Farewell Essay from the Outgoing Chair

From Theory to Theorizing

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In this brief article I will make the argument that we may want to replace theory with theorizing, and to stop teaching theory and instead teach theorizing. The balanced view is that the two belong together and complement each other. But the natural balance between the two is badly off; and this justifies a strong advocacy of theorizing. It can also be argued that in teaching classical theory (and important modern works in theory), we may want to approach them from the perspective of theorizing.

The difference between theory and theorizing is crucial. Let me start with the former. *Theory* is something that the teacher typically knows and can pass on to the students. It takes a year or so to work your way through *Economy and Society* by Weber; and students lack the time for this as well as the experience to see what is essential. Post-classical or modern social theory is a jungle that no-one can make his/her way through without the help of an experienced guide.

Theorizing is very different from theory. Theorizing is something that the student does, not the teacher. Theorizing is something that you have to learn to do yourself, a bit like swimming, bicycling or speaking a new language. And no-one should begin to learn English by reading Shakespeare or to theorize by reading Durkheim.

Theorizing is democratic in a similar sense that thinking is democratic. In "What is Enlightenment?" (1784) Kant says that Enlightenment means that every human being must think for himself/herself. Reading books, and deferring to these, he expressly states, means to hand oneself over to an authority. All have to think for themselves.

Theorizing is close to thinking; and one improves one's capacity to do both through *exercises*. Theorizing takes different expressions in the different sciences and the humanities. In philosophy you theorize exclusively in your mind; in sociology you theorize together with empirical data or what you are studying.

Two great challenges for the project of teaching theorizing rather than theory have to do with the role of the student and the role of the teacher. Both differ from when you teach theory, where the teacher is the enlightened and knowledgeable guide, and the student someone who is an open, curious and ready to receive (see Table 1).

Table 1. Teaching Theory versus Teaching Theorizing

Teaching Theory	*Teaching Theorizing*
students learn what theorists have said	students learn to theorize themselves
students read great texts by great theorists	students do exercises to learn to theorize
the teacher is an enlightened guide to the literature	the teacher gets the students to start theorizing

In theorizing the teacher essentially has to play the role of the Socratic midwife – helping the student to give birth to his or her child. The teacher does not want to be an authority, except in the sense of being good *continued on page 8*

A letter to the ASA section on Sociological Theory about the Real Utopias theme of the 2012 ASA annual meeting

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(a full version of this memo can be found at: http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/~wright/ASA/ASAsectionsMemo.pdf)

The theme for the 2012 Annual meeting of the ASA is "Real Utopias: Emancipatory projects, institutional designs, possible futures." Here is how I described the core idea of this theme in the ASA newsletter, *Footnotes*:

"Real Utopias" seems like an oxymoron: Utopia means "nowhere" – a fantasy world of perfect harmony and social justice. To describe a proposal for social transformation as "utopian" is to dismiss it as an impractical dream outside the limits of possibility. Realists reject such fantasies as a distraction from the serious business of making practical improvements in existing institutions. The idea of real utopias embraces this tension between dreams and practice: "utopia" implies developing clear-headed visions of alternatives to existing institutions that embody our *continued on next page*

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Wright, continued

deepest aspirations for a world in which all people have access to the conditions to live flourishing lives; "real" means taking seriously the problem of the viability of the institutions that could move us in the direction of that world. The goal is to elaborate utopian ideals that are grounded in the real potentials of humanity, utopian destinations that have accessible way stations, utopian designs of viable institutions that can inform our practical tasks of navigating a world of imperfect conditions for social change. Exploring real utopias implies developing a sociology of the *possible*, not just of the *actual*. This is a tricky research problem, for while we can directly observe variation in what exists in the world, discussions of possibilities and limits of possibility always involve more speculative and contentious claims about what could be, not just what is. The task of a sociology of real utopias, then, is to develop strategies that enable us to make empirically and theoretically sound arguments about emancipatory possibilities.

I am hoping that many of the sections of the American Sociological Association will be enthusiastic about engaging this theme in some of the sessions which they directly organize, but I also hope that members of different ASA sections will submit proposals to the program committee for thematic panels which explore the problem of real utopias within their subfield.

The Sociological Theory section seems like an especially fertile arena for thinking about real utopias. I would love to see panels on threads of utopian, dystopian and anti-utopian thinking in sociology, for example, or discussions of the epistemological foundations for "real utopian" sociology. My hope is that there are people in the Theory section who will creatively elaborate proposals for panels touching on such themes (and of course others that I have not thought of).

To facilitate such proposals I thought it might be helpful if I shared some of my general ideas on the structure of the thematic and plenary panels for the 2012 meetings. This is all quite tentative – the first real meeting of the program committee where these and other ideas will be discussed will be in early December – but it may give people some idea of the kinds of things I hope to see happen. What follows, then, is a brief sketch of the different kinds of panels around the theme of Real Utopias I would like see at the meeting.

I. Real Utopia Proposals Sessions

Each of these sessions will revolve around a proposal for a real utopian design to resolve some domain of problems. Examples would include: unconditional basic income, market socialism, equality-sustaining parental leaves, participatory budgets, random-selection democratic assemblies, worker cooperatives, stakeholder corporations, solidarity finance, democratic media, etc. The ideal here is to recruit an anchor person for the session who we know has already worked extensively on formulating such real utopia designs rather than simply a person who has thought critically about the theme (although there will certainly be flexible on this). This format will not be appropriate for all of the themes around real utopias; it will be especially effective for those problems around which there exists on on-going discussion of alternative institutions.

My idea is for the sessions to be organized as follows:

• We will create a dedicated website for these sessions.

• The person who anchors these sessions will prepare an elaborated proposal for institutional designs around some theme which will be posted online by early 2012. While of course these essays will include some discussion of what's wrong with existing structures and institutions, the goal is for them to sketch the central contours of alternatives. By this I do not mean a detailed "institutional blueprint", but rather a careful elaboration of the core principles of an institutional proposal. My expectation is that these will be in the 10,000 word range, although some could be longer.

• In some sessions there could be two competing or contrasting proposals. Having two different proposals could make for a very lively session for some topics.

• The website will allow for comments and dialogue so that these proposals can be part of a discussion prior to the meeting. I am not sure yet precisely what the best design for the website would be, but I am hopeful that it will be an interactive site rather than simply a passive site.

• At the session there will be a very brief, 15-20 minute, presentation

Semantic Legal Ordering: A Bonding Force in Society

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Sociological theorists have struggled with meaning and with culture.

On the one hand, there is a struggle to avoid polarities: structuralism versus essentialism, universalism versus relativism, idealism versus materialism. Each of these represents a road that has been traveled, one that a newcomer hopes to avoid so as not to expose herself to well-developed criticisms. And yet the avoiding is not so easy.

On the other hand, deep engagement with meaning and culture raises haunting specters that the great Enlightenment thinkers hoped to finally demystify: metaphysics, perhaps even religion, certainly ethics, ideology, and critique. If we trace our sociological tradition to the "positivist" vision of August Comte (*see* Levine 1995), are we not betraying ourselves through any return to metaphysics (*see* Comte 1988 [1842]; Mill 1866), no matter how tentative or subtle?

Finally, there is the troubling (yet fascinating) issue of language. To what extent are meaning and culture tied to language? The theory of language has been addressed by intellectual giants, from Aristotle to Mill to Wittgenstein. Any serious thought of stepping out onto the field with them tends to discourage the attempt.

In this brief essay, I wish to explore an angle from which to approach such challenges, challenges that contemporary theorists (*e.g.* Alexander 2003; Sewell 1992; Bourdieu 1977; Geertz 1973) have done so much to illuminate. The angle I am exploring begins with Max Weber's sociological concept of "Order" (*Ordnung*).

In the first chapter of *Economy and Society*, Weber drew on the concept of "legitimate order" to help explain why certain empirically observable regularities (*Regelmäßigkeiten*) of structure and sequence emerge out of the social action taken by multiple individuals over time (Weber 1978 [1922], at 29-31). Beyond his narrowly-specified concept of legiti-

mate order, Weber occasionally used a broader concept of "order" in discussions of the ways that mutual "orientation" to established social practices (usages and customs), shared expectations about self-interested action, normative "maxims," prototypical "exemplars," and "conceptions" can be inferred as forming the basis for patterns of directedness in consciousness, cognition, and thought (*see particularly* Weber 1978 [1922], at 14, 24-38; Weber 1967 [1922], at 11-16; Weber 1981 [1913]).

Consistent with Weber's multivalent uses, one might posit the concept of an "Order" as a *system* of meanings, as a meaningful "framework" (Halbwachs 1992), that includes normative values, principles for action, and conceptions of the "social facts" that make up social reality (*see* Durkheim 1982 [1901]; Searle 2010; Searle 1995).

Drawing out Weber's connections between orientation to an Order, on the one hand, and his discussions of the causal significance of meaning in social action and social relationships, on the other hand, one may draw the inference that an Order contributes conceptual form and systemic coherence to intentional motivations and meanings, thereby enabling an empirical coherence in the sequence and structure of social action and social relationships. Having extended Weber in this way to posit an Order as a system of social facts, principles, and values that forms the basis for patterns of directedness in consciousness, cognition, and thought, it becomes necessary to account for the Order's mode of existence, its relationship to experience, and its systemic character. This is, of course, where things get difficult.

I propose that a concept of "social memory" (Zerubavel 1997; *see also* Halbwachs 1992) can help in accounting for an Order's mode of existence, its relationship to experience, and its systemic character. Cognitive scientists use the term "semantic memory" to refer to an individual's "organized knowledge about the

world," her memory of conceptual categories and their relationships to one another (Matlin 2005, at 246; *see also* Zerubavel 1997, at 53-80). The current consensus among cognitive scientists is that this conceptual understanding of categories is tied to linguistic understandings as to the meaning of words (although the exact nature of the relationship remains a subject of debate), and that such understandings are continuously updated with experience (*see* Matlin 2005; *see also* Zerubavel 1997, at 53-80). For Zerubavel (1997), the sociological concept of "social memory" corresponds to the cognitive scientist's "semantic memory," albeit with distinctive reference to *social* conceptual categories and their systemic relations (*e.g.* the Crimean War, in relation to other wars), along with the social processes that contribute to the experiential content of conceptual categories and their systemic relations.

Following Emile Durkheim's methodological prescription to "consider social facts as things" (Durkheim 1982 [1901], at 60), we can look for empirical evidence of social memory in external indicators (Durkheim 1982 [1901], at 60-84), "observable data" whose existence is verifiable by independent, third parties. Drawing support from Edward Shils (1981) and Karl Popper (2002 [1948]), and from Maurice Halbwachs' work on "collective memory" (1992), I propose "tradition" as an external, independently-verifiable indicator for social memory. Tradition's Latin etymological root, *traditio*, evokes the sense of carrying, handing over. Tradition is accordingly a *carrier* of social memory, the *handing over* of social memories – together with the instruction that is deemed to be their vital legacy – from one generation to the next (*see* Shils 1981; Popper 2002 [1948]). Most importantly, this carrier of social memory is constituted by language, oral and written.

Having identified tradition as an external indicator and carrier of social memory, I propose that focus on the social processes by which traditions are sustained and transmitted may contribute to contemporary sociological theory by helping to

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explain the production of semantic "Orders" that contribute conceptual form and systemic coherence to meaning and culture. Such a proposal may seem surprising, given the ways that Weber himself contrasted tradition and rationality. Indeed, Weber treated tradition as a characteristically non-rational and non-deliberative basis for legitimating an Order: normative prescription or proscription is legitimated simply by the long standing of a particular practice or its absence (*see* Weber 1978 [1922], at 36-8; Weber 1967 [1922], at 20-33).

Without denying an important role for tradition in legitimating an Order, I am proposing that we may also approach traditions as social facts, as social "things" that have material, written and oral forms (*see* Goody 1986), and that are produced by social actors according to social processes. These social processes may be rational and deliberative or not, depending on a number of factors, including the concepts and principles interpreted within the tradition (*see* Popper 2002 [1948] and Shils 1981).

In particular, I propose that a methodological focus on traditions as external indicators of social memory can help shed light on one "semantic Order" with which Weber was centrally concerned, that of formal law. Although Weber was careful to distinguish the formal law that appears to those who are trained to interpret and apply it, from such law as it actually impacts economic and social decision-making, he also considered cases in which the former causally impacts the latter to be significant (*see* Weber 1967 [1922], at 11-16). Strikingly, Weber argued that the "categories of legal thought" – which through their generalization and systematization enabled the "rationalization" of formal law – can exercise a strong causal force in the social and economic world (*see* Weber 1967 [1922], at 61-4, *see also* 41-60; Weber 2003 [1889]).

My specific proposal is that the generalization and systematization of these conceptual legal categories, their

logical delineation as coherent elements of a "semantic Order," can be studied as a social phenomenon, which I am labeling "semantic legal ordering." I am further proposing that this semantic legal ordering manifests itself in the social action of jurists and lawyers who engage in the authoritative interpretation of legal traditions.

Assuming that its empirical validity can be defended, at least in the case of formal law, what does this focus on tradition as an external indicator and carrier of social memory reveal about meaning and culture? My hope is that this approach can help to explain the durability of certain conceptual categories, along with their systemic relation to other conceptual categories, for example "property," "contract," and the "corporation" in formal law. In other words, I believe that a focus on traditions and their authoritative interpretation may help reveal certain fundamental bonding forces in society, bonding forces that diachronically connect generations and that synchronically connect people in social relationships, each by means of the mutual orientation to semantic Orders sustained by the authoritative interpretation of traditions.

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Junior Theorists' Symposium, 2010

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Since its inception in 2005, the Junior Theorists' Symposium (JTS), sponsored by the Theory Section, has showcased the talents of scholars in the early stages of their careers, thereby cultivating the development and expansion of theoretical innovation and scholarship. The fourth iteration of this one-day mini-conference for up-and-coming theorists took place the day before the American Sociological Association meetings in Atlanta, on Friday, August 13th, 2010. It was hosted by Emory University.

Due to the increasing success and the overwhelmingly positive experiences of those who have presented and participated in the event over the years, its popularity and reputation has grown at a tremendous pace. This year, the event attracted 80 abstracts, and only 12 papers were selected for presentation – a 15% success rate. In total, 50 people attended – 18 were involved as organizers, discussants and presenters, but 32 attended simply to join in the conversation. Those in attendance represented 28 different universities and were composed of 27 graduate students and 23 post-doctoral fellows and professors. The conference was co-organized by Robert Jansen, Postdoctoral Fellow with the Michigan Society of Fellows and Claire Laurier Decoteau, Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Illinois, Chicago.

In the first section, entitled 'The Practice of Theory,' Stefan Bargheer (University of Chicago) argued that Max Weber's *Protestant Ethic* was interpreted in three vastly divergent ways over the course of the 20th century – challenging us all to consider the changing meaning of the concept of theory itself throughout sociology's recent history. Mucahit Bilici (City University of New York) revealed the ways in which Pierre Bourdieu disavowed the impact Martin Heidegger made on his conceptual tools (like habitus) and even his approach to practicing sociology. In so doing, Bilici asked us to reconsider Bourdieu's own theoretical roots and influences. Virag Molnar (The New School) argued that the concept of interstitiality, though it has been utilized to great effect in certain sociological sub-fields, has not been put to good use in the discipline as a whole. She suggested interstitiality should be developed as broader theory to help us: understand the social and spatial interstices that reify or substantiate inequality; bridge the divide between structure and agency; or, forge linkages between social entities like the market, the state, and culture. Michael Strand (Notre Dame) delved into the field of cognitive science to develop a means of conceptualizing social theory as a practice in scaffolding. As such, he explored the hermeneutic implications of taking a cognitive approach to theory. As a whole, this group of papers deliberated over what is at stake in actually practicing social theory, historically and cognitively. Neil Gross (University of British Columbia) provided insightful commentary on this group of papers, but he also invited us all to consider what it means to be a theorist. As theorists, he encouraged us to see ourselves as brokers and translators, whose job it is to reach out to a wide range of sociologists and convince them that attending to theoretical puzzles is a defining feature of our discipline as a whole.

The second section, entitled 'Culture and Action' began with a paper by Hiroki Igarashi and Hiro Saito (University of Hawaii) who argued that conceptualizing cosmopolitanism as a kind of habitus people utilize to navigate global fields has a tendency to reduce empirical complexities to a simplified utilitarian calculation of maximizing cultural capital. Instead, they develop a complicated theory about how people acquire both cosmopolitan and national dispositions depending on their educational trajectories, class origins, gender, ethnicities; in the end, they highlighted four different forms of cosmopolitanism: elite, rooted, banal and discursive. Next, Erik Schneiderhan (University of Toronto) argued that most studies of genocide assume a teleological, means-ends theory of action that privileges intentionality, and asked us to consider what a more pragmatist approach to action (including concepts such as rupture, perplexity, vocabularies of motive and creativity) can offer us in teasing out the complexities of genocide. Kimberly Spring (The New School) urged us to consider morality as contingent, continuous and relational as opposed to normative. She offered us a theory of morality based on the premise that practices and beliefs are endowed with morality through a process of intersubjective valuation that occurs in particular interactions. Drawing on Goffman, Joas and Butler, morality becomes, less an inherent trait than a performance. Iddo Tavory (The New School) also pointed to the difficult legacy theories of morality have had in sociology and sought to define moral action in a way that would allow sociologists to compare different cases across time and space. He suggested moral action should be understood as actions that define the self inter-situationally and which stimulate a particular emotional reaction. These last two papers prompted a discussion about how difficult sociological research becomes when one's object of inquiry evades definition. Michèle Lamont (Harvard University) served as the discussant for this set of papers. Lamont questioned young scholars' impetus to ground their theorizing in classical sociology, which she suggested oftentimes served to obscure the important strides made by social theorists in the 1980s and 1990s. She also challenged these theorists to attend to causal pathways and the more supply-side of cultural repertoires. A discussion of the newly emergent 'pragmatist turn' and its meaning for contemporary social theory ensued.

The final panel of the day, entitled 'State, Politics and Society' began with Elizabeth

Book Review: *Investigating Sociological Theory*, by Charles Turner

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This slim volume (published by Sage, 2010) is in some ways the combination of two different goals. First is providing a "grammar of inquiry," an evaluation of the methods of producing sociological theory. The second is the investigation of sociological theory as a "mode of encounter" with the social world, outlining the fundamental orientations of sociologists toward the production of theory. These two projects sit somewhat uncomfortably together in the book, but Turner provides thought-provoking analyses in both cases.

Turner begins with a distinction between classics and canon. In addition to intellectual authority, aesthetic power, and foundationality, Turner suggests several other criteria for classic status. Inexhaustibility means that "the act of rereading them entails...a small act of personal transformation" (p. 20), like experiences of great art, or of great love. Classic works are also exemplary, whether for good or for bad. Given these criteria, the point is to read the classics against one another, and to compare how theorists construct their arguments. Turner's first goal in this book is therefore to provide a grammar for this comparative reading.

This grammar involves investigations into the importance of description, categorization, metaphors, and diagrams in sociological theory. To begin with, Turner argues that description deserves a more prominent place in sociological thinking. In this he provides another criteria for classics: they combine formal theorizing, which transcends the context of production, with substantive theorizing, which provides generalizations about historical social processes. Sociological theorists meeting this criteria include Durkheim, Marx, and Weber, and later theorists such as Bourdieu, Douglas, Foucault, and Goffman. The problem for Turner is that this combination of formal and substantive theorizing is increasingly rare in the context of specialization and the growth of area studies. Instead, formal theorizing often seeks perfection, while substantive theorizing focuses on utility.

Three broad ways of using theoretical categories for description are then outlined: as classification systems, dialectics, or ideal types. Douglas' grid and group theory is cited as a good exemplar of theorizing classification systems, and Parsons' pattern variables a bad exemplar. Adorno's dialectical method of dissolving conceptual opposites is illustrated with the example of the culture industries, which transcend freedom and necessity because "there is no choice but to make a choice" (p. 68). Weber's ideal types are introduced as heuristic devices for comparing social phenomena, originating in generalizations from historical processes, but intended to capture general causal processes. For Turner, ideal types are a happy medium between "boring" classification and "exciting" dialectics (p. 78).

Beyond descriptions and classifications, theoretical language also employs metaphors to open up new understandings. Turner distinguishes metaphors from simile, images, and models, and proposes that the best metaphors exist in interaction with direct descriptions of social phenomena, rather than serving as substitutes for these descriptions. The most important distinction is between metaphor at the level of discourse, which offers a "systematization" of a theory, and metaphor at the level of words, which provides "dramatization" (p. 84) to specific arguments. Another criteria for classics is offered here: they use both types of metaphor. A metaphorical hero is Goffman, who combines framework metaphors of drama and games with more specific metaphors at the level of words, all with an explicit humility about how far the metaphors should be taken. The main pitfall in using metaphor is becoming trapped within its confines, killing the it through rigidity and overuse. In this sense, Parsons' system metaphor and Elias' metaphors of dance and games illustrate failures of systematization, and Zygmunt Bauman's theorizing suffers from too much dramatization.

Turner's chapter on the use of diagrams is one of the more original contributions of the book. Between merely illustrative and absolutely essential to a theory, the best diagrams exist in "dialectical-hermeneutic interplay" (p. 117) with the text. Diagrams of social structure, social dynamics, and theoretical logic are explored, and the most successful are deemed those that provide a "visible work space" (p. 132) that can be transposed to new contexts. Douglas' grid and group diagrams are again a good exemplar, but unlike these, Turner find many sociological diagrams to be redundant or unclear. These problems are due to a lack of standardization, unlike in the natural sciences. On the other hand, historical precursors from the humanities are often unacknowledged. For example, the symbol for Yin and Yang is a model of clarity for representing interaction, and the 11th century "Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate" is a clear precursor to network images.

Having outlined these various theoretical tools, Turner shifts his focus to the tool users themselves, and the book takes on a different tone. A chapter on "intellectual style" contrasts cynicism and skepticism in the sociology of culture. Cynicism includes reductionism, historicism, and functionalism, but the key problem is that "art or poetry or philosophy...cannot be direct sources of inspiration or wisdom" (p. 142). Instead, cynics rely on a "depth metaphor" and seek a "central generating mechanism" (p. 148) in social processes. Marx and Freud are cited as the most egregious examples, and Bourdieu as a contemporary exemplar.

While it is admitted that, per Bourdieu, education may help to reproduce social hierarchies, Turner's objection is that Bourdieu uses the same theoretical apparatus everywhere. Skeptics, on the other hand, are much more flexible and adventurous thinkers, and most importantly, only skeptics are "willing to allow...that works may have the power to
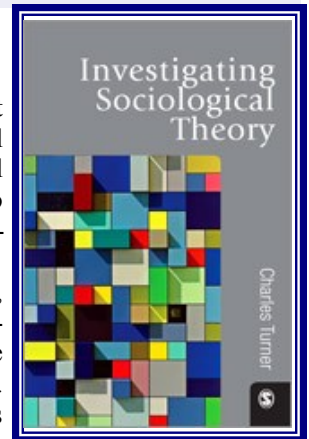
Theory of Morals and Morals of Theory: A Note on Incentive Combos

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Some time ago I met a sociology student who was active with the union at her school, and she forwarded me an email announcing the union's membership drive. *The union representing TA/GAs, faculty, and PTLs is sponsoring an iPod giveaway. Help us reach our membership goal this fall, and you could end up dancing in the streets . . . or on the bus, in the library, or in the lab.* The union was offering an iPod to the volunteer signing up the most new members. *Help us help you! Strong membership is the key to a strong union. Together, we are all better off... but only one of us will be dancing to the sound of a new iPod.*

Seeking to encourage participation in the membership drive, the union appealed to collective ideals (a strong union) but also offered an individual reward (the iPod). Additionally, an asterisk next to the word "iPod" directed potential participants to this footnote: *Apple donates a portion of sales for each iPod to help fight AIDS in Africa.* You could help strengthen the union, get an iPod, and contribute to fighting AIDS in Africa—all at once! The union had put together an appealing cocktail of incentives: the idealistic spirit of the union, the individualistic music of the iPod, the third-world altruistic touch.

Soon I realized that *mixed-incentive combos*, as I suggest we call them, were quite frequently used. A friend showed me an ad for giving blood, asking you to donate because you'll be saving lives *and* you'll enjoy some priority if you need blood yourself. I also heard people at immigration rallies say that immigrants should be legalized because of their human rights *and* because once they have papers they will consume more and help the economy. And the examples kept growing: all the way from events on campus (you should come to this talk because it's going to be interesting *and* there will be free pizza) to charities (make a difference in the world *and* the donation is tax-deductible) and policy (health care reform is the right thing to do *and* will save us money).

What these otherwise very different cases share is that an elevated idea is combined with a less virtuous benefit. You are told in the gravest voice that you can do something important, and almost in the same sentence you're told about some smallish perk that is also part of the deal. Do these combinations effectively nudge people into action? Isn't there a problem mixing up great-hearted ideals and narrow-minded gains? These questions require careful empirical research, as shown by Kieran Healy's (2006) study of blood and organ donation and Jared Peifer's (forthcoming) work on religiously-affiliated mutual funds. Here I briefly discuss what mixed-incentive combos suggest about the theory of morals (and the morals of theory) in economics and sociology.

Back in the 1830s, Tocqueville recognized that in the United States virtue was not only seen as beautiful, but also as useful. By behaving well toward others, Tocqueville noticed, Americans were also helping themselves. Tocqueville's idea of "self-interest properly understood" sheds light on the problem of mixed incentives presented here, but it doesn't exactly refer to the same thing. In Tocqueville's discussion, virtues such as decency were necessary (or helpful) for doing business. In the examples listed above it is rather the other way around: business (the promise of some sort of personal gain) is necessary (or helpful) to induce decency (or other high-minded purposes).

Modern economics is equipped to deal with incentive combos. The notion of utility can absorb anything that prompts us to act, and motivation is a sort of black box where different incentives can't be told apart (as formulated in revealed preference theory). Egoism and altruism, interest and disinterest, icy-cold calculation and "warm glow"—they can all contribute their share in accounting for action, and these shares can in fact be added up.

Helping others while helping oneself is the ultimate win-win situation, and different types of incentives pile up to accumulate the necessary "amount" of motivation.

Sociology is less ready to take combos at face value. For one thing, sociological theory does distinguish between different types of action. After presenting his typology of social action, Weber says that these types are seldom found in a pure state. But instrumental and value-rational action do not easily combine. Almost by definition, value-rational action (the high-minded ideals, the matters of principle) must stay relatively pure, free of the other types. Action can be based on different motives, but it is unlikely to be based on rational values *and* other motives.

Weber's distinction between value-rational and instrumental action echoes another key distinction in our discipline: that between the sacred and the profane. Durkheim emphasized the boundaries between the economy and religion, suggesting that social life moves in different lanes. The sacred (or ideal) cannot get mixed up with the profane (or instrumental) without becoming something else. Economics implies that ideal and material incentives add up; sociology hints at the possibility that they do not. Instrumental and value-oriented incentives, in fact, may cancel each other out. (A point that behavioral economics does seem to acknowledge [see Frey 2008]).

Back to the union's membership drive. What is a sacrifice if it isn't framed as such? How is value-rational action possible when carrots are also part of the package? Potential participants want to be part of something larger than themselves, and they get an iPod. Economics defines incentives as the key to engineering social life, and it proceeds as though they could always be combined. Sociological theory distinguishes between different realms and is skeptical of such combos, suggesting that incentives are not always incentives. Because of its emphasis on scarcity, economics is called the dismal science: choices must

Swedberg, continued

at helping people give birth. In *Theaetetus* Socrates says that only women who had given birth could be midwives.

For the student the key is exercises, autonomous exercises that the student will engage in to develop his/her own capacity to theorize.

One type of exercise could be for each student to carry out some small empirical work and learn to get a sense for what theorizing means in doing so. In working with some empirical material the student would learn to invent some concept to work with or use some existing concept, attempt a description and an explanation, perhaps in the form of a mechanism, and so on.

Another approach could be for the student to work on the canons of the discipline (or similar works), but approach them in a different way than what is usually done in teaching theory. The idea would be to approach them from a theorizing point of view and in this way open them up and not treat them as finished products.

This can be done in different ways. The student can, for example, be asked to write a diary as he or she reads and reflects on various works. One can also ask the student to single out one idea, one concept or one statement that especially appeals to him or her; and then try to deepen it or develop it in some new direction or use it as an inspiration for a new idea.

This last type of exercise can take different forms. It can, for example, be more analytical in nature than intuitive. But it is also possible to train the capacity to make informed guessing by engaging, say, in what Guy Debord calls *dériver,* a concept that he applied to walks in the city. One wanders aimlessly through a neighborhood and tries to drift off on streets that one has never walked on before, in order to encounter something new and surprising. The goal is to increase one's capacity to guess right or what Peirce calls abduction. Peirce himself, it can be added, came to master this capacity to an astonishing degree. At one point, when he was robbed of an expensive object, he was able to determine who the

thief was and retrieve the stolen object, exclusively by relying on his intuitive skills (cf. the Seaboks's essay in *The Sign of Three*).

I have tried to teach the capacity of guessing well or abduction in a seminar on Simmel that I conducted a few years ago at Cornell. The classes consisted of myself describing my own theoretical *dérive*, inspired by some idea in Simmel, and then the students would describe theirs. Each class the students came with about a page or so with notes about their theorizing (which took place at home). At the end of the course they were asked to reflect on how their theorizing had developed in a small "paper".

I put the word paper within quote marks to indicate that not only does the move from theory to theorizing demand a change in the teacher-student relationship, the same is also true for the style of the writing. Sociology is currently limited to standard articles and monographs, typically written in a drab and stylized manner that has as its purpose to convey to the reader that the analysis is objective. The author's voice, which literary people are so keen on discovering and developing, must be silenced since it signals subjectivity, which is the opposite of objectivity.

In theorizing, the subjective element is organically part of the process as well as the presentation; and the person who theorizes is deeply aware of this. While theory products are understood as end products that present definitive results, the person who theorizes knows that definitive solutions do not exist, just repeated attempts to approach difficult problems with a combination of thinking and facts. While theory stands still and comes from a world that is gone forever, theorizing tries to deal with a world that is ever new. In writing in a theorizing mode, the author also needs to think about using forms of expression that invite the reader to think and theorize, not just present the results.

A few more points. It should be emphasized that *repetition* is a crucial element in learning to theorize. Just like some people like to take walks

every day or do yoga in the morning, repeated exercises in thinking and theorizing do pay off. After some time one is able to run/think/theorize longer, faster and better. People theorize in different ways. I myself prefer to theorize and to think by sitting absolutely still for one hour. This is and it is not armchair sociology. I do sit in a chair - but you need facts in order to think sociologically. I try to do this type of exercise every day, when it comes to thinking in general, and the same amount of time when I am at the right stage of some research project.

A second point is about art. Inspired by conversations with Hans Zetterberg I have come to believe that art should be part of *everything* in society. The reason for this is that it spreads the spirit of creativity to whatever is around it. Art should, for example, be part of architecture, law, administration – and theorizing. There are many ways in which this can be accomplished. Some questions: Should sociologists be able to write well? Is there any relationship between what Umberto Eco calls an "open work" and theorizing; and is theorizing a form of open theory? Can one speak of *catharsis* (Aristotle) being linked to the teaching of theory, and *critical distance* (Brecht) to the teaching of theorizing – or is it rather the other way around? How about old-style objectivity versus new-style reflexivity (Weber versus Bourdieu)?

The last point I want to mention has to do with *methods*. Just as it has been realized that every method is at a deeper level based on theory, it can be said that theorizing is ultimately based on method. Or rather, that a set of methods is needed in order to theorize. This also means that if we want to seriously engage in theorizing, some of the methods used today may need to be reevaluated. Parts of what is called qualitative methods are, for example, very close to the kind of methods that make up theorizing. Theorizing and methods overlap to some extent – even if the main purpose of using methods, as opposed to theorizing, is to verify/prove what theorizing has come up with.

During the fall of 2010 I will teach a small course in theorizing at Copenhagen University for graduate students ("The Craft of Theorizing: Learning How to Theorize in *continued on next page*

Swedberg, continued

Sociology and Social Science"). It is the first course exclusively devoted to theorizing that I have taught, and I expect to learn much from it. I will proceed in the following way. The students will read a small number of texts and select some element in each of these to theorize from, along the lines described above when I discussed the *dérive*. The readings include Simmel's "Sociology of the Senses", Mauss' "Body Techniques", Abbott's "Lyrical Sociology", Tocqueville's "France before the Revolution" and the first 35 pages of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*. The lectures will consist of me speaking the first hour, followed by break, followed by one hour with the students presenting and discussing their attempts to theorize. For their final examination, the students have been asked to produce a small writing in which they reflect on their progress in learning to theorize.

When I lecture, I will try to outline different aspects of what can be called *the craft of theorizing* (which was the theme for the Mini Conference of the Theory Section at the annual meeting of ASA in 2010 in Atlanta). I plan to speak about how to develop your own concepts, how to make a description, how to open yourself up for intuition-abduction, how to approach the canons in sociology from a theorizing perspective, as opposed to from a theory perspective; and also how to approach non-sociological works from the viewpoint of theorizing (literature, art - especially art). The organic necessity of using empirical material in theorizing will be emphasized; and that one should not approach one's topic in order to use or confirm some theory. The Owl of Minerva is the product of theory, not theorizing. The full force of theorizing must not come into the picture until one knows quite a lot about some topic (and then the movement goes forth and back, between theorizing, gathering more material, theorizing again - until the whole thing is ready).

It is my sense that the transition in sociology from theory to theorizing will take time and experience to be successful. Much of what I have said in this short article will no doubt be pushed to the side in the process. To get thousands of ASA members to collectively engage in a theoretical *dérive* in the next city where the ASA meets may, for example, never take place. Still, it is my strong sense that the move from theory to theorizing is the right one and would make sociology stronger.

Decoteau, continued

Holzer (University of Wisconsin) who suggested that her work in a Liberian refugee camp in Ghana forced a reconsideration of theories of governmentality. Caregiving, according to her analysis, can operate as a form of coercion and serves as one mechanism through which refugee populations are disciplined. Comparing civic engagement in two different cities, Josh Pacewicz (Stanford University) argued that a shift in civic institutional configurations helps explain the movement from political participation to disengagement in party politics. In the 'old' model, civic engagement based on reciprocal obligations leads to a factional community structure and identification with political parties, whereas in the 'new' style, un-binding partnerships creates inclusive community structures and a subsequent disengagement with national politics. Drawing on both Bourdieusian and Gramscian perspectives, Silvia Pasquetti (University of California, Berkeley) suggested that group formation and penal policy theories need to be expanded upon in order to make sense of the differential responses to state power exhibited by a Palestinian Arab community on the Israeli side of the Green Line and a Palestinian refugee camp in the West Bank. Finally, Besnik Pula (University of Michigan) argued that focusing on the role law plays in states' transitions to modernity allows for a corrective to the binarizing theoretical tendency within the comparative historical literature on societal transformations which tends to focus on either the 'state' or 'society' as opposed to attending to their causal co-determination. Combining a neo-institutionalist approach with theories of the law, Pula analyzes the differential trajectory of nationalization in Albania and Turkey, illustrating how the adoption of Western legal traditions and institutions radically reconstituted state-society relations. Andreas Wimmer (UCLA) provided tremendously detailed feedback and advice to each of the participants on how to improve their papers. In particular, he suggested alternative theoretical perspectives within which they could couch their interventions, thereby challenging each of them to either defend their theoretical choices or consider the ways in which a different theoretical frame might lend itself toward a different analysis of their empirical puzzles.

Throughout the day, several themes emerged again and again: the 'return' to pragmatism, what it means to *practice* social theory, and how to newly (re)conceptualize social action, state power and institutional formations in the age of neoliberalism and globalization. There was quite a bit of diversity regarding the professional status and university affiliation of those attending, and a large number of theoretical perspectives were also represented; however, there were quite a number of discussions both during the conference and afterwards about the overrepresentation of men and the racial/ethnic homogeneity of the theory section as a whole. The pool of submissions received for the conference reflected these biases. Perhaps the problem is partially related to a lack of clarity about how social theory is defined and practiced within sociology as a whole, not to mention theory's complicated relationship to empirical research. Distributing the call for papers more broadly and encouraging sociologists who engage in global studies, race/ethnicity scholarship, and feminist studies to submit abstracts may be a possible solution. It is clear that demographic and intellectual diversification should be a primary goal of the section, for, if achieved, our understanding of what it means to practice theory, and the conceptual capacities of theory itself, would be expanded and augmented.

The JTS will be held again next year in Chicago, so please do encourage your students and colleagues to submit abstracts and register to attend the event and join in the stimulating theoretical conversations. Next year's organizers will be Michal Pagis of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Tom Medvetz of University of California, San Diego.

Eilbaum, continued

always be made. In limiting itself to one kind of choice, however, economics is not so dismal. There are different types of "choices," sociology reminds us, and that is the (morally) difficult "choice" to make.

Recent crises in the corporate world have brought the notion of conflict of interests to the forefront. Can companies be trusted to take care of their interests *and* the public's interests? Can they focus on making profits *and* abide by financial, environmental, labor, and safety-related regulations? Individuals, citizens and consumers, are faced with similar dilemmas, often torn between "disinterested" principles and convenient advantages. By throwing a little bit of everything into the package, incentive combos try to make choice easier. But does it work?

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Sonnett, continued

detach themselves from the context...in which they arose" (p. 142). In fact, skepticism is not interested in linking artists with social position, cultural tastes with class, and so forth, but instead provides immanent readings of cultural objects. Turner identifies with the skeptics, but this chapter often reads like a cynical attack on cynicism, rather than a skeptical comparison of two intellectual styles.

In the last chapter, Turner expands his focus yet wider, to explore answers to the question of, "by what means do I orient my conduct?" (p. 181). Classic sociologists are said to offer little on this topic, but Turner finds a few worth mention. Baumann is forgiven his excessive metaphors for his argument that sociological focus has shifted from social structures to ethics. Weber's "Science as a Vocation" offers an indirect answer, i.e., by seeking "clarity about the conditions and consequences of our actions" (p. 178). Schutz's well-informed citizen, who has an "open-mindedness and sensitivity to nuance" (p. 180), is advocated over the specialism of the expert and the simplicity of "the man on the street." Turner finds these answers largely inadequate, however, so for a better answer, he turns to Robert Musil's *The Man Without Qualities*.

Musil's novel provides three possibilities, as explored by the central character Ulrich. The utopia of exactitude is a science of living, transposing scientific precision from specialized domains onto a general attitude toward life. The utopia of essayism is a life of adventurism, where specialization is refused and evaluations are constantly in flux. The third utopia is where Musil enters "murky waters" (p. 187), as Ulrich and his twin sister Agathe discuss exactitude and essayism, and decide on "providing guidelines for life but then wondering whether they are true" (p. 190). They wish to pursue science but retain a respect for mysticism, but in the novel, they fail to sustain this "other condition" once they have decided on it. For students, Turner's lesson is that exactitude and essayism form a dialectical tension, and "The responsibility of their teachers...is not so much to point them towards one of these rather than the other, but to hint that such directions exist" (p. 192). This seems a rather limp conclusion after so much difficult digging, but provides a good summary of Turner's calls for "theoretical liberalism."

An ambitious book like this is bound to have some shortcomings. There are places where Turner offers rather cursory arguments to support his choice of theorists to include in the text. This is noticeable in a book where Talcott Parsons receives more pages and index entries than even Marx, Weber, or Durkheim. Turner's argument, that it is unfair to criticize dead white male theorists "on the basis of ascriptive categories, especially when they are no longer there to defend themselves" (p. 5) is difficult to parse. Similarly, in confronting the idea that "universal or enlightenment values are 'really' the expression of gender or race prejudices" (p. 142), Turner embraces cynicism and reduces this critique to Simmel's money economy. This defensiveness about the limited diversity of theorists in the book, or the possible resonance of ideas with historical inequalities, is disappointing. It is worth asking how a more inclusive text might portray classical theory.

There are other weaknesses in the book, but it could be considered of some merit that they reflect some of Turner's own criticisms of sociological theory. For example, while critiquing Parsons for elaborating categories that he later disregards in his analyses, Turner does much the same in his discussion of metaphor. Parsons is also criticized for the unclear origins of his pattern variables, but the same can be said for Turner's discussion of cynicism and skepticism, which "owes little to the venerable philosophical traditions that bear these names" (p. 7). These are relatively small ellipses, however, given Turner's stated preference for adventurous skepticism and the essay form. In the end, this approach has produced a book that fits some of Turner's own criteria for classic status: it is exemplary, and in mostly good ways, as it engages in both formal theorizing about the methods of sociological theory, as well as substantive theorizing about the orientations of sociologists toward theory. And finally, in the process of preparing this review, the book has merited it's rereadings, and surely there are more that could be found in the text.

ASA Theory Prize 2010, Remarks by Guillermina Jasso

I would like to begin by recognizing the members of the Theory Prize Committee. When I call your name, please stand and remain standing.   Richard Biernacki, Harry Dahms, Marion Fourcade, and Monica Prasad.

The Theory Prize is given to recognize outstanding work in theory. In even-numbered years, it is given to a book, and in odd-numbered years, to a paper; in both cases, eligible items are those published in the preceding four calendar years. The Theory Prize given today is for a book published in calendar years 2006 to 2009.

We received 17 nominations, 17 outstanding contributions to sociological theory. With such an abundance of distinction, it was enormously difficult to pick a winner. The Committee was exemplary in its careful review of the nominated books, and converged on a distinguished winner.

The winning book is *Social Structures*, written by **John Levi Martin** and published by Princeton University Press in 2009. *Social Structures* examines the building blocks of social life, showing how structural forms spontaneously arise from social relationships and how their features and size generate and constrain further forms. The book provides a masterly analysis of a large terrain of structures, with brilliant connections and many cases across space and time. This extraordinary book also opens many avenues for further research.

On behalf of the Theory Section and the Award Committee, I am proud to present the 2010 Theory Prize to John Levi Martin for *Social Structures*.

Wright, continued

of the proposal and at most one commentary, or perhaps a contrasting proposal. I want to avoid panels with lots of presentations and little time for debate and discussion.

• In *Footnotes*, section newsletters, and other modes of information dissemination we will encourage people to look at the proposals before the meeting and to come to sessions with issues they want to raise. While of course we want to avoid long-winded speeches from the floor, I think somewhat longer than usual interventions could be constructive.

Partial list of potential Topics for Proposal Sessions

Below is an initial list of possible thematic panels built around real utopia proposals. I have identified these sessions by the central principle of the proposal (for example, Unconditional Basic Income) rather than by the general topic or target of a proposal (eg. Healthcare), except where I do not have a specific real utopian proposal in mind. Because of my own expertise, most of the topics I have thought of revolve around political and economic issues. Nevertheless, it would be good if some of these thematic proposal sessions revolved around cultural issues of various sorts and around egalitarian and social justice issues that are not exclusively socioeconomic in character (gender, race, sexuality, etc.). Some of these topics may be more suitable for general thematic sessions rather than for the proposal sessions.

1. Unconditional Basic Income
2. A democratic media system
3. "High road" capitalism
4. Democratizing finance
5. Participatory budgeting
6. A democratic, egalitarian system of campaign finance
7. Deliberative referenda
8. Gender: Parental leaves for gender equality
9. Parecon (participatory economics)
10. A framework for a digital network economy
11. Building the Scientific Commons (publications, data dissemination, etc.)
12. Community policing
13. Worker-owned Cooperatives
14. Pensions, labor's capital, solidarity finance, wage earner funds
15. Randomocracy, citizens assemblies
16. LETS (local exchange trading systems)
17. Globally just Fair trade
18. Market socialism
19. Intellectual property – the creative commons
20. Public education
21. Universities
22. Heathcare

Wright, continued

II. Film/documentary sessions

I think it would be interesting to have a number of sessions which present documentary films on exemplary and iconic cases of social innovations to solve problems. The intention here is not to have cheerleading films, but documentaries that analyze specific kinds of leading cases. The films could either be presented by the filmmaker or by an expert who researches the case and could lead a discussion following the film. Most documentaries which are thematically relevant on these issues tend to be mainly about social movements and struggles – sometimes of the "heroic struggle" variety – and not so much about outcomes, institutional innovations, actual transformations of social structures. So, I am not sure exactly what is available. Examples could include things like:

• The *kibbutz* – there are a number of films that are retrospectives on the kibbutz experience

• *Holding Ground* – a film about the Dudley Street neighborhood association

• Public transportation – I understand that there is an interesting film about innovative public transportation in a Brazilian city, but I have not seen it

• Local food, alternative agriculture

III. Thematic panels around broad topics and disciplinary subfields

Some of the topics listed under Real Utopia Proposals sessions could be shifted to these regular thematic sessions if we don't find a suitable anchor person with a well-worked out institutional/transformational proposal. And some of the topics listed below, of course, could also be moved to the institutional proposal category.

In terms of format, I have a strong preference for sessions which do not have so many presentations that there is little time for discussion, and generally I prefer sessions without discussants – my experience is that it is usually more interesting to have discussion from the floor unless the discussant is really engaged in a debate with a specific argument (as in the proposal sessions). For these sessions, then, I would generally like three presenters and no discussant.

Some possible topics for general thematic sessions

1. Consumerism
2. The corporation: alternative models for more democratic/participatory governance
3. Carework
4. Future studies as a framework for envisioning real utopias
5. The Cleveland cooperatives initiatives
6. Mondragon, Emilia-Romagna and other exemplary worker cooperative districts
7. Utopian thinking within sociological theory
8. Utopian and dystopian visions
9. Marxism and real utopias or Marxism vs real utopias
10. Energy
11. Global Warming
12. The family
13. Sexuality
14. Childhood/children
15. Cities
16. Multiculturalism
17. Linguistic justice
18. Race, racial justice
19. International migration
20. Methodological issues: nonevents and possible futures
21. Criminal justice: crime & punishment
22. The military
23. Intentional communities
24. 19th century utopian communities
25. Transforming culture
26. Local food
27. Alternative Agro-food Systems
28. The Internet
29. Wikipedia
30. Creative commons
31. Voluntary simplicity
32. The Chicago participatory budget experiment
33. Transhumanism
34. Science policy

Wright, continued

IV. Plenary Panels

The program contains up to three plenary sessions – one on Friday evening and the in the noon slot on Saturday and Sunday. Tentatively, I am thinking of the following possibilities:

1. *Big Ideas for Real Utopias*: This could be one or two of the plenary panels, depending on other plenary suggestions. The idea would be to have a panel(s) featuring very prominent, articualte advocates of specific real utopian proposals. I envision three presentations for this panel, each around some Big Idea. One idea is also for these panelists to lead a proposal-thematic session (category I above) on the day after they are on the plenary panel. This would make it possible for there to be intensive discussion of the high profile ideas presented in the plenaries.

If we have only one plenary session of this character, the topics could include, for example, some of the following:
• Basic Income
• A democratic media system
• Participatory Budgets and direct democracy
• Gender Equality and the family
• Cooperatives

If we have two panels of this sort, one could be built around democracy issues and one around equality issues:

Democracy:
• Making Elections truly democratic
• Participatory budget and direct democracy
• Democratic media

Equality
• Basic income
• Gender equality and family
• Cooperatives

2. *Energy, the environment, and global warming*: This plenary would focus on institutional designs for countering global warming and other aspects of ecological crisis rather than just the nature of the problem itself. Mostly when I have seen panels and discussions of these issues the discussion of institutional design is pretty thin. There is a sharp indictment of existing consumption and production patterns and a call for dramatic transformation in how we do things, but little discussion of the mechanisms for accomplishing this and how sustainability and low growth can be institutionalized and reproduced.

3. *Sociology as Real Utopia*: I am less sure about this, but it might be possible to have a session which reflected on the nature of the discipline and academic life, and asked what the real utopia vision for sociology might be.

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