

Anti-Representationalism, Science and Brandom

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General questions

- What does language, or linguistic usage, consist of?
- Diversity of semiotic devices?
- Classical pragmatists vs. neopragmatists
- Tools and signs?
- Why vocabularies? Perhaps we as philosophers rely basically on linguistic data – and have to admit it – and draw the consequences of it?
- Pragmatic philosophy in analytic guise?

Observations on Brandom's paper

- The possibility of a *pragmatic metavocabulary*:
“... idea is to formulate in the favored vocabulary necessary and sufficient conditions for doing what one needs to be doing in order thereby to be saying what can be said using the vocabulary...”
- “Instead of worrying about what the vocabulary says about how things are ...how it is describing or representing the world as being ... we describe how the use of the vocabulary is taught and learned” – do we need for this a pragmatic metavocabulary?

Brandom on Rorty I

- “Understanding our cognitive and intentional relations to the world in representational terms puts an epistemological intermediary (a set of representations) between thinkers and what they think about. In this way, it excavates a gulf between mind and world.”
> epistemological skepticism > privileged representations.

Brandom on Rorty II

- Representing things as being thus and so (mind or language as mirrors of nature) requires commitment on privileged representations:
- Representations of these sorts are understood as having a *natural* or *intrinsic* epistemic privilege, so that their mere occurrence entails that we know or understand something. They are self-intimating representations: having them counts as knowing something.
 - *given* in sensory experience, and cognitively transparent *meanings*
 - concepts, noemas, mental models, prototypes and schemes – and *structures*

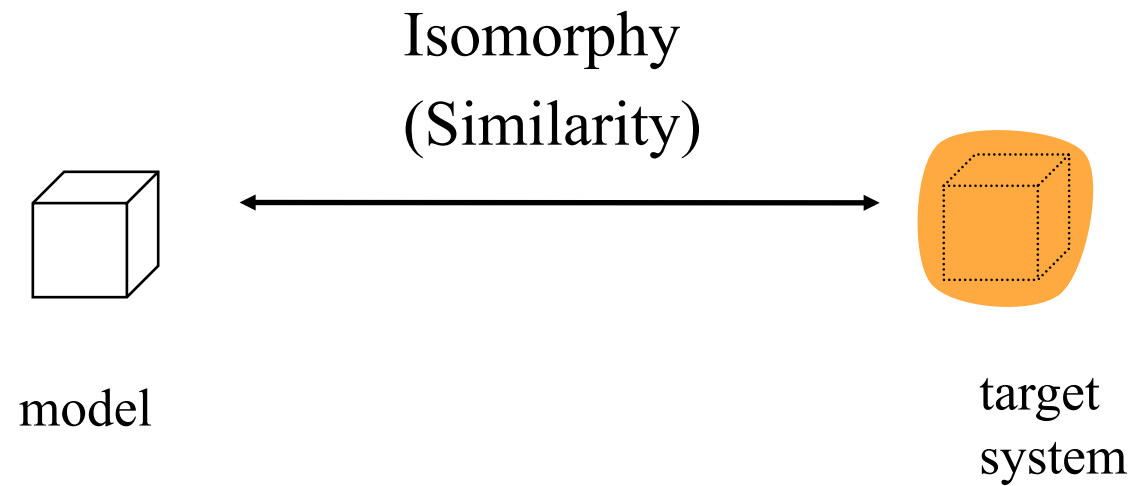
Models and representation

- Models have been understood as representations *and* it has been claimed that they give us knowledge because they represent.
- *I take the stand that, in principle, anything can be a model, and that what makes a thing into a model is the fact that it is regarded or used as a representation of something by the model users. Thus in saying what a model is the weight is shifted to the problem of understanding the nature of representation. (Teller 2001)*

Semantic/ structuralist account of representation

- Basic unit of analysis: the model-target dyad
- Special (privileged) relationship between a model and its target which is usually analysed in terms of *isomorphism*, *partial isomorphism* or *similarity*
- (By isomorphism I refer to a kind of mapping that can be established between the model and target that preserves the relations among elements)

The semantic or "structuralist" conception of models



Pragmatic accounts of representation

- No thing is a representation in of and itself, just by virtue of what it is – there is nothing in the nature/ construction/ structure of the model that makes it a representation of some specific target system
- Representation is *at least* a three-place-relation, to understand representation we have to take into account the uses of representation (human representers and their purposes)

Suarez (2002, 2005): A "deflationary" inferential account I

- No substantive account on what the representational relation rests (i.e. isomorphism, denotation, similarity) can be given.
- *A represents B only if (i) the representational force of A points towards B, and (ii) A allows competent and informed agents to draw specific inferences regarding B.*

Suarez (2010): A "deflationary" inferential account II

- *Representational force*: practice of using a particular representational vehicle as a representation **and norms of inference distinguishing correctly drawn inferences from those that are not (cf. I-representation, Subjects)**
- *Inferential capacities* of the representational vehicle. It has to have an internal structure such that its parts and relations can be interpreted in terms of the target's parts and relations (E-representation? Objects?)

Brandom: I-representation is a mere placeholder

- “...what makes the notion of I- representation a notion of a kind or sense of 'representation'. If, as Price recommends, we look for it horizontally, at the relations states and locutions stand in to other states and locutions, to the functional role they play in a system of others, rather than vertically, to their mapping or tracking relations to something outside the system, what is it about such roles that justifies us in treating them as *representations in any sense?*”

Different kinds of (scientific) representations and their representing relations to the world

- mapping and tracking as "simplest grades of representation": permitting the inferences from from "map-facts to terrain facts"
- Mathematical models: hypothetical systems of interdependencies, systems to which only a few properties are attributed
- "deliberate detour through merely hypothetical surrogate systems" (Godfrey-Smith)
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