

Reliability via Synthetic A Priori – Reichenbach's Doctoral Thesis on Probability

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Abstract

Reichenbach is well known for his limiting frequency view of probability, with his most thorough account given in *The Theory of Probability* in 1935/49. Perhaps less known are Reichenbach's early views on probability and its epistemology. In his doctoral thesis from 1915, Reichenbach espouses a Kantian view of probability, where the convergence limit of an empirical frequency distribution is guaranteed to exist thanks to the synthetic a priori principle of lawful distribution. Reichenbach claims to have given a purely objective account of probability, while integrating the concept into a more general philosophical and epistemological framework. I will give a brief synopsis of his thesis and an analysis of his argument. Many of Reichenbach's major developments in probability already surface – albeit in sometimes quite different form – in this early piece of work.

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