

## David Gooding's notion of construal

Gooding's research (1990) relates to "aspects of scientific work largely neglected by modern, especially analytical, philosophy. These are the agency of observers and the way their observation of nature is mediated by their interactions with each other, with their instrumentation and with the natural world."

"Construing may be thought of as a process of modelling phenomena while the conceptual necessities of theory are held at arms length."

In his analysis of Faraday's evolving understanding of electro-magnetic phenomena, Gooding refers to the essential role played by "objects and images which conveyed likely relationships between electricity, magnetism, wires and magnetised needles". [These [G90] calls 'construals']

"Construals are a means of interpreting unfamiliar experience and communicating one's trial interpretations. Construals are practical, situational and often concrete. They belong to the pre-verbal context of ostensive practices." ([G90], p.22); "... a construal cannot be grasped independently of the exploratory behaviour that produces it or the ostensive practices whereby an observer tries to convey it." ([G90] p.88).

[An *ostensive definition* is a way of defining a term by pointing to its referent.]

[G90] D.Gooding "Experiment and the Making of Meaning" Kluwer Academic Pubs., 1990.