

From ϕ -science to practical realism: an international conference in honour of Rein Vihalemm (1938-2015)

Aug 13-14 2019 University of Tartu, Tartu, Estonia

Call for Abstracts – New deadline: March 31, 2019

The philosophy of science unit at the University of Tartu, founded in 1992, owes much to Professor **Rein Vihalemm (1938–2015)**. He established research in this disciplinary area and supervised many students who now work in the field. Internationally Vihalemm is known as a founder, and was known as an active member, of the International Society for the Philosophy of Chemistry (ISPC). He edited the volume *Estonian Studies in Philosophy of Science* in the renowned series *Boston Studies in the Philosophy and History of Science* (2001). Vihalemm participated in fifteen Congresses of Logic, Methodology and Philosophy of Science and many other conferences. From the 1990s onwards, he published numerous research articles in journals, handbooks and collections of papers by leading publishers such as Oxford University Press, Springer and others.

One of Vihalemm's major theoretical achievements was the development of the concept of **ϕ -science** – the theoretical account of the physical sciences that enabled him to explain the differences between various research disciplines and characterise the nature of chemistry as partially a ϕ -science. The concept of ϕ -science captures constructive activities that scientists are engaged in. Vihalemm's main contribution to the philosophy of science is the programme of **practical realism** that analyses these activities.

On the 9th of December 2018 Rein Vihalemm would have had his 80th birthday. To celebrate, we invite philosophers of science to a conference on Vihalemm's work in Tartu next summer, **Aug 13-14, 2019**.

Themes of the conference include (and are not limited to):

1. Realism and anti-realism about science: various kinds of realism and anti-realism, arguments, perspectives, functions.
2. The concept of ϕ -science and actual practices of the physical sciences
3. Dual nature of chemistry – chemistry as a physical science and chemistry as natural history.
4. Pluralism in the accounts of science and technology.
5. Practice-based accounts of science in the light of ideas from history of philosophy
6. History and philosophy of science: cooperating or competing disciplines?
7. Methods for the empirical study of scientific practices, relevance of empirical findings for philosophy of science.

Some publications by Rein Vihalemm:

1. Vihalemm, R. (2016). Chemistry, Paradigms, and a View of Epistemic Pluralism: To the Issue of the Nature of Disagreements in Philosophy and in Science. *Acta Baltica Historiae et Philosophiae Scientiarum* Vol. 4, No. 1, DOI: 10.11590/abhps.2016.1.05
2. Vihalemm, R. (2016). Science, ϕ -Science, and the Dual Character of Chemistry. In: Scerri, Eric & Grant Fisher (Eds.). New York: Oxford University Press, 352–379.
3. Vihalemm, R. (2016). Chemistry and the problem of pluralism in science: an analysis concerning philosophical and scientific disagreements, 91-102, *Found Chem* (2016) 18: 91. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10698-015-9241-0>
4. Vihalemm, R. (2015). Philosophy of Chemistry against Standard Scientific Realism and Anti-Realism. *Philosophia Scientiae*, 19(1), 99–113.
5. Vihalemm, R. (2012). Practical Realism: Against Standard Scientific Realism and Anti-Realism. *Studia Philosophica Estonica*, 5(2), 7 - 22.
6. Vihalemm, R. (2011). The Autonomy of Chemistry: Old and New Problems. *Foundations of Chemistry*, 13(2), 97-107
7. Vihalemm, R. (2011). A Monistic or a Pluralistic View of Science: Why Bother? In: P. Stekeler-Weithofer, H. Kaden, & N. Psarros (eds.). *An den Grenzen der Wissenschaft. (Abhandlungen der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig. Philologisch-historische Klasse. Band 82, Heft 1)*. Stuttgart/Leipzig: Sächsische Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig. In Kommission bei S. Hirzel, 79 – 93.
8. Vihalemm, R. (2011). Towards a Practical Realist Philosophy of Science. *Baltic Journal of European Studies*, 1(1(9)), 46 - 60
9. Vihalemm, R. (2004). The Problem of the Unity of Science and Chemistry. Sobczynska, Danuta; Zeidler, Pawel; Zielonacka-Lis, Ewa (Ed.). *Chemistry in the Philosophical Melting Pot*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Verlag, 39–58.
10. Vihalemm, R. (2001). Chemistry as an Interesting Subject for the Philosophy of Science. In: Vihalemm, R. (Ed.). *Estonian Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 185–200.

Invited speakers:

- [Hasok Chang](#), University of Cambridge, UK
- [Olimpia Lombardi](#), University of Buenos Aires, Argentina
- [Peeter Mürsepp](#), Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia
- [Sami Pihlström](#), University of Helsinki, Finland
- [Eric Scerri](#), UCLA, USA
- [Triin Vihalemm](#) University of Tartu, Estonia

[Submission of abstracts at EasyChair](#)

Short abstracts (200-300 words) should be submitted to EasyChair by **March 21 2019**. We aim to communicate **our decision by April 29**.

Programme Committee

Ilkka Niiniluoto, Professor Emeritus of Theoretical Philosophy, University of Helsinki, Finland

Rom Harré, Linacre College, University of Oxford, UK

Rafaela Hillerbrand, Professor for philosophy of science, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, Germany

Kenneth R. Westphal Professor of Philosophy (Felsefe), Boğaziçi Üniversitesi, İstanbul, Turkey

Kalevi Kull, Professor of biosemiotics, University of Tartu, Estonia

Lea Leppik, PhD, historian of science, board member of the Estonian Association of History and Philosophy of Science, University of Tartu, Estonia

Joseph T. Rouse, Professor of Philosophy, Wesleyan University, CT, USA

[Travelling to Tartu](#)
[Accommodation info](#)

Organization

This workshop is organized by the Unit for Philosophy of Science, Institute of Philosophy and Semiotics, University of Tartu, Estonian Association for the Philosophy and History of Science.

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