

Prediction and Accommodation Revisited

JOHN WORRALL

Abstract: I argue that the problems concerning the relative confirmational weights of evidence that was predicted by a theory and evidence that was accommodated within a theory are effectively solved by the recognition that two different types of confirmation are involved – roughly ‘intra’ and ‘inter research programme’ confirmation. (See my [2002], [2005] and [2010].) Here I present further arguments for this resolution of the issues and in particular show that what is correct about Marc Lange’s [2001] response to Patrick Maher’s [1988] analysis is better captured within my approach.

I also explain why I find little of relevance to the central issue of capturing the rationality of theory-change in science in either of two recent contributions to the debate – those of Christopher Hitchcock and Elliott Sober ([2004]) and Eric Barnes ([2005] and [2008]).

References:

Barnes, E.C. [2005]: ‘Predictivism for Pluralists’ *BJPS*, **56**, 421-50

Barnes, E.C. [2008]: *The Paradox of Predictivism*. Cambridge: CUP

Hitchcock, C and Sober, E [2004]: ‘Prediction versus Accommodation and the Risk of Overfitting’, *BJPS*, **55**, 1-34

Lange, M. [2001]: ‘The Apparent Superiority of Prediction to Accommodation as a Side Effect: A Reply to Maher’, *BJPS*, **52**, 575-88

Maher, P [1988] ‘Prediction, Accommodation and the Logic of Discovery’, in A. Fine and J. Leplin (eds) *PSA 1988, vol 1*, East Lansing, MI: Philosophy of Science Association, 273-85

Worrall, J. [2002]: ‘New Evidence for Old’ in P. Gardenfors et al (eds) *In the Scope of Logic, Methodology and Philosophy of Science* Dordrecht: Kluwer, 191-209

Worrall, J [2005] ‘Theory-Confirmation and History’ in: Cheyne, C and Worrall, J. (eds.) *Rationality and reality: conversations with Alan Musgrave*. Kluwer, pp. 31-62.

Worrall, J [2010] ‘Error, Tests and Theory Confirmation’ in Mayo, D and Spanos, A (eds.) *Error and Inference*. Cambridge: CUP