

An Inferential Conception of Scientific Representation

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Abstract

This paper defends a deflationary conception of scientific representation. It minimally characterises representation by means of two necessary conditions: its essential intentionality and its capacity to allow surrogate reasoning and inference. The conception is defended by showing that it successfully meets the objections and difficulties that make its competitors, such as isomorphism and similarity, untenable. In addition the inferential conception captures the objectivity of scientific as opposed to ordinary representation, it sheds light on its truth and accuracy, and it explains the source of the analogy between scientific and artistic modes of representation

Keywords: Representation; Models; Idealization; Realism

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