



Validity and the Paradox of Confirmation by R. A. Sharpe

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all available evidence—with Popper's notion of confirmation: roughly, the degree of change in the probability of a hypothesis in the light of new evidence as compared with prior evidence. It is only the latter that is here under discussion.

DAVID KAPLAN

R. A. SHARPE. *Validity and the paradox of confirmation.* *The philosophical quarterly* (St. Andrews), vol. 14 (1964), pp. 170–173.

In stating the paradox the author writes “we may conclude that a white shoe confirms the hypothesis ‘All crows are black,’ or more precisely, the statement ‘This white shoe is not a crow’ confirms the hypothesis ‘All crows are black’ . . . [But] ‘This white shoe is not a crow’ reflects ordinary usage and is therefore analytically true in natural languages.” Hence it is necessary, and the paradox is dissolved because “Necessary statements do not confirm factual generalizations.”

DAVID KAPLAN

NICHOLAS RESCHER. *Definitions of “existence.”* *Philosophical studies* (Minneapolis), vol. 8 (1957), pp. 65–69.

KAREL LAMBERT. *Notes on “E!”.* *Ibid.*, vol. 9 (1958), pp. 60–63.

The background for these notes is contained in a paper by Leonard (XXVIII 259) wherein Leonard argues that one should introduce into formal logic the notion of (*singular*) *existence*, symbolized by ‘E!’, and defined by: $E!x =_{df} (\exists\varphi)(\varphi x \cdot \diamond\neg\varphi x)$, where x can be either an individual or predicate variable and \diamond is the modal possibility operator. Leonard gives no detailed formulation of the system he envisions but indicates that some of the “laws” of *Principia mathematica* will have to be modified if trivialization of his notion is to be avoided; e.g. he shows how to deduce $E!x$ from the premiss $\diamond Gx \cdot \diamond\neg Gx$, for any predicate G . To avoid this Leonard adopts an additional law L5: $E!\varphi \equiv \sim E!\varphi'$, where φ' is the complement of φ (i.e., $\varphi'x \equiv \sim\varphi x$), as well as the modified law of existential generalization L6: $\varphi y \cdot E!y \supset (\exists x)\varphi x$.

In the Rescher paper, which follows Leonard's point of view, it is argued that Leonard's definition of singular existence has unwanted consequences—e.g. that it denies singular existence to abstract objects—and should be replaced by: $E!x =_{df} (\exists\varphi)(\sim\varphi x \cdot \diamond(\exists y)\varphi y)$. Rescher also shows that from the premiss that there is some object X not having singular existence one can derive a contradiction if $E!$ is allowed as an instance of a free predicate variable, thus concluding that “*existence* is not a predicate.”

In the Lambert paper, which likewise adopts the Leonard point of view, the author makes two points: First, Leonard's derivation of $E!x$ can, with suitable modifications, be also carried through with Rescher's definition, and thus that Rescher should also adopt the above mentioned L5 and L6. Secondly, Rescher's proof that *existence* is not a predicate would not go through if L6 is adopted rather than the unrestricted form of existential generalization used by Rescher. But in this last point Lambert seems to make an error—his formula (17), which is supposed to be an instance of L6, contains $E!X$ where it should have $E!(E!)$, so that the antecedent of (17) reduces to $E!(E!)$ rather than a contradiction. This would make Rescher's proof not a derivation of a contradiction but of $\sim E!(E!)$, that is, if L5 is employed, of $E!(E!)$ —in other words, that non-existence has singular existence.

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KAREL LAMBERT. *Notes on “E!”: II.* *Ibid.*, vol. 12 (1961), pp. 1–5.

On the basis of some remarks on the use of definite descriptions in ordinary discourse, the author lays down the criterion that a “definition” of *existence* of a definite description must be such that “it will permit us to infer nothing about the truth or falsity of $E!(\iota x)\varphi x$ when the uniqueness condition [φ for at most one object] fails.” Accordingly he would replace Russell's definition: $E!(\iota x)\varphi x =_{df} (\exists y)(x)(\varphi x \equiv x = y)$, in which the definiens is equivalent to $(\exists y)\varphi y \cdot (\exists y)(x)(\varphi x \supset x = y)$, by the weaker

$$(\exists y)(x)(\varphi x \supset x = y) \supset E!(\iota x)\varphi x \equiv (\exists y)\varphi y,$$

citing as an advantage that Leonard's theory of description (XXVIII 259) would not then have to abandon the law $\varphi(x)\varphi x$.

In the absence of a formal treatment one cannot fully evaluate the author's proposed revision of description theory; however, in view of the conditional nature of the author's definition of $E!(\iota x)\varphi x$, one obvious consequence would be that one could not have eliminability of the description from all contexts, as with Russell's treatment.

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