

# INSTITUTE OF PHILOSOPHY

Faculty of Humanities, Eötvös University, Budapest

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## *Theoretical Philosophy Forum*

Wednesday 5:00 PM Room 226 Múzeum krt. 4/i, Budapest

Web site: <http://philosophy.elte.hu/tpf>

Contact: *László E. Szabó* (organizer) [leszabo@philosophy.elte.hu](mailto:leszabo@philosophy.elte.hu)

*The Forum is open to everyone, including students, visitors, and faculty members from all departments and institutes! The 60 minute lecture is followed by a 10 minute break and a 30-60 minute discussion. The language of presentation is English or Hungarian.*

## November 2009

### **4 November (Wednesday) 5:00 PM Room 226**

**Emese Mogyoródi**

*Department of Philosophy, University of Szeged*

#### **Revelation and Reason: Mysticism and Metaphysics in Parmenides' Philosophy**

Parmenides of Elea (5th c. B.C.E.) is one of the founders of Western science and philosophy. His contributions to the development of metaphysical reasoning and natural science are pivotal. One of the most debated issues of interpreting his philosophy, however, is raised by the fact that he presents his tenets in the form of divine revelation from a goddess. In most interpretations the significance of this motif is explained away as a rhetorical or didactic device external to the philosophy. Others argue, however, that the motif is to be taken "literally", that is to say, we must assume that Parmenides had some such experience and concluded that human knowledge is impossible without supernatural aid. This paper addresses the issue of the compatibility of the motif of revelation with Parmenides' argumentative rigour and argues that a genuine revelatory experience lying behind his poem is not a rhetorical device serving as an introduction into his philosophy, but constitutes the experiential ground on which his metaphysical and cosmological tenets rest. However, this does not diminish the pivotal role of Parmenides as one of the founders of Western science and philosophy, on the contrary, it attests to the economy, consistency and cogency of his thought.

## 11 November (Wednesday) 5:00 PM Room 226

**Balázs Gyenis** \* and **Zalán Gyenis** (speaker) \*\*

\* *History and Philosophy of Science, University of Pittsburgh*

\*\* *Mathematics, CEU, Budapest*

**A Hume-i természettörvényekről** \*\*\*

*(On Humeian laws of nature)*

\*\*\* In spite of the English abstract, the language of presentation will be Hungarian

Our aim is to discuss the feasibility of Humeian accounts of laws of nature, according to which laws merely supervene on more fundamental non-nomic facts. We are going to focus on the following question (which, as I shall argue, these accounts need to successfully address): is it true that it is possible to obtain a law-based description of the fundamental non-nomic facts whatever the distribution of these facts might turn out to be?

We are going to present several results – both positive and negative – which address the various natural ways how this question can be precisely formulated, complete with a discussion of the notion of a "law-based description". Some of these results might strike as surprising.

We're going to develop some formalism but the talk is not math-heavy and the intended philosophical points are accessible even on the basis of a crude understanding of the technical details.

## 18 November (Wednesday) 5:00 PM Room 226

**Tamás Füzessy**

*Department of Logic, Eötvös University, Budapest*

**Egy ismeretelméleti probléma vizsgálata formális eszközökkel**

*(Formal analysis of an epistemological problem)*

Előadásom tárgya az empirikus aluldetermináció közismert ismeretelméleti koncepciója, vagyis az a tézis, hogy a tudományos elméleteinket aluldeterminálják a megfigyelhető események. Kitérünk az empirikus aluldeterminációval kapcsolatos legfontosabb kortárs problémára: miközben a természettudományos kutatás széles körben alapvető tudomány-metodológiai elvként hivatkozik rá, igazából rendkívül nehéz a fent megfogalmazott formális feltételeknek tétélesen megfelelni, és a téma kutatói, illetve a természettudományok aktív művelői által is elfogadott valódi alternatív elméleteket találni.

Az elemzés fő tartalma annak vizsgálata, hogy a formális logika, a modellelmélet (halmazelmélet) modern eszközeivel, hogyan lehet precízen megfogalmazni a tudományos elméletekkel kapcsolatos követelményeket, ekvivalenciájuk illetve különbségük formális szabályrendszerét. Az így létrehozott formális apparátussal egy teoretikus példa-elméleten keresztül megmutatjuk a formális elméletleírások, illetve az elmélet-ekvivalencia vizsgálatok módszertanát.

A módszer felhasználásával megvizsgáljuk az empirikus aluldetermináció néhány klasszikusnak számító példáját, hogy megállapítsuk: vajon tényleg példái-e ennek az ismeretelméleti problémának.

Végül (ha marad idő), fel fogom vetni a formális elméletvizsgálat eszközeinek bizonyos metafizikai (ontológiai) eszmékre való alkalmazhatóságát is.

**25 November (Wednesday) 5:00 PM Room 226**

**Adrien Barton**

*Department of Philosophy, CEU, Budapest*

**Rationality and observations in an Everettian universe**

In order to solve quantum paradoxes, the contemporary Everett interpretation of quantum mechanics postulates a structure of the universe as a collection of splitting worlds. Still, it has sometimes been argued that this surprising description of reality should not lead to any difference in rationality or observational predictions, as compared with a unique, non-Everettian universe. In my talk, I will present a version of the contemporary Everett interpretation of quantum mechanics, in the continuation of Hilary Greaves' approach. I will present and discuss thought experiments (quantum Sleeping Beauty, quantum suicide) which will show how rational decisions, epistemic evaluations and observational predictions can differ in Everettian and non-Everettian universes. This will bring up the question of scientific realism as a central issue.

The scope of the Forum includes all aspects of **theoretical philosophy**, including: logic and philosophy of formal sciences / philosophy of science / modern metaphysics / epistemology / philosophy of language / problems in history of philosophy and history of science, relevant to the above topics / particular issues in natural and social sciences, important for the discourses in the main scope of the Forum.