

The Justification(s) of Induction(s)

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Abstract

Induction is 'the glory of science and the scandal of philosophy'. I diagnose why. I call my solution a "disappearance theory of induction": inductive inferences are not themselves arguments, but they synthesise manifold reasons that are. Yet the form of all these underlying arguments is not inductive at all, but rather deductive. Both in science and in the wider practical sphere, responsible people seek the most measured way to understand their situation. The most measured understanding possible is thick with arguments in support of every last belief. To achieve such an understanding is richly synthetic. Science has become systematically good at progressing towards this aim. But by virtue of their analytical orientation many philosophers are predisposed to misunderstand the nature of measurement, and thus to fall into confusion about the reasonableness of science. In considering an inductive inference, philosophers have expected to see one argument, rather than many; supposing that there is one argument, they have sought to describe its form; and then they have even attempted to establish a general kind of warrant for such a form of argument. Actually some significant philosophical contributions have issued from such work, but the worth, I argue, of these contributions, is best appreciated when they are all comprehended within the perspective that I defend. I also discuss how much more natural it is from the standpoint of synthetic philosophy (of the rationalists) rather than analytic philosophy (of the empiricists) to embrace the ideal of a most measured understanding, and in its light understand the integrity of both scientific and everyday beliefs.

Keywords: induction, deduction, inference, warrant, analysis, synthesis, analytic philosophy, synthetic philosophy, Hume

Subjects: [General Issues: Confirmation/Induction](#)

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