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A fundamental dilemma for naturalism

Bratislava, 5 May 2023

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This research received support from the Euregio Science Fund Project IPN 175-G „Resilient Beliefs: Religion and Beyond“

EUROPAREGION EUREGIO
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1. Varieties of naturalism
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5. The naturalist’s dilemma

1. **Varieties of naturalism** (Löffler 1999, etc.)

Vague framework claims

Semantic naturalism: every meaningful sentence must be fully translatable into a scientific sentence

Ontological naturalism: only the objects of science really exist

Methodological naturalism (my focus here): only those methods are acceptable in philosophy and world-view reasoning which occur in the sciences

Lip-service "naturalisms", global solidarity addresses to the scientists

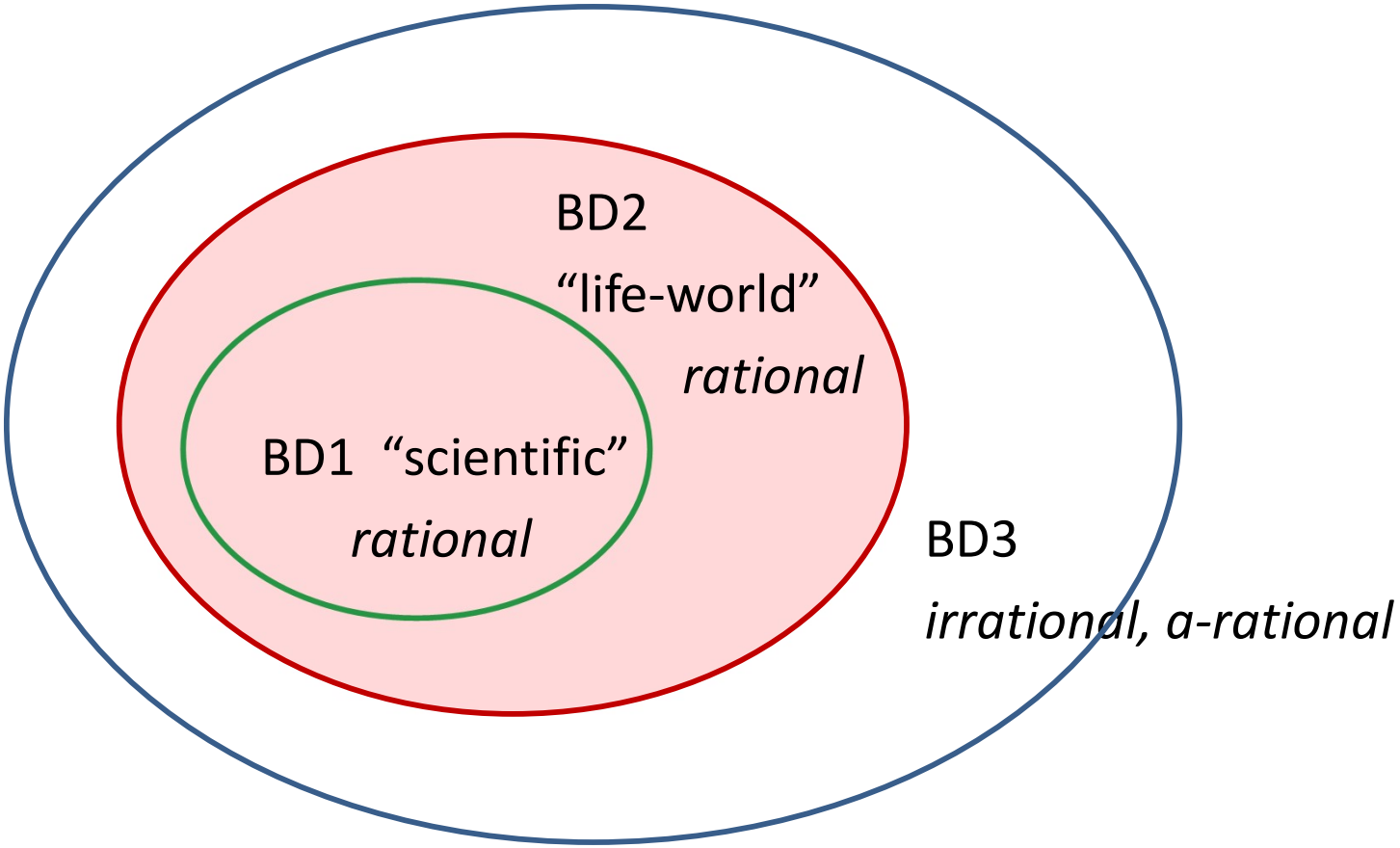
2. The argument, in short

There are rational segments of our belief systems *beyond* our scientific beliefs. The naturalist then faces a dilemma: (a) Either they can be *based on* scientific beliefs (then naturalism would indeed be an interesting thesis). But this is false. (b) Or they are declared as a *part of* science (in a wider sense). This might be true, but it would make naturalism trivial and uninteresting.

Hence, naturalism is either false or uninteresting.

3. Belief systems: A quasi-Quinean model

Set-theoretical modelling: beliefs and the practices generating/establishing them (Background: Aristotle, Strawson, Erlangen School, Sellars…)



4. The intertwinedness of science and life-world

Thesis: The layer/subset BD2 (life-world beliefs and practices) is *rational*.
(at least: in principle, like BD1 it may contain errors here and there.)

Motivation of the thesis:

(1) Science as an "extension", "refinement", "sophistication" of life-word practices and beliefs, no clear-cut border; historical emergence of B1.

(2) Science is dependent on stable life-world "tributary practices".

(Ex.1) Identifying a broken thermometer

(3) Life-world is the forum on which the applicability and success of scientific theories and practices is being judged.

(Ex.2) The physician without any life-world orientation knowledge

Conclusion: If science is rational, life-world has to be rational as well.

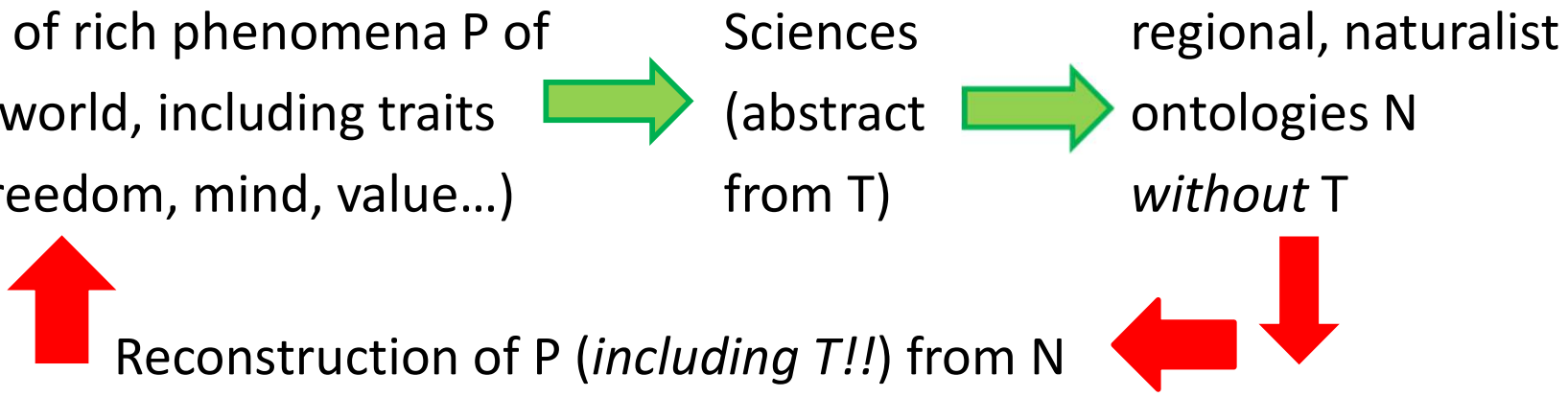
5. The naturalist's dilemma

If BD2 (life-world beliefs and practices) is rational, why so?

EITHER the naturalist claims that BD2 is justifiable/establishable on the basis of BD1 only. (Would be an *interesting* form of naturalism, but it is wrong.)

(1) Historically, BD1 was established on the basis of BD2.

(2) Justifying BD2 on the basis of BD1 would involve the "fallacy of reciprocal constitution of concepts", a kind of "broken symmetries" problem.



OR the naturalist declares BD2 as a part of science (loosely understood, “deflationary naturalism”). The whole package of BD1 and BD2 is “scientific” and rational then, i.e. all the world-view embeddings, tributary actions etc.

However:

(1) (Almost) everybody would be a “naturalist” then. Feasible, but uninteresting position.

(2) The upshot and novelty of naturalism is given up by that move.

In sum: naturalism is either interesting and then false – or feasible, but uninteresting.