

Philosophy of Science
in Practice

Newsletter

• Issue 4 •
Autumn 2013

Dispatches from a
Summer of Philosophy of
Science Conferences

INTERVIEWED:
Boaz Miller, Phyllis Illari

#APhilosophyofScienceTour
-ThroughTwitter

• Encounters with Philosophers •
From the Perspective of
Evolutionary Linguist
Seán Roberts

HPSTeaching
@Pitt

from our Editor

Welcome back from what I hope was a wonderful summer. It was great to see so many of you—familiar faces and new ones—at our fourth biennial conference in Toronto. This is my favorite city in the world (no one believes me when I say this...) so thank you organizing committee for giving me a free trip to the only place where I have found veggie hotdog vendors. With this edition of the newsletter we also celebrate our fourth publication. When I first suggested that we create an SPSP newsletter I had no idea it would be such a success. Most of that success is due to the amazing contributors who work on it with me, so I want to say an official ‘thank you’ to Sophia, Jordan, Laszlo, Liz and Buck who are so creative and organized. I also want to welcome our new contributors Janet Stemwedel and Federica Russo.

In addition to four issues we are also celebrating a new look: out with my amateurish formatting design and in with Jordan’s ‘visual transformation’. I think this makes us hands down the most beautiful philosophy newsletter around. Bravo Jordan. Once you get over the new cool design you will find within these pages content worth reading.

In ‘Around Town’—our new conference overview—you can catch up on the summer conferences you missed and learn some geography at the same time (what other philosophy newsletter provides such mixed opportunities?) Laszlo talks with Boaz Miller about social epistemology, evidence, and technology in our regular feature Philosophy of Or in Practice? Jordan discovers that tweeting your thesis is difficult unless you work with pig cadavers. And for the Proust Questionnaire Federica plays a version of the Newlywed Game with her former office mate Phyllis Illari. Here we find out that you really can survive the worst academic feedback ever (!) if you watch enough Buffy (or perhaps that’s just me). In addition to these regular features we also have some new additions; these will change from issue to issue hopefully keeping the newsletter current and interesting. To this end Liz spoke to Linguist Seán Roberts in order to find out what it’s like to work with philosophers. The results? We’re better at maths than he expected and we help put a name to his wild guesses (is this a good thing???). Janet brings SPSP into the 21st Century with Twitter and in our new HPS Teaching section we are introduced to the way that the University of Pittsburgh is making HPS attractive to medical students with their Certificate in Conceptual Foundations of Medicine.

I hope you enjoy it. As always please
send any and all questions, comments
and criticisms my way,
mccliman@mailbox.sc.edu

Best Wishes,
Leah

Contributors



Leah McClimans
University of South Carolina
Department of Philosophy
• EDITOR-IN-CHIEF •



Jordan Bartol
University of Leeds
Centre for History and
Philosophy of Science
• Editor at Large, Design •



Sophia Efstathiou
*Norwegian University of
Science & Technology*



Liz Irvine
*Australian
National University*
Signs to Symbols Project



Laszlo Kosolosky
University of Ghent
Centre for Logic and
Philosophy of Science



Federica Russo
*Free University of Brussels
University of Kent*



Janet D. Stemwedel
San Jose State University
Department of Philosophy

Charles Pence
Notre Dame
History and Philosophy
of Science

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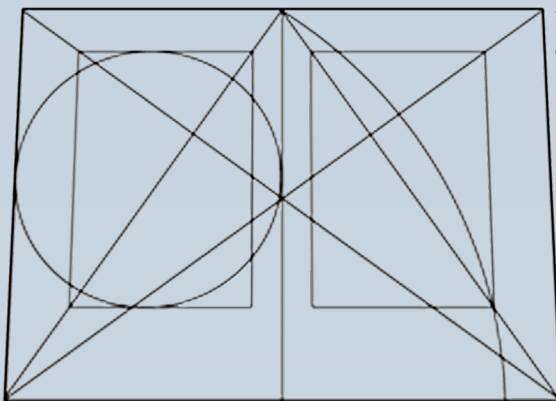
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This Issue's Cover Image



Jordan will be blogging about
his experience re-designing the
Newsletter, starting Sept 15.

www.jordanbartol.com/mug-cactus

It's had many names: 'The Golden Ratio', 'The Divine Ratio', 'The Golden Section', and the Latin, *sectio aurea*. Its properties have fascinated Euclid, Pythagoras, and even Johannes Kepler. Authors have (apparently) found the golden ratio at work everywhere from the proportions of the Parthenon to the work of composer Béla Bartók. The ratio also shares with Philosophy the convention of being symbolized by ' Φ '.

The Ratio was also widely used in book design. According to 'The Golden Canon', margins should fall in a ratio of 2:3, and in reverse proportion to the page. The Canon was at its peak between 1550 and 1770. Such generous margins soon fell out of fashion with modern printers, however, eager not to waste space.

The Newsletter has undergone a visual transformation this issue. One change you might have justifiably missed is that the type-area margins are now laid out according to the Golden Canon. This classic style is juxtaposed with modern elements, including the typesetting and image layout. I hope this junction, the best of old and new, is also mirrored in the aims of the Newsletter itself.

We hope you enjoy the newly-refreshed Newsletter. If you would like to get involved in future issues, please get in touch.

Jordan

Around Town

Summer2013 was a busy one for Philosophy of Science conferences. From Finland to France, our reporters have the details.

ISHPSSB
Montpellier, France
7-12 July

Charles Pence

The International Society for the History, Philosophy, and Social Studies of Biology (ISHPSSB) just wrapped up its largest meeting in the society's history (from July 7-12), featuring some seven hundred participants and more than 650 presentations. No doubt this was in no small part due to the conference's location: the University of Montpellier 3 in Montpellier, just off the Mediterranean in the beautiful south of France.

The meeting's size itself presented some issues, there were some fif-

teen parallel sessions each day, spanning the history of biology from the eighteenth century to contemporary stem-cell and epigenetics research, and topics in the philosophy of biology from fitness and selection to patents, disease, and transhumanism.

Any path through the conference is necessarily idiosyncratic, but I can report a few general observations. ISH's breadth continues unabated – topics in medicine, ecology, psychology, pedagogy, and the social and policy impact of science were all

healthily represented.

There was also a substantial complement of biologists at the meeting, which brought a welcome dose of interdisciplinarity to many of the sessions.

Many thanks to the program committee, the local organizers, and the locally sponsoring Universities of Montpellier 3 and 1 for a great week!

BSPS

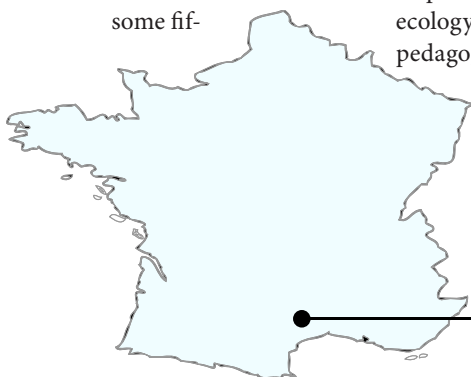
Exeter, UK
4-5 July

**Liz Irvine
& Jordan Bartol**

In the opening week of July, a small and distinguished group of philosophers of science gathered in the quiet town of Exeter for the British Society for the Philosophy of Science annual meeting. Summer conferences in the UK are often a real treat: cool, damp, and grey. What better conditions for serious discussion and insight, free from the temptation to relax outside?

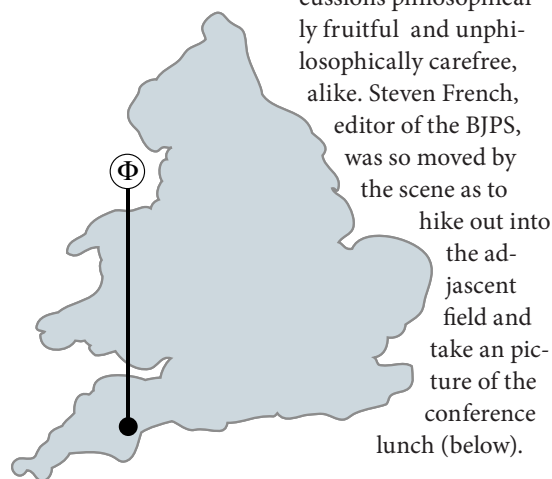
Hopes for such freedom were dashed, however, as philosophers arrived from around the world to find southern England as summery as any Mediterranean getaway. Happily, BSPS attendees made the best of the unseasonably nice weather: Delegates expertly combined sun-fueled relaxation with a top-notch philosophical discussion.

The venue, part of Exeter's business school, opened onto a patio and



Montpellier is the capital of the Languedoc-Roussillon region. The area has been home to Universities since 1289.

Montpellier's L'arc de Triomphe (above)
photo credit Jordan Bartol



rolling green lawn (with pond), which provided an idyllic venue for discussions philosophically fruitful and unphilosophically carefree, alike. Steven French, editor of the BJPS, was so moved by the scene as to hike out into the adjacent field and take a picture of the conference lunch (below).

This jovial atmosphere carried well into the evenings, as philosophers spilled into the historic town.

Philosophy-wise, attendees were also in for a treat. The keynote by Allison Gopnick, recent TED Talk alum, attracted an attentive audience, eager to hear her argument as to why the minds of children are in some ways more scientific than those of adults. The conditions for scientific revolution, she explained, are very similar to childhood: one must have lots of free time and be looked after by women.

Exeter is in the southern English county of Devon. The philosophy department was also host to SPSP2011.

The conference venue (right)
photo credit: Steve French

Gopnick was in good company, with additional keynotes by Sandra Mitchell (partial representation and integrative pluralism in protein science), Hew Price (retrocausality), and Alison Wylie (analogy in archaeological reasoning).

The programme reveals that traditional philosophy of science is alive and well, but so too is concern with practice. Compared to many recent philosophy of science conferences, the BSPS programme featured less work from biology, chemistry, social sciences, and medicine. This served as a refreshing reminder to many that high-quality, interesting work can come from more traditional PoS fields like physics and math(s), often with crossover

and generalizability.

Excellent sessions dealing with canonical issues like realism, monism, natural kinds, and the scientific method, were met with fewer but equally distinguished (and well-attended) sessions on scientific practice and applied philosophy of science. The SPSP community was represented by a strong contingent of philosophers who trekked straight from Toronto to Exeter – many of whom continued onward, to ISHPSSB Montpellier!

The BSPS conference was a highlight of this year's PoS conferences.

SPSP

Toronto, Ontario
26-29 June

Leah McClimans

In late June the Society for the Philosophy of Science in Practice met for the fourth time at the University of Toronto's Victoria College. What a fantastic conference! (What an amazing venue!

If you felt a bit like a movie star walking down the staircase you aren't alone! A conversation with the ever helpful Muna Salloum confirmed that the rich and famous have walked (and stumbled...) up and down these steps many times.)

This was my third SPSP and each year it gets better. The number of graduate students involved in presenting work, the number of women presenting and in positions of leadership...it's kind of an inspiration.

There isn't space to do



justice to the quality and breadth of papers that I heard—or that were presented—but perhaps a (very) brief overview of the key-notes speakers can provide a sense of the conference as a whole.

Ian Hacking opened the conference by noting the curious historical lack of mathematical discussion within SPSP while drawing our attention to its ubiquity in scientific practice; our very own Rachel Ankeny explored the tension between individual case studies in medicine and causal claims about

disease and illness; James Grisemer compared and contrasted model organisms to model taxa and then discussed the way in which the latter can be used as a unique platform for research; finally Sergio Sismon-

do opened our eyes to the way that pharmaceutical companies produce, distribute and consume knowledge.

I'm running out of space but before I do: a gigantic thank you to everyone who came. I can't wait to see the developments in all of your research in two years time in Aarhus!

Toronto is the largest city in Canada and the capital of the province of Ontario. It claims to be the most culturally-diverse city in the world.

Victoria University (top), the venue for SPSP2013, is among the oldest colleges on campus, an excellent example of Richardsonian Romanesque architecture. (below) Upper Burwash Hall



photos via Wikimedia Commons, Creative Commons

PhilSci of, or in, Practice?

An Interview with Boaz Miller

Laszlo Kosolosky

The Society for Philosophy of Science in Practice aims to look at philosophy of science from a practical perspective. However the term ‘philosophy of science in practice’ can be read in two distinct ways, i.e. as ‘philosophy-of-science in practice’ or ‘philosophy of science-in-practice’.

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

In each newsletter so far we presented this distinction to one colleague in the field and see how her/his research relates to it. After having had the pleasure of reading Kevin Elliott, Hanne Andersen, Kristen Intemann and Inmaculada de Melo-Martin thoughts on the matter, we now invited Boaz Miller (Tel Aviv University) to give us a few insights on how his particular work relates to philosophy of science in practice, and how he sees the future of philosophy of science in practice.

Boaz Miller
Tel Aviv University



Tell us, Boaz, how does your work tie in with some of SPSP's central tenets?

I work in social epistemology in the intersection of philosophy of science, analytic epistemology, and STS. I have worked on the epistemology of consensus, where the question that interests me is the distinction between mere agreement in a community and knowledge in the normative sense; in other words, when an agreement in a community is also reliable or trustworthy. I have published a paper about this question in Synthese.

“There is something philosophically interesting that happens when knowledge becomes social”

I am also interested in the relations and interactions between evidence and values.

Although there has been much discussion of this issue lately, I think that there is still some confusion in the literature about how evidence and values interact, which I have sought to clarify.

I am increasingly interested in issues concerning knowledge, technology,

and the internet. There is something philosophically interesting that happens when knowledge becomes social, and there is also something interesting that happens when the social becomes technologically networked.

The second transformation has not been sufficiently studied in social epistemology, especially conceptually, and I intend to look more closely at it in the near future.

A paper I have co-authored with my colleague Isaac Record, which has recently been published in *Episteme*, constitutes a first step in this endeavor.

And, according to you, what does the future hold for philosophy of science in practice?

Good epistemology, philosophy of science included, should be attentive to the practices of

“Good epistemology ... should be attentive to the practices of knowledge production, dissemination, and acquisition.”

knowledge production, dissemination, and acquisition. In the last SPSP I liked the connections that were made, especially by Sergio Sismondo, between empirical work in STS, and work in philosophy of science that tries to draw conceptual distinctions that are of normative importance in policy- and practice-related contexts.

I would like to see more analytic epistemologists looking at actual practices of inquiry and knowledge production. I think that philosophers of science have a lot to contribute to clarifying conceptual issues, such as the nature of knowledge and epistemic justification. They can inject new blood into debates in analytic epistemology, and also enrich their own work, which sometimes employs underanalyzed notions, which may not hold up to strict scrutiny.

By the Numbers

2013: PoS Conferences

		Days	Speakers (approx)	Keynotes
ISHPSSB	International Society for the History, Philosophy and Social Studies of Biology	6	650	3
BSPS	British Society for the Philosophy of Science	2	70	4
EPSA	European Philosophy of Science Association	4	220	3
SPSP	Society for the Philosophy of Science in Practice	4	140	4

Graphics: J. Bartol

For more in-depth conference coverage, see our Conference Reports.

On Working with Philosophers of Science: A Perspective from Linguist Seán Roberts

Liz Irvine

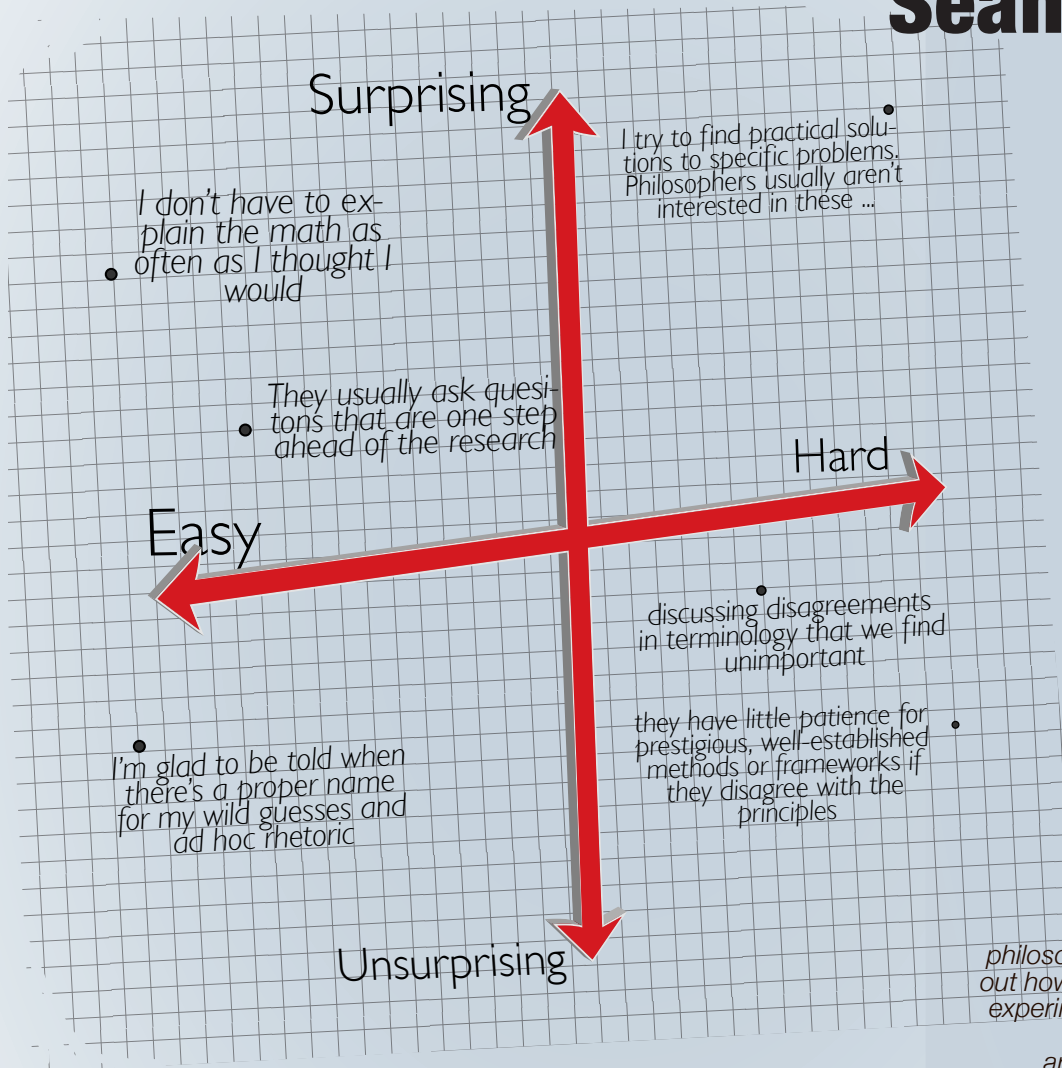
Seán Roberts is an evolutionary linguist at the Max Plank Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen. He is interested in how cultural systems change over time under pressures from cognitive biases, cultural transmission and social structures.

Faced with the difficulty of obtaining direct evidence for language evolution, Seán has recently started working with philosophers of science.

"I've been working with philosophers of science to work out how to integrate results from experiments and computational models to give a robust argument for our theories".

**You can find some of
Seán's work over at**

www.replicatedtypo.com



Proust Questionnaire

Federica Russo

How well does Federica Russo know her former office mate, Phyllis Illari?

Phyllis Illari is Lecturer in History and Philosophy of Science at the department of Science and Technology Studies, University College London. Phyllis has made valuable contributions to the philosophy of mechanisms,

causality, and now the philosophy of information. Phyllis and I have known for each other since 2009, when we became officemates in Kent.

While in Kent, Phyllis and I co-edited a mas-

sive edited volume (with Jon Williamson) called *Causality in the Sciences* (OUP 2011). We spent hours discussing philosophy, our experiences as young academics and as women in philosophy. I'm not just talking about gender balance or practicing the philosophy of science in practice, approach. I'm also talking about vital things such as: is there bag that is nice, handy, and that can fit your laptop, your tablet and phone, your brush and lipstick when you go to a philosophy conference?!

Phyllis and I no lon-

ger share an office. She moved to Hertfordshire and I moved to Brussels. But we still spend hours on Skype, working on our new project, *Causality: Philosophical Theory Meets Scientific Practice*, an introduction to causality. The final version is due February 2014.

Given our history, I'm hoping that I can guess her answers to our Proust Questionnaire.

So let's see how well I know Phyllis outside philosophy. The *comparative* Proust questionnaire will tell!

What is your favorite curse word?

Illari Russo

Que pale! Porca miseria! Fk... you know, why limit yourself?

When she's really angry, se says F**k, but not plainly.

Who are your favorite heroes/ heroines of fiction?

Phedre no Delaunay; Jewel A'Terafin; Lisbeth Salander; Buffy; Freddie from *The Hour*.

Uh, I guess characters in Jane Austin novels, for instance.

What is your favorite music?

Blues, soul, jazz.

Auch, I know she likes clubbing, so she must like dance music.

What is your favorite cuddle word?

Pie. 'Porca pupazza' Yes, I know. became one of her favourites

What sound or noise do you hate?

Silent Students

Not sure about sounds, but she certainly doesn't like drafts, so shut doors and windows properly!

What profession would you like to attempt, besides your own?

Novelist/education policy (especially childcare).

Some kind of career in education policy.



Phyllis Illari
University College London

What is your favorite food?

Pasta? I'm not really strongly committed. I love mango. *I know she loves soups, for instance lentils soup. But also tortellini, which she calls 'blobby pasta' (after so much time spent with an Italian ...!*

What is your favorite entertainment?

Episodes of familiar shows, like Buffy or the West Wing. Reading favourite novels. *She's working too much at the moment, but otherwise it's sailing.*

Where do you write your best work?

Café, particularly this great new one in Stratford in the View Tube. *In Costa! Or other cafés.*

What was the most critical academic feedback you ever received?

1 month before my MPhil thesis was due to be finished: 'there's a problem, I don't know what the problem is, perhaps you had better start again on a new topic?' After that, peer review is not so bad! *Uh, once she told me something about her thesis ...*

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

Um: come on in, Plato's over there? *Ah, no we haven't discussed this, I'm afraid!*

Teaching HPS: To Whom?

Pitt HPS's successful certificate programmes provide a way for non-philosophy majors to boost CVs ... and learn something while they're at it.

Liz Irvine

One administrative difficulty in teaching HPS is that it can be difficult to get a large student uptake. Low enrollment can in turn endanger the existence of these courses since many universities have enrollment thresholds that courses must meet.

One solution to this problem is to create courses that have wide and direct appeal to both HPS and non-HPS students.

One example of this approach is the Certificate in Conceptual Foundations of Medicine offered by the University of Pittsburgh HPS department. The certificate is aimed at (and largely taken by) pre-medical and pre-professional health care students, for whom the certificate functions as

a CV booster for medical school applications.

Around 120 students a year receive the certificate. Among the requirements are two core HPS courses: 'Mind and Medicine' covering topics across philosophy of psychology, neuroscience, genetics and psychiatry; and 'Morality and Medicine' covering ethical questions specific to medical research and clinical practice.

For more on the certificate, including other requirements, see [PittHPS](#).

[Online syllabus for Mind and Medicine](#)

[Online Syllabus for Morality and Medicine](#)

#TweetMyThesis

#TweetMyThesis offers a new way for grad students to share ideas, but is it suited to Philosophy of Science?

Jordan Bartol

Some days I tell myself that my work is really important to scientists. Of course, when I say is really important, I mean 'should be'. But in order for my work to matter to these people it'd need to reach them and interest them. This currently doesn't happen.

There are a few ways to reach out. You can attend interdisciplinary conferences, get yourself imbedded in labs and research groups, go to other departments' seminars, send your papers around, publish in scientific journals, and the list goes on. I've tried many of these things, with moderate success, but they all have one thing in common: they require a lot of work. What I really want is a zero-effort way to let the scientific world know that I have a brilliant idea and that they need to listen.

The Internet solves all problems: Enter #TweetMyThesis, the latest and most concise way for graduate students to have their voices heard.

Many graduate students tweet. That's nothing new. But some have stumbled upon a number of hash-tags dedicated to sharing their research; #TweetMyThesis is the latest, started by TimesHigherEd.

The idea is simple: you get one tweet, that's 140 characters, to summarize your thesis. It's like an entire abstract in one line. Of course, you really only get 125 characters, after you include the hashtag.

After struggling with the character limit for a few minutes, I quickly gave up. This was hardly the zero-effort solution I sought. It turns out it's difficult to summarize years of work, tens or hundreds of thousands of words, into just one tweet.

Some PhD students took to the waters with ease. Many of the tweets you find are pretty formulaic. Often "I'm exploring ____". Yet many (far more than you might think) are fantastic. A forensic anthropology PhD writes: "*Pigs (are not) good substitutes for human cadavers if you want to wallop it in a particular way to see if it causes a similar injury*" @HeebieB -- Now I know.

140 characters to summarize your thesis -- it's an entire abstract in one line.

There are many ways to tweet your thesis. Should you go purely descriptive, giving the whole thing

away like the pig cadaver tweet, or should you add some rhetorical flare, whetting the appetite without giving away the main course? The latter seems to have worked for @Mgavery:



"What turns oysters on?..and off: How epigenetic info regulates gene expression in response to environmental change in oysters"

@Mgaver

"What turns oysters on?..and off: How epigenetic info regulates gene expression in response to envi-

ronmental change in oysters" @Mgavery.

If there are jokes to be made about epigenetic regulation, then surely there are jokes to be made about my thesis work on biomolecules. But I can't imagine a cliffhanger involving biochemicals and natural kinds.

Perhaps I should forget playing coy and just outright boast:

"First to see Z bosons (weak force carriers) by colliding protons+antiprotons where one proton is unsmashed & Z decays to muons" @flimsin.

Boasting about discovering a boson is one thing, boasting about an argument in the metaphysics of science is another.

Though it's tempting to write #TweetMyThesis off as an exercise in procrastination, the feed seems to attract a lot of readers. It's no wonder: the problems philosophers face trying to talk to scientists are the same ones that all researchers face trying to talk to each other. We must cut through a lot of disciplinary jargon. We must be concise. We must make the importance of our work clear. We must publicize our research somewhere highly accessible. #TweetMyThesis forces researchers to address all of these problems, and provides a high-visibility venue in which to do so.

A few philosophers seem to have gotten in on the act. Former postgrad Rani Lill Anjum publicized her logic project: "Extensional logic typically treats conditionals 'if A then B' as a function of A and B, but conditionals are primitive" @ranilillanjum.

Thomasso Giordani, self-described 'massive Georges Sorel fan', tells us: "Sorel was not mad:

he tried to be Hegel and failed. Then he went mad" @ldtxv

Times Higher Ed's is not the only hashtag in the business. Similar streams include #TweetyrPhD and #TweetYourPhD. The idea seems to have started with Boston University's #BUthesis competition, back in 2010.

Scouring these hashtags reveals a complete lack of philosophers of science. Is it because we're all too

busy with more serious endeavors? That can't be it. Are philosophers of science too shy? Too serious? Too technologically inept? Too long winded? My money's on the latter. But Perhaps the SPSP community can start a #TweetMyThesis tidal wave.

Wondering which 140 characters I settled on? @jordanbartol



@HeebieB

#TweetMyThesis Stats

Started



Took Off



Most Popular Tweet

HelenaWangefeltStröm @helena_w_strom
Challenge to keep it *really* short #TweetMyThesis #UMEDH

Tweeting SPSP2013

What happens when a conference expands from the meeting rooms to social media?

Janet Stemwedel

At its 4th biennial meeting at Toronto in June, SPSP dipped a toe in the digital pool when, during the opening session, Sabina Leonelli invited attendees to take to Twitter to tweet the conference.

Twitter is an online social media platform on which users can post text-based messages of 140 characters or less, called “tweets”. Tweets are publicly visible, and users can include “hashtags” (generally words or phrases preceded by “#”) to indicate that tweets are part of a particular topic or conversation.

Tweeting from the word 'Go'

Those of us who started tweeting when Sabina gave the OK at first used #SPSP2013 as our hashtag – only to get a tweet via the Twitter account of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology telling us we were using their hashtag (despite the fact that their annual meeting had been months earlier).

To reduce confusion, we also used the hashtag #SPSP2013Toronto, and I believe some of our tweeters used the more compact #spsp13.

How does one tweet a conference presentation? In some ways, it seems counterintuitive

to take the careful concepts, questions, and distinctions which philosophers try to spell out and distill them to 140-character bites. Indeed, sometimes it’s hard for philosophers to communicate in sentences whose complexities don’t risk stranding their intended audience on some crucial point well before the period. What this means is that tweeting a talk requires abandoning perfectly faithful reproduction as a goal. Rather, one tweets the big ideas, the vivid examples, the connections to other lines of research. It is like taking notes, only the notes come in atomized chunks of text. (Reproducing a graph in a tweet is out of the question, although providing a link to a resource cited in a presentation is do-able.)

What makes tweeting different from just taking personal notes during a presentation is that the notes are shared, in real time, with anyone who wants to access them via Twitter. In practice, given the constant flow of tweets shared by Twitter users, this means that conference tweets are most likely to be seen by the “followers” of the Twitter user posting those tweets and by peo-

Twitter Ontology

Twitterverse also 'Twittersphere')

The mereological sum that is everything twitter. The twitterverse is made up of Tweets, Tweeters, and Hashtags.

Tweet

A message posted to twitter containing 140 characters or less

Hashtag (#)

Keywords or topics are marked with '#'. This device was created organically by Twitter users, seeking a way to

search through the Twitterverse for Tweets of specific interest.

Handle

Twitter users all choose a unique identifying 'handle'. It is always preceded by '@'

ple searching for tweets using the conference-specific hashtag. This meant that, during concurrent sessions, SPSP 2013 attendees might use Twitter to follow the sessions going on in other rooms – even to pose a question about one session while attending another. It also meant that people who were not at the meeting could follow the tweeted sessions remotely, thus potentially expanding the reach of the Society and the audience for presenters' ideas.

Reaching New Audiences

A number of my “followers” who interacted in visible ways with my tweets about the sessions (e.g., favoriting them, retweeting them to their own followers, replying with comments or questions) are working scientists rather than philosophers, which means conference tweeting may even lay groundwork for inter-

disciplinary conversations and collaborations beyond what we would find among those who consider themselves part of the SPSP fold.

It's worth noting that, for those not following the flow of tweets in real time (or for those swiftly converting presentations to tweets and thus not necessarily focused on those presentations as coherent wholes in the moment), tools like Storify allow tweets to be compiled into documents and given fuller context with links, images, and commentary after the fact.

The real time commu-

nication of one's talk to all of the internet will likely feel odd to many. Conference presentations can feel less “public” than journal articles, with the useful confines of sessions helping us find ways in which our arguments might not be fully baked. What if tweets expose an argument's gaps? Worse, what if tweets misrepresent one's claims or what's really at stake in the argument? Couldn't this expose a presenter to unfair judgment, or, by airing her ideas, put her at risk of being scooped?

Storify



Janet D. Stemwedel
@docfreeride

Follow

It's above-board enough that you can see it at a conference if you can pay the fee #SPSP2013 #SPSP2013Toronto

6:59 AM - 29 Jun 2013

Retweet Favorite



Janet D. Stemwedel
@docfreeride

Follow

... but the talk is general, almost never about particular cases (plus KOLs don't notice selves being managed) #SPSP2013 #SPSP2013Toronto

7:00 AM - 29 Jun 2013

1 RETWEET

Retweet Favorite



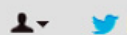
Drug Monkey
@drugmonkeyblog

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Ego stroking + \$\$ = RT @docfreeride: (plus KOLs don't notice selves being managed) #SPSP2013



757 TWEETS 208 FOLLOWING 127 FOLLOWERS



Followed by [Brendan Clarke](#), [Thony Christie](#), [Frédéric Bou](#) and 4 others.

Tweets



Philos-L @PhilosL

BLOG: why Philosophy Matters: theconversation.com/waste-want.....bit.ly/1dPYxEO

Retweeted by SocPhilSciPract

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Philos-L @PhilosL

SPSP 2013: Another (KOL) in Philosophy of Science

@SocPhilSciPract has collected over 200 followers since the conference.

The account was started by Christine James @cajames4

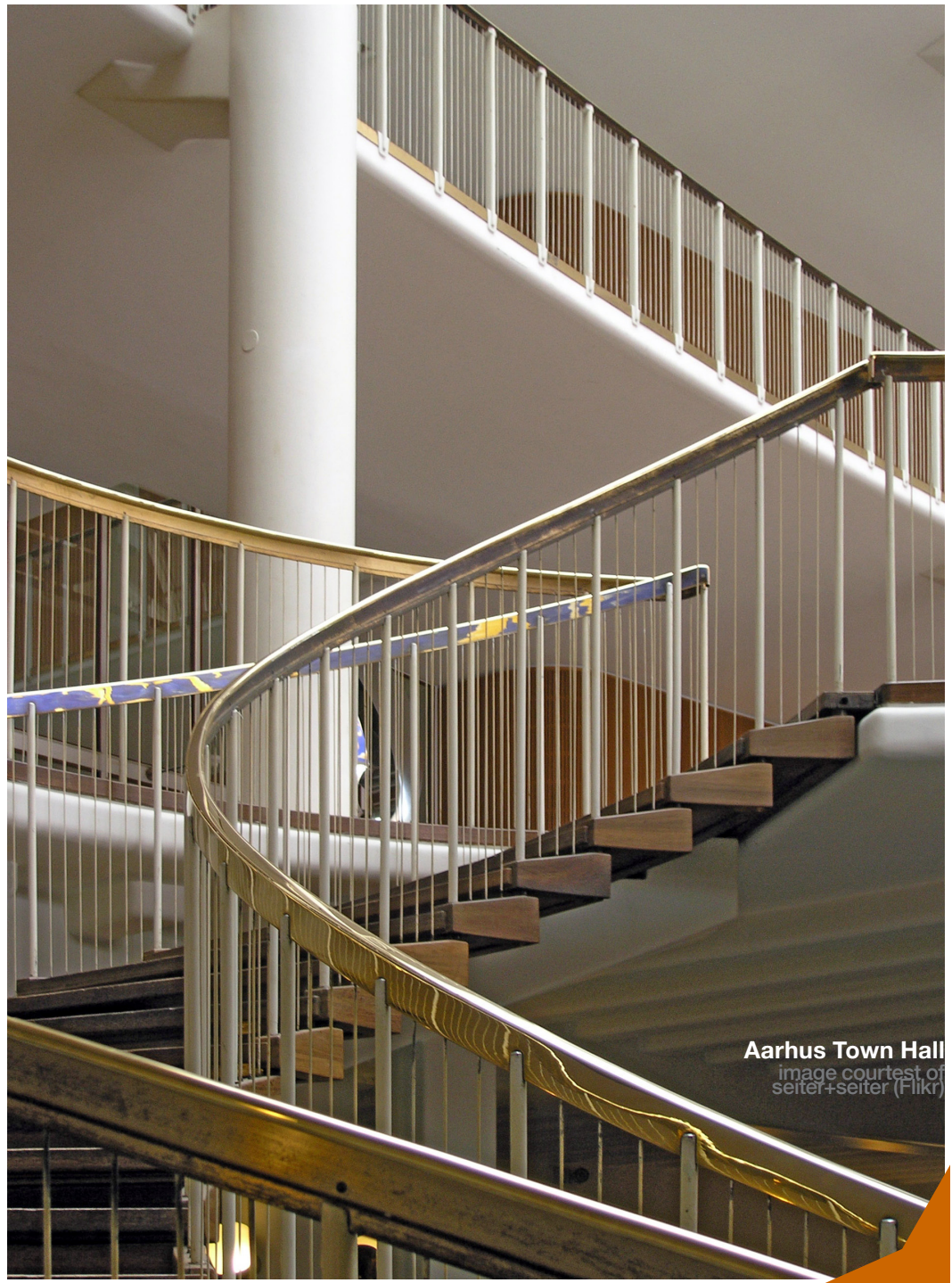
(above) Janet D. Stemwedel @docfreeride on Storify, a tool for compiling tweets to tell longer narratives.

These are not ridiculous questions. Transmitting someone else's talk via tweets surely imposes duties on the tweeter to strive for accuracy, to explicitly identify places where the tweeter doesn't fully understand the presenter, and to be absolutely clear about whose ideas, claims, and questions are being tweeted. Whether a tweet could be used to establish a priority claim remains to be seen. However, tweeted sessions may also give presenters more concrete clues about whether they successfully communicated what they hoped to – and an opportunity to clear up confusion after the fact.

With robust wifi in Aarhus, it seems likely that even more tweeting will happen at, and of, SPSP 2015.

Read compilations of **Janet's SPSP2013 tweets** at:

<http://scientopia.org/blogs/ethicsandscience/category/conferences/>



Aarhus Town Hall
image courtesy of
seiter+seiter (Flickr)