

On the Society and History of CSSH

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Comparative Studies in Society and History

On the Society and History of *CSSH*

RAYMOND GREW

CSSH Editor 1973–1997, Editorial Committee 1997–present

I

My knowledge of the inner workings of *CSSH* began when the journal had completed its sixth year and was already well known and widely circulated. A few years before, Sylvia L. Thrupp had brought it with her when she moved to Michigan from the University of Chicago. When I joined the Michigan faculty, its presence was one of the attractions. I had been become aware of *CSSH* in its first year, pointed to it by Robert R. Palmer, who was working on the second volume of his *Age of the Democratic Revolution*. As we talked about his project, I expressed surprise that more was not being done with historical comparison, and he mentioned, rather skeptically I thought, that there was a new journal I might be interested in. I found the first issues in the library and mentioned them to another Princeton colleague who commented, “When historians don’t know enough to write about one place, they write on two.” So I learned from the first that the venture was controversial. In contrast, Joseph R. Strayer told me he thought the new journal very promising, largely because of the woman who had founded it. (Much later, I learned that he had persuaded Princeton to make a small contribution to the journal’s founding, and some twenty-five years after that conversation, when both were in their eighties, Joseph Strayer married Sylvia Thrupp).

We had been in Ann Arbor only a few months, when Sylvia appointed my wife manuscript editor. The journal’s formal quarters were a second desk in Sylvia’s small office, and Daphne worked there, continuing for some fourteen years as *CSSH* expanded to a small office of its own and eventually a much larger one. She always worked less than half time, editing all manuscripts and handling most of the correspondence with the help of a part-time graduate student. During Daphne’s first year, Sylvia invited me to join the Editorial Committee, largely I suspected on the grounds that I had married well. Although *CSSH* had a physical address, its real headquarters were Sylvia. She established and maintained personal connections with lively scholars in Europe and America, drawing in those she admired wherever she met them and dismissing those she thought pretentious or dull. The Editorial Committee met sporadically in her living room amid piles of papers. We indulged in desultory conversations, drinking and smoking, listening to her reports of promising

people and offering suggestions for possible authors and reviewers of manuscripts or books. We read manuscripts when she asked us to, and on those occasions she generally accepted our advice (especially if it was negative). But we were content to enjoy the conversation and gossip, share our views of exciting new directions and talents, and leave most of the decisions to her.

Invited to reminisce, you tell yourself not to wax sentimental, partly because in others it tends to be boring when not embarrassing. Nevertheless, personal memories come to mind first, and they help to explain why one edits a journal (answering a question editors often ask themselves). I will begin there. A graduate student hired to make the office function and a manuscript editor were the only ones who received any pay (kept modest enough that they could share the sense of sacrifice). Working with those bright, engaged, imaginative students, a different one each year, and with some remarkable manuscript editors was a kind of private reward. Each student brought particular attributes and special knowledge, and I think of them still as important friends. Each editor had distinctive talents that added to the quality of the journal and to the quality of life within its office. Association with the scholars who served on *CSSH's* boards, who contributed articles, wrote book reviews, and read manuscripts, came closer than any other experience to what as a graduate student I had imagined academic life would be like.

CSSH was Sylvia Thrupp's creation. On accepting its editorship, I wondered how my new role might affect our friendship. I enjoyed her company and her wit; and when we argued, as we often did, escalation came more with turn of phrase than rising temper and usually ended more in laughter than resolution. I feared it might be hard, however, for sharp-tongued, opinionated Sylvia to let pass in silence the editorial practices of a journal to which she was intensely devoted. Yet she did just that (over the next decade even her few suggestions were presented with touching tact), and a valuable custom was confirmed. The editor has the final decision, because colleagues support an independence that permits the occasional eccentricities majority votes might squelch. That autonomy applied to the journal itself. It had a small endowment, started with contributions solicited from a half-dozen American universities (a kind of cooperation unimaginable today). And that carefully nurtured endowment has helped sustain institutional independence even as we benefited from the many forms of support provided by the University of Michigan, both officially and as a community. *CSSH* is not associated with any membership association (although I suspect that initially there was some vision of creating its own membership), and that has been a source of intellectual independence. There has been no need to assuage any particular group or point of view. To edit a quarterly that was established yet innovative, independent but well connected was an unusual opportunity. And I found that I liked the buoyancy in the quarterly rhythms of overlapping cycles: the flow of manuscripts, the complications of the decision process, the specific challenges of assembling a single issue,

and the satisfaction of seeing the result in print and sent off into the world. There is also the sense—somewhat illusory and dangerous but sustaining nevertheless—that in exercising judgment you are contributing to scholarship by rejecting the trite and the dull, embracing the venturesome, encouraging the young, and facilitating efforts to nudge issues beyond their usual boundaries. Editors, having seen their value early on and steered them through all the stages of publishing, can become surprisingly attached to articles about matters they have never studied and to authors they have never met.

The sustaining stimulus comes from the essays themselves, from intellectual excitement and the appreciation of craftsmanship. Considering so many articles—articles that are rooted in different disciplines, address diverse topics, and use varied methods—pondering comments on those articles from a variety of experts, and discussing all that with colleagues invites constant reflection on trends and styles in the social sciences. A sense of community grows from these activities not only from their shared purpose but also from their expression of values that underlie academic life. Authors send a manuscript in trust, other scholars read and comment as an expression of their belief in scholarship, and colleagues (volunteers all) solicit book reviews and meet to give advice and make decisions—a refreshing swim in intellectual generosity.

II

A harsh constant remains. For every letter of acceptance or invitation to revise, some eight to ten other letters informed authors of the decision not to publish their articles. My father was a writer, and I grew up knowing the tension with which an author opens mail from publishers. I wanted our rejection letters at the very least to say something useful and positive. In practice not even that simple standard was always met, a failure that made us think about how to describe what we hoped for in an article. The answer remained imprecise. After all, the manuscripts not chosen were nearly all serious, intelligent contributions that merited publication somewhere. In fact many a rejected article remained memorable, leaving an aura behind of regret around some imaginative topic or provocative idea. What guidance could be offered in advance? We strongly favored studies rooted in independent research; yet that hardly assured acceptance, and essays lacking that strength were sometimes chosen for publication. Of course we wanted work that was fresh, had broad significance, addressed important issues, and engaged important questions of theory. Those are not helpful criteria, however, for they describe what most social scientists believe they are about. Few rejected manuscripts fail to claim just such qualities (prompting critical, outside readers to recall similar findings published earlier, other standards of significance, and subtler theories). One shudders to think what a call for intellectual playfulness might bring forth; yet, well controlled, that is a very desirable quality. Of course we welcomed comparison, but



FIGURE 1 Sylvia Thrupp at her home in the early 1970s (photographer unknown).

explaining what we meant by that was a constant challenge. We sought something more than accounts of phenomena that occurred in two places, analysis more thought provoking than parallel columns or four-fold tables. We favored articles that evoked comparisons because they focused on a problematic relevant in other contexts, articles that questioned easy assumptions, and that invited further research. When a manuscript won unanimous enthusiasm, it was always said to be well written; such praise was a response to clarity, of course, and to well-chosen language but also to something more, prose that revealed personality, left room for irony and even wit, and that sprouted tendrils reaching toward other possibilities (and comparisons).

We did not solicit manuscripts, thinking it wiser to wait until an author had done the work. And because we received more good essays than we could publish, we made it a rule not to accept articles in print or scheduled to be printed elsewhere, no matter in what language. To us in the office, that

seemed a sound way to assure more opportunities for everyone, especially for younger scholars, and the practice was spiced with a gesture toward cosmopolitanism (scholars should read articles in other languages). In effect, then, we largely relied on what contributors assumed to be appropriate for *CSSH*, thus acquiescing to topics and methodologies that reflected academic trends more than editorial preference. Editors might claim some credit for recognizing innovation, or at least not avoiding it, but could only indirectly stimulate it. There was a risk in that. Work published in previous years spurred subsequent submissions, sustaining high standards but risking concentration on popular topics and neglecting others. Remarkable from the beginning for its geographical range, *CSSH* may well have published less on the United States in proportion to the scholarly activity in the field than on any other part of the world (despite some notable articles). Perhaps that followed from the range of outlets available to Americanists and their certainty of finding each other in other publications or maybe it suggests that comparison does not have a very prominent place on the palette from which they paint? Truly important articles on the ancient world appeared, but only now and then. There was much on Asia (with possibly more articles on India than any other country), Latin America, and eventually on Africa, along with steady attention to Europe.

From the first *CSSH* had welcomed debate and discussion. When a scholar took serious issue with an article, that criticism was published along with the first author's reply. A rubric called *CSSH Discussion* added flexibility by creating a place for intellectual exchange, and sometimes these discussions resonated widely, generating the continuing dialogue to which the journal was committed. The most fruitful dialogue, however, simply followed from the coincidence of significant issues and engaged authors. In some respect these efforts at dialogue were inhibited by success. Limited space and the necessary selectivity favored substantial essays that stood out by themselves. A certain rigidity and cautiousness could follow. Avoiding that was one reason for not insisting on unanimous agreement among a manuscript's readers. Originality, after all, attracts criticism, and the correctable errors specialists might point out need not be fatal to good ideas. For years, I toyed with the thought of a section to be called "Hunch" in which scholars could set forth bright ideas that they themselves were not going to develop. We did not try it. The appeal of playfulness never quite outweighed the pressure of limited space, and maybe we were fearful of having to distinguish between the brilliant eccentric and the simply nutty.

We did seek other devices to help break down the mental habits of specialization. Grouping articles in rubrics was a device designed to contribute to that. Sylvia Thrupp had begun using topical headings on the title page, partly to draw readers' attention away from the geography, era, or discipline from which an essay arose and as a way to emphasize instead its broader potential significance. For me, those rubrics became a central element in the ritual of

putting together a particular issue. The goal was to place two or three essays together in a way that would make each of them more interesting, as an exemplary exercise in intellectual comparison. That often worked, but my delight in the challenge risked becoming a dangerous private indulgence in touches of irony or naked puns. (I often wondered if authors were astonished to discover the category in which their carefully conceived essay found itself). The Editorial Foreword was similarly intended to point across disciplinary categories—and something more. By citing earlier articles, it presented *CSSH* as a continuing forum, with everything open to revision and debate and with older essays always relevant to current discussion. (Part of a quarterly's calling is to combat the tendency to treat articles as ephemera.) We were inviting readers to see each essay in multiple contexts: a defined scholarly field (for which specialists had vetted it), a general topic (indicated by rubric and listed in the index), a clearly posed analytic problem (inviting further research and comparison), and a polished sample of current methods and theories (constantly being refined and challenged). Proposing multiple frameworks for comparative study was one of the functions of *CSSH*.

Over the years, review essays therefore took on increasing importance. Here was a chance to identify, comment on, and draw attention to important avenues of current scholarship and to demonstrate openness to topics and methods that had not already been prominent in *CSSH*. Alert to current trends, review editors were imaginative in clustering books in ways that encouraged reviewers to address important issues of theory, method, and comparison. Then they identified authors likely to rise to such challenges. I count their comradeship, intellectual and personal, among the rewards for association with *CSSH*. Another device for reaching across disciplines was *CSSH Notes*, although it originated in a constraint of old-fashioned hot-lead printing. Then publishers thought it important that each issue reach an exact number of pages, and in its first years *CSSH* achieved that by publishing a list of books received, which the printer could lop off at just the desired length. We later substituted short reviews, with the idea that the same practical need could be met with short comments in which the reviewer presented a new work in one discipline to readers in the other social sciences, suggesting for example the ways in which a new work in political science would be of interest to sociologists, historians, and anthropologists. Sometimes that really worked. Many reviewers, however, found a short essay nearly as time consuming as a long one (they had, after all, to read the book) and, having made that effort, preferred to give their fuller assessment of it. Still, the *Notes* remain, no longer required to fill a signature at the bindery but as an enrichment.

The indices that began to appear every fifth year also pointed to multiple perspectives on each article published, listing it by area and period and several different topics. Specialists using the index to search for articles on a single topic, place or period would be reminded of discussions of their topic in

other contexts, of related issues in the place that interested them, and often of provocative global simultaneity within a given era. Very occasionally a reader mentioned finding one or another of these devices useful, but there was no way of knowing how effective such blatantly pedagogical techniques really were. Within the office at least, they stimulated thinking comparatively. Now, technology has relieved the staff of the hard work of preparing indices. We all rely on convenient (and decontextualizing) word searches, and the carefully assembled journal is itself dismantled as we ransack databases. In a sense the culmination of these efforts to stimulate comparative thinking has come with the *CSSH* book series. Each of the ten volumes that have appeared was built around a core of previously published articles, brought together now around a single topic (and reinforcing the claim that good articles have lasting value). Each topic, of obvious importance in itself, raises important questions about the use of comparison (exemplifying the value of reaching across conventional boundaries of discipline and place). The editor of each volume then invited a number of additional contributors; and subsequently all the authors, new and old, discussed their papers in public sessions in which graduate students and interested faculty members also participated (the continuing dialogue *CSSH* had always sought). The revised papers were then published in books that exemplify something of the journal's topical, chronological, geographical, and methodological range: *Comparing Muslim Societies*; *Colonialism and Culture*; *Constructing Culture and Power in Latin America*; *Time: Histories and Ethnologies*; *Cultures of Scholarship*; *Comparing Jewish Societies*; *The Construction of Minorities*; *States of Violence*; *Modes of Comparison: Theory and Practice*; and finally *Natures Past: The Environment and Human History*.

All these initiatives, worthy and enjoyable as they were, remained ancillary. A scholarly quarterly depends on the quality of the articles it contains. And if the editors' first task is to recognize quality, there are also ways in which they can contribute to it. To make a passage clearer or an argument stronger is a valuable gift. Once a revised and accepted manuscript is in hand, an intense and intimate procedure begins. Editing a manuscript, like translation, is a subtle, challenging, and vastly under-appreciated art. The more skilful it is, the less visible it becomes. Except for brief gaps, *CSSH* has had the extraordinary good fortune to have had but four manuscript editors for nearly all of its fifty years. Often, they served as managing editors, too; and as much as they differed in responsibilities and in personality and style, these two women and two men have many qualities in common: admiration for good scholarship and respect for those who produce it, and an appreciation for the impact of the right word, the allure of a well-turned phrase, and the persuasive clarity of logical structure. They, more than anyone else, have represented the journal to contributors, and each of them demonstrated great patience and tact. To authors, copyediting can seem a form of censorship that dilutes personal

style while mechanically imposing a template from some deadly manual. Instead, the process should be flexible and, ideally, one of cooperation toward a common end. Consistency is not its principal goal. *CSSH* long permitted both English and American spellings, allowing authors their customary speech, and it still allows references either to be placed in a list and referred to parenthetically or lie in footnotes at the bottom of the page. That is more than recognition of the traditions of different disciplines, for the two systems function with subtle differences and reflect distinctive ways of thinking. Editors' changes are suggestions, an invitation to reconsideration and discussion. Tiring though it sometimes was, I enjoyed taking part, going over the editorial changes manuscript editors had suggested, discussing with them niceties of style and the complexities of striving for clarity and good form while honoring the vocabulary of a particular field and an author's individual voice. I also asked manuscript editors to apply their hand to my own Editorial Foreword, and the arguments that resulted were edifying entertainment. The manuscript editor, who participates in every phase of journal activities, corresponds with authors, deals with compositors and publishers, and joins in reading the two sets of proofs, sits at the heart of the enterprise.

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In fifty years *CSSH* has published work by different generations of scholars—tradition breakers formed in the serious commitments of the 1920s through the 1940s, social scientists filled with the expansive confidence of the 1950s and 1960s, academics driven by the radical missions of the 1970s and 1980s, and then those steering linguistic and cultural turns in search of new directions. Given the devotion of social commentary to discerning trends, it seems appropriate to consider changes of style and subject in *CSSH* over half a century. Even in the early issues, contributors came from Europe as well as the United States, and soon submissions arrived from everywhere that English was the language of scholarship, and in addition from individuals in Asia and Africa who chose to write in English. When manuscripts in other languages arrived, they were translated before publication, despite some embarrassment at that provincialism, on the grounds that more readers outside Europe and America were most likely to read work in English. *CSSH* benefited especially, as did American universities more generally, from European scholars who had come to the United States in the 1930s and 1940s. Their cosmopolitanism was more than geographic. Steeped in classical and European culture, they often engaged philosophy, literature, and history in their social analysis even as they embraced modern paradigms and methods. The attention given to societies of any era and around the world was also remarkable, not so much for the interest (*CSSH* was contemporary with the founding of area centers) as for the clear conviction that Asia and Africa, the ancient world and the middle ages are comparably valuable for the study of human society.

In the journal's early years some of the articles it published were strikingly speculative and wide-ranging, almost experiments in imagining how far an open conception of comparative studies might reach. That reflected the era and Sylvia Thrupp's wide network but also her double conviction that the study of society was a coherent whole, even as its range expanded and surged in new directions, and her determination that *CSSH* should stimulate that development. After some years, that venturesome air faded somewhat in favor of articles that extended boundaries through focused, carefully annotated scholarship. (Those who later wrote in *CSSH* on bureaucracy and professionalization would have had no difficulty explaining the trend.) While welcoming the impressively substantial contributions that crossed their desks, editors, unlike authors, had to be concerned about the constraints high standards impose. On the whole, the articles published in the first decades of *CSSH* continued to vibrate with unstated optimism, not necessarily about the future of society but about the future of the social sciences. These were, the general tone suggested, becoming stronger and their findings cumulative as they became more interdisciplinary and horizons broadened. In that respect, they shared the carefully understated ambitions of the journal itself. The mere fact of being open to any argument, Marxist or liberal, to all methods, and articles on any society within the same covers expressed a daring ambition.

Although that optimism dimmed, many contributors convey a related expectation of growth in the understanding of society through their concern for theory, thus maintaining the view that focused research should have wider significance. Understood as a framework shared, larger than any single project, social theory is also meant to be broadly applicable to different eras and places, although applicability may refer more to the questions raised than the resulting answers. In another respect those earlier contributors were relatively modest. Their tone was less that of pioneers riding a new wave (a stance commonly claimed a couple of generations later) than that of learned scholars building on previous scholarship but determined not to settle for its conventional limits. There was much in this intellectual confidence that foreshadowed ideas of modernization, which became an important topic in *CSSH*. Used increasingly to refer to a general set of changes, the term acquired more formal meanings in the general literature, implying that certain changes (such as a market economy, increasing mobility, an effective state, literacy, and so forth.) needed to occur more or less together. As these (sometimes conflicting) theories were more fully worked out, articles criticizing the assumptions and methods also appeared in *CSSH* culminating in sharp rejection of "modernization theory." Yet the idea that there were common patterns of change proved indispensable, and one can see the beginning of an alternative in the tendency to refer to worldwide or global development. In many contributions undercurrents of Marxism provided both rigor and range. Remarkably, skepticism about positivist methods and criticism of Eurocentrism (although

the term was not yet used) filled a publication dedicated to the analysis of significant patterns of change.

In its first year the four issues filled a total of 400 pages. That rose to 500 in the second year, climbed to over 600 pages a decade later, and in the years since this has expanded to nearly 1,000 pages per volume. In all *CSSH* has published some one thousand articles and included contributions from more than 1,500 authors. What topics have appeared most frequently? Classic subjects of comparison like revolution and slavery have gotten recurring attention in articles some of which have themselves become classics. Using very broad categories, religion may be the subject most often written about. That is something of a surprise, for the well-established field of comparative religion (like that of comparative law) has not been heavily represented. Rather, articles treating religion usually emphasize its embeddedness in social structures and culture, its role in cultural encounters (missionaries have drawn a lot of attention), and its place in group identity and political conflict. These sorts of interests bring together modern anthropology, social history, and historical sociology in ways that *CSSH* has consistently favored. It is also the case that there has been relatively little in its pages about the history of ideas and of institutions. Whether the reason for this lack is because scholars with those interests do not see *CSSH* as a natural venue or because our contributors disdain approaches they consider traditional, there remain attitudinal barriers that *CSSH* has a continuing mission to overcome. A number of other topics have had continuing attention, and one can descry a slight but revealing shift over time. The scores of essays on the state once emphasized its role as a form of development and later were more likely to note its role as a source of repression. Many of these articles have been by political scientists and legal scholars inclined to incorporate concerns from other disciplines, even when probing such familiar matters as bureaucracy, parliaments, elections, and parties. A remarkable number of articles on property and on markets, both international and local, have increasingly paid attention to international trade, on the one hand, and peasant society on the other, thus combining economic theory, anthropological data, and history; sustaining a dialogue that built on, modified, and challenged earlier work. An early interest in development (political and economic) expanded into world systems and dependency and gradually shifted toward global relationships more generally. Similarly, interest in issues of social class turned especially to labor history, expanding the perspective with analyses of language and using trenchant comparisons to expose differing constructions of the roles assigned to women workers. Studies of kinship increasingly focused on family and households. The changed perspective on demography was especially notable. Once presented in terms of its power as a tool of social analysis, demographic data became less frequent and the field itself the object of direct attack (the sociology of Talcott Parsons suffered a similar recasting). No topic has more consistently brought together history and

anthropology than colonialism, with a shifting emphasis from imperialism to subaltern studies and postcolonial conditions—all consistently treated as a laboratory for studying the interplay of cultural attitudes and power, social structures and economic change. In these changing emphases *CSSH* reflected general trends in the social sciences (indicated as well by the rise and decline of references to such figures as Max Weber, Sigmund Freud, Edward Said, or Michel Foucault). Looking for trends, however, should not obscure the common qualities that mark most articles: their richness in ideas, the strength of their evidence, and their ease with complexity. On subjects that invite easy moral indignation and academic posturing, that is a notable achievement. From time to time, there have also been notable essays on contemporary affairs (Soviet domestic policies, east-west tensions, Margaret Thatcher's Britain, the Middle East, or Southeast Asia, for example); which even now hold up impressively on rereading.

Some topics—frontiers and regionalisms are good examples—earned a prominence in *CSSH* not echoed elsewhere. Some, of which much was expected, have for whatever reasons not sustained a continuing dialogue. I think of the uses of psychology for social analysis, patron-client relations, and theories of dictatorship. Sylvia Thrupp had encouraged articles on cities and long hoped they might culminate in a special volume. That did not happen, despite some excellent articles. The comparative study of cities across time and place may have been inhibited, at least in *CSSH*, by the diversity of social structures, of relationships to surrounding territories, and of political regimes. Similarly a dozen delightful and well-illustrated articles on cartoons published over fifty years have not elevated the topic to a conceptual category for comparative study. Their use as propaganda and their appeal to stereotypes and shared attitudes is more locally than generally revealing. In contrast, sporadic essays on populist movements more readily used transnational comparison. Something similar occurred with regard to studies of medical practice, specific enough in purpose to make cultural differences striking and often telling. If the journal can claim to have been early in demonstrating that museums and world fairs provide ironic insight into society, its attention to ecology has developed more slowly and along with other current interests. And despite editorial encouragement, there have been only occasional forays into art, music, and literature; a few superb essays did not lead to a stream of submissions in those areas. One could always imagine, of course, how the ideas, findings, theories, or methods in one article might stimulate fresh questions and further work among scholars in different disciplines, concerned with other topics. That ambition may have made it easier to turn away from manuscripts that seemed somewhat plodding, even when they contained well-informed comparisons of policies or parties or customs in more than one country, but it was never the principal consideration. The practice rather was to assess each essay as it stood (or readers thought revisions might make it).

Recognition of a well-crafted, substantive, and stimulating essay was one of the joys that kept us all going, and involvement with *CSSH* offers other satisfactions. Given the journals unusual freedom of choice, the selection of what to publish necessarily invoked conceptions as to what scholarship should be and where the study of society might lead. However misdirected—wrong-headed, poorly informed, or dully conventional—those decisions may be, making them can feel faintly uplifting. Encountering some of the latest work in many disciplines is exciting in itself. To read the manuscripts submitted and the comments of reviewers who themselves have diverse expertise and academic interests is to overhear a lively and pointed seminar. To participate in the journal's rhythms—the almost daily arrival of manuscripts that are like unsolicited gifts; the requests to learned people who already feel overworked that they devote some of their time to reviewing a manuscript or book for no compensation, in effect calls to share in some unstated sense of common purpose; the winnowing until finally every three months an issue takes shape; negotiating with printers and publishers; the shock of finding errors even in the second proofs—allows a sense of accomplishment at the appearance of an issue in which each article is like a fond acquaintance with familiar talents and idiosyncrasies. This at its best is like being surrounded by generous colleagues at a continuing communal banquet of thought and erudition. In their very relentlessness those rhythms somehow neutralize occasional encounters with the egocentrism, pettiness, and arrogance that can accompany authorship. The pressure of quarterly cycles could easily reduce these multiple rhythms, each moving at a different beat, to mere routine. The corrective comes with the experience of how scores of individuals contribute intellectual energy and personal commitment to each issue printed. So lyrical a description of a repetitive process contains a hint of confession; and I would find making it even more embarrassing if I had not now been able to observe thirty or forty smart, productive scholars willingly join in these efforts (I think of Eric Wolf, Aram Yengoyan, Diane Owen Hughes, and dozens of members of the Editorial Board), and if I had not had the comfort of observing how effectively and with what great spirit Sylvia Thrupp, Thomas Trautmann, and Andrew Shryock also succumb to the stimulating range and compelling rhythms of *CSSH*.