

Genuine Confirmation and the Use-Novelty Criterion

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According to standard logical concepts of confirmation such as the hypothetico-deductive or the bayesian concept, rationalized versions of creationism come out as "empirically confirmed", although intuitively they are not confirmed at all but clear cases of pseudo-explanations. The characteristic feature of these pseudo-explanations is that with help of them all kinds of experiences are explainable in an ex-post. fashion. An alternative concept of confirmation which attempts to capture this intuition is the use novelty (UN) criterion of confirmation which has been elaborated and defended by John Worrall. Against both criteria serious objections against have been raised. In this talk I will argue that the UN criterion is on the right track but has some disadvantages. I will then present a new criterion of so-called genuine confirmation. I argue that this criterion has the following advantages: (1.) it yields the UN-criterion for the case of hypotheses that contain variable theoretical parameters, but it applies also to cases (e.g. inductive generalizations) which are not adequately handled by the UN criterion and (2.) it does not refer to pragmatic factors, but is formulated in purely probabilistic terms, so that it can be understood as a strengthening of the bayesian confirmation concept.