

Call for Papers and Sessions

Cultural Histories: Close Readings, Critical Syntheses

ISCH Annual Conference 2010

University of Turku, Finland, 26–30 May 2010

Keynotes

Carlo Ginzburg, Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa (pending)

Sir Christopher Frayling, Royal College of Art, London

Jacques Revel, École des hautes études en sciences sociales (EHESS), Paris

Miri Rubin, Queen Mary, University of London

Marja Tuominen, University of Lapland, Rovaniemi

Cultural historians' enquiries often encounter a tension between the need to build up holistic interpretations and syntheses and the need for close reading, for dense microhistorical analyses. The Conference investigates the ways in which today's cultural historians perceive "the grand narratives" and holistic interpretations. It explores the challenges that are involved in combining micro- and macro levels, and asks what kinds of new viewpoints the cultural historian's investigations can open.

The Conference is thematically open. Original papers addressing theoretical and/or methodological questions or suggesting new interpretations arising from empirical analysis are welcomed. The papers may discuss for example the following topics:

- What kinds of metanarratives and models of narrative have been used or are used by cultural historians?
- In what ways do our new interpretations challenge established narratives? For example: Does the history of emotions undermine a history which is based on the idea of progress? How does the history of corporeality or bodiliness negotiate with Norbert Elias's civilization theory? Does gender history challenge the narrative of the birth of the individual?

- What kinds of syntheses can cultural history construct by changing the vantage point? What will the world look like, for example, when seen through the eyes of a reading or a writing person of the past?
- What is the relationship of the narrated cultural history to the narrator's own culture?
- How do the narratives of cultural history relate to the understanding of epochs? In what way does our research take into account the people's understanding of their own time, their past and their future? Is our perception, for example, of a Victorian culture a Victorian creation?
- Does cultural history have a canon or several canons?
- Who has the right to make cultural historical interpretations? At whom is cultural history aimed?
- Is cultural history colonizing? How broad is the concept of culture? Do the micro- and macro levels recognise a similar concept of culture?
- How can we identify the general in the particular?
- In what ways can we challenge "the grand narratives" or established interpretations with new or different kinds of sources?
- Does today's cultural history relate to the history of civilizations, universal history or Weberian comparative history?
- In what ways do media culture and popular memory challenge cultural historical interpretations? How do new media, television, cinema, theatre, and literature build up cultural history?
- How does a cultural historian as a teacher make syntheses: what – and how – do we teach in the foundational or introductory courses on cultural history?

We welcome proposals for individual papers and complete sessions. Presentations should be 20 minutes in length. The deadline for abstracts is **30 October 2009**. The length of the abstracts is 250 words. Abstracts can be submitted at <http://isch2010.utu.fi/>

The language of the conference is English, but full sessions in other languages can be proposed. Presentations in languages other than English should be accompanied by hand-outs or projector presentations of main points in English and discussion in English should be possible. All abstracts should be in English.

Further information at the conference web-site <http://isch2010.utu.fi/>