

SOCIETY FOR THEORETICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL PSYCHOLOGY

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Amy Fisher Smith, PhD, Editor

DIVISION 24

The Society engages the philosophical and metatheoretical dimensions of psychology, and is committed to representing and fostering diverse perspectives regarding ontological, epistemological, ethical, and critical issues within disciplinary psychology.

THEORETICAL AND
PHILOSOPHICAL
PSYCHOLOGY

SOME NOTES ON THE 5TH ANNUAL MIDWINTER MEETING IN RICHMOND, VA. 2017

The fifth annual Division 24 Midwinter Meeting took place in Richmond, VA at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, and it was a great success. The theme for the midwinter meeting was *Practicing Philosophical Psychology in Research, Teaching, and Clinical Work*, and there were a number of excellent presentations on that and related topics. Of special note, the Division President Thomas Teo put together a three-part Presidential Forum *Re-envisioning theoretical psychology: Rebels with(out) a cause?* which kicked off each of the three days of the conference and included a number of excellent talks about the future of the field from several leading voices. Our plenary speaker, Dr. Darcia Narvaez, offered a powerful vision on development, evolution, and morality. An update on the Hoffman ethics report was provided, as well as a specific meeting and series on topics pertaining to clinical issues. There were also some excellent presentations on social justice and training in philosophically informed clinical programs. As Program Chair, I would like to offer a special thanks to the rest of the Program Committee, Samuel Downs, Mary Beth Morrissey and Steve Yanchar, for their help with this year's program. Thanks also go to Cacky Mellor and other students who helped with the proposal review.

Gregg Henriques, Ph.D.
2017 Program Chair/Div 24 Membership Chair

THE PRESIDENTIAL FORUM AT THE MIDWINTER MEETING

“Theorizing as rebellion” does not only apply to psychology but also to theoretical psychology. Thus, for the Presidential Forum I have decided on the topic of “Re-envisioning theoretical psychology:

Rebels with(out) a cause?” The 3 presidential fora were organized for

the mornings of Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. The meetings were labeled as Three Friends of Winter which are commonly used in Chinese art: I. Pine (松), II. Bamboo (竹), and III. Plum (梅). These plants flourish in winter and while the cold wind is gusting against theoretical psychology, we still flourish. Theoretical / philosophical psychology has a “biography.” We do not know the stage of this “life,” its future trajectories, or what will be written on

its epitaph. We know that the division was founded more than 50 years ago and that since the institutionalization of theoretical psychology as a separate subdiscipline within psychology lives have passed. It is time to rethink and re-envision the duties, responsibilities, hopes, and tasks of theoretical psychology. This is due to the age of the subdiscipline but also because the gap between alternative approaches and the mainstream has widened, and significant changes in society, culture, technology, the discipline and profession of psychology, that include processes of internationalization, intellectual and philosophical innovations in other disciplines, and changes in how we conduct our lives, afford possibilities of a new orientation in theoretical psychology. How would such a re-envisioned theoretical psychology look like? What new alliances would it make? What should it keep from the past and what should it drop? Historically, it seems that neither rebellious deconstruction nor reconstruction, that may include another round of interpretations of classical texts, showing slight variations, are sufficient. But this is open for discussion. Theoretical psychology needs theory “construction” that includes the development of original theoretical-psychological ideas that inspire psychology and articulate mental life and subjectivity more adequately.

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These issues were debated in this forum by some of the leaders within the Division, Mark Freeman (Wiping the Slate Clean: Theoretical Psychology for the Trumpian Age), Mary Beth Morrissey (Phenomenology and the Law as Rebellion: An Autoethnographic Account), Suzanne R. Kirschner (Psychology as it should be: Ironies, Reveries, Strategies), Louis A. Sass (On psychology, phenomenology, and the ‘black hole’ of human subjectivity); Brent D. Slife, Eric C. Ghelfi and Gregory Martin (The Playing Out of the “Western Project:” What Next?), Gregg Henriques (From E. Psychology to M. E. Psychology: A Vision for the Field in the 21st Century), Jeff Sugarman (Overcoming Psychologism), Saulo de Freitas Araujo (Bringing the History of Psychology Back to Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology: A Two-Layered Approach); Barbara S. Held (The Return of Physics Envy: This Time It’s Theoretical); Lisa M. Osbeck (Vertical and Horizontal Development in Theoretical Psychology), Kathleen L. Slaney (An Intersectionality for Theoretical Psychology?), Thomas Teo (The epistemic, practical, and emancipatory interests of the psychological humanities in theoretical work). The papers were discussed by Blaine Fowers, Frank Richardson, and Alan Tjeltveit.

Thomas Teo, Ph.D. President, Society for Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology

UPCOMING EVENTS: THE DIVISION 24 PROGRAM AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

125th ANNUAL CONVENTION | Washington, D.C.
AUGUST 3-6, 2017

This year’s program takes as its Presidential theme, “**Theorizing as Rebellion**” (“**What Can We Know? What Should We Do? What May We Hope?**”). President-elect Thomas Teo elaborates it with the following:

Kant famously posed in his Critique of Pure Reason three questions: “What Can I Know? What Should I Do? What May I Hope?” Although these questions have relevance in psychology as they pertain to epistemology, ethics, and faith in the discipline and profession, they also require revisions. An important turn in

theorizing relates to the social dimensions of ontology, epistemology, ethics, and aesthetics, because the monological, decontextualized individual does not exist. Thus, the questions themselves need to be updated and the “I” is changed to “We.” In addition, although these questions are fundamental but rarely addressed in psychology, we need to include issues that reflect our present and its concerns with environmental and social justice. These questions and issues are not at the forefront of the discipline and profession, and posing them makes theorizing rebellious. But rebellion goes further and challenges the status quo as well as those traditions that have supported a new nihilism that assumes that we collectively can no longer change unjust structures, institutions, and practices. Rebellion in this second meaning is more radical and questions the status-quo supporting function of many psychologies themselves. Accordingly, we welcome topics that fall within a more traditional philosophical division concerning the ontological, epistemological, ethical, and aesthetic

shortcomings of psychology, and its solutions, but also topics that veer into radical theorizing as they relate to marginalized groups, topics, or events, with a critical lens in mind.

DIV 24 APA CONVENTION
THEME:

*Theorizing as Rebellion:
What can we know? What
should we do? What may we
hope?*

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Our program will begin on the morning of Thursday, August 3rd with an invigorating symposium on the “Crisis of American Psychology”, followed by continuing discussions of psychology in changing sociopolitical conditions that will begin in APA convention rooms and carry over to the Division’s hospitality suite. On the second day of the conference, Division 24 presenters will discuss another pressing concern: Psychology in the era of Neoliberalism. Special focus will be given to the changing nature of teaching, training, and academic opportunities in psychology; and students and early career psychologists will lead an engaging lunch conversation on “Critical Perspectives on Graduate Studies”. On Saturday, August 5th, our presenters will address various conceptual and ethical concerns in psychology—including what a psychology may look like in “The Age of Neuroscience”; ontological and epistemological concerns related to core psychological concepts; as well as latest updates on the Hoffman

Report from Division 24’s Ethics in Psychology Taskforce. We will also hear Thomas Teo’s Presidential Address, entitled “Laying the Foundations for the Psychological Humanities: What do we know about subjectivity?”. The program will conclude on Sunday with theoretical psychological discussions of central topics to psychological inquiry and practice, including empathy, personality, and psychotherapy.

We also have exciting social events scheduled on each day of the conference, including a joint social with Division 26 (History) on Thursday, a Journal Reception for the Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology on Friday, and a larger-scale Foundational Divisions Coalition (FDC) Social that will bring members from five divisions together on Saturday.

Basia Ellis

Div 24 Program Chair