

ISHPSSB



INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, AND SOCIAL STUDIES OF BIOLOGY

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President's Semi-Annual Report

Spring 2004

Michael R. Dietrich

Getting Ready for Guelph in 2005

Preliminary planning for the next ISHPSSB meeting is well underway. Our next meeting will be held July 13-17, 2005 in Guelph, Ontario.

Lynn Nyhart and the Program Committee have generated the Call for Papers for the July 2005 meeting (see the related article in this newsletter). It is not too early to start thinking about papers and sessions that *you* would like to see in Guelph. The Program Committee has also been discussing the issue of acceptance guidelines for conference papers. They will make a recommendation to the Executive Council before the next meeting. The issue will be taken up by the membership in Guelph.

A New Way to Pay

In preparation for the Guelph meeting, we have decided to implement a new method for payment using an online service, PayPal. Before the previous meeting, a number of people expressed concern that our registration forms asked for personal information and credit card numbers and yet were not secure. This left registrants vulnerable to unscrupulous internet denizens who might intercept this information. Our investigations into providing secure forms proved that this was both complicated and expensive. Moreover, there was no guarantee of security. Other societies have moved to online payment systems with some success. After some research, we decided to try PayPal. Using this system will provide a more secure means for us to have credit card payments for

membership, journal subscriptions, and conference registration. In addition, PayPal is much more cost effective for the society. In the past, we have paid a higher charge for every use of a credit card, even though we process them ourselves. These charges quickly became significant with over 500 registrants in Vienna. Moving to PayPal also reduces the work load of the Treasurer who previously processed all credit card charges. (The value of a happy treasurer cannot be overemphasized.)

We will be implementing the PayPal system for journal subscriptions and membership this summer. If you wish to pay by check, our treasurer, Keith Benson will continue to be more than happy to accept it. If you have any problems or reservations about PayPal, please let me know. This is an experiment of sorts for us and we'd like to make it as successful as possible. This experiment would not be possible without the efforts and expertise of Roberta Millstein, our webmaster.

Off-Year Workshop Scheduled for September 2004

The first ISHPSSB sponsored Off-year Workshop will be held this September at the University of San Francisco in San Francisco, California. Proposed

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and organized by student members, Vivette Garcia Deister (UNAM), Matt Haber (UC Davis), Andrew Hamilton (UC San Diego and University of San Francisco), and Grant Yamashita (UC Davis), this meeting will be a Philosophy of Biology Graduate Training Workshop. In the tradition of ISHPSSB meetings, the workshop is intended to foster collaborations among individuals as well as traditional disciplines. One of the goals of the workshop is to anticipate future challenges and opportunities within philosophy of biology. At the same time, speakers will be asked to address graduate student concerns about selecting a thesis topic, addressing different audiences, and publishing. Speakers scheduled for the workshop include Kim Sterelny (ANU/VUW), Jason Robert (Dalhousie University), Jay Odenbaugh (Lewis & Clark College), and Elihu Gerson (Tremont Research Institute). For more information about this workshop, see <http://www.ishpssb.org/workshop2004.html> or contact one of the organizers: Vivette Garcia Deister (Vivettegd@aol.com), Matt Haber (mhhaber@ucdavis.edu), Andrew Hamilton (ahamilto@ucsd.edu), or Grant Yamashita (gyamashita@ucdavis.edu).

In 2001, the ISHPSSB Council approved the idea of sponsoring Off-Year Workshops or Conferences. Off-year workshops do not receive any financial support from ISHPSSB, although we will help promote and advertise approved events. This is the first proposal that we have received. It has been reviewed and approved by the Off-Year Workshop Committee. As an ISHPSSB sponsored event, this workshop is open to all ISHPSSB members who are interested. If you have an idea for a future off-year workshop, please contact me.

As always I welcome your comments and suggestions regarding ISHPSSB. Please contact me at Michael R. Dietrich
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The Running of ISHPSSB

On a warm July night in Vienna, Keith Benson and I sat in a bar below street level where couples tangoed around a small dance floor. I was scheduled to fly back to Milwaukee in a few hours, and our conversation wandered from biology studies to society business to analysis of the sleek dance steps. We considered a series of short articles for this newsletter on various subjects the general membership might be interested to know. Upon further reflection, some of the ideas proved to be nothing more than our own whims about how the world might be a different place. Ultimately, however, a few suggestions are worth sharing with all of you who might be planning to come to Guelph in 2005.

First, Keith and I, along with anyone who was paying attention in Vienna, recognized the enormously energetic contributions of Werner, Astrid, Gerd, Eva, and everyone else from KLI. They responded to requests from members, which ranged from the legitimate to the absurd, with good humor and efficiency. Need I remind you that we were in Austria!?!

Next, as the bartenders kept careful watch over us, we talked about the many needs scholars had brought to us at the registration table. It needs to be said that while our society is informal and (we hope) our level of service is quite high, some members seemed unable to identify any limit to our generosity. Demands to use the computer at the registration desk were frequent, and just as frequently denied. That equipment was not there for folks to make last-minute changes to their papers. In fact, the integrity of registration information and meeting-organizing details depended on that machine working consistently and being available to planning staff. Sorry friends, it was not a question of having been a member since the early days or waiting until no one was looking. We all needed to keep hands off the registration computer, printer, copier, and the rest. The same will have to be true in Guelph.

The availability of banquet tickets became something of a moot issue, since our hosts were

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Call for Papers: ISHPSSB Meeting

Guelph July 13-17, 2005

Since its inception, the ISHPSSB has brought together scholars from diverse backgrounds together to discuss issues of mutual interest in an informal, collegial setting. Over the past twenty-odd years, the group has evolved from a small one—the earliest meetings had perhaps 60 participants—to a large one (over 600 participants in Vienna, 2003). As we grow, we face increasing challenges to retaining an informal and experimental approach in our meeting. How can we strengthen the lines of communication among historians, philosophers, social scientists, and biologists, and not fall into the more comfortable scenario of talking to the subset of Ishkabibblers we already know? How can we continue to open conversations that lead to innovative ways of thinking about our common subject, biology, and about our own disciplines?

For the 2005 meeting, we hope to continue our tradition of an informal, experimental approach. We especially seek sessions that work to meet this challenge, through innovative cross-disciplinary content, format, or both. To facilitate bringing together people of different disciplinary and national backgrounds, the Society invites prospective participants to post session ideas and calls for contributions to particular session electronically (check the ISHPSSB website, <http://www.ishpssb.org/>, after 15 July 2004 for links; Editor's note: session ideas posted before October 1 will be listed in the fall ISHPSSB Newsletter).

Many areas within our broad field are wide open for cross- and interdisciplinary innovation. For the 2005 meeting, we would especially like to encourage sessions in the following areas:

- biology and aesthetics. Sessions might include such issues as the aesthetic considerations implicit in the choice of work that biologists do; aesthetics in the history and philosophy of concepts of evolutionary mate choice; the place of art in natural history museums—to give only a few examples.
- social activism and biology/biology studies. How do biologists of different sorts engage politically? How do academic students of biology (whether historians, philosophers, or sociologists/social theorists) engage with politically (and morally) charged issues? What is the relationship between biology and activism in different parts of the world?
- “applied” biology: agriculture, forestry, fisheries, horticulture, veterinary medicine, plant pathology, medicine. What is the nature of the relations (intellectual and social) between these areas and “purer” or more “basic” aspects of biology? How have these relations been different (or similar) across time and space? This is an especially appropriate area of emphasis for Guelph, a university that emphasizes applied biological disciplines, including agriculture, bioengineering, health, and environmental sciences.
- relations between popular and elite biology. A great deal of historical and sociological work has been undertaken recently on popular biology. Far less has concerned the relations between popular and academic biology, and very little work has been done to understand the philosophical distinctions and connections between the knowledge of the two groups. How can we close these loops?

Of course, we welcome sessions in all areas of our fields; individual paper submissions are also welcome.

The basic time unit for sessions will be 90 minutes; sessions encompassing two units (but not more) are welcome, as long as there are at least five formal participants over the two sessions.

We encourage innovative formats. If you are interested in proposing a session with an unusual format (e.g., with pre-circulated papers or requiring an unusual room format or special equipment), please contact Lynn Nyhart so we can make sure it is feasible.

Questions? Ideas? Suggestions? Contact the Program Officer, Lynn Nyhart, at lknyhart@wisc.edu, and please be sure to include the term ISHPSSB in your subject line. Email contact is strongly preferred, but if you do not have access to it, you may also send letters via regular mail to Prof. Lynn Nyhart, Dept. of the History of Science, University of Wisconsin, 1180 Observatory Drive, Madison, WI 53726 USA.

Publications of Interest

The International Journal of Developmental Biology is a not-for-profit, scholarly journal whose mission is twofold: to promote the examination of developmental biology to scientists worldwide by offering free online access to scientists from developing countries; and to tackle some of the social aspects of developmental science. I refer you to our two latest publications, which may be of interest to ISHPSSB members.

Our most recent edition, entitled "Evolution & Development" has been conceived as a biological roadmap by our Special Editors, hand in hand with experts in evolutionary development to:
learn from the past to shape the future

*put forward new and thought-provoking hypotheses
stimulate debate on critical issues in Evolution & Development*

*offer case studies on the origins of different organisms
delve into the complexities of both macro and micro
evolutionary processes*

Our very well-received Special Issue from 2003 is entitled "Teaching Developmental Biology" may also be of interest. It offers marvelous insight into the many different aspects of teaching Developmental Biology. It features representatives of many different countries (USA, UK, Germany, Japan, France, Canada, Italy, Singapore, Sweden, Russia, India, Turkey, and Ecuador), and reveals a selection of different course levels (primary,

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extremely generous in providing for *every* last-minute request that came to us. Such is almost never the case at scholarly meetings. In planning for the Guelph meeting, we hope you will purchase your banquet tickets at the time you register. Everyone will tell you that the banquet is the place to be during an ISHPSSB meeting, whatever your experience with scholarly banquets elsewhere. Don't wait until the last minute only to find that no more tickets are available.

Currency exchange became an issue on a few occasions at the registration table. In order to keep our costs low and our finances in order, we could not make exchanges on the spot. ISHPSSB is incorporated in the U.S. and has bank accounts in that country, so we accept only U.S. dollars. Fortunately, use of credit cards makes exchange convenient. We are adding PayPal service to our online registration and renewal so that members will have greater security when using credit cards, and our treasurer will have fewer buttons to push on the manual credit card machine we lease. It will also save the society in transaction costs.

Email access was perhaps the most requested service. Fortunately, Vienna had internet cafes with reasonable prices nearby. We will be sure to have options clearly outlined by our local arrangements chair for Guelph. Members should not assume, however, that internet access will be provided at the registration table or free of charge, depending on access at our various meeting sites.

Keith and I have also considered a photo essay on the various locations where our society's services are currently housed. As you know, this is a strictly volunteer-run organization, so we operate out of diverse facilities. The newsletter is laid out on my Mac, which sits in our guest room overlooking Astor Street in Milwaukee. Not particularly glamorous, but you can get a nice Guinness at the County Claire a few doors down. Printing and mailing come out of Alverno College's small professional services department, thanks to an excellent staff including Sue, Dave, Blaine, Larry, Connie, Milt, Donna, Diane, and Darlene. This is saving us thousands of dollars in printing costs. I still stick labels on envelopes myself. Faxed messages come to me through mail services too. Keith processes credit cards by hand from his home office 30 feet from Puget Sound on Vashon Island. He does our banking at a branch in busy downtown Vashon, in between trips to Washington, D.C., San Diego, Vancouver, B.C., and all the other places you all keep inviting him! He also maintains correspondence from his apartment in D.C. We never got around to taking the photos, so this brief description will have to suffice.

As we left the tango bar and made our way back up to the sidewalk, we felt better to have worked through these issues. I hope your reading about our conversation gives you some perspective on what makes for a successful meeting.

The New Look of Online Membership Renewal

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secondary, undergraduate, post-grad etc), teaching methods, social considerations and personal teaching philosophies.

I am sure that the two latest releases mentioned will interest your members. Further information can be found at the link: <http://www.ijdb.ehu.es/>

Many thanks in advance for your time and

consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any queries.

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Meeting of Interest

Call for Papers: International workshop "A Cultural History of Heredity III: Nineteenth to Early Twentieth Centuries" at the Max-Planck-Institute for the History of Science, Berlin, January 13-16, 2005

Organizers: Staffan Müller-Wille and Hans-Jörg Rheinberger

Deadline for Paper Proposals: June 30, 2004

The Max-Planck-Institute for the History of Science Berlin is inviting scholars from a wide variety of disciplines, including historians of art and literature, medicine, law, or economics, to submit paper proposals for its forthcoming workshop "Cultural History of Heredity III: Nineteenth to

Early Twentieth Centuries". This workshop, scheduled for January 13-16 2005, is part of a series of workshops forming the backbone of a long-term research project on the cultural history of heredity that aims to uncover the technical, juridical, medical, and scientific practices in which the knowledge of inheritance was historically anchored in different epochs and to understand the genesis of today's naturalistic concept of heredity. Conference language is English. Costs for travel and accommodation will be covered by the Institute. For further information see the call for papers at <http://www.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/heredity/ANNOUNCE3.html> or e-mail to smuewi@mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de

Notice about Renewals

Members are invited to renew when they register for the biennial meeting. Since all memberships run for two years, this process keeps everyone on track, and helps us minimize additional mailings and reminders.

If you are unable to attend a meeting, and forget to renew, we will include a reminder with the fall Newsletter following the meeting.

Your renewal date is always printed on the mailing label for the Newsletter.

If you currently need to renew, your mailing label will read "Dues through 2003," indicating that you have not paid since 2001. Please visit our website to download a renewal form, or use the new PayPal service to pay by credit card!

If you ever have any question about your membership status, feel free to contact Chris Young, secretary@ishpssb.org

New Society of Interest

Iranian Institute of Philosophy (IRIP) Establishment Announcement

Purpose & Mission

The Iranian Institute of Philosophy (IRIP), formerly the Iranian Academy of philosophy was founded in 1973, in order to meet the research requirements of the country in philosophy, Hikmah and relevant fields. IRIP is affiliated to the Ministry of Science, Research & Technology.

IRIP began its new round of activities with a new organization in 2000 with the following objectives:

- 1 Working towards promotion of research in the fields of Islamic philosophy, Western philosophy, religion, theology, comparative philosophy, logic, history and philosophy of science, science studies and philosophy of religion.
- 2 Study and research in modern philosophy and its introduction to the Iranian audience.
- 3 Study and research in traditional philosophical issues and their introduction to the modern generation.
- 4 Revival of the special status of Iran in Islamic and world philosophy
- 5 Promotion and cultivation of philosophical and logical thought in the Iranian society.

Responsibilities

IRIP will undertake the following responsibilities with respect to the above objectives in the field of philosophy:

- i Study of the research needs in the relevant fields
- ii Conducting research projects in the above fields in line with the objectives of the Institute
- iii Providing the suitable means for the research activities
- iv Study of interdisciplinary themes between philosophy and other sciences
- v Editing, translating and composing texts in Persian and other languages in different levels in the mentioned subjects
- vi International cooperation with similar philosophical centers and institutes in the world and holding scientific and specialized gatherings, and local and international discussion meetings in the relevant fields
- vii Publication of a periodical and specialized magazines

- viii Establishment of relations with local and international research centers
- ix Invitation of prominent researchers both from Iran and the world for cooperation with IRIP
- x Carrying out educational activities in the framework of the objectives of the Institute

Constitution

President: Professor Gholam Reza A'avani

The Institute is comprised of six research groups in the fields of:

- 1 Western Philosophy: Chairman, Professor Gholam Reza A'avani
- 2 Islamic Philosophy: Chairman, Professor Gholam Hossein Ibrahimy Dinani
- 3 History and Philosophy of Science: Chairman Dr. Shapoor E'temad
- 4 Religion and Mysticism: Chairman Professor Mustafa Mohaqeq Damad
- 5 Theology & Logic: Professor Zia Movahhid

The Institute has a library containing about 30,000 titles in the above areas and about 200 specialized periodicals. It also publishes books in the above domains in English, Arabic and Persian. It envisages the publication of specialized quarterlies in the related fields.

Membership

Membership is open to all interested philosophers in different parts of the world. There are no membership dues at the present.

To join the Institute, please send an E-mail, which states your name, academic affiliation (if applicable), research/interest areas, contact information and your desire to become a member of IRIP to: international@irip.org

Inquiries about the Institute may be made to the Email address above or to the following mailing address:

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You can subscribe to ISHPSSB's Listserv list by sending the following message:

Send an email message to: LISTSERV@lists.umn.edu

with the following in the body of the message: SUBSCRIBE ISHPSSB-L Yourfirstname Yourlastname

Don't forget to check updates online: <http://www.ishpssb.org>

Deadline for submissions for fall Newsletter: October 15, 2004