

PiBM Newsletter

April 2024

Introduction

Hello PiBM network members!

After a quiet month we are back to fill your inboxes with lots of interesting PiBM-related events and announcements. There are some wonderful new publications, and quite a few events, both past and upcoming, all nicely illustrating the variety of methods and topics to which scientifically-engaged philosophers and philosophically-oriented scientists have directed their shared attention. And the icing on the PiBM cake comes from a nice report on recent celebrations of the rich, symbiotic life and work of one PiBM member.

Enjoy!

PhDs & Postdocs

[Two Postdocs in PHIL_OS project, Technical University of Munich \(TUM\)](#)

Sabina Leonelli is announcing the following positions:

- 1 x postdoctoral fellowship in (philosophy of) science policy/science studies/ Open Science, for 20 months starting from January 2025 (flexible). **The deadline for applications is 6 May.** To apply, visit this site: https://portal.mytum.de/jobs/wissenschaftler/NewsArticle_20240314_143414
- 1 x postdoctoral fellowship in social epistemology and/or philosophy of science with an emphasis on justice/equity, for 20 months starting from January 2025 (flexible). **The deadline for applications is also 6 May.** To apply, please visit: https://portal.mytum.de/jobs/wissenschaftler/NewsArticle_20240314_140315

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PhDs & Postdocs (cont.)

[PhD in Philosophy of Biology at the University Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne \(IHPST\) & Gustave Roussy, France](#)

Supervisors: Lucie Laplane and Francesca Merlin

Start day: October 1st 2024. Duration: 3 years

Application deadline: June 1st

Funding: SIRIC EpiCure and SIRIC InSiTu

Open to: Philosophers interested in daily and intensive interactions with biologists and MDs, able to read and learn biology. Knowledge in Biology, especially on cancer or in epigenetics will be an advantage.

Context and topic: The PhD project is funded by two of the 8 SIRIC projects currently running in France (<https://www.e-cancer.fr/Professionnels-de-la-recherche/Recherche-translationnelle/Les-SIRIC>). All SIRICS are ambitious integrative projects in French cancer research. The present project will mostly relate to the SIRIC EpiCure (“Epigenetics to Cure cancer”) and secondarily take place in the context of inter-SIRIC with the SIRIC InSitu (“Insights Into Cancer: From Inflammation to Tumor - Prevent, Intercept, Cure”).

EpiCure is localized in Gustave Roussy, one of the top cancer research centers in Europe. It gathers 14 teams among which 4 relates to human science. The project is centered on the role of epigenetics in cancer and structured around 3 research axes: (1) the role of epigenetics and chromatin structure in cancer development and progression, (2) the role of epigenetics in resistance to treatment, (3) epigenetic modulation of the immune microenvironment as a therapeutic strategy. Human sciences are then organized as a transversal research program that include philosophy, economy, oncostatistics and sociology.

InSitu regroups several research groups in Paris at Hospitals Saint-Louis and Beaujon/Bichat. There are several human science projects including one in philosophy led by Matteo Mossio in collaboration with Lucie Laplane. One PhD student in philosophy has been recruited already by the SIRIC InSitu (Claudia Gadaletta). The 2 PhD students will be able to collaborate across these projects and institutions. (cont...)



PhDs & Postdocs (cont.)

Aim of the PhD project: In this SIRIC EpiCure project, the philosophy project is transversal to the 3 research axes and intend to clarify the role of epigenetics in cancer, especially its role in the evolution of cancer cells. The PhD candidate can either decide to develop a broad approach to the topic (for example by applying the recent developments of the Extended Evolutionary Synthesis to cancer) or choose to focus on one of the following 3 questions: (1) the role of epigenetics in clonal evolution and cancer progression; (2) cell plasticity and its role in treatment resistance; (3) Epigenetic modulation of the microenvironment and/or niche construction.

Requirements: The PhD student will work half time in Gustave Roussy, in the research group led by Lucie Laplane, and half time at IHPST under the supervision of Francesca Merlin. The student will be asked to collaborate with the scientific teams of the EpiCure project. This will involve extensive periods of time spent in the lab to develop a philosophical project that is scientifically relevant and well grounded. A strong motivation to learn scientific contents and contribute to science is essential to the success of the project.

Application: We ask the candidate to write a short application document in which they lay down a research project related to the aim described above (3 pages) and indicate their motivation to apply to this project (2 pages, please explain why you want to work in close collaboration with scientists and MDs). A CV and 1 or 2 letters of recommendation will be asked. The candidates will have to apply through the CNRS plateforme. Please contact Lucie Laplane (lucie.laplane@univ-parisi.fr) to get the link for application.

Conferences / CFAs

[Research Workshop on Philosophy of Biology and Cognitive Sciences](#)

The Research Workshop on Philosophy of Biology and Cognitive Sciences (PBCS) is an annual encounter of young scholars that aims at bringing together researchers from different disciplinary backgrounds: philosophers, cognitive scientists, and biologists working on issues of common interest. In this workshop, young researchers can present their ideas and participate in the discussions, as well as attend the conferences of keynote speakers. (cont...)

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Conferences / CFAs (cont.)

Its main purposes are to serve as a tool for enhancing research through discussion and to promote the interdisciplinary of the ideas presented. In its eleventh edition, the organisers would like to keep encouraging young researchers to participate in this fresh and distinctive forum.

This call is addressed to graduate, Master, Ph.D. students, as well as Doctors who finished their dissertations during the last three years, working on the areas of Philosophy of Biology and Cognitive Science. Women and other underrepresented groups are especially encouraged to apply. Possible topics include (but are not limited to):

- Consciousness and Cognitive Phenomenology
- Animal and non-animal cognition
- Enactive Approaches to Biology and Cognition
- Biological and Cognitive implications of Transhumanism
- Cognition, Adaptation and Evolutionary Theory
- Philosophical Issues Concerning Extended Evolutionary Synthesis (EES)
- The Ideas of Explanation and Causation in Biology and Cognitive Sciences
- Models in Biology and Cognitive Sciences
- The Concept of Environment and The Organism-Environment Relationship in Biology and Cognitive Sciences
- The Concept of Individuality

They invite abstracts between 500 and 750 words. **Applicants must send a detailed summary of the contribution to the email address by June 30th.** Summaries must be sent in .pdf format. The contributions are expected to indicate the title of the talk and also highlight the relevance of the topic for the event and a sketch of the main arguments. They can be written in English or Spanish. Applicants must send two copies of the summary: one will contain the name(s) of the author(s), affiliation(s) and email contact. The second one will not include names, affiliations, email contact or any kind of information that could reveal the authorship of the document. Contributions will be sent to a specialized scientific committee for evaluation that is committed to ensuring a double-blind peer review process.

Each talk will last no more than 20 minutes, followed by 10 minutes of discussion.
(cont..)



Conferences / CFAS (cont.)

Please submit your paper to: xiiipbcs@gmail.com For more details: <https://sites.google.com/view/xiii-pbcs/>

Workshop on Regeneration and Tissue Repair, Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat

The next EMBO workshop “The molecular and cellular basis of regeneration and tissue repair” will take place from October 7-11 2024 in Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat, in the south of France.

The program includes 4 talks from philosophers and historians of sciences (Andrew Inkpen, Kate MacCord, Thomas Pradeu, Lucie Laplane) and the organizing committee (which includes Lucie Laplane) hopes more philosophers and historians will contribute to the conference.

Abstract must be submitted by **June 15th**. More information can be found here: <https://meetings.embo.org/event/24-tissue-repair>.

Publications

Daignan-Fornier B & Pradeu T. (2024). ‘Critically assessing atavism, an evolution-centered and deterministic hypothesis on cancer’. *BioEssays*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bies.202300221>

MacCord, K., Maienschein, J. (2024). ‘Studying Regeneration Through History as a Way of Looking Forward’. *Journal of the History of Biology*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10739-024-09769-5>

Okholm, S. (2024). ‘Cancer as a breakdown of multicellular life’. *Metascience*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11016-024-00958-w> (Review of Aktipis’ book: *The Cheating Cell*.)

Potochnik, A. (2024). *Science and the Public*. Cambridge Elements. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/elements/science-and-the-public/F068224306AE6FE86D7CA0757948D137>.

Pradeu, T., Thomma, B., Girardin, S.E., Lemaitre, B. ‘The conceptual foundations of innate immunity: Taking stock 30 years later’, *Immunity*, 57.4, 613-63. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.immuni.2024.03.007>

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Recent PiBM events

[Philosophy of Nutrition Podcast](#)

David Raubenheimer (University of Sydney) and Jonathan Sholl (University of Bordeaux) recently appeared on Sigma Nutrition's podcast to discuss their latest article, "Who's Afraid of Nutritionism?". David and Jonathan make a case for defending forms of reductionism in nutrition science and suggest that many criticisms miss the mark and may hinder scientific advances. The podcast is run by researcher Danny Lennon and focuses on current issues in the nutrition sciences.

You can listen to their discussion here: <https://sigmanutrition.com/episode518/>

[Self-organization, Autonomy and the Bounds of the Self - Paris](#)

On March 18 and 19, there was an international workshop in philosophy of biology called "Self-organization, Autonomy and the Bounds of the Self", held at the Centre Panthéon in Paris. This workshop aimed to confront different perspectives in philosophy of biological agency, from skeptics about a large distribution of cognitive skills in the living world to those who try generalize cognition as a universal property of any living creature. The parallel idea was to question the identification biological = cognitive agency.

The sessions were broadcast on zoom at the link available on the following presentation page (where one will find the program and the different abstracts): <https://philosophie.pantheonsorbonne.fr/evenements/self-organization-autonomy-and-bounds-self>.

[Previous Talks in PhilInBioMed Seminar Series](#)

On Wednesday, April 3rd, Tim Lewens (HPS Cambridge) gave a talk in Bordeaux entitled: "Is there a Direct Role for Values in the Heart of Science?". The full abstract for the talk can be found here: <https://www.philinbiomed.org/event/tim-lewens-2024/>. And for those of you who weren't in attendance, the video for the talk can be found here: <https://www.philinbiomed.org/event/tim-lewens-2024/>.



Upcoming PiBM Events

Upcoming Talk in PhilInBioMed Seminar Series

The next talk in this series will be by Mikala Egeblad and will take place on 30 May from 17h00 to 18h30 (CET). The details will be announced soon on the PiBM site: <https://www.philinbiomed.org/event/mikala-egeblad/>

Mikala is a Bloomberg Distinguished Professor of cell biology and oncology at John's Hopkins School of Medicine. Her lab studies the contributions of the tumor microenvironment – in which cancer cells arise and live – to therapy responses and metastasis. To learn more about her research, please visit: <https://cellbio.jhmi.edu/people/mikala-egeblad-ph-d/>

Multilevel Selection Philosophy Group

Elliott Sober, David Sloan Wilson, and Mitchell Distin are running a broader initiative on Multilevel Selection Theory that is perfect for a PinS-type audience, which boasts an impressive roster of evolutionary biologists, evolutionary ecologists, behavioral ecologists, and historians/philosophers of biology working together to inform and direct the next generation of biological theory.

The organizers cordially invite anyone interested to join the online group to discuss the philosophical implications of multilevel selection (MLS) theory. The group is part of a larger initiative to establish MLS as a foundational theory for understanding prosocial evolution, [which is described here](#). Joining the philosophy group will also engage you in the larger initiative, which meets every Wednesday on Zoom to discuss topics surrounding MLS theory.

MLS is already a lively topic of interest among philosophers of biology, which is why they need to be included in the initiative. We will attempt to delineate issues that are largely settled and constitute a zone of agreement, along with issues that are more contentious and require future work. Outcomes of our interactions will depend upon what emerges from the discussions but can include accessible content on the online magazine This View of Life ([go here for an example](#)) and elsewhere, academic publications, new research projects, and new practical implementations. (cont...)



Upcoming PiBM Events (cont.)

They have designed the initiative to accommodate your bandwidth for this kind of activity. Some will have incentives to get heavily involved, while others will have little time despite a strong interest in the subject.

In this first meeting (already in April), Elliott will give a lecture on “Additive and Non-additive Models of the Evolution of Altruism,” with plenty of time left for discussion. We will also discuss the group’s future, what days/times work best for everyone, what areas of interest we want to cover, and outcomes.

Anyone who is interested in participating in the initiative or looking for more information can email Mitchell Distin at Mitchell.Distin@prosocial.world.

Interdisciplinary Project on Aging, Bordeaux

A project on social factors of aging, led by [Chris Verschoor](#), Assistant Professor, Northern Ontario School of Medicine University, recently received an NFRF exploration grant. Maël Lemoine (ImmunoConcept, Bordeaux) participates in this interdisciplinary project, which aims to investigate the resilience traits and assets that protect older adults from the harms of social inequalities.

PhilInBioMed Summer School Bordeaux

Taking place from **June 3rd to June 7th 2024**, this interdisciplinary summer school is organised in collaboration with the PhilinBioMed network and the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS).

The summer school will welcome Master and doctoral students, as well as post-doctoral fellows from the fields of philosophy of science, life sciences and medicine. Participants will learn to use interdisciplinary methods to address conceptual issues in scientific research.

Course leaders from both science and philosophy will be present to highlight practical examples of interdisciplinary partnerships from their career, and to advise and interact with participants throughout the week. (cont...)



Upcoming PiBM Events (cont.)

The program will also include different formats such as group work, ‘speed dating’, and individual discussions, designed to further interactions between participants and course leaders. For more details, please visit: <https://www.philinbiomed.org/event/bordeaux-summer-school-philosophy-in-biology-and-medicine/>

Concepts for Understanding Brain Organization

Taking place on 10 Jun 2024 from 9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Salle Dussane - ENS Ulm, Paris. The workshop brings together leading neuroscientists and philosophers of science to discuss how concepts of brain organization guide and constrain experimental and theoretical research. It should be of interest to advanced students and researchers in neuroscience, cognitive science and philosophy interested in how the brain and comparable complex systems are organized, and how science best conceptualizes such systems. For registration and more details, please visit: <https://my.weezevent.com/concepts-for-understanding-brain-organization>.

Reports on Recent Events

A symbiotic view of philosophy: Celebrating the work of John Dupré and the Egenis Centre

Written by Elis Jones, Konrad Lorenz Institute

In April 2024, friends of the Egenis Centre for the Study of Life Sciences converged on Exeter for a (slightly delayed, due to Covid) 20th birthday celebration for the centre. The event featured talks from those working on, in and with the life sciences, particularly those influenced by and connected with work done by centre founder John Dupré.

Several themes from John’s work connected an otherwise diverse set of talks: pluralism about the nature of reality; change as a fundamental feature of the universe; a strong role for values in scientific processes; the intertwining of the social and the biological; the ubiquity of symbiosis; and the need for a processual view of nature to make sense of all of this. (cont...)



Reports on Recent Events (cont.)

Thomas Pradeu, Catherine Kendig, Ford Doolittle, Jane Calvert, Scott Gilbert and Dan Nicholson - amongst others - spoke to the potent mix of symbiosis research and philosophical theory which has been a hallmark of John's career and much of the work at Egenis, particularly a string of influential articles on the philosophy of microbiology with former Egenis member Maureen O'Malley.

Many attendees spoke also to the symbiotic nature of such work itself, at Egenis and beyond: webs of personal and professional connections leading to production of stunning and impactful articulations of the nested hierarchy of living processes we find ourselves born into. The contributions of Egenis co-founders Steve Hughes and Barry Barnes, as well as former co-director Staffan Müller-Wille and outgoing director Sabina Leonelli, to the creation of a vibrant interdisciplinary research centre were also made abundantly clear. Talks highlighted the diversity of approaches - studies on/in/with science - for fruitful interdisciplinary collaborations.

Change was, as always in John's work, ever-present. The event featured updates on the work done across Egenis' core research strands, including cutting-edge perspectives on cognition, stigma, mental illness, the environment, AI and data science. A poster session offered insights into current trends in philosophy, with – amongst other topics – posters on biochemistry, proteins, agriculture, psychiatry, and environmental sciences. Posters from the event will be made available on Zenodo.

The event was a great success, and offered an opportunity to reflect on the development of the centre itself, marking the appointment of new director Adam Toon. Many thanks to organisers and attendees for putting together such an interesting and engaging celebration.

More information about the event is available at the conference webpage: <https://www.exeter.ac.uk/research/centres/egenis/conference/>

(See next page for some pictures from the event...)



Reports on Recent Events (cont.)



Above: Speakers Hasok Chang, John Dupré, Nancy Cartwright and Philip Kitcher. *Picture by Sabina Leonelli.* Below: Newly appointed Egenis director Adam Toon, with founder John Dupré and former director Sabina Leonelli. *Picture by Rose Trappes.*



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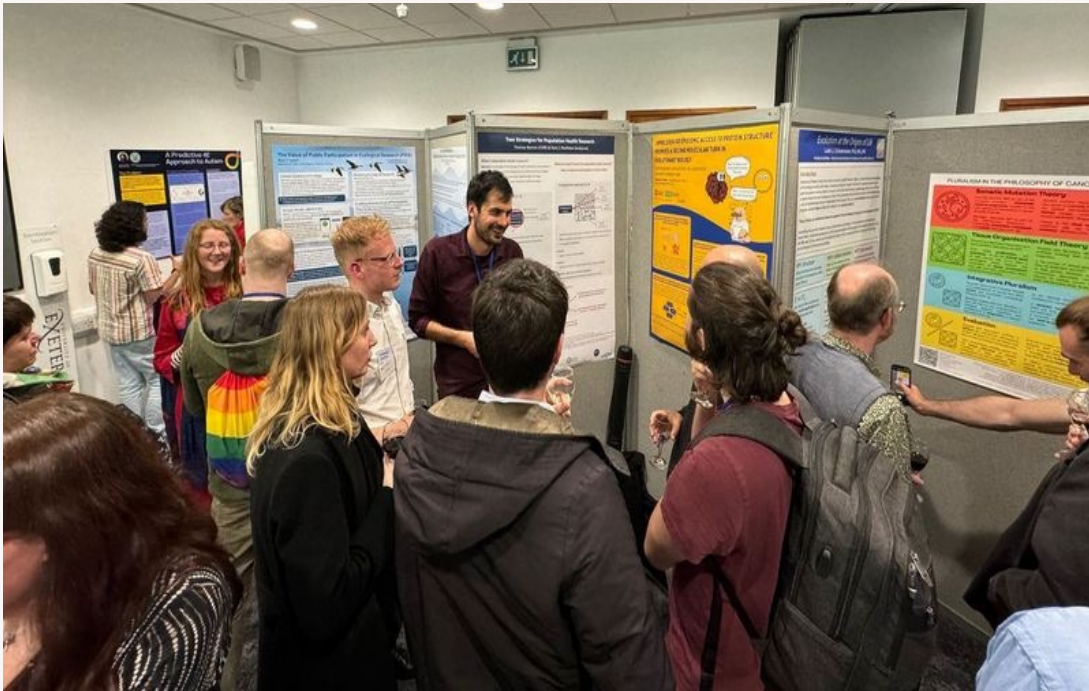


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Reports on Recent Events (cont.)



Above: Attendees at the busy poster session. *Picture by Sabina Leonelli.* Below: The conference attendees gathered on Exeter's Magnolia Lawn. *Picture by Adrian Currie.*



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