Society for Philosophy and Technology

SPT newsletter

Volume 33, Number 2 (Spring 2009)

Contents

1. President's Column

By now many if not most of us open the morning newspaper in anticipation of seeing dispiriting headlines and articles calling our attention to the impacts of the global economic downturn. Some of you may be wondering as to how current conditions are impacting our Society and the preparations for the upcoming conference. Along these lines, it is my pleasure to say I have nothing but good, even exciting, news to report First of all, SPT's resources are in excellent shape. It is safe to say that in this context we have not only fully recovered from the losses that we sustained due to low attendance at the conference in Park City in 2003 but are thriving. I want to extend a special thanks here to our secretary/treasurer John Sullins, whose prudent, if not frugal, management of SPT's finances have contributed to this happy state of affairs.

Secondly, Philip Brey, Katinka Waelbers, and others at the University of Twente have been highly active in soliciting support for SPT 2009. Because of their activity, our conference will be supported by several programs and research centers within and outside the University of Twente. It will also be subsidized by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences. More details regarding SPT 2009's sponsors can be found at www.utwente.nl/ceptes/spt2009. Enormous thanks and congratulations are due to Philip and Katinka for all their hard work and fundraising success!

At some universities, the economic downturn has resulted in fewer resources available for faculty travel. Some of you have been asking whether it might be possible for SPT to provide some assistance for participation in our meeting in Enschede. Following a discussion among board members, I am very pleased to announce that SPT will be able to pick up the costs of the conference registration fee for 2-3 members in good standing whose abstracts have been accepted for the conference and who require some assistance to attend. If you are interested, please send a request for a fee waiver to spt@spt.org by 1 May. Decisions will be made promptly after that date has passed.

In other news of interest to Society members:

Jean-Pierre Dupuy will be joining Nick Bostrom and Andrew Feenberg as a keynote speaker at our biennial meeting. He is Professor of Social and Political Philosophy at the École Polytechnique, Paris, as well as the Director of C.R.E.A. (Centre de Recherche en Épistémologie Appliquée), the philosophical research group of the École Polytechnique.

SPT board members and the editors of Techné are continuing to work very hard on finding a commercial publisher for the journal that would meet the needs of scholars in the philosophy of technology and the Society. Slow progress is being made, as these economic times are obviously not the most conducive for this effort. Still, slow progress is progress nonetheless; and a full update will be given in Enschede.
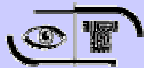
The SPT membership directory will be coming soon to your in-box! We hope to have it distributed by the end of next week.

A quick reminder that the deadline to submit a proposal to host SPT 2011 is coming up. I would be happy to forward a sample proposal to any one who is interested. More information can be found in the pages of this newsletter.

During a recent visit to the Netherlands, I learned April is celebrated throughout the country as "de maand van de filosofie," the month of philosophy, with many lectures, debates, special book exhibits, and other activities. As you can see from Katinka's report in this newsletter, interest in our upcoming conference, as gauged by the number of submitted abstracts, has been quite enthusiastic. This high level of interest suggests that April will not be the only month for philosophy in the Netherlands this year! The full program for the conference will be published in the next edition of this newsletter. Until then, all good wishes for a most enjoyable Spring!

Collegially yours,

Diane Michelfelder
President, SPT

2. Techné

Techné: Research in Philosophy & Technology, the journal of the Society for Philosophy and Technology, is currently welcoming submissions of all styles and approaches in philosophy of technology. The editorial stance of *Techné* is ideologically neutral. There is, however, a unifying theme: a focus on technology, particular technologies, modern or traditional, worldwide, or on social and ethical problems associated with particular technologies. *Techné* aims at being the platform for presenting novel developments and results in academic research on this theme. We therefore seek rigorous, seminal, interesting, creative work and eagerly solicit work from those in fields outside philosophy as long as they offer philosophical perspective.

Submissions will be blind refereed by at least two readers. It is our expectation that authors will be provided with critiques, where, in the judgment of the editors they are deemed helpful. We also seek to have a turn-around time of two months, although this is subject to the cooperation of our referees. We construe philosophy of technology broadly, and we are dedicated to fostering the highest standards in what
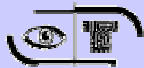
is becoming a diverse field of study. We hope you will consider submitting your work to *Techné*. Submissions and questions can be directed by email to technejournal@gmail.com. If you would like to read past issues of *Techné* for free, please visit our Ejournal, http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/SPT/.

For statistics on the growing readership of *Techné* from 1996 to 2007, please visit: http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/stats/ejournals/SPT-current.html

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3. SPT 2009: Converging Technologies, Changing Societies. Call for posters

16th International Conference of
the Society for Philosophy and Technology
July 7-10
University of Twente
Enschede, The Netherlands

SPT 2009 welcomes high quality posters in all areas of philosophy of technology. Given the focus of this year's conference, posters dealing with converging technologies and their social and cultural impact are especially welcomed. Engineers are warmly invited to submit an abstract.

Keynote speakers include:
Prof. Dr. Nick Bostrom, (Director at Future of Humanity Institute, Faculty of Philosophy and James Martin 21st Century School, Oxford University)
(Prof.) Dr. Andrew Feenberg, (Canada Research Chair in Philosophy of Technology, School of Communication, Simon Fraser University)
Prof. Jean-Pierre Dupuy (École Polytechnique, Paris, Director of research at the C.N.R.S. (Philosophy) and Director of C.R.E.A. (Centre de Recherche en Épistémologie Appliquée))

Posters will be accepted on the basis of a submitted abstract. An abstract must be about 250 words in length) and submitted via email (spt2009@gw.utwente.nl) as embedded plain text or an attachment in RTF or WORD (no docx) or PDF format. Abstracts must be submitted no later than April 31, 2009. Authors will be informed of the decision by May 15, 2009.
The SPT conference series is recognized as the premier international event in philosophy of technology, with delegates from all over the world. Conferences are held every 2 years, alternating between Europe and the United States. SPT 2009 is the 16th conference in the series.

Organizing Committee:
General Director: Philip Brey, University of Twente
Scientific Directors: Peter-Paul Verbeek and Tsjalling Swierstra, University of Twente
Managing Director: Katinka Waelbers, University of Twente

Keep checking the conference website (currently in progress) at
www.utwente.nl/ceptes/spt2009

Conference email address: spt2009@gw.utwente.nl

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4. Call for Invitations to Host SPT 2011

The SPT Board of Directors invites proposals to host the SPT meeting in 2011. Following past practice, it is anticipated that this meeting will take place in North America, but invitations to host SPT 2011 in other locations are also welcome.

Invitations should include the following details:

- A brief description of your institution and why it would be a good choice for this meeting.
- Anticipated conference dates.
- Anticipated number of registrants.
- Travel information: What airport will conference participants use? Are there direct flights to this airport from major US and international cities? How far is the airport from the conference location? Will the host institution arrange transportation from the airport, or will participants be responsible for getting to the venue on their own?
- A description of the facilities available for the conference. How many rooms will be available for our use? What is their seating capacity? Where will group meals take place?
- Lodging information: How many rooms will be available for conference participants? What will be the anticipated costs of the lodging? Will lodging be on or off campus? If off-campus, how far away, and will transportation be available for participants to get from their lodging to the campus?
- An estimate of the conference registration fee, and a description of the costs to be included in it.
- A budget estimate, including a detailed breakdown of institutional and other expenses (eg keynote speakers, group educational/social activities, etc.). Please provide an explanation of how the costs will be covered, including
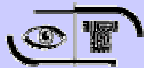
anticipated revenue from registration fees, amount needed from the society, and institutional support. (All budgetary information should be given in US dollars.)

- A letter of commitment of institutional support is encouraged to accompany the invitation.

Invitations to host SPT 2011 may be sent to Diane Michelfelder at any time, but preferably no later than 15 May 2009. Invitations may be submitted electronically (to michelfelder@macalester.edu) or by surface mail to the Department of Philosophy, Macalester College, 1600 Grand Avenue, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55105-1899 USA. The SPT Board will consider the proposals received at their next meeting; and it is anticipated that the host institution will be announced at the conference in Enschede. Preliminary expressions of interest, requests for a sample proposal, or any general questions should be directed to Diane at the e-mail address above or at 1-651-696-6197.

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5. Conferences, Workshops, and Lectures

Shaping Knowledge: Knowing Bodies in a Socio-technical Culture
Carlsberg Academy 14. – 15. May 2009
This interdisciplinary workshop will be organized around three thematic tracks and based on presentations by the following researchers:

Track 1 Visualization and risk Michael Lynch, Cornell University, USA Sven Ove Hansson, Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden Evan Selinger, Rochester Institute of Technology, USA Robert Scharff, University of New Hampshire
Track 2 Gendered Embodied Knowledge Dorte Marie Søndergaard, the Danish School of Education (AU), Denmark Peter-Paul Verbeek, University of Twente, Holland Estrid Sørensen, Humboldt University, Germany Dorthe Staunæs, the Danish School of Education (AU), Denmark
Track 3 Socio-techinical bodies Steen Brock, Aarhus University, Denmark Gert Goeminne, the Free University of Brussels, Belgium Don Ihde, Stony Brook University, USA Finn Olesen, Aarhus University, Denmark

Conference fee is 100kr per day, 75kr per day for students
Abstracts and detailed programme at www.phis.ruc.dk
Contact info and registration at the latest 1st of May to phis@ruc.dk
Organizers: Amalie Frese, Cathrine Hasse, Finn Olesen, Stig Andur Pedersen, Søren Riis.
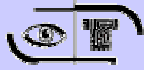
SNET 2009

The Society for the Study of Nanoscience and Emerging Technologies (S.NET) is poised to become an international organization to promote open intellectual exchange towards the advancement of knowledge and understanding of nanotechnologies in society. S.NET represents diverse communities, viewpoints, and methodologies in the social sciences and humanities.

The first annual conference will coincide with the founding of the Society. The conference takes place in Seattle, Washington, September 8 to 11, 2009 in cooperation with the University of Washington Center for Workforce Development Nanoethics Symposium. It invites all discussions of anthropological, cultural, economic, ethical, historical, philosophical, political, and sociological aspects of nanosciences and emerging technologies.

SPSP 2009

Society for Philosophy of Science in Practice (SPSP), Second Biennial Conference, June 18-20, 2009, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, USA

The Society for Philosophy of Science in Practice (SPSP) aims to create 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 at http://www.gw.utwente.nl/spsp/about/SPSP_purpose_051202.doc/

The SPSP biennial 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. http://www.gw.utwente.nl/spsp/. Themes are:

1. Philosophy of Science and Science Education
2. Epistemology of Scientific Practice
3. Experimental Practices
4. Practices of Modeling, Simulations and Computer Experiments
5. 'Knowing Well', Values, and Evidence-for-Use
6. Rationality, Pluralism and 'Styles of Reasoning'
7. Philosophical Pragmatism and Science in Practice
8. Social Epistemology

Keynote speakers: Helen Longino & Mary Morgan

For further information about the conference, see the conference website: http://ships.umn.edu/spsp

CEPE 2009
Eighth International Conference of Computer Ethics Philosophical Enquiry
26-28 June 2009, Ionian Academy Corfu, Greece
The CEPE (Computer Ethics Philosophical Enquiry) conference series is recognized as one of the premier international events on computer and information ethics attended by delegates from all over the world. Conferences are held about every 24 months, alternating between Europe and the United States. http://cepe2009.ionio.gr

ISHPSSB 2009, Brisbane
Biennial Meeting, 12-16 July 2009, Brisbane, Australia
The 2009 meeting of the International Society for the History, Philosophy, and Social Studies of Biology will take place from Sunday, 12 July, through Thursday, 16 July, at Emmanuel College, St. Lucia, Brisbane, Australia, hosted by the University of Sydney: http://www.ishpssb2009.org
ISHPSSB brings together scholars from diverse disciplines, including the life sciences as well as history, philosophy, and sociology of science. The ISHPSSB biennial summer conferences are known for their innovative, transdisciplinary sessions and for fostering informal, cooperative exchanges and on-going collaborations among a variety of international
scholars. This will be the first meeting to be held in the southern hemisphere.
The aim of the conference is to facilitate the exchange of research ideas and results across a range of fields. The submission of papers and sessions on any topic within the society's scope is welcomed. We also encourage the submission of posters, workshops, and general
interest sessions based on themes identified in session proposals. 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.

The Philosophy of Identity in the Virtual
Symposium 6, April 23, 9-12 AM / 2-5 PM
Difference, Relation and Identity are three notions that are fundamentals for the success of Virtual Reality technologies (VR and AR). The aim of this symposium is to conceptualise the Identity of an individual as a scientific concept whilst acknowledging the fact that Identity cannot be studied without considering the other two notions. The pros and cons of designing identities for or within VR become obvious upon admitting that representing any Self will be interpreted at some point by someone having his own values, opinions and experience in life. Members of our society that self-procure, attribute or redistribute Identity in the Virtual World bring about psychological enquiries in relation to user intentionality, specific uses of VR applications or general modifications to our ways of communicating. Usability issues addressing the problem of Identity have not yet been integrated into long-term visions of society and our needs. The Chair of the session is thus open to all existential, ethical and epistemological issues having to do with Identity in Virtual Communities.
Submission of full papers: January 19, 2009
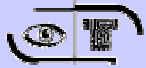
Symposium chair: Colin Schmidt, colin.schmidt@univ-lemans.fr
For more information, see the Call for Paper http://www.laval-virtual.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=59&Itemid=111

Die fünf Sinne der Wissenschaften
Gemeinsame Jahrestagung der deutschen Gesellschaft für Wissenschafts- und Technikforschung (GWTF) und der Swiss Association for the Studies of Science, Technology, and Society (STS-CH)

am 27./28. November 2009 in Tübingen

Organisation: Regula Valérie Burri, Cornelius Schubert, Jörg Strübing

Der Rolle von Bildern im Erkenntnisprozess ist in den letzten Jahren eine rege Aufmerksamkeit aus verschiedenen Bereichen der Wissenschaftsforschung zu Teil geworden. Während diese Diskussion anhält, rücken zunehmend auch andere sinnliche Erkenntnispraktiken in den Fokus. Welche Rolle akustische, haptische, olfaktorische, gustatorische und auch visuelle Wahrnehmungen in den Wissenschaften spielen, soll im Zentrum dieser Konferenz stehen. Dies kann entlang verschiedener Fragestellungen geschehen. Einerseits können instrumentelle Praktiken dahingehend untersucht werden, in wie weit sie die sinnliche Erfahrung reduzieren, wenn etwa Krankheiten stärker nach Laborbefunden diagnostiziert werden als durch das Fühlen, Riechen, Schmecken oder Sehen. Andererseits können Technologien auch helfen, Daten in neuer Weise sinnlich aufzubereiten, etwa Unhörbares hörbar zu machen oder akustische Phänomene in grafische Darstellungen zu verwandeln. Nicht zuletzt wurden wissenschaftliche Instrumente aus dem Grund entwickelt, die körperliche Begrenzung der menschlichen Wahrnehmung zu überwinden. Eine weitere Fragerichtung ist, in wie weit beispielsweise visuelle oder akustische Repräsentationen geeignet sind, Disziplingrenzen zu überschreiten, interdisziplinäre Kooperation zu ermöglichen und nicht zuletzt auch die Kommunikation wissenschaftlichen Wissens über die Wissenschaft hinaus zu ermöglichen. Hierzu laden wir sowohl Vorträge ein, die sich aus Perspektive der wissenschaftlichen Praxis mit der Art und Weise der sinnlichen Erkenntnis beschäftigen, als auch Vorträge, die sich aus Perspektive der Wissenschaftsforschung konzeptionell mit den veränderten epistemischen Praktiken auseinandersetzen. Die Probleme der Analyse und der Kommunizierbarkeit visueller und nicht visueller Daten und die Frage nach dem epistemischen Gehalt und der Überzeugungskraft von unterschiedlichen Repräsentationsformen stellen auf der Seite der wissenschaftlichen Praxis neue Anforderungen. Gleichzeitig spiegeln sich diese Spannungen in den Beobachtungen der Wissenschaftsforschung wieder, wenn nicht mehr allein schriftlich und bildlich festgehaltene Diskurse analysiert werden können, sondern die sinnlichen Praktiken in den Laboren in textlich/bildlicher Form gefasst werden müssen. Während die audiovisuellen Möglichkeiten der neuen Medien zumindest nach der visuellen auch die akustische Vermittlung erleichtern, so sind der Verbreitung von haptischen, olfaktorischen und gustatorischen

Wahrnehmungen noch enge Grenzen gesetzt. Inwieweit die neuen bzw. neu entdeckten Erkenntnispraktiken die Theorien der Wissenschaftsforschung herausfordern und inwieweit sich die Praktiken interdisziplinärer Forschung oder die Kommunikation „nach Außen" durch die Verknüpfung instrumenteller Erkenntnis und sinnlicher Erfahrung verändern, soll in einer interdisziplinären Diskussion empirisch wie theoretisch eingefangen werden.

Vorschläge von max. 1 Seite bitte bis zum 31.05.2009 an cornelius.schubert@tu-berlin.de

RISC-CNRS (PIRSTEC) *Prospective Thinking Project*,
a workshop sponsored by the French National Agency for Research (ANR)
24 (afternoon) – 25, April 2009, Laval, France

(free entry and accommodation for speakers within budgetary limits)

.mERGERs. Physical and Cognitive Mutations in Humans and Machines
SYMPOSIUM: 24-25 April 2009 (1.5 days with free entry to LAVAL VIRTUAL)

Invited Speaker:
Lorenzo Magnani, Professor & Director of the Computational Philosophy Laboratory, University of Pavia (IT): Knowledge as Duty. The Mediating Effect of Technological Cultures as Human Hybridization

Biological and mechanical components are merging. The 'technological artefact' has become a relative notion. Computer-compelled technology is drawing closer to human life as we experience it. Human Life will undergo further movement towards technology. It would seem that the further scientists humanise technology, the more making humans into artefacts becomes possible. Since the outburst of the Industrial Revolution in Europe, attempts to explain human cognitive life away have been on the increase; the idea is to render acceptable the organisation of manifest (more or less biological) components whose human-like behaviour is guided thanks to various calculations. Whether 'building up' the Machine or 'breaking down' the human being, ambivalence prevails in the hearts of all when it comes to future issues: do we or don't we have the right to create certain things? What are the key future issues that involve the evolution of our machines and our very persons? And what do we wish to become tomorrow? Surely there are realistic goals to the activities listed above. It has now become necessary to seriously analyse the "fringe-like aspects" of the use of technology to modify human life (emergent future states & immersion into the unknown). For many, the humanisation of technology and rendering human life more technical in nature go hand in hand, constitute opposing forces, or at least occur on the same practical terrain.
Therefore, over and beyond confirmations and refutations of the humanisation-technicisation relation that exists between Society and Technology, whatever its nature, we solicit papers exploring the Philosophical, Ethical and Epistemological

aspects of the simulation/modification of human cognitive and physical processes and states for this informal Symposium to be held in Laval France. The most promising will be reviewed in view of being published as book chapters in a quality publication.

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(06.26.26.66.48
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52, rue des Docteurs Calmette et Guérin,
53020 Laval Cedex 09, France

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6. Special offer Engineering Studies

Taylor & Francis are offering individual members of SPT a discounted subscription rate to Engineering Studies, a new journal in 2009 from Routledge. The Journal publishes research on social, historical, cultural, political, philosophical, rhetorical and organizational studies on engineers and engineering. For the full aims and scope, please visit the Journal website at www.tandf.co.uk/journals/engineeringstudies .

They are delighted to offer your individual members a special subscription rate of £49/ US$95/ EUR 76 and members could subscribe via an online order form.

The online order form can be accessed by going to the Journal homepage, www.tandf.co.uk/journals/engineeringstudies , and clicking on 'News and Offers'.

Zoë Sternberg
Publishing Editor, Applied Science Journals
Taylor & Francis

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7. Recent publications of interest

Berg Olsen, J.; Pedersen, S. and Hendricks, F. (Eds) (2009) *Blackwell Companion to Philosophy of Technology*. Wiley-Blackwell
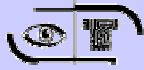
Bruhèze, A. de la. and Oldenziel, R. (Eds.) (2009*), Manufacturing Technology, Manufacturing Consumers. The making of Dutch Consumer Society.* Amsterdam: Aksant

Hanks, C. (ed.) (forthcoming May 2009). *Technology and Values: Essential Readings.* Wiley-Blackwell.

Ihde, D. (2009) *Postphenomenology and Technoscience: The Peking University Lectures.* SUNY Press.

Luppicini, R. and Adell, R. (2009) Handbook of Research on Technoethics (2 Volumes)

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8. Membership and Dues

SPT welcomes as members persons from all countries whose professional interests include philosophically significant considerations of technology. Membership is open to those who have or who are pursuing an advanced degree in philosophy or a related discipline, and to those who work in a technological field. Because of the Society's long-standing commitment to access, dues are purposively kept at a modest amount: $35US per year for regular memberships and $15US per year for student memberships. Dues are waived for individuals from developing nations.

To join SPT, to renew your membership, or to change your e-mail address and/or update other contact information, just go to

http://www.pdcnet.,org/member-spt.html

Dues can be paid online by credit card (Visa, Mastercard, or Discover). Arrangements to pay by cheque or money order can also be made by calling the Philosophy Documentation Center at 1-800-444-2419 (toll-free from the US and Canada) or at 1-434-220-3300.

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9. SPT Officers

President: Diane P. Michelfelder, Macalester College
President-elect: Philip Brey, University of Twente
Secretary-Treasurer: John Sullins, Sonoma State University
Executive Board: Peter-Paul Verbeek, University of Twente
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Ann Johnson, University of South Carolina
David Kaplan, University of North Texas
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Peter-Paul Verbeek, University of Twente
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