

THEORIES OF REFERENCE AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

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Abstract

It has sometimes been suggested that the so-called new theory of reference (NTR) would provide an alternative picture of meaning and reference which avoids the unwelcome consequences of the meaning-variance thesis and incommensurability. However, numerous philosophers of science have been quite critical towards the idea and NTR in general. It is argued that many of them have an over-simplified and, in part, mistaken understanding of what NTR amounts to. It is submitted that NTR, when correctly understood, can be an important ingredient in the realist toolkit for defending the rationality of science.

Keywords: theories of reference, incommensurability, causal descriptivism

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