

International Social Theory Consortium
10th Annual Meeting
16-17 June, 2011
School of Sociology & Philosophy,
University College Cork, Ireland.

**‘Methods of Theorizing:
Reflective searches for Ways, Ideals and Measures’**

Call for papers:

Social theory and method are inextricably bound up with one another, despite the convention of their separation and a recent tendency to differentiate them entirely by emphasizing technical training in particular methods over general education in culture and thinking. But to theorize, whether in Sociology, Philosophy, Politics, Anthropology, or in any cognate field in the Arts, Humanities and Social sciences means not simply to arrange empirical evidence, but also to seek to clarify the Ideals, Standards or Measure by virtue of a way of inquiry that is sustained and methodically pursued, so much so that we may speak of method(s) of theorizing.

Questions of method, or searches for the ‘Way’, just as the use of the powers of reason, cannot be reduced to a search for means to satisfy given ends, but must incorporate a discussion of the very ends of social and human life, including the question of meaning. Methods of theorizing are thus ways of attending to the world so as to bring into view, contemplate and articulate Standards of beauty, truth and the good life; radiant Ideals that illuminate and make possible an understanding and interpretation of our present practices and institutions, thereby enabling our education and self-transformation in light of such a Measure.

As Weber concludes in ‘Politics as a Vocation’ “all historical experience confirms the truth – that man would not have attained the possible unless time and again he had reached out for the impossible.” Theorizing can thus be conceived of as

the methodical reaching out for the impossible Measure. But as *theoria* and *methodus* have become differentiated we lose sight of the Ways towards recovering our Ideals just at a time when economic crisis, ecological catastrophe and political turmoil threaten to overwhelm us.

Last year's ISTC meeting sought to transcend the cultural turn's differentiation & proliferation of Habermasian, Foucaulian, Eliasian, subaltern, feminist, sub-disciplinary theories, a concern indicating an aspiration towards our recovering re-integrating, holistic methods of theorizing. This year's conference continues this search for renaissance, inviting contributions seeking a reflective balance and harmony amongst the various currents in social & political thought at the fundamental level of theory and method, focus on their relation to the elusive but very real directive Ideals of human existence.

Papers are invited that speak to the topic from:

- Classical & contemporary social theory: working with our inheritance
- Methodology of Critical Theory
- Literary methods and Social Theory
- The interpretive tradition, depth hermeneutics & analysis
- The performative aspects of public life
- Media power and image magic
- Psychoanalytic method and social theory
- Phenomenology & hermeneutics
- Epistemologies and philosophies of knowledge today
- Asian philosophies and methods
- Socrates, Plato, and working with the Greeks today
- Political anthropology and reflexive historical sociology

Convenor: Arpad Szokolczai, Professor of Sociology, University College, Cork, Ireland.

Please submit abstracts by March 1, 2011 to s.renwick@ucc.ie