Realism about Structure: The Semantic View and Non-linguistic Representations

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Abstract

The central concern of this paper is whether the Semantic Approach to theories has the resources to appropriately capture the core tenets of structural realism. Chakravartty, for example, has argued that a realist notion of correspondence cannot be accommodated without introducing a linguistic component which undermines the Approach itself. We suggest first of all, that this worry can be addressed by an appropriate understanding of the role of language with respect to the Semantic Approach. Secondly, we argue that an appropriately structuralist account of representation can serve the structural realist's needs. However, the real challenge, we feel, is whether a core notion of 'explanatory approximate truth' can be incorporated into this account and in such a way that the emphasis on structure is retained. The extent to which this challenge can be met is something on which even the authors are divided!

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