



EDITORIAL

The Causation in Science project is in its second month and the ball has already started rolling.

The announcement of the two PhD-positions was published in the beginning of February and the process of establishing a Philosophy PhD program at UMB is initiated. The first speaker, time and place for the UMB PhilSci Forum are also set. These days we are planning the first project workshop on causation in biology.

In this issue we present one of the CauSci Project Directors, Roger Strand.

CauSci Newsletter / February 2011



NEWS



2 PHD-POSITIONS CauSci has announced two PhD-positions in Philosophy of Science. See next page for details.

CAUSCI MEETING The CauSci Project Directors met at UMB on 17 January to plan the project and the announcements of the 2 PhD-positions. Later that week the Department Research Board approved the announcement, and the positions were advertised in the very beginning of February.

UMB PHILSCI FORUM The first talk will be given by Professor Stephen Mumford with the title 'A World Without Laws'. The talk will be held on Thursday 17 March, at 16:15-18:00, room T401, Tårnbygningen, UMB. For more information, see www.umb.no/causci/article/philsci-forum

WORKSHOP The first CauSci workshop will be held on 18-20 October 2011 at UMB. The title of the workshop is Causation, Biology and Reductionism. John Dupré and Stephen Mumford will be giving the opening lectures. For full list of speakers, see www.umb.no/causci/article/workshop

2 PhD POSITIONS

CauSci announces two full-time 3-year PhD fellowships in Philosophy, with focus on philosophy of science, as part of the interdisciplinary research project ‘Causation in Science’, based at UMB.

CauSci is a 4-year research project, funded by the Research Council of Norway and hosted by UMB. The main goal of this project is to investigate issues related to causation within the sciences, while at the same time contributing to a better philosophical understanding of the notion of causation. Central issues are dispositionality, emergence, complexity and context-sensitivity.

Required qualifications for the position are an MA or MPhil degree with documented research experience relevant to the project and a solid background in philosophy.

The successful candidates will perform research as described in the CauSci project contract and description, with focus on one of the following subject areas:

- (1) Philosophy of Physics: spatial and temporal locality/non-locality of causation, causal realism, causal symmetry/asymmetry, causal determinism/indeterminism
- (2) Philosophy of Biology (genetics, ecology or medicine): the causal role of genes, genetic determinism, biological reductionism, the role of context
- (3) Philosophy of Sociology, law or economics: reductionism/emergence of social entities and dispositions, causation and legal responsibility, causal complexity, context-sensitivity and the possibility of causal prediction
- (4) Philosophy of Psychology: agency and event causation, free will and determinism, intentionality, reduction/emergence of mental dispositions, causal perception

Applicants are referred to the CauSci webpage <http://www.umb.no/causci> for more information about the research areas and theoretical background of the project. Applicants may also receive a copy of the contract and formal description of the project by contacting Project Manager Rani Lill Anjum, rani.anjum@umb.no.

Successful candidates will be expected to be based at UMB and contribute actively to the project on a day-to-day basis through planning, research, publications, talks and workshop organization. As part of their career development and research training, it is a formal requirement that candidates are admitted to and follow an approved programme for the PhD degree.

We offer:

- * a competitive salary (starting at NOK 383 900 or GBP 41.630 per year)
- * a large international and interdisciplinary project network of established philosophers and scientists
- * an opportunity to spend 1-12 months abroad with extra expenses covered
- * a friendly and informal work-environment in beautiful surroundings in the old part of the UMB campus

Education, research experience or documented interest in one or more of the scientific fields to be studied in the project will be given some weight in the evaluation of the candidates.

Please include in your application a 1-page (max.) application letter, CV, the names and contact details of two referees, a subproject proposal (max. 2000 words), and a writing sample of relevant work (e.g. paper, article, chapter). The subproject proposal will identify the subject area that the applicant will address in his or her research work. Furthermore, the proposal should provide indications of how the applicant will proceed with the work, and how his or her personal qualifications will come to use in the CauSci project.

The application should be submitted via the link: “Apply for this job” on this web page by March 1, 2011.

An interview will be a part of the selection process.

Apply here: <http://www.jobbnorge.no/job.aspx?jobid=72271>

More information may be obtained by contacting project leader Dr Rani Lill Anjum, rani.anjum@umb.no



PHOTO The CauSci Project Directors at UMB in January. From left: Frode Kjosavik, Roger Strand, Rani Anjum, Terje Kvilhaug, Arnt Myrstad and Stephen Mumford.



PRESENTING: ROGER STRAND

“There is a profound need to rethink the role of science and technology in our societies”

WHAT EXACTLY ARE YOU A PROFESSOR OF? I did my PhD in biochemistry, on a dissertation that studied problems of data interpretation within biochemistry from a combination of philosophical and internal, scientific perspectives.

WHY ARE YOU INTERESTED IN CAUSATION? My path into the questions of causation – many of which are still a mystery to me – departed from an interest in complexity as encountered mainly in biology. When moving from "complicatedness" to "complexity", that is, for instance moving from what may appear as a situation with multiple, but still readily identified, discernible and understandable causal relationships to situations that do not easily lend themselves to such an analysis, the fundamental questions reappear: What does it really mean that A is a cause and B is an effect?

DO YOU HAVE A PROFESSIONAL MISSION The question of the interface between science and action in late modern societies is extremely important. There is a profound need to rethink the role of science and technology in our societies - epistemologically, to fully understand the implications of uncertainty and complexity for our institutionalised ways of drawing upon scientific advice in public decision-making. Equally important, we have to find ways to govern science and technology that take seriously that science and technology both

WHO? Professor and Director of SVT – Centre for the Study of the Sciences and the Humanities in Bergen. Roger is member of the Norwegian Research Ethics Committee and Leader of the EU funded project 'Technolife' and the NFR-funded 'Reflexive Systems Biology'.

WHY? Roger is a CauSci Director and SVT's representative on the project.

reduce and create uncertainty, surprise and complexity, in particular as they are given the role as the engine of innovation in a global consumption-based economy. Personally I think of this challenge as equally great and difficult as those of the transitions into modernity, and with a similar time frame.



PEOPLE

ALEXANDER REUTLINGER ALLEN
STAIRS ANDREAS HÜTTEMANN
ANITA LEIRFALL ANNE INGEBORG
MYHR CAMILLA SVENSEN
DAGFINN DØHL DYBVIK DEBORAH
OUGHTON DOROTHY JANE
DANKEL FERN WICKSON FREDRIK
ANDERSEN FRODE KJOSAVIK GRY
OFTEDAL HARALD MARTENS
JENNIFER McKITTRICK JOHAN
ARNT MYRSTAD JOHANNES
PERSSON JOHN DUPRÉ JONAS
JENSEN JONATHAN JACOBS
JONATHAN WEBBER KRISTINA
ENGELHARD MAGNI MARTENS
MARKUS STEPANIANS MAX
KISTLER RANI LILL ANJUM
REBECCA CARVER ROGER STRAND
RONNY SELBÆK MYHRE RUTH
GROFF SIGURD TØNNESSEN RYAN
WESLEY STEIN HOLDEN TOR EGIL
FØRLAND STEPHEN MUMFORD
STIG OMHOLT SVEIN ANDERS
NOER LIE TERJE KVILHAUG TERJE
TRAAVIK THOMAS BØHN THOR
EIRIK ERIKSEN THOR SANDMEL
TORILL CHRISTINE LINDSTRØM
TROND JACOBSEN HENRIK
ZINKERNAGEL