

**Interpretive Methodologies & Methods Conference Group
@ APSA 2011, Seattle**

Grain of Sand Award

The Interpretive Methodologies and Methods Conference Group of the APSA is proud to recognize Anne Norton, Professor of Political Science at the University of Pennsylvania, as this year's recipient of the Grain of Sand Award.

The award is intended to honor a political scientist whose contributions to interpretive studies of the political, and, indeed, to the discipline itself, its ideas and its persons, have been longstanding and merit special recognition. More specifically, drawing combined inspiration from the opening lines of William Blake's "Auguries of Innocence" and Wisława Szymborska's "View with a Grain of Sand" (excerpted below), after both of which it is named, the Grain of Sand Award honors a scholar whose contributions demonstrate creative and sustained engagement with questions of enduring political importance from an interpretive perspective. Echoing Szymborska's "We call it a grain of sand," the award underscores the centrality of meaning making in both the constitution and study of the political; drawing on Blake's "To see a world in a grain of sand," the award honors the capacity of interpretive scholarship to embody and inspire imaginative theorizing, the intentional cultivation of new lines of sight through an expansion of literary and experiential resources, and the nourishing of a playfulness of mind so necessary to the vitality of social science.

Anne Norton is an ideal honoree both for her scholarship and for the work she has done in the profession to expand the scope of what counts as *knowing* in political science. Her research record exemplifies her tireless efforts to change how political science is done and what types of political science are valued. Her *95 Theses on Politics, Culture & Method* (Yale University Press, 2004) provides a stunning assault on political science orthodoxy and opens multiple possibilities for using interpretive and anti-foundational approaches to understand power, politics, culture, and identity. Her earlier works in political theory and American politics render these possibilities concrete through elegant applications of anthropological theories and semiotics to enduring questions about culture and identity.

In addition to *95 Theses* Anne deserves special recognition for her *Leo Strauss and the Politics of American Empire*, also published in 2004 (Yale University Press). This courageous, beautifully-written book constitutes a compelling demonstration of some of her theses from the other book. Rather than feign political neutrality, she passionately engaged in the debate over the Iraq war, taking a clear stand against it (manifesting Thesis 55: "There are no neutral scientists"). And rather than expunge the author from the text, Anne imaginatively and profitably incorporated into the narrative her

experience as a graduate student at the University of Chicago, where she studied under some of Leo Strauss's leading students. Thus, this "[w]ork speaks simultaneously of its ostensible object and of its author and context" (Thesis 56). Inasmuch as *Leo Strauss and the Politics of American Empire* draws both on Anne's life experiences and on her careful reading of Straussian texts, the book offers a compelling model of combining phenomenological and hermeneutic approaches to interpretation.

Finally, we would be remiss were we not to recognize Anne Norton's work within the profession on behalf of interpretive methods, both as a challenger and gadfly to traditionalists and as a mentor and supporter for newer scholars who use interpretive and other non-positivist approaches. We all owe Anne Norton a debt of gratitude for helping to open the space we now inhabit.

Julie Novkov, Ido Oren, and Dvora Yanow
on behalf of the 2010-2011 Committee:

Peregrine Schwartz-Shea, University of Utah – co-chair
Dvora Yanow, University of Amsterdam – co-chair
Patrick Jackson, American University
Cecelia Lynch, University of California, Irvine
Julie Novkov, SUNY Albany
Ido Oren, University of Florida
Tim Pachirat, New School
Dorian Warren, Columbia University

View with a grain of sand
-- Wislawa Szymborska

*We call it a grain of sand,
but it calls itself neither grain nor sand.
It does just fine without a name,
whether general, particular,
permanent, passing, incorrect, or apt.*

*Our glance, our touch mean nothing to it.
It doesn't feel itself seen and touched.
And that it fell on the windowsill
is only our experience, not its.*

...

*The window has a wonderful view of a lake,
but the view doesn't view itself.*

...

*The lake's floor exits floorlessly,
and its shore exists shorelessly.
Its water feels itself neither wet nor dry
and its waves to themselves are neither singular or plural.
They splash deaf to their own noise
on pebbles neither large nor small.*

*And all this beneath a sky by nature skyless
in which the sun sets without setting at all
and hides without hiding behind an unminding cloud.*

...

*A second passes.
A second second.
A third.
But they're three seconds only for us.*

*Time has passed like a courier with urgent news.
But that's just our simile.
The character is invented, his haste is make-believe,
his news inhuman.*

Auguries of Innocence
-- William Blake

*To see a world in a grain of sand,
And a heaven in a wild flower,
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,
And eternity in an hour.*

...

*We are led to believe a lie
When we see not thro' the eye,*

...

*But does a human form display
To those who dwell in realms of day.*