

Pázmány P. sétány 1/A Budapest
Phone/Fax: (36-1) 372 2924
The web site of the seminar: <http://hps.elte.hu/seminar>

Philosophy of Science Colloquium

Room 6.54 (6th floor) Monday 4:00 PM

November 2005

7 November 4:00 PM 6th floor 6.54

Language: *English, except if all participants speak Hungarian*

Gábor A. Zemplén

*Department of Philosophy and History of Science
Budapest University of Technology and Economics*

The development of the Neurath-principle: unearthing the Romantic link

The talk investigates a previously unnoticed influence on the development of the Neurath principle, an extension of Duhemian holism. Based on a study of Neurath's early works on the history of optics, I claim that a significant if not major influence on this extension came from his reading of Goethe's *Farbenlehre*. With this claim I shift attention from the "horizontal" extension of the Duhem thesis to all sciences - a possibility that, as I will show, Duhem himself did not exclude - to the "vertical" extension to observation statements. The significance of recognizing this link is to demonstrate the existence of direct textual linkages between "romantic" science and the development of twentieth-century philosophy of science. As a consequence, it is shown that Goethe's critique of the language of science and observation deserves more attention than it generally receives in the history of philosophy of science. Neurath's usage of Goethe's examples also indicates that the birth of the Neurath principle is more tightly connected to observations of actual scientific practice than heretofore acknowledged.

14 November 4:00 PM 6th floor 6.54

Language: *English*

Olga Markic

Philosophy, University of Ljubljana

The illusion of free will?

In this talk I will examine recent psychological research which suggests that free will is an illusion. In his book *The illusion of conscious will* (2002) and in some other papers, Daniel Wegner argues that the interpretative process that creates the experience of conscious will works according to the theory of "apparent mental causation". The theory tells us that the actual causal paths are not present in the person's consciousness and that a person infers just an apparent causal path from thought to action. It seems that Wegner suggests the thesis that our conscious will is an illusion that plays no role in causing our actions, presenting thus a potential threat to the psychology of action. I will argue that it is not clear what exactly does the term illusion mean in this case, and that different interpretations of "the illusion of conscious will" have different consequences for the free will issue.

21 November 4:00 PM 6th floor 6.54

Language: *English*

Nenad Miscevic

*Philosophy, Central European University
Budapest Philosophy, University of Maribor*

Thought Experiments and Arguments

It is argued that thought experiments (TEs) cannot be reduced to arguments. Judgments immediately derived from (TEs) are modal and taxonomic particularized judgments. Cognizers are often better at assessing the modal and taxonomic features of a situation if it is a particular token situation. Therefore, our immediate, intuitional TE judgments are probably geared to singular, concrete situations. Arguments come after and not before TEs.

28 November 4:00 PM 6th floor 6.54

Language: *English*

Barry Loewer

*Philosophy, Rutgers University
Collegium Budapest*

The Fundamental Structure of the World

This paper is an interim report on some recent work with David Albert in which we are seeing how far one can go in explaining how the fundamental laws of physics (including a probabilistic law that grounds statistical mechanics) can serve as the basis for macroscopic special science laws, counterfactuals, and various of “time arrows” (why we can know more about the past than the future, why causes typically precede their effects, why we can affect the future but not the past etc.)

The colloquium is open to everyone, including students, visitors, and faculty members from all departments!

The 60-minute lecture is followed by a 10-minute break. Then we hold a 30-60-minute discussion. The participants may comment on the talks and are encouraged to initiate discussion through the Internet. The comments should be written in the language of the presentation.

The organizer of the colloquium: László E. Szabó (email: leszabo@hps.elte.hu)