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Social Studies of Biology*

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President's Corner

Since this is my first address to our membership as acting president, I should first of all like to thank all of you who have supported my candidacy for their confidence. It is a real privilege to accept this challenge! My warmest thanks go also to past president Paul Griffiths, secretary Anya Plutynski, long-time treasurer Lisa Gannett, and many other friends of Ishkabibble, either visible or not so visible, whom I cannot name here, for handing over a society in perfect health, financially and otherwise. After a somewhat slow start mainly due to the necessity for the current team to familiarize ourselves with many new voices—ISHPSSB has come of age, as reflected in the existence of by now fourteen committees that in many ways assist the Council in running the society—we are ready to move further forward with full energy!

Looking back, everybody will agree that the Montpellier meeting, our largest ever, was as good as they get. Jean Gayon and Philippe Huneman, who oversaw the local organization in this most charming city, report on it in this newsletter (see “After the Montpellier 2013 Meeting” at page 3). For me personally, the most striking and beneficial innovation Montpellier brought was the engagement of many of the first-rate local biologists, in particular ecologists, in our meeting. Congratulations to Jean and Philippe as well as to Michel Morange and Thomas Pradeu, the co-chairs of the program committee, for their Herculean efforts in general, and in particular for having brought us into close contact with the Montpellier ‘biocommunity’! (I’m already harvesting benefits from this networking here in Vienna, and I suppose I’m not alone.) It would be wonderful if this accomplishment could get an encore in Montréal next year.

Looking forward, while many of us were still recovering from our intensive interactions at Montpellier, Frédéric Bouchard and Christophe Malaterre felt they had no time to lose and immediately started organizing our next meeting in “the North American city with the European heart,” Montréal, most enthusiastically. See their words of welcome in “ISHPSSB 2015, Montréal” at page 4 (the conference website will soon be up). It is very practical to have Mathieu Charbonneau, a philosopher of biology from Montréal who is now a post-doc in Vienna, as a kind of liaison officer between the Old and New Worlds. The team of local organizers in

Montréal is nicely complemented by Mark Borrello and Rob Wilson, who co-chair the 2015 program. From what I’ve been able to glance behind the scenes, it looks like this meeting is going to be “for-mi-da-ble” (Charles Aznavour) as well.

Future Challenges for Ishkabibble

A society that is steadily growing poses challenges that (I’d say, fortunately!) will keep us from resting on our oars. I will mention three here:

1) Our policy, reflecting our grassroots origins, has always been to accept most paper proposals to allow a maximum of scholars, including the most junior ones, to participate actively in the society meetings. Given that both the history and the philosophy of biology are booming fields, our ‘uncontrolled growth’ (fifteen parallel sessions in Montpellier!) is now approaching, if not already stretching, the limits of our (current) organizational capacities and the infrastructural capacities (lecture rooms, dorms...) of most universities. Many of us feel it is time to reflect on what would be the best way for the society to go:

- allow for (or even promote) yet more quantitative growth, which in practice would require shifting to a more professional level of organizing, or
- size down in favor of more quality by imposing a more rigid selection procedure, or
- remain more or less as we are now.

2) The ‘HPSS’ in our name: For many years now historians of biology have been unhappy with the philosophers of biology’s ‘dominance,’ and social students of science have become ever more rare over the years. What should and can be done to reach a better balance?

3) The ‘I’ in our name: Although, as Jean and Philippe note in their report, four continents were represented in Montpellier, there are notable geographical ‘holes’ in our covering of HPSSB worldwide (for instance, almost no participants from Eastern Europe). How can we reach out to improve this situation?

These and other issues are already being discussed in the council and relevant committees, but we hope to engage more members, as well as people who are (currently) not members, in these debates. The ISHPSSB website, which has been neglected in recent years, will soon arise in a new look, and provide

functionality to stage our discussions.

Werner Callebaut

ISHPSSB President, 2013-15

After the Montpellier 2013 Meeting

A word from the Organization Committee

The 2013 edition of the ISHPSSB Meeting has been held in Montpellier in July. For us, as—we hope—for the participants, it has been a great success. About 650 people came to the southern, sunny and ancient city of Montpellier, to attend a large range of symposia and talks distributed along many parallel sessions. Friendly meetings such as the welcome cocktail hosted in the *Jardin des Plantes* or the Banquet in the *Parc du Château de Gramont* gathered junior and senior researchers in beautiful and sunny settings, around provençal wines and food, and lively philosophical discussions.

Plurality and diversity have been two keywords for this meeting. Scholars came from 4 continents, with a wide proportion of young researchers. Many philosophers, but also many historians came, signalling perhaps a return of the historians in our community, which is a good thing. The very old tradition of Montpellier for medicine and life sciences may have played some role in this case. As usual, presentations in many various styles have been given, and we witnessed at the same time the dynamism and the widening of our field: the list of topics addressed in the meetings could not be given here, and the disciplines concerned cover all branches of the life and medical sciences. A fruitful interdisciplinarity has been found here with the implication of many biologists and ecologists; those who in general don't know this conference, such as the ecologists and biologists of the Montpellier area—the most prolific concentration of ecology, biology and environmental sciences in Europe, attended talks, gave presentations and engaged into fruitful discussions with Ish members, that often are still going on. Hence the meeting entirely fulfilled its function as a great place for insemination and generation of ideas and prospects across disciplinary boundaries.

For this striking academic, social and in terms of friends success we are greatly grateful to the society's Bureau and committee—Paul Griffiths and Anya Plutynski with whom we worked in an harmonious interaction from early on—, to our

institutions—CNRS, many biology and ecology labs, Montpellier universities and others—that supported us by giving funding or lending us the conference buildings, and to Agropolis International, the Montpellier structure in environmental science that finally made this conference possible. Everybody appreciated the efficiency, helpfulness and kindness of the student staff—mostly from biology and medicine Universities—that has been hired for the event and that, on this occasion, discovered philosophy of biology, appreciated it and perhaps decided to make use of it in their future careers. But above all, our warm thanks go to all the ISHPSSB members that came to Montpellier and collectively made this beautiful event. We know that many of them enjoyed the meeting, the place and its many cultural, gastronomic, and natural attractions, and their satisfaction has been for us a tremendous gratification for the effort we put into organizing this meeting.

Thanks to all of you, and see you in Montréal in 2015!

Jean Gayon & Philippe Huneman

Chairs of the Organization Committee for ISHPSSB

2013

Report from the off-year workshop 2014

“Changing Life in Times of Crisis,” an off-year ISHPSSB workshop, was held at the Old Fire Station in Woods Hole Massachusetts, USA from May 17-21. The 16 participants came from the USA (10), Canada (3), Spain, Portugal, and Russia (1 each) and included two tenured professors, two post-docs, four independent scholars, and 8 graduate students (most of the latter with travel support from ISHPSSB). We spent four days creating spaces, interactions, support,



Workshop participants

and connections in formulating plans to extend our own projects of inquiry and engagement around "changing life in times of crisis."

This intentionally broad topic encompassed a wide range of projects: workshops in which epidemiologists would reflect on their personal and professional life course in relation to longstanding and emerging frictions or tensions in their field; development of conceptual tools to fight social injustice rooted in category-based generalizations and explanations; methods to examine the intersection of neo-liberal politics and (for one participant) regulation of biotechnology in the poorer EU countries or (for another participant) menstrual health management campaigns in various regions in the Global South; extending the philosophy of extended mind to "extended sex;" a doctoral proposal in history redesigned to connect toxic chemicals and women's health issues since WWII as played out in the specific site of New Jersey; the science and politics of extinctions; role of public health research community in reinforcing the superiority of breast milk at the expense of ignoring inequality; an investigative video on weed scientists and invasive species; a multi-year civic science project on how different knowledge communities mobilize information to create change in the face of ocean plastics—and much more.

Activities during the workshop, as they have since 2004 at the annual New England Workshops on Science and Social Change (*NewSSC*)*, emphasized "connecting, probing, and reflecting" so as to support and learn from each others' inquiries, employing tools and processes such as freewriting, extended autobiographical introductions, office hours, and "five-phase" dialogue hours. (The program, with links that explain the processes used, and evaluations can be accessed via <http://sicw.wikispaces.com/newssc14>.) The workshop schedule, in brief, included an activity together as a group each morning and again for an hour at the end of the day. In between, time was spent in independent research related to our evolving projects, in conversations, and impromptu mini-sessions. The outcomes included: a) *products* that reflect our inquiries and plans, conveyed in work-in-progress presentations on the third day and revised in response

* For further reading: Taylor, P. J., S. J. Fifield, et al. (2011). "Cultivating Collaborators: Concepts and Questions Emerging Interactively From An Evolving, Interdisciplinary Workshop." *Science as Culture* 20(1): 89-100

to feedback so as to be shareable outside the workshop, b) *experiences* that motivate us to take our individual projects beyond our current scope or level of activity, and c) *stock-taking* towards developing the workshop format.

Comments expressed in the written and spoken evaluations include: "I now have 15 people I can turn to when I need to." [This] "is very important work for the people involved and the tools they bring with them into their respective research and communities." A line of inquiry opened up—"processes that produce crisis" and "heterogeneity and mutual aid" and "which philosophies deal well in practice with messy boundaries?" and how "we tend to stay safe in our areas of interest unless supported through structure an play into other spaces of inquiry."

The participants are very grateful for the financial support of ISHPSSB, without which many of them would not have been able to attend.

Peter J. Taylor

Organizer of the off-year workshop 2014

ISHPSSB 2015. Montréal

A warm welcome from the local organizers.

We are extremely happy to welcome you all to Montréal for the next ISHPSSB meeting, July 5-10 2015.

You all know Montréal: it is a North American city with a European heart! It is a highly diverse city in all respects: linguistically, culturally, and socio-economically. It is a French city in which it is easy to



Olympic Stadium



UQÀM Campus

get around solely in English (over half the population is bilingual). And, because of its large student body—the highest proportion of student/general population in North America—it offers many affordable eating and lodging options.

Montréal international airport is within easy reach of most destinations. Direct flight times typically range from 1 to 6 hours when coming from the US, from 6 to 8 hours when traveling from Europe, and not surprisingly longer from Asia. The city’s highly developed public transit system—voted best in North America—as well as its public bicycle sharing system “Bixi” make it a very manageable city for temporary visits.

The meeting will be organized at the UQÀM campus which is conveniently located downtown Montréal, at walking distance from the numerous restaurants and hotels of the Quartier latin. The UQÀM campus is also situated nearby one of the major subway nodes, the Berri-UQÀM station, which is directly served by the airport shuttle-bus. The financial district and its shopping areas are just a few subway stations away, and so is the old-Montréal district (a tourist favorite) and its harbour by the Saint Laurent river.

The practical organization of this event will be a joint effort of three local institutions: two universities with historians, philosophers and sociologists of science and, in particular, of biology (UQÀM and UdeM), and an inter-university research center that focuses on science studies (CIRST, whose members are UQÀM, UdeM and Sherbrooke University). We have already started to assemble a set of diverse options in terms of accommodations situated at walking distance from the UQÀM campus. This includes 3- and 4-star hotels

with bedrooms ranging from \$90 to \$160 per night, as well as student residencies and studios ranging from \$55 to \$80.

Being located right at a main subway interchange, the conference venue makes it easy to go all over town for a quick shopping or eating trip. We hope people will focus on the meeting, but many quick diversions are within easy reach. A quick subway, bus, or bicycle ride can take you to the Museum of Fine Arts, the Contemporary Arts Museum, or maybe a quick stroll through Mount Royal Park or in Montreal Botanical Gardens (one of the largest and most diverse plant collections in the world). And if public transit is not enough, you can always hail one of the many taxis in town to get back from one of the many (many) restaurants and bars all over the city. More importantly, you can eat very well at all price ranges in Montréal.

If you wish to stay longer, you can rent a car and you’re within easy reach (60-90 minutes drive) of the Laurentians or the Eastern Townships, where green hills and mountains are peppered with lakes of all sizes. Camping, canoeing, windsurfing, hiking, fishing, or just drinking beer(s) looking at sunsets are common summer activities. But you can also decide to stay downtown and enjoy Montréal’s numerous cultural highlights, museums, concert venues and summer festivals. Whichever option you choose, we are sure you will love it here!

Frédéric Bouchard and Christophe Malaterre
Local organizers



Pavillon De Sève on UQÀM campus

Report from the Program Co-Chairs

In coordination with the local site organizers, we are currently finalizing both the Call for Papers and the Submission Guidelines and Participation for the 2015 meeting in Montreal. While we expect these to be available by July, we thought that the ISH membership might appreciate some heads-up, especially since there will be an important change to our acceptance policy for submissions: this year we will adopt the practice of ROLLING ACCEPTANCES for submissions. While we may fine-tune or correct the information below in the official Call for Papers and Submission Guidelines and Participation, we do not anticipate major changes here and encourage you to start thinking about submissions early!

ISHPSSB has offered various kinds of session over the years—in length, in participatory format, in number of participants—each with their own virtues and limitations. For the 2015 meeting, we have decided to offer a single session length (90 minutes), to streamline the session types, and to offer a relatively simple rule governing the number of times a person may appear on the program. We hope that, together with a bulletin board to promote session coordination, this streamlining and simplification will encourage earlier submissions as well as a higher proportion of organized sessions.

For ISH 2015, submissions will open on 1st October, 2014 and will close on 15th January, 2015. To encourage ORGANIZED SESSION submissions, the program committee has introduced a new policy of rolling acceptances for those submissions. This will benefit those of you who would like to plan your ISHPSSB travel early, and will ensure the timely completion of the overall program for the conference. While all session types may be submitted from 1st October, 2014, only organized sessions will benefit from the rolling acceptance policy. The earlier you submit an organized session, the earlier you will hear from us about acceptance, and the more effective choice you will have as to the scheduling of your session. Please see OVERVIEW OF SUBMISSION TYPES below for further details.

As with past meetings, ISHPSSB 2015 aims at facilitating the exchange of research ideas and results across a range of fields, while fostering informal, co-operative exchanges and on-going collaborations among a variety of international scholars. It is our goal

to develop a program that will allow maximal interactions, while also giving people the chance to present their ideas to their colleagues.

Overview of Submission Types.

The three submission types this year are “Organized Session”, “Individual Paper”, and “Poster”, and are explained as follows:

1. ORGANIZED SESSION: These submissions come in two formats, (a) and (b) below, and are submitted by a session organizer who must also be one of the participants in the session. Amongst other things, the session organizer will indicate 3 preferred, ranked timetable slots with the submission, and these slots will be filled on a “first come, first served” basis. *Organized Sessions are the only submission type that will be given the perhaps considerable benefits of acceptance and scheduling on a rolling basis from October 2014.*

(a) STANDARD TALKS SESSION. 3 speakers, plus a Chair who can be one of the speakers but need not be. In these sessions, each speaker will have 30 minutes total (including discussion). This submission format requires a session title and abstract, titles and abstracts for each talk, as well as names, affiliations, and emails for all participants.

(b) DIVERSE FORMAT SESSION. At least 2 participants, including a chair who must be one of the participants. These sessions allow a variety of formats, and may be organized as roundtables, panels, dialogues, longer talks, lightning talks, commentaries, interpretative dances, etc. This submission format requires a session title and abstract, as well as names, affiliations, and emails for all participants; further information germane to the particular format may also be included by the session organizer.

Individuals may submit, or may participate in, up to TWO Organized Sessions.

2. INDIVIDUAL PAPER: This submission format involves submitting an individual paper that requires participant name, affiliation, email, and a title and abstract. The paper here must be no more than 20 minutes in length, with 10 minutes for discussion. Notification of acceptance will be given only after January 15th, 2015, and Individual Paper submissions will be grouped by the program chairs and scheduled into time slots that remain after Organized Sessions are

scheduled. *Please note that Individual Papers are likely to have a higher chance of being rejected or placed in less desirable timetable slots, as many available program slots will be taken by Organized Sessions that will be accepted on a rolling basis from October 2014.*

Individuals may submit only ONE Individual Paper.

3. POSTER: This submission format is submitted by an individual, and requires a title and abstract; posters will only be accepted after January 15th, 2015. Individuals may submit only ONE Poster.

PARTICIPATION RULE: THE SIMPLE RULE OF TWO. Any individual can appear at most twice on the program (speaker, commentator, roundtable participant, poster author, etc.) in addition to serving as a session chair.

This submission structure is aimed at (i) encouraging participants to submit Organized Sessions, and (ii) to do so relatively early on; together with other requirements for submission (e.g., completion of a checklist of keywords), it also should (iii) facilitate other ISH desiderata for sessions, such as interdisciplinarity, inter-regionality, and career-stage integration. ISH has been a great place for interdisciplinary and trans-national work, as well as graduate student and junior faculty mentoring. We hope that this structure will contribute to enhancing these features of the 2015 meeting.

Mark Borrello(borrello@umn.edu) & Rob Wilson (rwilson.robert@gmail.com)

Co-Chairs of the Program Committee

A word from the Student Advisory Committee

The mission of the Student Advisory Committee is to continuously support the valuable tradition of no segregation between students and non-students as ISH is an organic blend of junior and senior scholars united by common passion for and interest in the study of the life sciences. Nevertheless, students have special needs and concerns such as lack of funding, limited networks, and career anxieties. We help maintaining the diverse and inclusive nature of ISH and enable junior network building by providing more opportunities to mingle and mix (including informal food and drink events) and by advocating for improved junior travel funding practices. We also organize training and advising workshops to address the career and publishing education needs of junior interdisciplinary HP/SS/S

scholars of the life sciences.

ISHPSSB 2013 Events

Last year, the committee organized a Student Advisory Workshop “Navigating Intellectual and Professional Transitions in an Interdisciplinary World.” Sandra Mitchell chaired a panel discussion with Rachael Brown (U. of Western Ontario), Maria Kronfeldner (U. Bielefeld), Michael Weisberg (U. of Pennsylvania), Anya Plutynski (Washington U.) and Lukas Rieppel (Northwestern University). The next day, at the Graduate Student Meeting, Lynn Chiu (U. of Missouri) was elected as the new graduate representative of the ISHPSSB council and chair of the Student Advisory Committee. Current members of the committee include Emily Parke (U. of Pennsylvania), Ann-Sophie Barwich (KLI), and Nina Atanasova (U. of Cincinnati).

ISHPSSB 2015, Looking Forward

In anticipation of an inclusive and fruitful experience for students, post-docs, and new faculty, the committee will conduct a pre-ISHPSB 2015 Conference Young Scholar Survey to gather feedback and suggestions for ISHPSSB 2015. The survey will reach your mailboxes soon, stay-tuned!!

The Student Advisory Committee: Lynn Chiu, Nina Atanasova, Ann-Sophie Barwich and Emily Parke

Publication committee: open access, website re-design, editorial division of labor

The publication committee has set itself a tripartite agenda.

OPEN ACCESS: A long-term and major goal of the publication committee is to develop initiatives so that the society can keep pace with the opportunities our digital world offers. Thus, we will try to find ways to support OA initiatives within the society and with journals of interest to the society. More information will be made available as soon as concrete options are on the table.

WEBSITE RE-DESIGN: The publication committee will recommend to council to decide on spending some money for a professional re-design of its webpage. That re-design shall take the new logo into account and will

restructure the website according to suggestion made from the publication committee. If possible, this redesign will include a suitable open membership list to facilitate interaction among the members and to set new incentives for membership in the society, especially for younger researchers.

EDITORIAL DIVISION OF LABOR: The division of labor for the publications of the society (website, newsletter, listserv) shall be made more explicit. The publication committee will make a proposal to council regarding this. Part of the proposal will be to install an editorial board assisting the secretary of the society, who will nonetheless stay the ultimate arbiter for ISHPSSB content. The website editor (currently Carlos Mariscal), listserv editor (currently Trevor Pearce) and newsletter editor (currently David Suárez) will be part of that editorial board.

Maria Kronfeldner on behalf of the publication committee

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TBA

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Are you subscribed to the ISHPSSB Listserv <ISHPSBL>?

If not, you may have missed information posted for members which became outdated by the time this Newsletter was ready. Subscribe online by following these instructions:

Send an email message to:

LISTSERV@lists.umn.edu

with the following in the body of the message:

SUBSCRIBE ISHPSBL YourFirstName YourLastName

Check for updates online: <http://www.ishpssb.org>

Have you renewed your membership?

ISHPSSB members typically renew their memberships when they register for the biennial meeting. Those who do not attend a meeting sometimes fail to renew. To renew your membership, go to:
<http://ishpssb.onefireplace.com>.

If you experience any difficulties, please contact Anya Plutynski at secretary@ishpssb.org

As a benefit, members receive a variety of journals at reduced rate, including ISIS and JHB.

If your membership has expired some time ago (approximately 6 months), you may be put in the “archives” of the membership database. In order to be removed from the archive, you must contact Anya Plutynski at secretary@ishpssb.org

Credits

This newsletter was designed and edited by David Suárez.

I thank Maria Kronfeldner, Anya Plutynski and Werner Callebaut for their invaluable help in reviewing the contents of this issue.

The new logo of the society was generously contributed by Andrew Yang.