

# Society for the Philosophy of Science in Practice

## Mark Your Calendars!

Submission Deadline for SPSP's Fourth Biennial Conference at the University of Toronto is

1 December 2012

## Editorial

Dear SPSP Community,

Hello again! We hope you had a warm and sunny as well as productive summer (although if it was sunny you were probably not living in Ireland or Germany or the UK...or northern Europe. Perhaps we simply hope you did not drown).

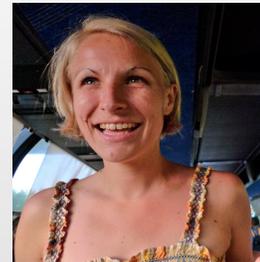
Continuing the Newsletter's aim to strengthen and maintain our community in-between our biennial conferences this second edition highlights some SPSP 'firsts' in our (now) regular features.

In 'At the Philosopher's Desk', [Mieke Boon](#) tells Leah McClimans and Sophia Efstathiou about a few 'firsts' including the origins of her Chair in the Philosophy of Science in Practice at the University of Twente, and the development of SPSP itself.

In 'Graduate Students Speak Out!' Jordan Bartol provides some personal commentary on memorable 'firsts' as a graduate student in PSP (to which we're sure many can relate). He also interviews [Jo Donaghy](#) (EGENIS, Exeter) on her remarkable PSP 'first': entering the 2011 'Dance your PhD' competition. With public engagement being an increasingly important (and exciting!) part of academic life (e.g. see also the '[Consciousness Expo](#)' in Brighton this summer), we hope this encourages other PSP-ers to think about different ways of presenting their research!

Sophia Efstathiou (Researcher, Norwegian University of Science and Technology). Sophia has spent the last 10 years trying to make sure that besides riding the serial intellectual highs of academia, she makes some difference in how practitioners understand their worlds. Developing an account of how some ordinary ideas can become extraordinary, scientific ones, Sophia studies race and aging science and now systems biology research. She loves sparkly things, especially when found on the ground.

## Newsletter Committee



Leah McClimans (Assistant Professor, University of South Carolina). Leah works on the methodology of quality of life measurement (sometimes to the detriment of her own quality of life!), medical ethics and is currently attempting some genuine social scientific research (and feeling like a bit of a poser in the process). She loves cats and hates being cold.



In our continuing effort to understand better the contours of PSP, Laszlo Kosolosky's explorations of philosophy-of-science in practice vs. philosophy of science-in-practice focuses on the work of Hanne Andersen's 'Philosophy of Contemporary Science in Practice' group at Aarhus. They describe their work as 1) understanding how science is actually done, and 2) reflecting on traditional philosophical questions in light of current scientific work. Thus they aim to cover at least two of the ways of doing PSP. Moreover, they suggest that PSP should go beyond just philosophical methodologies into history and psychology in order to really understand what is going on. Similar to some of Mieke's responses in her interview, they also see improving science education as an important application of PSP.

Finally, Talk of the Town, our New Yorkeresque feature brings news from two conferences. The first, *Empirical Philosophy of Science – Qualitative Methods*, was hosted by Hanne Andersen and Susann Wagenknecht both at Aarhus University, and the second, *Challenging Philosophy: Interdisciplinary Problems and Disciplinary Philosophy*, took place in Tuebingen University and was organized by the Philosophy of/as Interdisciplinarity Network.

We hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter! If you have any comments, suggestions, or ideas for submissions, please email Leah McClimans at [mccliman@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:mccliman@mailbox.sc.edu)

## Newsletter Committee Cont.



Liz Irvine (Post-doc at Centre for Integrative Neuroscience, Tübingen) Trying for a revolution in philosophy of mind and cognitive science by injecting it with some philosophy of science, but will settle for causing minor disturbances. Moving on from consciousness science, the next project is on decision-making, along with an exploration of different kinds of pluralism.



Buck Field. Independent researcher and consultant Buck Field works at the intersection of project management, history & philosophy of science, research, and policy. On a mission to contribute to future faster-than-light technology, he seeks to bring people and ideas together to change the world for future generations as profoundly as the past 500 years of science have done for us.

Laszlo Kosolosky (PhD Student, Centre for Logic and Philosophy of Science, Ghent University, Belgium). As a 'practical' philosopher of science, Laszlo fills his days investigating the ins and outs of consensus conferences, allowing himself to shed new light on social epistemological issues, such as expertise, (epistemic) responsibilities, consensus making, peer review, science policy and scientific integrity.



## At The Philosopher's Desk with Mieke Boon

Mieke Boon is a full professor *Philosophy of Science in Practice* in the Philosophy Department at the University of Twente. This is, as far as we are aware, the first position of its kind in the Netherlands or abroad. Her research strives to provide a better understanding of the role of science in technology. Her current project is entitled: *Using science in technology: Towards a philosophy of the engineering sciences*. Mieke is a founding member of our society and so without further ado...



1. Your Professorship in Philosophy of Science in Practice at the University of Twente seems to be the first position of its kind. Can you tell us a bit about how the professorship evolved? Would you anticipate more such positions coming up in the Dutch context, or abroad?

The University of Twente has a strong department in the Philosophy of Technology. In the late 1990s, young staff-members started to rebel against the technology-pessimistic and monolithic approaches in the Philosophy of Technology. They thought that understanding technology asked for more refined and 'empirically informed' approaches, which they named *The Empirical Turn in the Philosophy of Technology*. This background may explain why, in the year 2001, this department offered me an assistant professorship in the philosophy of technology. At that time, and for almost 15 years, I had been doing scientific research in biotechnology and environmental technology for the mining industry at the University of Technology in Delft. In addition, I initiated in the 1980s in the Netherlands, *Ethics and Technology*, which was a non-existent field by then.

Making this radical career-switch from

science to philosophy has been an enormous challenge. I felt pretty uncertain about the fact that I did not have a PhD in philosophy, and I needed to somehow make-up for it. At that time I was lucky because the Dutch National Science Foundation had started a program called the *Innovational Research Incentives Scheme*, which offered prestigious 5 years personal grants. This program invited researchers who wanted to do something really new, and this suited me as I was having strong ideas on the direction to take. My own philosophical interest had shifted from ethics of technology to, say, the quality of scientific research in the engineering sciences. My hypothesis was that these research practices modeled themselves too much after a view of the 'fundamental' natural sciences, which was not always fruitful in the development of scientific results needed for technological applications. In other words, I believed that a dominant image of science hampered the development of methodologies that suit the engineering sciences, especially methodologies needed for doing inter- and multi-disciplinary research.

So, in 2002 I wrote a research proposal: *Using science in technology: towards a philosophy of the engineering sciences*. However, I did not

have an academic publication record in philosophy, which made it a perilous undertaking. Fortunately, my *h-factor* ☺ in science was quite high, and the reviewers found the project intriguing and trusted that I could make it.

My project attracted attention within the University because I also worked on implementing my findings. For instance, some of the ideas enabled research-groups (in nanotechnology) to reflect on their methodological approaches. I organized workshops together with professors who struggled with how to educate their PhDs in achieving a higher academic level. These workshops were really exciting and both the professors, the PhD students and I learned a lot. I also developed courses for MSc and PhD students in the engineering sciences, which have been well-received, and I got involved in all kinds of excellent teaching at the University. At some point, the board of the University of Twente decided that *Philosophy of Science in Practice* was a productive and challenging new field that also contributed to emerging ideas about science and engineering education and research. This is how this chair was established.

2. As an initiator of the Society for Philosophy of Science in Practice in 2006, could you tell us how SPSP got started? Could you give us an insight on the creation of the group and any practical concerns you had or still have about the organization?

My research project *Philosophy of Science for the Engineering Sciences* was motivated by significant problems of scientific practices, such as: How to perform scientific research that at the same time is of high scientific quality and applicable to concrete systems? How to integrate different scientific fields in solving technological problems? Although I developed my ideas on the grounds of the traditional and more recent philosophy of science, I didn't feel that my questions and approaches found much support in the field. Nancy Cartwright's work came closest to the kind of questions I had, and has been extremely important in my thinking. In 2006, I attended the *Scientific Understanding* conference, organized by Henk De Regt in Amsterdam. This conference

### Newsletter Committee Cont.



Jordan Bartol (PhD Student, Centre for History and Philosophy of Science, University of Leeds). Jordan spends his time thinking about explanations in molecular biology and neuro-cognitive investigations concerning decision-making. He looks forward to the day when these two fields come together, but suspects he'll be waiting for some time.

### At The Philosopher's Desk Cont.

was fantastic. It was the first time that I really felt in place at a philosophical conference. It was as if many of the people had gathered, who I had met over the years, and who shared an interest in real practices of science. At this conference, I suddenly saw the possibility of establishing a vivid, sparkling, involved and open-minded philosophical community that I would like to be part of. Probably, it was 'hanging in the air.' The idea got momentum right away: different people with whom I spoke about it – Hasok Chang, Marcel Boumans, Rachel Ankeny and Margaret Morrison – responded enthusiastically. Just by chance, a very productive SPSP committee was formed. I never ever worried that we would not succeed. Only with hindsight, I recognize how special it was that the SPSP worked out so well. About its success-factor: I think that time was just ready for it.

3. Your MSc is in Chemical Engineering and your PhD is in Biotechnology. What instigated your interest in philosophy? Do you think a background in science is essential to those who want to work in philosophy of science in practice?

My interest in philosophy was only instigated when I was 24 years old, during a traineeship at Shell Oil Company in California. Being in the US was a culture shock, especially on the side of ethics. I stumbled on philosophical questions when starting to ask how it is possible that people see (and think about) the same world so differently. Besides that, I had concerns about the environmental impact of chemical engineering, and how to take responsibility for it. But, 'in the end' my real philosophical passion is the amazing ability of humans to think about the world and 'make knowledge.'

### At The Philosopher's Desk Cont.

My awe about our intellectual abilities has been beautifully expressed by Joe Rouse, who has written: "*The sciences expand and reconfigure the breadth and depth of the space of reasoning. ..Conceptual articulation enables us to entertain and express previously unthinkable thoughts, and to understand and talk about previously unarticulated aspects of the world.*"

The second part of your question is difficult. The kind of philosophy of science I do involves nitty-gritty analyses and interpretation of how scientific knowledge has been 'constructed.' It would be impossible for me to do this without an in-depth understanding of scientific thinking, which essentially involves experience in *doing* scientific research. I tend to believe that a background in science is essential if someone wishes to contribute to these research practices. But this is of course not the only concern of the philosophy of science in practice.

4. You have made a significant contribution to the development of a philosophy of engineering sciences. How is this different from a philosophy of engineering or a philosophy of technology, and what motivated you to study this area?

Engineering sciences is scientific research in the context of technological application. For many of us, these scientific practices are invisible. In part this is caused by the researchers themselves, as they tend to tell about the technological applications, rather than the scientific research they do. Thereby they wrongly suggest that they are firstly doing the engineering part. Philosophy of the

### At The Philosopher's Desk Cont.

engineering sciences focuses on understanding these scientific research practices, and hopefully, making them more visible. Philosophy of engineering focuses on understanding technological design and design methodologies. Philosophy of technology is much broader: it concerns ethical, sociological and anthropological issues of technology.

5. Bringing philosophical insights to scientists seems to be one of your driving interests. How have you been able to achieve that aim? Why do you think engineers should care about the distinctions philosophers make?

Yes, it is my driving interest because I think that some philosophical insights can help them towards a more advanced intellectual level. The difficulty many of us face is that there is more and more knowledge, and that we have to work together with experts from many different disciplines. We feel that we lose track; it is too difficult to handle such complexity. One of the things I aim to show is that the way in which we produce scientific knowledge can be understood in terms of a few, more general structures. The traditional hypothetical-deductive model is an example that scientists are familiar with, but its value for better understanding scientific work is limited. My alternative proposes to assume that most scientific articles present a scientific model of a very specific physical (or mathematical) phenomenon, and that the model is constructed for a specific epistemic purpose (such as finding out how the phenomenon can be technologically created or controlled). In my classes students learn, for instance, how to systematically reconstruct scientific models. This approach helps them in more easily grasping scientific articles, especially from fields they are not familiar with. Once one understands how to do these systematic reconstructions, this approach

### At The Philosopher's Desk Cont.

can be utilized as 'the level' at which scientific insights can be exchanged. This makes the exchange between disciplines much easier. Initially students and scientists find it very hard to understand where I am trying to get them, but at some point it clicks and especially our excellent students find it very significant.

6. Your work seems to focus more directly on epistemological issues involved in scientific practice as opposed to ethical or social ones. In your view, what is the relationship between epistemological questions, and ethical/social ones and where do you see philosophers of science in practice contributing more?

First of all, reflecting – by means of epistemological insights – on the methodologies used in scientific research, helps to improve these practices. One of my broader concerns is the wide-spread societal mistrust in science, as well as the difficulties scientific researchers have in adequately dealing with the limitations of science. In my view, inadequate images of science are at the center of this problem. The situation is that scientific research can never give certainty; at the same time, it is the best approach we have so far. My take on ethics in scientific practices, therefore, is a kind of virtue ethics. In the inaugural speech that I gave when I accepted this new Chair, I have defended that prudence (*phronèsis* in Greek) is one of the most important virtues scientific researchers ought to acquire. The philosophical challenge is then to give an account of this virtue such that it suits the current situation. In part, the epistemological questions I address aim at substantiating that virtue. I also call it *epistemological responsibility*. The term epistemic responsibility was dubbed by Lorraine Code in 1987, on which I expand.

### At The Philosopher's Desk Cont.

In my view, besides the more obvious aspects, this virtue involves the ability to reflect on how we use and construct knowledge; more precisely, it involves the ability to track down the frameworks and presuppositions that guide us and to be open to the possibility of better ones – an idea that has been formed through the insights of Kant and Kuhn.

7. Would you tell us about your work for the Female Faculty Network Twente ([FFNT](#)), that you chaired until 2006. What ways have you found to promote gender equality and career development for women in academia? Do you have advice for women philosophers of science in practice about working in our field.

In 2004, I raised the *Female Faculty Network Twente*. My aim was not geared at 'traditional gender issues', as I thought that we didn't have them. Instead, the focus was 'empowerment.' Very soon, however, it turned out that there were big issues, for instance in the numbers of female staff that got appointed and promoted. Somehow, the University board picked it up as an important issue and instituted a so-called ambassadors-network of which I am still a member. Our task is monitoring the situation and proposing measures for improving the careers of female faculty. We offer, for instance, 15.000 euro grants for female faculty who make a plan for taking the next step in their career. Another example is our half-yearly visits to all deans, with whom we discuss the situation of female staff and talk about possibilities for improvement. We also have a mentor network for junior female faculty. These kinds of 'custom-made' measures appear to be enormously effective. So, I am very proud of what we have achieved so far.

### WANTED!

Female Philosopher looking to trade deep philosophical insights for childcare. Children ages 2 and 7 weeks. Situation is desperate! Please respond quickly. Children very cute and full of fun...! Contact me: [help!@would-like-to-make-tenure.edu](mailto:help!@would-like-to-make-tenure.edu)

Social epistemologist in search for rare 80's G.I.Joe collectibles, mint condition. Willing to trade one's own epistemic expertise or cash, whatever is preferable. Contact me at: [YoJoe@metaexpert.edu](mailto:YoJoe@metaexpert.edu)

### SEEKING!

Are you Interdisciplinary? Embedded but not sure where? Philosophically inclined yet tangentially divergent? Do you want to go Native, but unsure of the ethical-epistemic and aesthetic repercussions on your wardrobe? You are not alone! Call me on Skype: [philosophia1917dadada](https://www.skype.com/name/philosophia1917dadada)

Did you started to lose your social skills after writing your dissertation? Help is available. We are a confidential, non-profit support group that meets weekly for anonymous forays into 'the world', e.g. clubs, pubs and discos. We urge intermingling with non-philo types and have next-day debriefs. Learn the art of small talk with *Socially Disabled Now* call 1 800 SDNOW

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# The SPSP Proust Questionnaire

## Featuring Mieke Boon

### **Who are your favorite heros/heroines of fiction?**

Birgitte Nyborg (Sidse Babett Knudsen) in the Danish movie *Borgen*; Daniël Daréus (Michael Nyqvist) in the Swedish movie *As it is in heaven*; Vianne Rocher (Juliette Binoche) in the French movie *Chocolat*.

### **What is your favorite music?**

Classical music, especially Johan Sebastian Bach, Schubert, Mahler and Arvo Pärt. And Jiddisch Klezmer music because it is melancholically cheerful.

### **What is your favorite curse word?**

I can't remember swearing at someone, but if a situation strikes me I say Jeetje or Yek.

### **What is your favorite cuddle word?**

Fûgeltsje, Goudene hârtsje, which are very sweet Frisian expressions (which is where I was born).

### **What sound or noise do you hate?**

People screaming.

### **What is your favorite food?**

Italian, Turkish, and stir-fried spinach with feta cheese.

### **What was the most critical academic feedback you ever received?**

That I have not understood an author's work well enough.

### **Where do you write your best work?**

Best writing in my study. Best thinking is on my bicycle.

### **What is your favorite entertainment?**

Gardening. Watching movies. Studying art (history). Good food with good company.

### **What profession would you like to attempt besides your own?**

I really liked to be a scientific researcher, and I often miss the laboratory. And I would have liked to have been an engineer in the chemical engineering industry as well.

### **If heaven exists, what would you like to hear god say to you at the pearly gates?**

That I would soon see my beloved ones.



## Philosophy-of-Science in Practice vs. Philosophy of Science-in-Practice

The Society for Philosophy of Science in Practice is interested in philosophy of science from a practical perspective. Following John Dupré's presentation at our conference in Exeter (June 22-24, 2011), the study of science in practice tends to make two assumptions, i.e. (1) philosophy of science should be connected to science, and (2) there is more to science than published texts, i.e. practice. Nonetheless, as John discussed there are at least two distinct ways to study science in practice: philosophy-of-science in practice and philosophy of science-in-practice.

**Philosophy-of-Science in Practice** is philosophy that is directly engaged with scientific research through interaction with scientists about philosophical problems (e.g. background assumptions, logical structure, implications of unexpected findings, etc.) This kind of problem-solving is not something scientists *cannot* do, but something scientifically informed philosophers may be good at.

**Philosophy of Science-in-Practice** is philosophy that is engaged with the people and communities producing science, i.e. their various goals, tools and social structures. These are not just incidental features of the production of science but essential to what it is and what its assertions mean.

While these definitions are helpful to elucidate the different ways in which we can study science in practice, they need not be conclusive. Indeed we hope they are a starting point for further reflection on our common interests. To this end in each newsletter we will present this distinction to a colleague in the field and ask how her/his research relates to it. Is the distinction straightforward or debatable? Are both conceptions (mutually) exclusive or not? Could the distinction be improved? If so, how? For this issue, we asked Hanne Andersen - professor at the [Centre for Science Studies](#), Aarhus University, Denmark, and PI of the "[Philosophy of Contemporary Science in Practice](#)" group - to share her thoughts with us.



## P-o-S vs. S-i-P Cont.

She discussed our questions with other members of her group, i.e. Susann Wagenknecht, Sara Green, Mads Goddixsen and Brian Hepburn, and together they came up with the following answer:

Philosophy of Contemporary Science in Practice is a project that aims at achieving a detailed understanding of characteristic changes in contemporary science and their implications for the future development of science. Our group conducts case studies that investigate contemporary science on an empirical basis, focusing on a range of topics including the increased mathematical embedding and use of engineering approaches in areas of contemporary biology, explanatory practices in nanoscience education, trust and testimonial practices in collaboration among scientists on a group level, authorship practices, exploratory experimentation, conceptual development in interdisciplinary research, and scientific misconduct and other malpractices in science. Hence, some of our work is engaged with the practices of how science is actually done, and some of our work is engaged with how best to investigate traditional philosophical problems in the sciences – most of the time it is engaged with both.

Our work stands on both sides of Dupré's distinction between philosophy-of-science in practice and philosophy of science-in-practice. Our position is that philosophy of science is improved by a proper understanding of scientific practice, at the same time recognizing that to understand scientific practice properly requires the application of the philosophy of science. The two evolve together. We would widen the application of philosophy-of-science in practice to include not only, as Kevin C.

## Graduate Students Speak Out!

Life as a graduate student is full of new experiences. These often form the most memorable parts of the years we spend toiling away on MAs and PhDs – though surely there are some things we'd rather forget. I recall the first time I was able to share my work (on gene concepts) with a practicing geneticist. He made my neat-and-tidy philosophy crumble when he revealed, "I don't care what a gene is. I never use the word and the concept plays no role in my practice. The term 'gene' only crops up when we start explaining our findings to the PR department." After mumbling a few incoherent words about *a priori generalizations* and *the theory-ladenness of observation*, I left the room and quietly admitted defeat. My first interaction with a scientist led to my first trip back to the drawing board. I am told these things happen often.

Often comical, sometimes disastrous, other-times uplifting, these firsts are important for grad students. My first encounter with a scientist and my first taste of failure prepared me for yet other firsts, like my first *successful* encounter with a scientist, and the first time I integrated practice into my studies of science.

Many graduate students will share the same firsts: first conferences, first publication rejections, first acceptances(!), and first collaborations. This month, I had the opportunity to talk to one SPSP grad student who is not content with this standard list. I caught up with Jo Donaghy, a student researcher with EGENIS at the University of Exeter, to talk about her very unique experience – surely an SPSP first.

If, like Jo, you've had to move to a small quiet town to do your PhD, you'll probably be

**P-o-S vs. S-i-P Cont.**

Elliot did in the last newsletter, how philosophical insights can be used to assist policy makers and citizens in addressing science related questions, but also how and to what extent philosophical insights into the nature of science might be used by science educators to enhance scientific proficiency. The comparative, empirical investigation of the role of explanations in textbooks from different disciplines is an example of how philosophical insights can be of benefit for educators and students in interdisciplinary programs.

We see science as a multi-faceted enterprise that can vary considerably from one area of inquiry to the next. We therefore also think that philosophy of science-in-practice needs to draw on many methodologies, not only from philosophy but also from history, sociology, psychology and the cognitive sciences. Although the demarcation lines between philosophy of science-in-practice and the many other modes of studying science may not dissolve, they can be made more permeable and less rigid in practice. In the same way, if philosophy-of-science in practice engages with scientific research through interaction with scientists about philosophical problems in the sciences, and also engages with the application of scientific research in society or the training of future scientists, it will necessarily have closer relations to neighboring disciplines such as science education.

**Grad Students Speak Out! Cont.**

looking for ways to make life a little more interesting. Jo found one: Submitting a proposal to the annual 'Dance your PhD' contest, a web-run contest asking PhD students to create interpretive dances of their research (and you thought writing an abstract was hard!).

*Many fellow staff and students encouraged me from the start, bombarding me with links to their favourite entries from previous years. A few just gave me slightly concerned looks. Unfortunately none of them could be tempted to get in front of the camera. Sadly I didn't win. The department continued to show their support at a post research seminar showing of the dance film, and I gave a talk about the project during the ESRC festival of social science.*

*I learnt a lot about public engagement in research. I was working with a team of 20 local performers and filmmakers. I was taken by surprise by how incredibly interested they all were in my research. In preparing for the project I had been so busy with logistics and the final piece that I failed to realise that the process of making the piece was an opportunity for public engagement. The performers and filmmakers were donating their time and expertise; I could have offered them a much better insight into current philosophy of science in return.*

*I also learnt a lot about the importance of paying close attention to the history of science. I made the piece towards the beginning of my PhD when I was still grappling with what it meant to do academic research and what exactly it was I was researching. Whilst this didn't make for a particularly clear and engaging final piece it meant that I was more open to learning about my topic during the process. I was trying to make a piece about methodological*

## Grad Students Speak Out! Cont.

*integration. A problem I encountered whilst creating the piece made me appreciate that I needed to pay more attention to the historical trajectories of the different methods when I returned to my research.*

Jo's video is, to my knowledge, an SPSP first. Perhaps Jo's story will inspire another entrant, perhaps even the first SPSP *Dance your PhD* winner? ... but I'm afraid it won't be me.

Jo's video can be found here: <http://vimeo.com/30026966> and be sure to check out the winning 2011 videos here: <http://tinyurl.com/3b3xh2b>. If you're interested in the 2012 contest, go here: <http://gonzolabs.org/dance/>, Jo highly recommends it!

*Jo Donaghy is a 2<sup>nd</sup> year PhD student at the ESRC Centre for Genomics and Society, University of Exeter. She is working on the AHRC-funded project Philosophical and Historical Perspectives on the Systems Biology of Metabolism. This project is supervised by Sabina Leonelli and John Dupré. Jo moved into HPS after taking a BSc in Human Sciences at the University of Sussex.*

*Jordan Bartol is a 2<sup>nd</sup> year PhD student in the Centre for History and Philosophy of Science at the University of Leeds. He does not dance.*

## Talk of the Town

### Workshop Reports: Practice and Philosophy

We attended two workshops that examined the relations between philosophy and practice, with interesting outcomes.

*“Empirical philosophy of science – qualitative methods”* March 21-23, 2012, Sandbjerg Estate (Denmark), organized by the project *Philosophy of Contemporary Science in Practice*, led by Professor Hanne Andersen at the Centre for Science Studies, Aarhus University, Denmark.

This workshop examined how empirical methods are being used and could be used to answer and reformulate philosophy of science questions. The meeting was attended by almost 20 people, mostly philosophers but of various interdisciplinary backgrounds. It provided a forum for discussing a wide variety of empirically inspired philosophy and science studies work. ‘Empirically immersed’ philosophers choose to do empirical work themselves, whereas ‘empirically informed’ philosophers saw themselves in the role of ‘second-order observers’ and draw on empirical data that others have established – both roles embodied by Erik Angner of George Mason University, and his work on happiness. It also became clear that empirical data of interest to the philosopher arise from a range of different empirical methods, including historical analyses, ethnography, in-depth interviews and quantitative statistical analyses.

Among the speakers, Susann Wagenknecht of Aarhus University spoke about the possibility of a naturalist framework justifying an empirical philosophy of science approach. An

### Talk of the Town Cont.

interesting prospect however complicated by the assumed normative stance that philosophy would occupy in the frame. The invited lecture given by Lisa Osbeck (University of West Georgia) on her joint work with Nancy Nersessian at Georgia Tech reported on the researchers' rationale and their empirical analysis scheme as well as their research results. Focusing on the place of emotion in wet and dry laboratory work in a tissue engineering, a neural engineering and a systems biology lab, Osbeck discussed their reasons for picking the "acting person" as their unit of analysis, and why interview data was taken to be good evidence for their conclusions. Endla Lohkivi's comparative research on cultures of physics labs in Italy, Esthonia and Denmark, used "culture contrast" to distinguish these cultures reporting a significantly more woman-friendly culture in the case of Italy than elsewhere. Farzad Mahootian talked about a research lab using the metaphor of a system striving, but never reaching equilibrium. Erika Mansnerus pointed to the tension between philosophical theorizing and ethnographic sensitivity which she has encountered in her work. In order to address this tension, she proposed, that Philosophy of Science might need to adopt a different vocabulary. Hauke Riesch raised the interesting question why philosophers of science have historically had more trouble accepting social studies of science as opposed to historical ones, discussing social identity and academic politics within the field of philosophy and pointing to ongoing 'boundary work' between the two fields. Henrik Thoren touched on the same subject, discussing the relation of philosophical and historical problems, and claiming that history traditionally fed Philosophy with its problems.

### Talk of the Town Cont.

The workshop raised several questions including some classic questions from the tradition of philosophy of science: What kinds of empirical methods would philosophers of science use or develop as particular to them? Can empirical insights help to diversify and extend philosophical accounts, and how? What should empirical insights be based on, i.e. what methods can be used to generate empirical data? What is the data-theory relationship that a philosopher wishes to create? How do philosophers themselves deal with the fact that the observations they draw upon are theory-laden? How exactly do and should the normative and descriptive interact in empirically based theorizing? Though we reached little conclusion, the setting was excellent for us to raise and begin to answer these important questions.

More information about the workshops can be found at:

<http://css.au.dk/forskning/projects/philosophyofcontemporaryscienceinpractice/workshopsandconferences/empirical-methods/>

*"Challenging Philosophy: Interdisciplinary Problems and Disciplinary Philosophy"*  
September 20-23, Tuebingen University, Germany, Organized by the Philosophy of/as Interdisciplinarity Network.

The meeting invited several speakers from the U.S. and Europe to discuss the status of philosophy within a changing academic interdisciplinary terrain. Several of the participants were philosophers involved in either community or extension work, as a part of their academic posts, as well as philosophers working as consultants, in

## Talk of the Town Cont.

government or policy posts.

Hanne Andersen (Aarhus University) discussed her account of different kinds of interdisciplinary interactivity, Steve Fuller (Warwick University) contemplated an opening up of the university to interdisciplinary work, that did not threaten the status and authority of the institution itself. Stephen Crowley (Boise State University) and Michael O'Rourke (Michigan State University) discussed their development of a “toolbox” for interdisciplinary communication, so far used with 85 practitioner groups in the U.S. Working as a philosopher for the European Commission, René Von Schomberg presented us with a typology of approaches for responsible research innovation. Kathryn Plaisance spoke about philosophers as “interactional experts” demonstrated by her own work with behavioural geneticists. Kyle Whyte (Michigan State University) discussed his work as researcher mediating with Native American tribes and the Environmental Protection Agency on environmental policy issues, and Adam Briggie asked us to reflect on how to assess the effectiveness of such “extension”, or knowledge transfer roles for philosophers. Nicola Erny (University of Applied Sciences Darmstadt) discussed her joint work with biomedical scientists on the ethics of antidepressant administration. Sophia Efstathiou (NTNU) and Zara Mirmalek (MIT) attempted a general guide on the challenges for interdisciplinary work, based on their own analytic and ethnographic work with biomedical and space scientists. Michael Hoffman outlined a scheme for empirical research on issues of justice and ethics that included analyzing respondents' arguments' structures. David Stone discussed a phenomenological engagement as opening up alternative views to individuals and thus enhancing their ability for interdisciplinary communication.

The workshop provided a forum for interesting discussion on the role of philosophy in interdisciplinary and applied work settings, as well as the place for some programmatic discussions on future meetings, publications and funding options for the PIN network.

[http://pin-net.gatech.edu/international\\_conference\\_2012\\_program.php](http://pin-net.gatech.edu/international_conference_2012_program.php)

## Call for Papers

October (organized by abstract deadlines)

### Dimensions of Measurement

14-16 March 2013, Bielefeld (ZiF) Germany

Abstract Deadline: 30 October

Plenary speakers include

- Hasok Chang
- Marcel Boumans
- Mary Morgan
- Laura Dassow Walls

Submissions for individual contributions or symposia (three or four papers) are invited on the many dimensions of measurement, systematic as well as historical.

Abstracts of 400-500 words for individual contributions or 1000-1200 for symposia can be submitted:

<https://www.easychair.org/conferences/?conf=dom2013>

More information is available at

<http://www.bicoda.info/>

### Special Issue of *Foundations of Science*

The aim of this issue is to bring together two philosophical disciplines, i.e. social epistemology and philosophy of the humanities, that have been dealing with the same topic: the relation between science and its social context.

Guest Editors:

- Anton Froeyman
- Laszlo Kosolovsky
- Jeroen Van Bouwel

Submission Deadline: 31 October

Papers should not exceed 8000 words

More information (including a list of possible topics) is available at <http://www.philosophy.ugent.be/fos>

November

### Evidence and Causality in the Science: Topoi Special Issue

This volume will examine the relation between causality and evidence. This involves questions about the foundations of the sciences, e.g. what is evidence and how does it contribute to causal knowledge? But it also involves questions about specific applications, e.g. how should we best deal with the many problems of evidence given by expert witnesses in court; and questions about policy-making, e.g. what constitutes evidence of causation that is relevant to the design of socio-economic and public health policies?

Guest Editors:

- Phyllis Illari
- Federica Russo

Papers should not exceed 10,000 words and include a short (200 word) abstract.

Papers should be submitted at <http://topo.edmgr.com/> and select article type *Special Issue "Evidence and Causality"*

More information is available at

<https://blogs.kent.ac.uk/federica/publications/ecits-topoi/>

December

### Fifteenth Annual Philosophy of Social Science Roundtable

22-24 March 2013, University of California-Santa Cruz

Abstract Deadline: 15 December 2012

Send one-page abstract to one of the following:

- James Bohman: [bohmanjf@slu.edu](mailto:bohmanjf@slu.edu)
- Mark Risjord: [mrisjor@emory.edu](mailto:mrisjor@emory.edu)

- Paul Roth: [paroth@ucsc.edu](mailto:paroth@ucsc.edu)
- Stephen Turner: [turner@usf.edu](mailto:turner@usf.edu)
- Alison Wylie: [aw26@u.washington.edu](mailto:aw26@u.washington.edu)

For more information see the Roundtable website: <http://humweb.ucsc.edu/Roundtable>

February

### First Nordic Science and Technology Studies/STS Conference

24-26 April 2013, Rica Hell Hotell (Trondheim)

Abstract Deadline: 1 February

Abstracts for individual contributions and panel proposals (3-4 papers) should be send to: [STS2013@hf.ntnu.no](mailto:STS2013@hf.ntnu.no)

Abstracts for both individual contributions and panel proposals should be no more than 300 words and contain names and institutional affiliations of authors and organizers. Panel abstracts should also contain information about each paper to be presented.

## Upcoming Workshops/Conferences

### The Ethos of Integrative Research: The case of systems biology

26-27 November 2012, Norwegian University of Science and Technology

This two-day workshop invites participants from different experiments of integration in order to create an arena where methods and rationales for integration can be further discussed. We invite participants to present outcomes of their work that we shall take as starting points for reflection on possible approaches, experiences and motivations for integrative research.

*Participation in the workshop is open and registration is free.*

*For further information e-mail: [sophia.efstathiou@ntnu.no](mailto:sophia.efstathiou@ntnu.no)*

### Models and Mechanisms

6-7 December 2012, Tilburg University

Speakers:

- Stuart Glennan
- Andreas Huttemann
- Iris van Rooij

The development of models and the investigation of mechanisms are often deeply related across scientific research. Modeling plays a range of roles in directing research into mechanisms, ranging from suggesting very general computational frameworks to studying low-level features of a mechanism. Partly due to such prominence, recent years have witnessed an increasing amount of

SPSP 2013  
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26-29 June  
Mark Your Calendars!



interest by philosophers and by scientists alike in the distinctive roles that models and mechanisms play in scientific explanation. In spite of much attention, however, many outstanding issues about the relationship between models, investigations of mechanisms and scientific explanation remain. The aim of this workshop is to address some such outstanding issues by exploring the multifaceted relationship between modeling and mechanisms—paying special attention to practice in the cognitive sciences.

More information is available at:

<http://www.tilburguniversity.edu/research/institutes-and-research-groups/tilps/events/MM2012/>

**SPSP Pre-Conference Workshop: Science, Policy, Values**

26 June 2013, University of Toronto

Speakers include:

- Frederic Bouchard
- James R. Brown
- Kevin Elliott
- Maya Goldenberg
- Jennifer Liu
- Kieran O'Doherty
- Sergio Sismondo

In this workshop, we will explore the relationships among science, policy, and values, by looking at both historical and contemporary cases at this nexus, with an eye towards both describing the ways in which science, policy, and values influence each other and putting forth guidance for how they should influence each other.

Questions should be directed to Heather Douglas (organizer)

<http://philosophy.uwaterloo.ca/people/douglas.html>