable visibility.

The koan of pedagogy

That institutionalization and disciplinarity pose questions for the educational project of cultural studies is a commonplace within the subject area. Less acknowledged is how pedagogy itself holds its own problems for this project, especially in contemporary educational contexts. Cultural studies is frequently identified with, even defined as, a radical educational project committed to empowering and forging alliances with dominated social groups (for example, Giroux et al., 1984). This project has become associated with developing less didactic and more democratic, open and participatory forms of curriculum, teaching, evaluation and social organization in education. Cultural studies is also heralded as pioneering such practices as collaborative group work, collective authorship, publishing unfinished student research and embedding the personal within the pedagogic. As such, cultural studies is frequently portrayed as offering educators an oppositional pedagogy capable of giving voice to the knowledge and experience of those social groups said to be silenced within and by established educational knowledge (for example, McLaren, 1993).

This project owes much to the model of working relations practised at the Birmingham CCCS and subsequently (often tacitly) mythologized as representing a kind of 'best practice'. Not only have subsequent accounts attempted to strip away some of this veneer (for example, Brunson, 1996) but it is an open secret in cultural studies that any attempt to recreate this

postgraduate model in the context of undergraduate teaching will be fraught with difficulties. Indeed, this disjuncture informs extant public discussion of the pedagogy of cultural studies. The disciplining effects of many of the tools of the teaching trade – the examination, the set curriculum, the textbook – have been frequently argued to be inimical to this educational project. Conversely, the difficulty of walking a tightrope between participation and instruction in the role of the self-effacing teacher has been a major focus of concern in discussion of cultural studies as education (Canaan and Epstein, 1997). Concerns over pedagogical problems have thus typically focused on the marginalizing effects of traditional teaching practices and the difficulties of enacting particular pedagogies; the radical credentials or effects of such pedagogies are often taken for granted. However, as if these lived contradictions were not enough, one can identify other, less discussed issues that problematize pedagogy in cultural studies.

First, students themselves can present an obstacle to aspirations to critical pedagogy. They are often more pragmatic than politicized. In an analysis of his experiences teaching a new and experimental course in 'Popular pleasure', John Parham (this issue) shows how students are frequently a source of vocationalist pressures. Far from being open to critical pedagogy, many students treat cultural studies as a vocational step towards a career in the culture industries. In a frank and honest account giving a rare glimpse into the 'hidden aspects' of cultural studies as education, Parham describes the failures and anxieties faced by the course team, how they attempted to overcome this vocational-critical opposition, what obstacles remained and recommendations for future courses and research.

Second, the forms of curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation associated with (at least) the rhetoric of cultural studies systematically favour students from the new middle class. All emphasize the weakening of boundaries (between subject areas, between teacher and taught, between learners) and a shift in the locus of control in the classroom from the teacher towards the taught. Research in the sociology of education, in particular that drawing on the work of Basil Bernstein (1975, 1990, 1996), has repeatedly shown how different social classes exhibit habituses based on the maintenance of different strengths of boundaries and that students from the new middle class (working in the field of symbolic control rather than the industrial economy) tend towards habituses based on the maintenance of relatively weak boundaries and control. Extensive research shows that in educational contexts sharing these characteristics, students from this social class background are advantaged by their ability to recognize and realize the kinds of performances or competences required (Savage et al., 1992: 153). To put this another way, for the kinds of students that cultural studies has often sought to embrace, educational contexts and practices characterized by relatively weak boundaries render invisible the requirements for success. It can

be difficult for such students to know whether they are even doing 'cultural studies'.

Third, making the personal pedagogic may be anything other than empowering. As Foucault's approach highlights, this form of pedagogy opens up more of the student for study, surveillance and control. By focusing on personal experience, autobiography, subjective perceptions, reflexivity and identity, more of the learner is revealed to the assessing gaze of the teacher – educational knowledge need not be avowedly 'disciplinary' to be disciplining. This is illustrated by the reluctance of students to engage with aspects of 'identity' and the failures in teaching 'reflexivity' reported by Parham (this issue). Conversely, didactic pedagogy of knowledge strongly bounded from the personal experiences of learners affords them a rarely noted private space, protection from the invasive gaze of the teacher and the very kind of marginal site valorized by cultural studies.

Lastly, particular pedagogic practices once viewed as progressive or radical may now be coping mechanisms within the mass production lines of contemporary western universities. Small group seminars where the teacher is a 'facilitator' and but a few years older than the students, collaborative group work, self-assessment – such practices have become accepted means for teaching the maximum number of students with the minimum of resources. As well as possessing radical possibility, they enable university administrators to keep unit costs low and enrolment numbers high. This danger forms one strand of Tony Thwaites' analysis in this issue of the 'online imperative' – market-led pressures from university managers to embrace information technology (IT) in teaching. Thwaites analyses how this imperative is not simply (as technophiliacs might suggest) a democratic step but bound up with notions of efficiency and the demands of a new economy. Importantly, he describes how IT can involve a conception of knowledge as akin to money. Here, as Bernstein puts it, knowledge 'is divorced from inwardness and literally dehumanized' (1996: 87). However, this move, Thwaites argues, fits the abstracting and universalizing practices of the humanities. Highlighting that IT brings with it both dangers and possibilities, he argues for a position of 'vigilant hospitality'.

Each of these issues highlights a pedagogic conundrum that suggests that 'radical' pedagogy may have conservative ends and vice versa. It is, then, perhaps unsurprising that teaching cultural studies can, at present, exact a great cost from the teacher. Richard Johnson (1997), for example, movingly recounts the personal costs – emotional, physical, psychological – exacted by trying to teach cultural studies. Johnson's account highlights clearly how a deep personal commitment and sincerity and exerting every sinew in effort are not enough to avoid 'perplexity, a sense of contradiction, insecurity' (1997: 44).

Conclusion

At present institutionalization, disciplinarity and pedagogy remain irritating splinters in the eye of cultural studies; our aim here has been not to remove them but rather to see them for what they are. Each issue highlights a rhetoric–reality gap which, without empirical analyses of cultural studies as education, produces insoluble koans. It is not, we are arguing, a lack of commitment or effort or will to change that represents the primary obstacle to being (as Raymond Williams put it) serious about what we aim to do, but a lack of knowledge. If knowledge is power, then we need more knowledge of knowledge, of how its selection, organization, recontextualization, transmission and evaluation within the determinate conditions of institutions of education shape what is and is not possible. In effect, we are reversing Karl Marx's eleventh thesis on Feuerbach to argue that: 'Thus far we've tried to *change* higher education in various ways. The point, however, is to *understand* it, in order that we might know not only on behalf of *whom*, but *what* and *how* change may be effected'.

Each of the articles in this issue works to further that task; each helps to narrow the distance between the rhetoric and reality of cultural studies by opening up its 'hidden aspects' as education; and each highlights effects that are not always those intended. As such, this themed issue aims to contribute to returning cultural studies to education better prepared to make its rhetoric reality.

Note

- 1 This table has been compiled by the editors from listings provided at the official conference website (<http://www.crossroads-conference.org/topics/index.html>) as at 20 June 2000. The themes are those developed by the central conference organizers largely in response to the submissions of session organizers. The 2000 Crossroads conference devolved organization of themed panel sessions (of about 4–5 papers, lasting 105 minutes) to Session Organizers. The Editors have organized sessions on cultural studies as education at the Second, Third and Fourth Crossroads conferences.

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