

Happenings

Philosophizing Social Justice in Nursing: 14th International Philosophy of Nursing Conference Held in Vancouver

Patricia Rodney

We at the University of British Columbia School of Nursing were most pleased to co-host the 14th International Philosophy of Nursing Conference, held September 20–22, 2010, in Vancouver. We were especially happy to welcome our international colleagues who travelled to Vancouver to take part in this first IPONS conference to be held in Canada.

A Brief History of IPONS¹

IPONS was launched in September 2003 at the 7th international conference, held at the University of Stirling in Scotland. The broad purpose of the Society is to bring together individuals from different countries in an international network to promote and support the growing discipline of philosophy of nursing. The specific aims of IPONS are to

- promote and establish philosophy of nursing, and health care in general, as a credible and important field of philosophical and critical inquiry
- establish a growing international network for this purpose
- conduct and support philosophical inquiry in a manner that informs and engages with health-care practice, theory, research, education, and policy from national and international perspectives
- support philosophical inquiry into nursing and health care across cultures and countries, including those who may have difficulty making their voices heard

The Society, in association with Wiley-Blackwell, has its own scholarly journal, *Nursing Philosophy*, published quarterly. IPONS also hosts an

¹ Adapted from <http://www.ipons.dundee.ac.uk/index.html>.

annual conference. In an e-mail discussion list provided by JISCMail, members can initiate and contribute to debate on various issues.

The Vancouver event was only the second annual IPONS conference to be held outside of the British Isles. Some of the faculty at the UBC School of Nursing are IPONS members and had attended the Society's conferences in the past. We were therefore delighted to be able to host a prestigious gathering of nurses, philosophers, and other colleagues who have staked a claim in the value of philosophizing on behalf of our discipline. Nursing ideas play a key role in envisaging and operationalizing a more just and equitable world. The UBC School of Nursing is academic home to a significant investment in social justice theorizing, philosophizing, and action, and we therefore welcomed the opportunity to meet a wide variety of national and international colleagues for continuing dialogue and collaboration during the conference and beyond.

Conference Details

The keynote speakers for the Vancouver conference, and their topics, were as follows:

Trevor Hussey, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy, Buckinghamshire New University, and Part-Time Tutor in Philosophy, University of Oxford: *Just Caring*

Joy Johnson, Scientific Director, Institute for Gender and Health, Canadian Institutes of Health Research, and Professor, UBC School of Nursing: *Whose Voices Count?*

Sioban Nelson, Professor and Dean, Lawrence S. Bloomberg Faculty of Nursing, University of Toronto: *Competency's Reflex Arc: An Approach to a Genealogy of Reflective Practice*

Fifty concurrent papers were presented by nurses, philosophers, and others on a diverse array of topics related to social justice and nursing philosophy. Special featured papers were given by Annette Browne and Sheryl Reimer Kirkham: *Problematizing Social Justice Discourses in Nursing*; Barbara Pesut: *A Moral Stone? Philosophizing Social Justice in Rural Palliative Care*; Mark Risjord: *Nursing and Human Freedom*; and Joan Anderson: *The Evolution of Critical Theorizing and Postcolonial Scholarship in Nursing: Toward a Critical Humanism*. The conference closed with a panel discussion and audience engagement on *Using Nursing Philosophizing to Solve Social Justice Issues*.

The dialogue throughout the plenary and concurrent sessions was energetic and inspiring. There were 86 registered participants (including a number of graduate students) from a variety of countries: 56 from Canada; 13 from the United States; 9 from the United Kingdom; 3 from

Hong Kong; and 1 each from Ireland, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, and Sweden. The evaluations from the conference indicate that participants greatly appreciated the opportunity to learn from the expert presenters and from each other. Overall, the conference affirmed the importance of IPONS in promoting international nursing inquiry into philosophy and ethics.

The Planning Committee consisted of the following faculty members from the UBC School of Nursing:

Conference Chair: Sally Thorne, Professor and Director of the School

Scientific Review Chair: Colleen Varcoe, Professor

Program Chair: Patricia Rodney, Associate Professor

Site Coordination Chair: Angela Henderson, Associate Professor

Forthcoming Nursing Philosophy Issue

Reflecting the theme of the 14th IPONS conference, the journal *Nursing Philosophy* is compiling a special issue on Philosophizing Social Justice in Nursing, scheduled for publication in Volume 13 Issue 1 (January 2012). The Guest Editor will be Colleen Varcoe from the UBC School of Nursing.

The Next Conference

The next IPONS conference is to be held August 26–28, 2011, at West Park Centre, Dundee, Scotland. The theme is Healthcare and the Politics of Austerity and the call for abstracts is open until July 21, 2011 (see <http://www.ipons.dundee.ac.uk/events.html>).

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