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Message from the New Editor of *Sociological Theory* Activist Editing with an Open Mind

By Jonathan Turner

I am honored to be named editor of *Sociological Theory*. Years ago, Randall Collins and I conceptualized the journal (sitting in a bar in Pasadena, for reasons that I do not remember), but in the end, he did all of the work in making the journal a reality (I am much better at conceptualization than doing anything in the empirical world). The section owes Randy a debt for his work in creating the first book-format issues and, later, the regular journal-style issues.

I have no grandiose plans for the journal, but I do have a number of goals that I will seek to realize. First, I would like to see the journal expanded to four issues a year from the current three. This will be a top priority which, I gather, will be complicated by the renegotiation of the contract with the publisher by ASA (although this might be a very good time to put the pressure on). Second, I would like to expand the size of each issue to at least one additional article, and perhaps more. Third, I will seek to change the format somewhat to a more traditional format where the contents are on the cover.

As for editorial policies, my biases are well known, and, obviously, I will be sympathetic to articles that try to explain empirical events. I will actively seek

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Studying Theorists' Views of Theory

By Steven Brint and James LaValle

Theory has been a notoriously divided field in sociology virtually from the beginning. This is true both in relation to the philosophical assumptions of theorists and their substantive conclusions. Indeed, the field can be divided in an almost limitless number of ways. Philosophically, the conflicts between formal theorists, empirically-grounded positivists, historicists, and interpretivists are still far from being settled. Substantively, are there four major schools, as Collins'

Four Sociological Traditions argues? Or are there seven major schools (and 37 important variants), as the latest edition of *The Structure of Sociological Theory* suggests? Should we be moving toward synthesis, or do the hopes of some for theoretical consolidation remain premature?

Although important divisions in the field are evident, the views of theorists as a body about these divisions and about the purposes of theory are not as evident. We can see that a variety

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Studying Emotions Requires Theory and Method

This note is in response to a passing comment made by Andrew Abbott (in the October issue), in the context of his essay on the top ten theorists. I agree with him when he states that top tens in social science usually ignore emotions. But he goes on to say that emotions' "best investigators are without question novelists." I agree that precise, lifelike descriptions of emotional states lie near the core of a novel's appeal, and that such descriptions are also valuable in helping us to understand emotions. But they are not enough for social science, since novelists, even modern ones, lack theory and method. Indeed, theory and method are anathema to them.

But without theories and methods, advances have been slow to the point of standstill. As Virginia Woolf remarked more than half a century ago, the passions are still uncharted. In the last forty years, there have been several social science studies which advanced knowledge of emotions, mainly through detailed descriptions of emotional states using verbatim texts: two examples would be studies by Norbert Elias and by Helen Lewis. Both of their works also employed the rudiments of

a theory and a method. But their treatment of theory and method was exceedingly spare compared to their detailed analysis of the textual data. Their work was innovative and original, but interpretation of it still suffers from the relative absence of explicit theory and systematic methods.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

In my opinion, the study of emotions which shows the best balance between theory, method, and data, treating each almost equally, is a study of four marital quarrels by Suzanne Retzinger: *Violent Emotions: Shame and Rage in Marital Quarrels*. She used videotapes of quarrels to analyze the interchange of emotions between marital partners. Her theory is derived from classic (Simmel and Marx) and current studies of emotions. Her method for identifying hidden emotions was developed by combining earlier studies of verbal and nonverbal cues. In terms of balance between theory, method and data, I think that this book is the best yet written about emotions, far better than anything of mine. Like the work of Elias and Lewis, it represents a significant advance over Tolstoy, Lady Murasaki, Austen, and Eliot in charting of the passions.

Tom Scheff

Survey of Section Members Underway

THE FIELD *from Page 1*

of different work is published, but this in itself does not measure the current state of thinking about theory in the field. Indeed, a tendency may exist for theorists to exaggerate the importance of their opponents. In a divided area, everyone feels embattled to a significant degree. But what are the real lines of division? How many theorists are aligned with each position? Are these lines of division correlated with demographic characteristics or organizational positions? And, perhaps most important for future development, is there a greater consensus among theorists than many of us have been led to believe?

These are the issues and questions that led us to develop a survey to investigate theorists' views of theory. We fully recognize that theory development is and should be far from an opinion poll, but we also believe that the field can profit from the collective self-understanding conveyed through the results of a survey.

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New ST Editor will be an Activist One

EDITOR *from Page 1*

such articles, and I invite authors to submit theoretical explanations to me, once I assume editorial responsibilities for new submissions over the summer. While I have strong opinions about what sociological theory should be, I am open to other kinds of intellectual activities that define sociological theory. Commentary and analysis of the masters, metatheorizing on the theories of others or schools of thought, epistemological debates, critical theories of all varieties, and other types of theoretical work are welcome.

I am also open to special issues, symposia, commentaries, and other formula that will increase dialogue and discussion in theory. In particular, I would be receptive to symposia on important theoretical works, on a significant theorist, or on a particular style or genre for doing theory.

As for editorial style, I will be an activist editor. There are two ways to edit a journal. One is to send articles that are submitted out for reviews and let the reviewers be judge and jury on an article's acceptability. The second is to use the reviews as one input into a decision-making process that ultimately is in the editor's kitchen. I am the second type of editor. I will try my best to get reviews from those who would be sympathetic to the particular genre in which an article is written, but I will also make my own independent judgement on the merits of the article. In this vein, I am not a big believer in "revise and resubmit," perhaps because my own work almost always has suffered this fate. I am much more likely to reject or offer a conditional acceptance (if certain criticisms are met) and not send the article out for review again (beyond my own re-reading). This editorial philosophy places more discretion in my hands,

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Theory at the ASA Meetings Miniconference Spotlight on Theory for Non-Theorists

By Janet Saltzman Chafetz

An exciting set of three miniconference sessions should keep you at this summer's ASA meetings until the last minute of the last day. The conference will begin with a session organized by Doug Heckathorne on "Improving Theory Education for Graduate Students," at which Robert Antonio, Willie Jasso and Alan Sica will join Doug in a panel discussion. For the past few years, the issue of graduate theory education has been touted by many section members as one that requires examination, discussion and possible reformation. Given my interest in how we can better communicate with non-theorists, I am eagerly awaiting the opportunity to hear how some of our colleagues, who have thought seriously about this issue, propose that we should begin that process by educating students who will mostly not become theorists themselves. There should be ample opportunity for audience members to add their diverse perspectives, resulting in what I expect—and hope—will be a contentious and therefore stimulating experience.

This session will be followed by one organized by Jon Turner on "Using Theory in Sociological Practice and Policy Formation," in which papers will be presented by Jon, Ron Burt, Cecilia Ridgeway and Willie Jasso. Sociologists often bemoan our relative lack of influence on public policy. It seems to me that in order to command respect from, and the ear of, decision-makers, theory-driven, empirically supported recommendations are absolutely required. Bring your applied sociologist colleagues to this one!

I have organized the final session, "Communicating with the Research Community," which is a somewhat more eclectic mix of papers to be pre-

sented by Donald Light, Murray Milner, David Sciulli, Randy Collins and Murray Webster. What they share in common is their scholarly excellence and the fact that they ground theory in concrete issues of contemporary social life. We should therefore end the miniconference with a keen sense of how, as theorists, we are making—and can better make—our work relevant and useful to colleagues throughout the discipline. I remain committed to the fundamental notion that sociological theory should, can, and sometimes does vitalize the research and applied components of our discipline, and the miniconference will be a wonderful showcase of that commitment.

The 1999 Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association will take place on August 6-10, 1999 in Chicago. The Theory Section has scheduled a miniconference consisting of three sessions, a session on "doing sociology", a roundtables session, a business meeting, and a reception to be held jointly with the Section on Mathematical Sociology. All Theory Section events will be held on Monday, August 9 and Tuesday, August 10. Several other theory sessions have been organized by the ASA Program Committee as well, with topics ranging from the classics to new innovations in theory.

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MINICONFERENCE: COMMUNICATING WITH NON-THEORISTS

Monday, August 9 and Tuesday, August 10

I. Improving Theory Education for Graduate Students

Session 439. Monday, 4:30 p.m.-6:15 p.m.

Organizer and Presider: *Douglas D. Heckathorn*, University of Connecticut

Panel:

Robert Antonio, University of Kansas

Guillermina Jasso, New York University

Alan Sica, Pennsylvania State University

II. Using Theory in Sociological Practice and Policy Formation

Session 463. Tuesday, 8:30 a.m.-10:15 a.m.

Organizer and Presider: *Jonathan H. Turner*, University of California, Riverside

The Case for Sociology as an Engineering Discipline. *Jonathan H. Turner*, University of California, Riverside

Reputation as a Policy Variable. *Ron Burt*, University of Chicago

Status, Expectations, and the Level Playing Field. *Cecilia L. Ridgeway*, Stanford University

Deriving Policy Implications from Comparison Theory. *Guillermina Jasso*, New York University

III. Communicating with the Research Community

Session 483. Tuesday, 10:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

Organizer and Presider: *Janet Chafetz*, University of Houston

Explaining Status Relations: The Cases of Brahmans, Nerds, and Sociological Theorists. *Murray Milner, Jr.*, University of Virginia

Reconsidering Institutionalism. *David Sciulli*, Texas A&M University

Seven Cross-Disciplinary Ideas of the 20th Century Human Sciences. *Randall Collins*, University of Pennsylvania

The Importance of Rules of Correspondence in Theory Testing. *Murray Webster, Jr.*, University of North Carolina, Charlotte

Theory Section Offerings beyond the Miniconference

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Other Sessions Organized by the Theory Section

Doing Sociology: Issues in Theory and Practice

Session 506. Tuesday, August 10, 12:30 p.m.-2:15 p.m.

Organizer and President: *Joan Alway*, University of Miami

Talcott Parsons and the Disunity of Sociology. *Harry F. Dahms*, Florida State University

On Pretending Not to Know: Leo Strauss and the Historical Sense. *James R. Abbott*, Rowan University

On Blau's Interpretation of Simmel. *Sandro Segre*, Università degli Studi di Genova, Italy

A Feminist Method for Theoretical Work. *Patricia Madoo Lengermann*, George Washington University, and *Jill Niebrugge-Brantley*, Gettysburg College

Discussion: *Peter Kivisto*, Augustana College

Theory Section Refereed Roundtables

Session 522. Tuesday, August 10, 2:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m.

Organizer: *Harry F. Dahms*, Florida State University

1. RATIONALITY, TRUST, AND SOCIETY

Table President: *Michael Christopher*, Hawaii Trends Research Institute

A System Cybernetic Approach to Individual and Organizational Level Trust Formation. *Amalya L. Oliver*, Hebrew University, Israel

Self-Organization Theory and the Emergence of Social Solidarity and Rationality from the Unintended Consequences of Human Action. *Michael Christopher*, Hawaii Trends Research Institute

2. PERSPECTIVES ON MARRIAGE AND MIDDLE-AGED WOMEN

Table President: *Laura L. Sundell-Bahrd*, University of California, Riverside

Middle-Aged Women and Multiple-Role Anarchy: A Durkheimian Theoretical Argument for the Addition of a Fifth Type of Suicide. *Laura L. Sundell-Bahrd*, University of California, Riverside

Virtue and Marital Conflict: A Theoretical Formulation and Research Agenda. *Vincent Jeffries*, California State University, Northridge

3. SOCIAL PROBLEMS, SCIENCE STUDIES, AND THEORY

Table President: *Susan Chimonas*, University of Michigan

Back to the Drawing Board: Irony, Moral Panic, and the Materialist Study of Social Problems. *Susan Chimonas*, University of Michigan

Sociology after the Demise of Humanism: A Lesson from Contemporary Science Studies. *Daniel Breslau*, Tel Aviv University, Israel

4. THEORY AND THE ORIENT

Table President: *Farzin Vahdat*, Brandeis University

Is Critical Theory Relevant to Contemporary Middle East? *Farzin Vahdat*, Brandeis University

Orientalism and Sociology: The (Un)Happy Marriage? *Jaeyoun Won*, University of California, Berkeley

5. CONTEMPORARY THEORY: ON BOURDIEU AND COLEMAN

Table President: *Annette Lareau*, Temple University

Social Capital: Untangling the Differences between Coleman and Bourdieu. *Annette Lareau* and *Erin McNamara Horvat*, Temple University

The Linguistic Bias in Bourdieu's Theory. *Niilo Kauppi*, Academy of Finland

6. ON REALISM AND WEBER

Table President: *Michael Meacham*, Valdosta State University

In Defense of Realist Assumptions. *Pidi Zhang*, Georgia Southern University

Suggestions on a Weberian Process of Religion: A Model of Weberian Religion for the Instructor. *Michael Meacham*, Valdosta State University

7. FROM NEO-MARXISM TO POST-MARXISM: MARCUSE AND LACLAU

Table President: *Paul C. Fuller*, State University of New York, Buffalo

Post-Marxism: Underdetermination in Discourse Theory. *Paul C. Fuller*, State University of New York, Buffalo

From "Social Implications" to One-Dimensional Man: Herbert Marcuse's Theory of the One-Dimensional Society. *Black Hawk Hancock*, University of Wisconsin, Madison

8. THEORY AND CULTURE

Table President: *Thomas J. Burns*, University of Utah

Epistemology and Culture: Some Social Implication of Human Cognition. *Thomas J. Burns*, University of Utah, and *Terri LeMoyné*, University of Tennessee, Chattanooga

9. INSTANCES OF CRITICAL THEORY: FOUCAULT AND HABERMAS

Table President: *Jorge Ardití*, State University of New York, Buffalo

Self-Cultivation as a Microphysics of Reverence: Towards a Foucauldian Understanding of Korean Culture. *Jorge Ardití* and *Minjoo Oh*, State University of New York, Buffalo

Irreconcilable Paradigms of Critique?: The Unfinished Debate between Habermas and Foucault. *Markus S. Schulz*, Bauhaus University, Germany

Contemporary Academic Feminism in the UK and the USA, 1980-1998: Developing a

See **ROUNDTABLES** on Page 8

Other Important Section Events

Theory Section Reception

Monday, August 9

6:30 p.m.

Theory Section Business Meeting

Tuesday, August 10

3:30 p.m.-4:15 p.m.

The ASA Meetings in Chicago Feminist Theory, Critical Theory, Teaching, and More

In addition to the theory sessions organized by our section, several other sessions devoted to sociological theory have been organized by the ASA Program Committee. They include sessions on feminist theory, critical theory, classics of sociological theory, and postmodern theory; there are also sessions devoted to teaching theory. These sessions are listed below.

Intellectual Production and Social Theory

Session 16. Friday, August 6, 8:30-10:15 a.m.

Organizer and President: *Harvey Goldman*, University of California, San Diego

The Experiential Bases of Social Thought. *Arpad Szakolczai*, University College, Cork, Ireland

Whence Durkheim's Nietzschean Grandchildren? A Look at Robert Hertz in the Durkheimian Genealogy. *Alexander Tristan Riley*, University of California, San Diego

Predecessor Selection and the Making of the Canon: Spencer's Critics, Then and Now. *Valerie A. Haines*, University of Calgary

Critical Theory

Session 34. Friday, August 6, 10:30 a.m.-12:15 a.m.

Organizer and President: *Moishe Postone*, The University of Chicago

The Critical Theory of the Modern State: Marcuse's Departure from Frankfurt Orthodoxy. *Stanley Aronowitz*, City University of New York Graduate Center

The Nature of Structure and the Form of Difference: Temporal Conceptions in Critical Theory. *Nancy Hanrahan*, George Mason University

Critical Theory and the "Risk Society": Adapting to Systems or Identifying Agency and Relationships? *Nitsan Chorev*, New York University

Feminist Welfare Reform: Intimate Realms and Rationality. *Suzanne T. Reading*, University of California, Santa Cruz

Discussion: *Peter Beilharz*, La Trobe University, Australia

Social Structure, Social Relationships, and Moral Order: Weber, Durkheim, and Others

Session 60. Friday, August 6, 12:30-2:15 p.m.

Organizer: *Harvey Goldman*, University of California, San Diego

President: *Steven A. Turner*, University of South Florida

Stratification Theory and Research in Weimar Germany. *Sandro Segre*, University of Genoa

Scarce Resources and Iron Cages: Max Weber's Mechanism of Ossification of Social Relationships. *Vladimir Oboronko*, University of California, San Diego

Rationalism in the Wild West: Max Weber, Capitalism, and the Frontier. *David N. Smith*, University of Kansas

The Moral Philosophy of Organic Utility: Durkheim, Mill, Maslow. *Ronald G. LaRoque* and *Candan Duran-Aydintug*, University of Colorado, Denver

Teaching Graduate Theory Courses

A Teaching Workshop

Session 196. Saturday, August 7, 2:30 p.m.-4:15 p.m.

Anne Kane, University of Texas, Austin

Feminist Theory

Session 229. Sunday, August 8, 8:30 a.m.-10:15 a.m.

Organizer: *Joan Alway*, University of Miami
Feminists Thinking the State. *Anna C. Korteweg*, University of California, Berkeley

The Everyday Extraordinary: Community Practice and Theory in "Herstory." *Mimi ArNSTEIN*, Brandeis University

Three Feminist Perspectives on Fractured Identity. *Tracy E. Crosby*, University of Colorado, Boulder

Gender Politics in Contemporary Taiwan: A Reflection of Feminist Methodology. *Yun Fan*, Yale University

Discussion: *Jennifer Pierce*, University of Minnesota

See **MORE SESSIONS** on Page 6

Other Meetings Offer Theory Too

The Society for the Study of Social Problems meets just before and during the ASA meetings in Chicago. They have organized two sessions that may be of special interest to section members. The first is focused on feminist theory, the second on social problems theory.

Feminism and Social Problems

Session 14. Thursday, August 5, 1:00 p.m.-2:45 p.m.

Location: The Fribourg Suite at The Swissôtel

Organizer and President: *Carol Brooks Gardner*, Indiana University

Co-parenting and Gender Equality: A Reexamination of Nancy Chodorow's Contribution. *Mary Godwyn*

Voice Appropriation in Feminist Theory. *Deirdre M. Smyth*, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, The University of Toronto

Feminist Caucuses: Theorizing Challenges. *Benita Roth*, Binghamton University

'Race Traitors' and 'Fags': White Anti-Racist and Male Anti-Sexist Activists. *Eileen O'Brien*, SUNY-Brockport and *Michael P. Armato*, New York University

Social Problems Theory at Century's End

Session 48. Friday, August 6, 3:00-4:45 p.m.

Location: The Vevey Suite at The Swissôtel

Organizer: *Donileen R. Loseke*, University of South Florida

President: *James A. Holstein*, Marquette University

The Practical Relevance of Social Constructionism? *Gale E. Miller*, Marquette University

Heroic, Tragic and Comic Stances in Social Problems Analysis. *Joel Best*, Southern Illinois University

Appropriating Problems: The Use of People and Conditions in Social Problems Discourse. *J. William Spencer*, Purdue University

Constructionism Reconsidered: Toward a Dialogic Model of Social Problems Claims-Making. *Lawrence T. Nichols*, West Virginia University

Sessions in Chicago Will Feature Theory

MORE SESSIONS from Page 5

Postmodern Theory

Session 306. Sunday, August 8, 4:30-6:15 p.m.

Organizer: *Douglas Kellner*, University of California, Los Angeles

President: *Ben Agger*, University of Texas, Arlington

Society, Science, and Human Identity: Postmodern Paradigm Shifts and Coevolution. *Steven Best*, University of Texas, El Paso

Dealing with Digital Divides: The Rough Realities of Materiality in Virtualization. *Timothy W. Luke*, Virginia Polytechnic Institute

The Empirical Use of Postmodern Theories. *Douglas Goodman*, University of Maryland

Discussion: *George Ritzer*, University of Maryland

Frontiers of Theory

Open Refereed Roundtables

Session 274. Sunday, August 8, 2:30-4:15 p.m.

Organizer: *Christopher K. Vanderpool*, Michigan State University

1. THEORY UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Table President: *David L. Sallach*, University of Chicago

Attractor Models of Classical Social Processes. *David L. Sallach*, University of Chicago

The Social Constructionist Perspective of Deviance: Assessing the Critical Utility of Its Theoretical Base. *Robert T. Wood*, University of Alberta

Teleocausality and Sociological Explanation. *Shanyang Zhao*, Temple University

2. COLLECTIVE ACTION: SOLIDARITY, MOVEMENTS, AND POLICY

Table President: *Susan Kinnevy*, University of Pennsylvania

Stonewall Yesterday and Today: Framing the Gay Rights Movement. *Neil Quisenberry*, University of Kentucky

Making a Social Movement: Exploring Theoretical Frameworks through Group Role Play. *Jo Reger*, State University of New York, Albany

Ecological Theory as a Social Welfare Theory. *Susan Kinnevy*, University of Pennsylvania

3. IS THERE THEORETICAL CAPITAL IN SOCIAL CAPITAL?

Table President: *Alison Neustrom-Scott*, Louisiana State University

The Impact of Social and Economic Capital upon the Participation of Dominican Women in the Informal Economy. *Liza Aranda* and *Sherri Grasmuck*, Temple University

Welfare Recipients' Views about the State's Role in Family Support: Do Human and Social Capital Matter? *Alison Neustrom-Scott*, *Staci Minyard*, *F. Andrew Deseran*, and *Joachim Singelmann*, Louisiana State University

4. THEORY AS METHOD

Table President: *Black Hawk Hancock*, University of Wisconsin, Madison

De-Mythologizing the Data: Texts, Myths, and Bodies in the Neglected Sociological Theory of Roland Barthes. *Black Hawk Hancock*, University of Wisconsin, Madison

5. CRITICAL CRITIQUES OF CRITICAL THEORY

Table President: *Nuran Erol*, Ege University, Turkey

Social Determination and Marx: An Exploration of Marx's Materialist Dialectic. *Timothy B. Gongaware*, University of Nebraska, Lincoln

Habermas's Theory of Public Sphere and Contemporary Urban China. *Hui Niu*, University of Minnesota

Debating Andre Gunder Frank's Re-ORIENT: Global Economy in the Asian Age. *Ricardo Duchesne*, University of New Brunswick

6. FINDING SELF IN THEORY

Table President: *Leda E. Kanellakos*, University of Iowa

Cultural Transitions and Identity Transformations: Considering Role-, Situated-, and
See CHICAGO on Page 7

On the International Scene

Moscow Conference on Intellectuals and Society

September 28-30, 1999. *Intelligentsia and/or Intellectuals: The Forthcoming Reality of the XXI Century*. Moscow, Russia.

This conference is the third in a series of international conferences about intellectuals and society. It is being organized by the Interregional Centre for Advanced Studies in cooperation with the Moscow State University, the Historical Division of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and the Editorial Board of the journal *Problems of History*. The aim of the conference is to bring together researchers working in various fields for an interdisciplinary discussion on the past, present and future of intelligentsia. The conference will examine the following themes: (1) theories of intelligentsia and the prob-

lems of intellectual labor, (2) psychological and sociological portraits of intelligentsia, (3) humanistic values and economy, (4) intelligentsia in the labyrinth of cultural evolution in the twentieth century, (5) the university as citadel of knowledge versus the marketplace of professions, (6) the moral and ethical responsibility of intelligentsia for advanced studies in science and humanities applications, and (7) intelligentsia and the world. For more information, contact the conference organizer: Alexander I. Studenikin, Department of Theoretical Physics, Moscow State University, 119899 Moscow, Russia, telephone 7-095-939-50-47, fax 7-095-939-29-91, 932-88-20, studenik@srdlan.npi.msu.su; or Andrey Egorov, secretary of the conference, ane@srdlan.npi.msu.su.

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Social-Identity Perspectives. *Leda E. Kanellakos*, University of Iowa

Self-Affirmation through Death: Toward a Sociology of the Self. *Glenn Muschert*, University of Colorado

Theory & International Perspectives

Research Posters: Selected Presentations

Session 382. Monday, August 9, 12:30 p.m.-2:15 p.m.

1. A Sociological Road Not Taken: Transgressive Utopias before Durkheim. *Jeffrey Dennis*, State University of New York, Stony Brook

3. Reclaiming Malthus: The 1798 Essay as Social Theory. *Frank W. Elwell*, Murray State University

4. Spinoza and the Theory of Balance. *John Bramsen*

Innovations in Theory

Potpourri: Selected Presentations

Session 384. Monday, August 9, 12:30 p.m.-2:15 p.m.

Applying Concepts across Disciplinary Boundaries. *Kenneth D. Bailey*, University of California, Los Angeles

The Relational Perspective in Social Exchange: A Correction to the Dominant Individualist-Collectivist Dichotomy. *Leon H. Warshay* and *Diana W. Warshay*, Wayne State University

Teaching Sociology

Session 436. Monday, August 9, 4:30-6:15 p.m.

Organizer: *Diana Kendall*, Baylor University

Presider: *Jerry Shepperd*, Austin Community College

Exploring Critical Feminist Pedagogy: The Dialogic, Experiential, and Participatory (DEP) Approach to Teaching and Learning. *Esther Ngan-ling Chow*, American University

Intertextuality and a Reclaimed Public Sphere: Undergraduates Playing with Habermasian Theory. *Jeanne Curran*, California State University, *Dominguez Hills*, and *Susan R. Takata*, University of Wisconsin, Parkside

Thinking outside the Box: Reinvigorating the Teaching of Theory in the Sociology Curriculum. *Diana Kendall* and *Harold Osborne*, Baylor University

A Successful Methodology for Teaching Social Theory: A Problem-Area Perspective. *Mike McMullen*, University of Houston, Clear Lake

Sociological Theory Gets New Editor

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and it will also speed up the review process and let authors know where they stand without months of delay. Moreover, I do not see contradictory reviews as necessarily a bad thing; and I do not feel obligated to keep sending an article out for third- (fourth-, fifth-) party adjudication of split reviewers. If competent reviewers come down on different sides of an article, I am often disposed to think that it would provide some excitement for readers. Again, I will place considerable discretion in my own hands about how to handle split reviews, but my goal is to shorten the review processes and publish articles that will generate something more than a yawn from readers.

In closing, it is important to emphasize again that, while I have strong opinions about the direction of theory and while I will be a strong editor, I

take seriously my charge to edit a journal for the whole of sociological theory, not just its positivistic wing. I will try to be fair and open; and so, I invite theorists of all persuasions to see *Sociological Theory* as a potential outlet for their work. If I have anything approaching a grandiose plan, it is to make the journal the place where established stars and younger scholars alike will first submit their articles. This goal is attainable if we can expand the journal and make it an exciting place for sociologists to read about theory.

How to Submit to *Sociological Theory*

As of July 1, 1999 send manuscripts to *Sociological Theory*, Department of Sociology, University of California-Riverside, 900 University Avenue, Riverside, CA 92521

More Aphorisms

By Murray S. Davis

§ Georg Simmel will be more relevant to the 21st century than Marx, Durkheim, and Weber. Simmel viewed everything – nature, technology, culture, society, individual – as trying to organize everything else around itself, producing a disintegrated, multicentered, dynamic, swirling world. For example, a Simmelian analysis is most appropriate for the late 1990's "browser war," in which Microsoft and Netscape contest whether to organize the network of all computers around the individual computer's desktop or the individual computer's desktop around the network of all computers.

§ Before promulgating their theories, social theorists should be forced to consider how their ideas could be misconstrued and corrupted—perhaps even required to issue an *intellectual impact statement*. That might have saved the world from such disasters as Marxism and Fascism.

§ Sociologists can help human beings articulate themselves only by deriving their concepts from human experience. If their concepts reflect this experience too closely, however, human beings will find the self-articulations they facilitate too obvious. But sociologists who focus on the fringe of human experience, especially on where it differs from the center, can create concepts that human beings will find interesting enough to use for increasing their self awareness and development.

§ Sociology (as currently practiced): the boring's counterattack on the interesting.

How Theorists See Theory

SURVEY from Page 2

Therefore, we received permission from Janet Chafetz, the current chair of the theory section, to mail surveys to a random sample of members of the ASA theory section with the intent of understanding more about theorists' views of theory.

In March, half of the American members of the ASA's Theory Section (231 people) received a three-page questionnaire asking for answers to 12 substantive and four demographic questions. (We wanted to keep the questionnaire short in the hope of increasing the response rate.) So far as we know this is the first survey study of theorists' views of theory. The substantive questions asked theorists to name (1) the key authors they teach in courses on the classical period, (2) the works they consider most important from the classical period, (3) the works they would consider dropping from the "canon" of the classical period, (4) works they would consider adding to the "canon", (5) the key authors they teach in courses on the contemporary period, and (6) works they consider to be part of the "emerging canon" of contemporary theory. The questionnaire also asked theorists to discuss (7) the emphasis of their courses in contemporary theory and to characterize (8) their own identity as a

theorist in relation to 24 types of theorizing. We asked three questions about theorists' understanding of Max Weber because we have a particular interest in the contemporary reception of Weber. (We intend to write a paper on Weber's social theory and the reception of his work in American sociology.) The demographic questions asked theorists about their current position, institutional affiliation, age, and sex. We may also code region based on postmarks.

We have no interest in the names of the respondents to our surveys. For this reason, we asked that all surveys be returned to the project's administrative assistant, Robin Whittington, rather than to us. Robin has the only copies of the list of names keyed to identification codes, and she has removed any identifying marks from the returned surveys.

After two mailings, the response rate to the survey has been just over 50 percent. We have more than 110 returned questionnaires. This response rate, while acceptable, is not as high as we would like. During the next month, we will therefore be contacting those of you who received copies of the questionnaire but did not respond. We hope that most of you who have not returned the surveys will want to participate, but we understand that some theorists may not find surveys an appropriate means of understanding theorists' views of

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theory. Interestingly, we apparently have had a very good response from senior theorists, but not as strong a response from graduate students and new professors.

We hope to have the data analyzed by next September. If so, we will have a second installment in the fall edition of the newsletter detailing the findings of the survey.

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