

Philosophy of Science in Practice Newsletter

No 9

Looking Back at the First 10 years
- a conversation with the founders

Poetry

2016 Pre-Conference Workshop Report

Fossil Dig at Rowan

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Call for SPSP 2018 in Ghent

SPSPers hunt for fossils during the Rowan Fossil Park trip after the 2016 conference at Rowan University. See pages 10 and 11.

From the Editors

Dear SPSPers,

Exciting News! Sara Green of the University of Copenhagen has joined Bart as co-editor. She will be the lead editor and Bart will stay on as the technical editor. The theme of this edition of the newsletter is "Looking Back" both at the Society's first 10 years and the past meeting at Rowan University, which had approximately 200 participants including people from China, New Zealand, Australia, Europe, and the United States. Keynote speakers included Alan Love (University of Minnesota), Julie A. Nelson (University of Massachusetts, Boston), Miriam Solomon (Temple University), and Andrea Woody (University of Washington). The conference was preceded by a graduate student workshop on empirical methods in philosophy of science.

Sara and Bart

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A Conversation with the Founders:

the Founders Look Back at the Society's Beginnings, its Growth and its Future



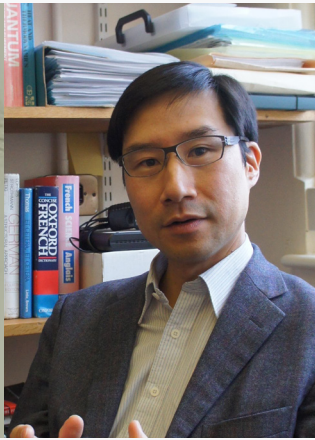
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Looking back calls for reflection on what has happened in the first 10 years of SPSP and where we would like to go in the future. In this context, it is crucial to remember that there would be no SPSP without enthusiastic founders and committee members. To get more insight into how the society was formed and developed, the editors have invited the founders to tell the story of SPSP from their perspective.

We believe that we speak for all SPSP members when we express our gratitude for the way they have led and nurtured the society. They have been great role models, and the success of SPSP is directly related to their intellectual and personal generosity. Let us therefore remind ourselves to thank the past and current committee members for the work that we all benefit from today.

Tell us the story of the founding of the the society. How did it happen and why?

Hasok: The co-founders of SPSP were all attending the conference on "Understanding Scientific Understanding" in Amsterdam in 2005, hosted by Henk de Regt, Sabina Leonelli and Kai Eigner. It was such a productive and inspiring meeting. Toward the end of it, Mieke Boon proposed to several of us that we should create a new group devoted to doing the kind of philosophy of science that was being done at that conference. Initially we all said "well, that sounds great but it would be too much work...", but Mieke just wouldn't let us be so lazy! So we got things going, starting with an open meeting at

the next Philosophy of Science Association conference. It was a very interesting process figuring out what it was that we all saw expressed at the Understanding conference, and to come up with a name to reflect our collective sense of it.

Mieke: Yes, that is also how I remember it. Perhaps I should explain why I was so insistent. In 2001, I switched from being a scientific researcher to philosophy. Although I could have made a great career in the engineering sciences, I believed that it was more important to contribute by means of "a philosophy of science for those practices." Based on my research experience, I believed that those application-oriented research practices such as the engineering sciences could

improve via a better philosophical understanding. At the time, although I knew quite a bit of the philosophy of science literature, I had not expected that the philosophers themselves would have so little interest in real science. This is what I found when attending philosophy of science conferences like PSA and CLMPS, where I felt quite lost. So, when attending this conference on “Understanding Scientific Understanding” that Hasok refers to -- and at which both Hasok and Rachel were keynote speakers -- I got very excited. This felt to me as a community that should aim to work together on what I then dubbed “philosophy of science in practice.” During the conference, I had been chewing on the idea, wondering whether it made sense, whether other participants felt as I did, whether it was naive, and whether it would be feasible at all. At the end of the conference, I took the plunge and approached Hasok to share my thoughts. While talking with Hasok, also Rachel and Marcel joined in, and to my great surprise, they and also some other participants got enthusiastic immediately.

Certainly, after this, it took quite some discussion over email to develop our plans and ideas, and to make SPSP happen. I remember, for instance, our discussions about the name. Marcel proposed KiP (knowledge in practice, while KiP is Dutch for chicken). I was quite stubborn to keep PoSiP, as I believed that our movement should be called philosophy of science in the first place.

Rachel: Another key driver was the atmosphere of the Understanding conference which was very open to diverse subfields of and methods for doing philosophy of science, in an era in which existing professional organisations tended to focus narrowly on only some of the special sciences, and on theory rather than practice. The energy of this conference including exciting work by an emerging new generation of philosophers of science who were less bound by disciplinary boundaries, and hence willing to use or even pursue historical and sociological work, also contributed to our thinking and plans.

The name was tricky, and still is confusing to some: does it refer to philosophy of (science in practice) or (philosophy of science) in practice? Either way, SPSP created a buzz (try saying spspssp quickly!) though I do regret not having a chicken mascot.

Marcel: What I recall of that ‘founding period’ was how quickly we came to the agreement that what we so much enjoyed at the Understanding conference should find a continuation. It was not only the conference organised by Henk, Sabina and Kai for which we sought continuation, but also the first two Model-Based Reasoning conferences organised by Nancy Nersessian. What these conferences had in common was a welcoming openness to other approaches such as those of history of science, science studies, and cognitive science. There were so many enthusiastic researchers I knew who were studying science by combining these approaches but who couldn’t find (beside these three conferences) a platform to exchange their work and ideas. My own view was that much of mainstream philosophy of science was not much - if at all - about science, while I witnessed a growing number of scholars with a clear interest in scientific practice, and who were aware that for the study of practice a more pluralistic approach might be needed. And, of course, we were also aiming to get more attention and interest from philosophy of science for other fields and disciplines than (natural) science, such as engineering (Mieke) and in my case social science. This was also one of the reasons why I proposed Knowledge in Practice, because it would be less exclusive towards engineering and social science.

Henk: When Sabina, Kai and I were organizing the Understanding Conference, which was part of our joint research project on scientific understanding, we couldn’t have dreamt that it would lead to the birth of a new society, SPSP, that would turn out to be so successful. As the other have already pointed out, it was Mieke who started it all, inspired by the open atmosphere of the conference, which was rather different from traditional philosophy conferences. Also, there was the feeling of a community: even though the participants were working on quite different topics, there was a shared commitment to an “in practice” approach to philosophy of science (which could still be interpreted in various ways, as mentioned by Rachel).

What was the vision for the society? Do you feel that this still holds true today? Looking back, would you have emphasized anything differently?

Hasok: The main point, as we came to agree, was to do philosophy of science as if actual science mattered! I think this vision certainly still holds true now. One thing to note is that we avoided setting out a very fixed vision, as the vision itself also needs to evolve. The phrase “science in practice” was intentionally ambiguous from the start, meaning both “scientific practice” and “science in practical realms of life.” And then people (I think Heather Douglas especially) also noticed an additional ambiguity in the SPSP name, which we also embraced: we are pursuing not only “philosophy of science-in-practice” (as above), but also “philosophy-of-science in practice.”

Mieke: We worked on a SPSP mission statement right from the start, which should be posted on the website. This was a collaborative activity that went quite smoothly. We shared similar ideas for the most part. As to myself, it was quite important to focus on epistemological issues of scientific practices and to avoid that it would become an ethics-focused project. Reading the current mission statement, I think that it is still quite close to the first one -- I don't know whether it was significantly revised in the meantime. I still agree with it a lot, and believe that it applies quite smoothly to those who position themselves as doing philosophy of science in practice. In my memory, Margaret Morrison was the one who pointed out this intentionally ambiguous meaning of PoSiP, in her keynote at the first SPSP biennial conference in Twente. One of the things I am very happy about is that PoSiP turns out to be much richer in topics and approaches than I could ever have imagined, which is really very inspiring.

Rachel: A cornerstone of the society's organisation was to be welcoming no matter the participant's career stage, previous experience in the field, geographic locale, gender, and so on. The conversations were to be constructive and collegial and not argumentative, which we actively policed, and we made sure to schedule the program to maximise participation and attendance, with special attention to not isolating early career scholars or others who might otherwise get lost. These were conscious efforts in partial response to recognised problems with diversity and inclusion in other types of venues

for philosophy of science. I would contend that SPSP has become a model in this regard for other groups including those which have emerged in recent years since its founding.

Marcel: One of the first issues we had to solve in the beginning was what kind of organisation we were aiming at. I believe we made the right choice by deciding that our main responsibility was to organise regular conferences with the aim Rachel describes as the organisational cornerstone. So, SPSP has never been set up as a society in the sense of having members and an elected board and such things. But I am really happy to see that it became a Society in a better sense: one for which people feel citizenship. It became more than just a series of conferences.

Henk: The mission of SPSP has been accomplished, in the sense that through the SPSP conferences and other activities the “philosophy of science in practice” approach is now far more visible than it was 10 years ago, and moreover is taken seriously also by those who favour other approaches. This is clear from the fact that, for example, also PSA and EPSA conferences now feature more SPSP-like sessions and symposia. Having participated in most of the SPSP conferences, I feel that the fact that there is so much enthusiasm, especially among younger researchers, shows that our original mission statement struck a chord with many. Looking back, I wouldn't have emphasized anything differently.

How would you describe the growth of the society? Hosting the 1st conference on any topic involves a great deal of optimism about the sustainability of that project. How do you feel looking back on the first 10 years?

Hasok: The growth of the society has been spectacular. We were being optimistic in creating yet another society and conference series in a crowded field, but our expectations have been exceeded. Aside from the growing number and range of people who have been attending the conferences and joining the mailing list, there is a strong sense of community and a real buzz that we are creating. Going to an SPSP conference literally feels very different from going to most other philosophy conferences. There is an

immediate sense of friendliness and openness, of tolerance and engagement. One of the most notable things about our community has been the very strong presence of women, and the leadership roles taken by women; that is not merely a demographic point.

Mieke: I agree with Hasok that the growth of the society is amazing, and everything Hasok says about it is very true. Even though I had this vision in 2005, I could never have hoped that SPSP would become this successful, which is also due to the right time spirit. At the start of SPSP, we actually got a lot of recognition and encouragement from established philosophers of science. Today, the increasing number of PhD students working on practice-oriented philosophy of science, as if there was never a need for SPSP, is quite wonderful to see.

Rachel: I was extremely nervous in the early years about longevity - what if we held a conference and only the inner core came along? But we also believed that it might be a good thing if the 'science in practice' focus simply became routine in the more traditional societies so SPSP would be no longer needed. We talked about infiltrating the mainstream via presence of this perspective on governing and editorial boards, program committees, and other institutions. Although I think we've been highly successful in that regard, SPSP has become critical in its own right and seems to be here to stay, which makes me very proud of all of us.

Marcel: We were pretty nervous, particularly when we presented our ideas at the PSA conference. I am not sure whether the term 'optimistic' is appropriate, I would use the term 'hope.'

Henk: Indeed, the session at PSA 2006 was a crucial event, and as Marcel says, we were a bit nervous. I remember that Nancy Cartwright was in the audience and asked us some critical questions, pressing us to say clearly why yet another society was really necessary. But, given the support we received - also from her and other established philosophers of science - we succeeded in conveying the message!

Do you feel that the society has had a meaningful role in supporting practice-oriented philosophy of science? Has the

kind of work encouraged by the society entered the mainstream of philosophy of science in your opinions?

Hasok: Absolutely (and I try my best to avoid the word "absolute" in most contexts)! SPSP has certainly become a leading venue for people who are seeking a hospitable place to do practice-oriented philosophy of science. As for our relation to the mainstream: initially when we launched SPSP there was a worry that we might constitute a splinter group and thereby weaken the Philosophy of Science Association. I think just the opposite has happened: the energy and enthusiasm generated from SPSP are feeding into the PSA activities, transforming and strengthening the mainstream of the philosophy of science. That is just as we had hoped.

Mieke: The whole idea of PoSiP as well as the atmosphere of collaboration and openness of SPSP seems to have become adopted in several of the other philosophy of science conferences as well. In this respect, the last EPSA conference, in Exeter, was almost as nice as SPSP conferences! I believe that it makes the philosophy of science so much more interesting and societally relevant. Initially, we had discussions in our board meetings about the question of whether we needed our own journal. Hasok said time and again, No, we are going to take over, we are going to change the philosophy of science itself. And that is what actually happened -- almost to our own surprise.

Rachel: Beyond the 'infiltration' discussed above, I think SPSP conferences have proven to be an excellent venue for articulating, discussing, and exchanging methods for doing philosophy of science in practice, which perhaps is one of the most tricky matters but absolutely necessary if this turn to practice is to really take hold. In part the important role of SPSP conferences is precisely why we focus on them as our primary activity, as we think this model is working.

Marcel: Because the conferences functioned as supportive meeting places, many of our participants must have felt some kind of encouragement to go on with their not-so-much-mainstream work. The more people feel like that the more it will - by definition - change the mainstream.

Henk: I think I already answered this question, in one of my answers to an earlier question. Indeed, I agree with the others that we have made a difference to the philosophy of science in general. So, we have changed the character of “mainstream” philosophy of science, and have thereby become somewhat “mainstream” ourselves. Which is not always a bad thing, apparently.

What do you see as the most difficult challenge for the practice oriented work and the society moving forward?

Hasok: So far we have managed to maintain and grow SPSP on a completely informal basis. We have done amazing things, for a group that has no formal or legal existence, and has no steady source of funding. I think this informality is part of what makes SPSP special, but maintaining it is a challenge. For one thing, it does demand a great deal of time, commitment and ingenuity on the part of the Organizing Committee members and other active leaders of the group. I see two other tough challenges. First, we have not been as successful as we had hoped in fostering links with practicing scientists and science educators (the latter despite a strong hope reflected in Douglas Allchin’s hosting of the second conference). Second, although we have been very successful in eliciting strong participation from diverse parts of Europe as well as North America, it has not been easy to bring in the rest of the world (despite Rachel Ankeny’s strong input from her Australian base).

Mieke: Yes, Hasok may be right. In our SPSP committee we did not even have a formal chair. Also, no elections of new committee members - we just invited new members. The question whether this needs to be changed is a tough one. Last year, at the SPSP conference at Rowan University, I stepped down from the board, after 10 years of service, so I will not be part of that decision. But to be honest, I think that it would be wise to aim at a more formal structure.

Rachel: I think the future is very bright! We have just done a ‘refresh’ of the Organising Committee as people have rotated off to other professional roles and duties, and we have a

fabulous group of experienced members plus some new but long-standing SPSP contributors who have joined us. I think that is as formal as we need to be so long as it continues to work—from experience with many other professional groups, formality comes with a relative lack of agility particularly for an international organisation. We will need to continue to keep costs down to encourage those from less prosperous institutions and locales to attend our conferences, but the large amount of interest we always have had in hosting SPSP bodes well. The main challenge in my view is maximising attendance given many other attractive conferences and organisations, but we will continue to be diligent in this regard, making certain to plan satellite meetings and pre- and post-conference workshops, coordinate with our peer organisations, and so on to make our meetings appealing and maintain what is a very strong community.

Marcel: I am sorry to say this but I still don’t see much work on engineering and social science. It remains very hard to get philosophers of science interested in these fields, despite the enormous - if not greatest - impact (beside medicine) they have on our modern society.

Henk: I agree with Hasok that the main challenge is to establish more and stronger links with practising scientists. There have been some interesting symposia featuring both philosophers and scientists at the SPSP conferences, but I feel that this deserves stronger (and perhaps structural) attention. Also, interaction with researchers and practitioners in science education and science communication would be another important challenge.

How you hope the SPSP and the field of philosophy of science to develop in the future?

Hasok: I hope we find the right balance concerning the place of philosophy in modern society. I think we can show the world how philosophical thinking is different from, yet pertinent to, other practices of life. We philosophers should continue to ask questions that practical people would ideally be addressing but cannot afford the time and mental space to think about.

Mieke: I began this interview, telling that I turned to philosophy of science in 2001, when I was appointed assistant professor in the philosophy department at the University of Twente. But actually, I was appointed for ethics and technology. This was a topic that I had started to promote in The Netherlands, from 1984 onwards due to my concerns about environmental issues and sustainability, and my own professional responsibility as a (future) chemical engineer. It took about 10 years for this topic to get societally accepted. As for myself, it gradually changed into Pandora's box, since every problem is called an ethics problem nowadays. Even at my university, colleagues can hardly understand that I am not doing ethics. It is for the same kinds of societal concerns that I turned to philosophy of science: how can science be done well? My hope is that the societal role for the philosophy of science will increase and become recognized. The SPSP has already, and will continue to be, a very important factor in this respect.

Rachel: I believe philosophy more generally has a critical role in many debates and controversies facing the world today, and particularly the philosophy of science as there is increased attention to why science should be considered as an important way for establishing knowledge. Focus on science in practice allows us to demythologise science and help people (including sci-

entists!) to better understand what science does, how non-scientists can contribute, and what its limits are. SPSP allows us a constructive venue to discuss these important issues with our peers and take findings back to the coalface.

Marcel: There is still a strong normative inclination among philosophers to denote what best practices are and which are not. I hope we move away from this normativity and instead aim more at gaining a better understanding of research practice, an understanding of why researchers do what they do, as an empirical question. I am aware that this statement is a paradox.

Henk: As Rachel says, there is an important role for critical (philosophical) reflection on science these days. In my view, it is increasingly difficult to find the right way to carry out this critical task. On the one hand, we face anti-scientific sentiments and fact-free politics (or politics relying on "alternative facts"). On the other hand, radical scientism is still an undeniable force in public debates and policy. It is not easy to steer a middle course and defend the importance of science while at the same time demythologize it. Although this is a challenging task, I hope that the work of the SPSP community can help to achieving it. In fact, I think that the SPSP-approach is the best way to achieve it!

SPSP Poetry

Ode to John Dupré

From the disorder of things
Some strange ideas spring
No objects can be found
When John looks around
Only processes come to eye
You'll see the change if you try
Boundaries are blurred
When microbes are recurred

We shouldn't be monogamous
And marry only one philosophy
Promiscuous and autonomous
As pluralists we are free

By Rasa Engre

Interdisciplinarity

Desperation and pain and collaboration and
pain and coauthoring and pain and pain

Pain, on my shoulder
I have a hump
I love my work, right

Yeah
I am so so stiff and tired

Transfiguration and pain.

COMING to be another is it always so hard?

By Poshia Theousatfi

SPSP 2016 pre-conference workshop on empirical methodology

Sophie van Baalen

Empirical methodologies are increasing of interest for philosophers of science in practice.

If there is one thing that many SPSP-ers struggle with, it is how to make philosophical analysis empirically informed. How, why, and to what extent, should empirical information shape philosophical accounts of scientific practice? And should the philosophical analysis accordingly follow any specific methodology? Should 'empirical philosophy' develop its own methods, or can we adopt methods from social sciences, running into the danger that we become 'bad social scientists' rather than good philosophers? Previous SPSP meetings have displayed beautiful examples of 'empirically informed philosophy' and have touched upon some of these questions, but never gave it our full attention. Some of us felt that it was about time that we spend a full day reviewing empirical methods and discussing their merits and uses for philosophy of science in practice. The pre-conference workshop at the SPSP2016 was organized by Maria Serban (University of Copenhagen) and Sophie van Baalen (University of Twente) and sponsored by the 4TU Centre for Ethics and Technology, The Danish Network for Philosophy of Science, as well as the Society for Applied Philosophy.

The day started with a duo-talk by Frederick Wertz (University of West Georgia) and Lisa Osbeck (Fordham University). Wertz gave a beautiful overview of qualitative research methods in psychology and other social sciences. Since the early 1900s, positivism had a huge impact on philosophy of science and social sciences. This resulted in a preference for quantitative methods over others, following the practice of qualitative research without formal methodology pre-1960 by e.g. Sigmund Freud and Wilhelm Wundt. Socio-political changes rooted in 1960s countercultural critiques and a crisis of authority and privilege of science led to a 'qualitative revolution' in the 1990s. This resulted in a plurality of methods, including, among others, phenomenology and hermeneutics, discourse analysis, grounded theory and autoethnography. These methods allow

for example to explore the sources of concepts and methods and how ideas develop over time. Lisa Osbeck presented her own empirical work in biomedical engineering and integrative systems biology labs. She also showed what characteristics are required of an empirical researcher (such as a high degree of tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty). Moreover, she gave some practical tips and important considerations on interviewing, its ethics, mechanics, and highlighted some common mistakes. Finally, she had brought a transcript of one of her interviews and showed her approach to interpreting this data.

After this quick but comprehensive introduction to qualitative research methods and a well-deserved coffee break, we were treated to a few more concrete examples of how empirical research can inform philosophy. Dominic Berry (University of Edinburgh) presented his 'object-centered approach', using (historical) objects to ask and study philosophical question. He told us about collaborating with the people who usually handle objects (such as archivists and curators) while also taking ownership of your research question and figuring out for yourself which method works best for your research questions. Liam Kofi Bright (Carnegie Mellon University) presented his own empirically informed study on scientists' experiences reviewing and submitting interdisciplinary research proposals. Instead of in-depth qualitative interviews, he performed a survey among scientists in order to study how scientists deal with philosophical questions themselves – thus providing quantitative information. In his case, the study gave insights into challenges such as how to compose a multidisciplinary panel to review interdisciplinary proposals, and how to deal with 'peer disagreement' between members of multidisciplinary panel with different expertise. How can you get them to agree on an assessment and how to ensure that reviewers review what they are qualified to?

Joshua Alexander (Sienna College) gave an introduction to experimental philosophy by drawing on examples that connect to the interests of philosophers of science. Experimental philosophy draws on methods in cognitive science to study philosophical reasoning by non-philosophers and to critically reexamine the way in which thought experiments are used in philosophical argumentation. Experimental philosophers are interested in what goes on in the heads of people when they think about philosophical problems, and also how this relates to claims made by philosophers through the use of thought experiments. Currently, it is mainly engaged in moral philosophy and philosophy of mind. But there is a huge potential also for philosophy of science. Examples of interests for both experimental philosophy and philosophy of science are issues such as the effects of context- and content-based framing and the epistemic costs and benefits of scientific disagreement.

That empirical research methodology is a subject of interest for many SPSP-ers was evident from the great turn-out for the workshop (chairs had to be dragged from all corners of the building for everybody to be seated), but also from the great poster-pitches of empirical work by graduate stu-

dents during the lunch break and the lively panel discussion at the end of the day. In the panel debate, Miriam Solomon (Temple University), John Dupré (University of Exeter), Sabina Leonelli (University of Exeter), and Julia Bursten (San Francisco State University) discussed whether the issue of 'empirical philosophy of science is really new, after earlier 'naturalistic' and 'applied' approaches to philosophy of science have been proposed. The main concerns remain how we communicate with scientists about what we do and if (and how) they can benefit from it, how we ensure that we are answering real questions and that these questions are different from those social scientists work on. They also discussed the role and status of the 'evidence' provided by empirical work in a field like philosophy that traditionally focused on theory, arguments and logic. Important questions are what interaction with scientists (e.g., in collaborations or by interviewing them) adds to the analysis, in comparison to only analyzing published papers as 'empirical input'? These questions are far from being answered, but the attendees of the workshop left with a plenty of inspiration and ideas to go about studying their own (empirical) philosophical research questions.

IN FOCUS: A Look the Rowan Fossil Dig

Barton Moffatt

Attendees of our 2016 meeting at Rowan University in Glassboro, NJ, had an extraordinary opportunity to dig and keep their very own fossils at Rowan's Jean and Ric Edelman Fossil Park! The post-conference field trip was a once in a lifetime experience for all of those involved. Many thanks are due to everyone who made this happen: Dean Lacovara, Dean Vitto, Provost Newell, Fossil Park Director Heather Simmons, our local hosts (Matt Lund, Nathan Bauer, Bruce Paternoster) and finally our guides, Kristyn Voegelé and Paul Ullmann, who graciously showed us around and patiently identified our fossils.



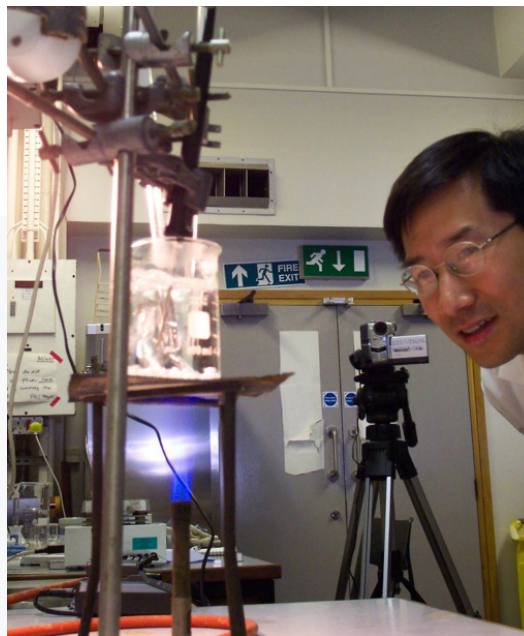


Hasok Chang

TAKES OUR PROUST QUESTIONNAIRE

Saana Jukola

The 'Proust' Questionnaire was a game popularized by Marcel Proust who supposedly believed that by answering questions such as those below one reveals his or her true nature. This questionnaire was modernized more recently by James Lipton and 'In the Actors Studio'.



Hasok Chang is the Hans Rausing Professor of History and Philosophy of Science at the University of Cambridge.

Who are your favourite heroes or heroines? In real life or in fiction.

The great un-trendy scientists: Joseph Priestley, Jean-André De Luc, Percy Bridgman.

Which words or phrases do you over-use?

"I mean"; "very"; the comma, and the semi-colon.

What is your favourite food?

Rice. This staple I was raised on is something I can't go very long without, even though I have learned to enjoy a whole variety of foods.

What is the most critical academic or non-academic feedback you ever received?

It's difficult to rank the many painful instances! One example is what I got on my first-ever submission to the PSA in 1994: "The author raises a false problem ... and then proposes a 'solution'.... Not at all a very high-level grasp of the physics and not a very interesting methodological idea either."

Where do you write your best work?

At home. Often my best insights arise in the shower or lying in bed falling asleep, after a period of struggling with a difficult problem.

What is your favourite entertainment?

Listening to music of all kinds, from Vangelis to Mahler to 60's and traditional folk. Also, witnessing excellence of any kind (watching Roger Federer play tennis, for example).

What profession would you like to attempt besides your own?

When I was a disillusioned physics student, I considered psychiatry and high school teaching.

What is your greatest achievement?

Openness, curiosity, and independence of mind. Cosmopolitanism. Not letting the Y-chromosome rule things. Intelligibility in academic work. Nurturing of junior scholars and respect for senior ones. And SPSP, as the best single expression of all of the above.

What is your most treasured possession?

Letters from Thomas Kuhn.

Where were or are you happiest?

When I really connect with another human being. The next best thing is to be left alone to be myself. Learning something new, especially directly from nature, is a close third.

CALL FOR PAPERS

SOCIETY FOR PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE IN PRACTICE (SPSP)
SEVENTH CONFERENCE
29 JUNE – 2 JULY 2018
GHENT UNIVERSITY, BELGIUM

Keynote speakers: William Bechtel (University of California at San Diego), Sabina Leonelli (University of Exeter), Maarten van Dyck (University of Ghent), Alison Wylie (University of British Columbia).

Abstract submission deadline: 15 January 2018

Notification of acceptance: 7 March 2018

An on-line submission site for paper or session proposals will be available later this fall.

Main Contact: Joe Rouse, rouse@wesleyan.edu

The Society for Philosophy of Science in Practice (SPSP) is an interdisciplinary community of scholars who approach the philosophy of science with a focus on scientific practice and the practical uses of scientific knowledge. For further details on our objectives, see our mission statement.

The SPSP conferences provide a broad forum for scholars committed to making detailed and systematic studies of scientific practices — neither dismissing concerns about truth and rationality, nor ignoring contextual and pragmatic factors. The conferences aim at cutting through traditional disciplinary barriers and developing novel approaches. We welcome contributions from not only philosophers of science, but also philosophers working in epistemology and ethics, as well as the philosophy of engineering, technology, medicine, agriculture, and other practical fields. Additionally, we welcome contributions from historians and sociologists of science, pure and applied scientists, and any others with an interest in philosophical questions regarding scientific practice.

We welcome both proposals for individual papers, and also strongly encourage proposals for whole, thematic sessions with coordinated papers, particularly those which include multiple disciplinary perspectives and/or input from scientific practitioners. You may wish to involve other members of SPSP (a listing is available on our website) or post a notice to the SPSP mailing list describing your area of interest and seeking other possible participants for a session proposal. (To post to this list or to receive updates on the conference, please join the mailing list.)

Individual paper proposals must include a title and an abstract of 500 words, and full affiliation details and contact information for the author(s)/speaker(s).

Session/symposia proposals must include an overall title for the session, a 250–500 words abstract of the session, and a 500-word abstract for each paper (or an equivalent amount of depth and detail, if the format of the proposed session is a less traditional one), and full affiliation details and contact information for each contributor. Session proposals should be submitted as a group by the organizer of the session; typically, 3 standard length or 4 shorter papers can be accommodated within our usual session formats. We welcome less traditional formats too, including panel discussions and author-meet-critics sessions, as long as they explicitly target a broad issue or specific idea as the core of the discussion (rather than ad hominem arguments), are firmly committed to collegial and non-adversarial exchange, and explain why that issue or idea is relevant to SPSP interests.

Individuals should only appear on the program once as presenters, and at most one additional time as commentator or co-author. If in doubt, please contact the organizers in advance about your anticipated submissions.

There will also be a graduate student workshop, a smaller topical workshop before and after the conference, and a poster presentation session, with further details TBA.

SPSP 2017–18 Organizing Committee:

Chiara Ambrosio, University College, London

Rachel Ankeny, University of Adelaide

Justin Biddle, Georgia Institute of Technology

Till Grüne-Yanoff, Royal Institute of Technology (KTH), Stockholm

Sabina Leonelli, University of Exeter

Matthew Lund, Rowan University

Joseph Rouse, Wesleyan University