

Goodman's "Grue" Argument in Historical Perspective

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Overview of Today's Talk

- Today, my main aim will be to sketch and trace some important consequences of the following (crude) analogy:
entailment : inference :: confirmation : evidential support
- I will focus on arguments *against* classical deductive and inductive logic ("relevantist" and "grue" arguments).
- The talk is mainly *defensive*. I won't offer positive accounts of the "paradoxical" cases I will discuss (but, see "Extras").
- I'll begin with Harman's defense of classical deductive logic against certain (epistemological) "relevantist" arguments.
- Then, I'll argue that *if* you like Harman's defensive move in the deductive case, you should like a similar defense of inductive logic (from Goodman's "grue") *even more*.
- I will indicate how a "Harmanian maneuver" might be used to defend either Hempelian or Carnapian inductive logic.
- I will focus mainly on defending Carnapian IL from "grue".

- Here is a (naïve) "*reductio*" of classical deductive logic:
 - (1) For all sets of statements X and all statements p , if X is inconsistent, then p is a logical consequence of X .
 - (2) If an agent S 's belief set B entails p (and S knows $B \models p$), then it would be reasonable for S to infer/believe p .
 - (3) *Even if* S knows their belief set B is inconsistent (and, hence, that $B \models p$, for *any* p), there are still *some* p 's such that it would *not* be reasonable for S to infer/believe p .
 - (4) \therefore Since (1)-(3) lead to absurdity, our initial assumption (1) must have been false — *reductio* of the "explosion" rule (1).
- Harman [9] would concede that (1)-(3) are inconsistent, and (as a result) that *something* is wrong with premises (1)-(3).
- But, he would reject the relevantists' diagnosis that (1) must be rejected. I take it he'd say it's (2) that is to blame here.
- ☞ (2) is a *bridge principle* [13] linking *entailment* and *inference*.
- (2) is correct *only* for *consistent* B 's. [*Even if* B is consistent, the correct response *may* rather be to *reject* some B_i 's in B .]

- The choice of *inconsistent* belief set B is intentional here.
- In such contexts, there is a *deep disconnect* between (known) *entailment* relations and (kosher) *inferential* relations.
- Will a more sophisticated DBP (2') help here? A *dilemma*:
 - (2') will be *too weak* to yield a (classically) *valid* "*reductio*".
 - or
 - (2') will be *false*. [Our original BP (2) falls under this horn.]
- Let B be S 's belief set, and let q be the conjunction of the elements B_i of B . Here are two more candidate BP's:
 - (2'₁) If S knows that $B \models p$, then S should *not* be such that *both*: S believes q , *and* S does not believe p .
 - (2'₂) If S knows that $B \models p$, then S should *not* be such that *both*: S believes each of the $B_i \in B$, *and* S does not believe p .
- (2'₂) is *false* (preface paradox) *and* too weak (it's wide scope).
- (2'₁) *may* be true, but it is also *too weak*. [It's wide scope, and the agent can reasonably disbelieve *both* q and p .]

“Potted History” Version of Goodman’s Argument

- Consider the following two inductive arguments:

(\mathcal{A}_1) $(E_1) a$ is a green emerald. $\vdots (H_1)$ All emeralds are green. | (\mathcal{A}_2) $(E_2) a$ is a grue emerald. $\vdots (H_2)$ All emeralds are grue.

- A “potted history” version of Goodman’s argument ([8]):
 - Arguments (\mathcal{A}_1) and (\mathcal{A}_2) have the same logical form.
 - Argument (\mathcal{A}_1) is “inductively valid” (i.e., E_1 confirms H_1).
 - (\mathcal{A}_2) is *not* “inductively valid” (i.e., E_2 does *not* confirm H_2).
 - \vdots “Inductive validity” is not *merely* a matter of logical form.
- My talk today aims mainly to undermine Goodman’s argument (in FF&F [8]) for premises (2) and (3).

- Sidebar: I also think (1) is *question-begging*. I won’t be able to get to this today, but see my “Extras” slides for more.

☞ Goodman’s argument against *inductive* logic is analogous to the (unsound) argument above against classical *deductive* logic. This is what the rest of the talk will aim to establish.

- I’ll begin by laying out the salient bits of the inductive logical (*viz.*, *confirmation*) theories of Hempel and Carnap.
- Hempel’s confirmation theory uses *entailment* to explicate “inductive logical support” (confirmation), which is a logical relation between statements. [E confirms H iff $E \models_{dev_E} H$]
- Hempel’s theory has the following three key consequences:
 - (EQC) If E confirms H and $E \not\models E'$, then E' confirms H .
 - (NC) For all constants x and all (consistent) predicates ϕ and ψ : ‘ $\phi x \ \& \ \psi x$ ’ confirms ‘ $(\forall y)(\phi y \supset \psi y)$ ’.
 - (M) For all x , for all (consistent) ϕ and ψ , and all statements H : If ‘ ϕx ’ confirms H , then ‘ $\phi x \ \& \ \psi x$ ’ confirms H .
- These three properties are the crucial ones needed to reconstruct Goodman’s “grue” argument against Hempel.
- Before giving a precise reconstruction of Goodman’s “grue” argument, we’ll look at the essentials of Carnapian IL/CT. [Goodman targeted both Hempel and Carnap in FF&F [8].]

- Carnapian confirmation (i.e., *later* Carnapian theory [14]) is based on *probabilistic relevance*, *not* deductive entailment:
 - E confirms H , relative to K iff $\Pr(H \mid E \ \& \ K) > \Pr(H \mid K)$, for some “suitable” conditional probability function $\Pr(\cdot \mid \cdot)$.
 - Note how this is an *explicitly* 3-place relation. Hempel’s was only 2-place. This is because \Pr (unlike \models) is *non-monotonic*.
 - Carnap thought “suitable \Pr ” meant “*logical* \Pr ” in a very strong/naive sense. But, Goodman’s argument (charitably reconstructed) will work against *any* probability function \Pr .

☞ Carnap’s theory implies *only 1* of our 3 Hempelian claims: (EQC). It does *not* imply either (NC) *or* (M) (see [4]/[14]).

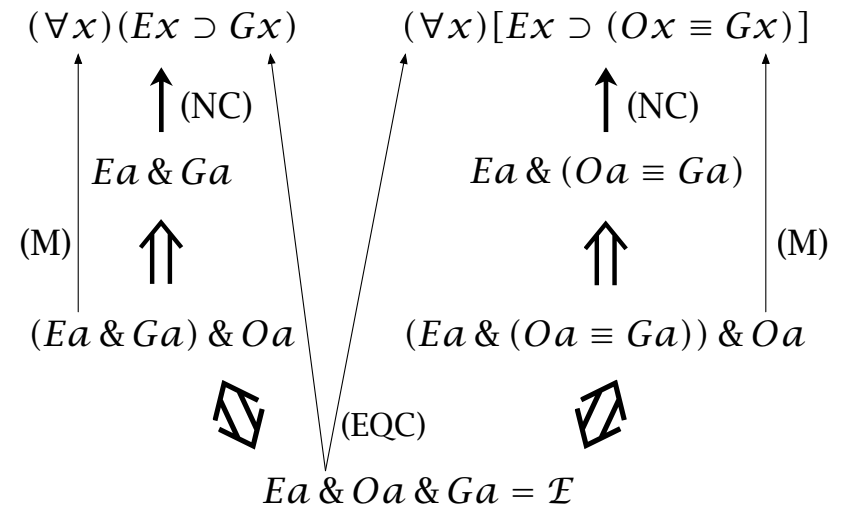
- This will allow Carnapian IL to avoid facing the full brunt of Goodman’s “grue” (but, it will still face a serious challenge).

- For Carnap, confirmation is a *logical* relation (akin to entailment). Like entailment, confirmation can be *applied*, but this requires *epistemic bridge principles* [akin to (2)].
- Carnap [1] discusses various bridge principles. The most well-known of these is the *requirement of total evidence*.

- The Requirement of Total Evidence.** In the application of IL to a given knowledge situation, the total evidence available must be taken as a basis for determining the degree of confirmation.
- This *sounds* like a plausible principle. But, once it is made more precise, it will actually turn out to be subtly defective.
- More precisely, we have the following *bridge principle* connecting *confirmation* and *evidential support*:
 - (RTE) E evidentially supports H for S in C iff E confirms H , relative to K , where K is S ’s *total evidence* in C .
- The (RTE) has often been (implicitly) presupposed by Bayesian epistemologists (both subjective and objective).
- But, we’ll see that (RTE) is an *independently* implausible BP.
- ☞ Moreover, Goodman’s “grue” argument will rely *more heavily* on (RTE) than the relevantists’ argument relies on (2). In this sense, Goodman’s argument will be *even worse*.
- Before reconstructing the argument, a brief “grue” primer.

- Let $Gx \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} x$ is green, $Ox \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} x$ is examined prior to t , and $Ex \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} x$ is an emerald. Goodman introduces a predicate “grue”
 $Gx \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} x$ is grue $\stackrel{\text{def}}{=} Ox \equiv Gx$.
- Consider the following two universal generalizations
 (H_1) All emeralds are green. $[(\forall x)(Ex \supset Gx)]$
 (H_2) All emeralds are grue. $[(\forall x)[Ex \supset (Ox \equiv Gx)]]$
- And, consider the following instantial evidential statement
 $(E) Ea \ \& \ Oa \ \& \ Ga$
- Hempel’s confirmation theory [(EQC) & (NC) & (M)] entails:
 $(\dagger) E$ confirms H_1 , and E confirms H_2 . [proof]
 $\therefore (\ddagger) E$ confirms H_1 if and only if E confirms H_2 .
- What about (later) Carnapian theory? Does it entail (\ddagger) ?
 NO! There are Carnapian *countermodels* to (\ddagger) . [See Extras.]
- So, Hempel was an easier target for Goodman than (later) Carnap (to be fair, Goodman talks only about *early* Carnap).
- Now, we’re ready to reconstruct Goodman’s argument.

A Proof of (\dagger) From Hempel’s (NC), (M), and (EQC)



- There is just one more ingredient in Goodman’s argument:
 - The agent S who is assessing the evidential support that E provides for H_1 vs H_2 in a Goodmanian “grue” context C_G has Oa as part of their total evidence in C_G . (e.g., [2], [16].)
- Now, we can run the following Goodmanian “*reductio*”:
 - E confirms H , relative to K iff $\text{Pr}(H | E \ \& \ K) > \text{Pr}(H | K)$.
 - E evidentially supports H for S in C iff E confirms H , relative to K , where K is S ’s total evidence in C .
 - The agent S who is assessing the evidential support E provides for H_1 vs H_2 in a Goodmanian “grue” context C_G has Oa as part of their total evidence in C_G [i.e., $K \models Oa$].
 - If $K \models Oa$, then—*c.p.*— E confirms H_1 relative to K iff E confirms H_2 relative to K , for **any** Pr [i.e., (\ddagger) holds, \forall Pr ’s].
 - Therefore, E evidentially supports H_1 for S in C_G if and only if E evidentially supports H_2 for S in C_G .
 - E evidentially supports H_1 for S in C_G , but E does *not* evidentially support H_2 for S in C_G .
- \therefore (i)–(vi) lead to an absurdity. Hence, our initial assumption (i) must have been false. Carnapian inductive logic refuted?

- Premise (vi) is based on Goodman’s *epistemic intuition* that, in “grue” contexts, E evidentially supports H_1 but *not* H_2 .
- Premise (v) follows logically from premises (i)–(iv).
- Premise (iv) is a theorem of probability calculus (**any** Pr !).
 - The *c.p.* clause is $\text{Pr}(Ea | H_1 \ \& \ K) = \text{Pr}(Ea | H_2 \ \& \ K)$. [See [16].]
- Premise (iii) is an assumption about the agent’s background knowledge K that’s implicit in Goodman’s set-up ([2], [16]).
- Premise (ii) is (RTE). It’s the *bridge principle*, akin to (2) in the relevantists’ *reductio*. This is the premise I will focus on.
- Here are my two main points about Goodman’s argument:
 - (ii) must be rejected by Bayesians, for *independent* reasons.
 - Unlike Hempel’s theory, Carnap’s c -theory *doesn’t entail* (\ddagger) .
- This suggests Goodman’s argument is *even less* a *reductio* of (i) than the relevantists’ argument is a *reductio* of (1).
- Moreover, a careful reading of *Fact, Fiction, and Forecast* reveals that this *was* Goodman’s argumentative strategy.

Three Salient Quotes from Goodman [8]

☞ The “new riddle” is *about inductive logic (not epistemology)*.

Quote #1 (page 67): “Just as deductive logic is concerned primarily with a relation between statements — namely the consequence relation — that is independent of their truth or falsity, so inductive logic ... is concerned primarily with a comparable relation of confirmation between statements. Thus the problem is to define the relation that obtains between any statement S_1 and another S_2 if and only if S_1 may properly be said to confirm S_2 in any degree.”

Quote #2 (73): “Confirmation of a hypothesis by an instance depends ... upon features of the hypothesis other than its syntactical form”.

☞ But, Goodman’s *methodology* appeals to *epistemic* intuitions.

Quote #3 (page 73): “... the fact that a given man now in this room is a third son *does not increase the credibility of* statements asserting that other men now in this room are third sons, *and so does not confirm* the hypothesis that all men now in this room are third sons.”

- As Tim Williamson points out [18, ch. 9], Carnap’s (RTE) must be rejected, because of the problem of old evidence [3].
- If S ’s total evidence in C (K) entails E , then, according to (RTE), E cannot evidentially support *any* H for S in C .
- As a result, there are C ’s in which we can’t use $\text{Pr}(\cdot | K)$ — for *any* Pr — when assessing the *evidential import of* E in C .
- There are (basically) two kinds of strategies for revising (RTE). Carnap [1, p. 472] & Williamson [18, ch. 9] suggest:
(RTE₊) E evidentially supports H for S in C iff S possesses E as evidence in C and $\text{Pr}_+(H | E \& K_+) > \text{Pr}_+(H | K_+)$. [K_+ is “empty”, Pr_+ is “inductive” [14]/“evidential” [18]/“logical” [1].]
- Note: Hempel explicitly *required* that confirmation be taken “*relative to* K_+ ” in all treatments of the paradoxes [10, 11]. (RTE₊) is a charitable Carnapian reconstruction of Hempel.
- A more “standard” way to revise (RTE) is [(RTE’)] to use $\text{Pr}_{S'}(\cdot | K')$, where $K \models K' \neq E$, and $\text{Pr}_{S'}$ is the credence function of a “counterpart” S' of S with total evidence K' .

- Carnap never re-wrote the part of LFP [1] that discusses the (RTE), in light of a probabilistic *relevance* (“increase in firmness” [1]) notion of confirmation. This is too bad.
- If Carnap had discussed this (“old evidence”) issue, I suspect he would have used something like (RTE₊) as his bridge principle connecting confirmation and evidential support.
- Various other philosophers have proposed similar accounts of “support” as some probabilistic relation, taken relative to an “empty” (perhaps “*a priori*”) background $\&/\vee$ probability.
 - Richard Fumerton (who, unlike Williamson, is an epistemological *internalist*) proposes such a view in his [5].
 - Patrick Maher [14] applies such relations extensively in his recent (neo-Carnapian) work on confirmation theory.
 - Brian Weatherson [17] uses a similar, “Keynesian” [12] inductive-probability approach to evidential support.
- So, many “Bayesians” *already* reject (RTE), for reasons that are largely *independent* of “gruesome” considerations.

- So far, I have left open (precisely) what I think Bayesian confirmation theorists *should* say (*logically & epistemologically*) in light of Goodman’s “grue” paradox.
- Clearly, BCTs will need to revise (RTE) in light of “grue”. But, the standard (RTE’) way of doing this to cope with “old evidence” isn’t powerful enough to avoid *both* problems.
- The more draconian (RTE₊) — suggested by the work of Carnap — avoids both problems, from a *logical* point of view (*if* “inductive”/“logical” probabilities *exist!*). But, what should would-be “Carnapians” say on the *epistemic* side?
- I’m not sure what the evidential relations *are* in “grue” contexts (but, see “Extras”). But, *that* doesn’t undermine my line on Goodman’s “grue” *argument* against *inductive logic*.
 - Analogy: Harman doesn’t tell us (in general) how someone *should* respond to the discovery that their beliefs are inconsistent. But, *that* doesn’t undermine Harman’s points about relevantist “*reductios*” of classical deductive logic.

Overview Harman Hempel Carnap Goodman (RTE) References Extras

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"Carnapian" Counterexamples to (NC) and (M)

(K) Either: (H) there are 100 black ravens, no nonblack ravens, and 1 million other things, or (~H) there are 1,000 black ravens, 1 white raven, and 1 million other things.

- Let $E \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} Ra \ \& \ Ba$ (a randomly sampled from universe). Then:

$$\Pr(E \mid H \ \& \ K) = \frac{100}{1000100} \ll \frac{1000}{1001001} = \Pr(E \mid \sim H \ \& \ K)$$
- \therefore This K/\Pr constitute a counterexample to (NC), assuming a "Carnapian" theory of confirmation. This model can be emulated in the later Carnapian λ/γ -systems [14].

- Let $Bx \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} x$ is a black card, $Ax \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} x$ is the ace of spades, $Jx \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} x$ is the jack of clubs, and $K \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} a$ card a is sampled at random from a standard deck (where \Pr is also standard):
 - $\Pr(Aa \mid Ba \ \& \ K) = \frac{1}{26} > \frac{1}{52} = \Pr(Aa \mid K)$.
 - $\Pr(Aa \mid Ba \ \& \ Ja \ \& \ K) = 0 < \frac{1}{52} = \Pr(Aa \mid K)$.

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A "Carnapian" Counterexample to (\ddagger)

(K) Either: (H_1) there are 1000 green emeralds 900 of which have been examined before t , no non-green emeralds, and 1 million other things in the universe, or (H_2) there are 100 green emeralds that have been examined before t , no green emeralds that have not been examined before t , 900 non-green emeralds that have not been examined before t , and 1 million other things.

- Imagine an urn containing true descriptions of each object in the universe ($\Pr \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \text{urn model}$). Let $\mathcal{E} \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} "Ea \ \& \ Oa \ \& \ Ga"$ be drawn. \mathcal{E} confirms H_1 but \mathcal{E} disconfirms H_2 , relative to K :

$$\Pr(\mathcal{E} \mid H_1 \ \& \ K) = \frac{900}{1001000} > \frac{100}{1001000} = \Pr(\mathcal{E} \mid H_2 \ \& \ K)$$
- This K/\Pr constitute a counterexample to (\ddagger), assuming a "Carnapian" theory of confirmation. This probability model can be emulated in the later Carnapian λ/γ -systems [14].

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What Could "Carnapian" Inductive Logic Be? Part I

- Many logical empiricists dreamt that inductive logic (confirmation theory) could be formulated in such a way that it *supervenes* on deductive logic in a *very strong* sense.
 - Strong Supervenience (SS)**. All confirmation relations involving sentences of a first-order language \mathcal{L} supervene on the *deductive-logical* (*viz.*, syntactical) structure *of* \mathcal{L} .
- Hempel clearly saw (SS) as a *desideratum* for confirmation theory. The early Carnap also seems to have (SS) in mind.
- I think it is fair to say that Carnap's project — understood as requiring (SS) — was unsuccessful. [Note: I think this is true for reasons that are *independent* of Goodman's "grue".]
- The later Carnap seems to be aware of this. Most commentators interpret this shift as the later Carnap simply *giving up* on inductive logic (*qua logic*) altogether.
- I want to resist this "standard" reading of the history.

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What Could “Carnapian” Inductive Logic Be? Part II

- I propose a different reading of the later Carnap, which makes him much more coherent with the early Carnap.
- I propose *weakening* the supervenience requirement in such a way that it (a) ensures this coherence, and (b) maintains the “logicality” of confirmation relations in Carnap’s sense.
- Let \mathcal{L} be a formal language strong enough to express the fragment of probability theory Carnap needs for his later, more sophisticated confirmation-theoretic framework.
 - **Weak Supervenience (WS)**. All confirmation relations involving sentences of a first-order language \mathcal{L} supervene on the *deductive-logical* (*viz.*, syntactical) structure of \mathcal{L} .
- Happily, \mathcal{L} is pretty weak (Carnap’s c -theories are *decidable*). So, even by early (*logicist*) Carnapian lights, satisfying (WS) is sufficient to ensure the “logical determinateness” of c .
- The specific (WS) approach I favor takes confirmation to be a 4-place relation: between E, H, K , and a Pr-model \mathcal{M} .

What Could “Carnapian” Inductive Logic Be? Part III

- Consequences of moving to such a 4-place c -relation:
 - We need not try to “construct” “logical” probability functions from the syntax of \mathcal{L} . This is a dead-end anyhow.
 - Indeed, on this view, inductive logic has nothing to say about the *interpretation/origin* of Pr. That is *not a logical* question, but a question about the *application* of logic.
 - Analogy: Deductive logicians don’t owe us a “logical interpretation/construction” of the *valuation function*.
 - Moreover, this leads to a vast increase in the *generality* of inductive logic. Carnap was stuck with an impoverished set of “logical” probability functions (in his λ/γ -continuum).
 - On my approach, *any* probability function can be part of a confirmation relation (*via* \mathcal{M}). Which functions are “appropriate” or “interesting” will depend on *applications*.
 - So, some confirmation relations will not be “interesting”, *etc.* But, this is (already) true of *entailments*, as Harman showed.
 - Questions: Now, what *is* the job of the inductive logician, and how (if at all) do they interact with *epistemologists*?

What Could “Carnapian” Inductive Logic Be? Part IV

- The inductive logician must explain how it is that inductive logic can satisfy the following Carnapian *desiderata*.
 - The confirmation function $c_{\mathcal{M}}(H, E | K)$ quantifies a *logical* (in a Carnapian sense) relation between E, H , and K .
 - (\mathcal{D}_1) “Logical determinateness” of c is ensured by the move from (SS) to (WS) [from an \mathcal{L} -determinate to an \mathcal{L} -determinate c].
 - (\mathcal{D}_2) Another aspect of “logicality” insisted upon by Carnap is that $c_{\mathcal{M}}(H, E | K)$ should *generalize* the entailment relation.
 - At least: $c_{\mathcal{M}}(H, E | K)$ should take a max (min) value when $E \& K \models H$ ($E \& K \models \sim H$) — for **all** (*regular*) Pr-models \mathcal{M} .
 - (\mathcal{D}_3) There must be *some* interesting “bridge principles” linking c and *some* relations of evidential support, in *some* contexts.
 - My basic “bridging” idea (rough): subject-context pairs $\langle S, C \rangle$ will determine “epistemically appropriate” Pr-models \mathcal{M} .
 - (\mathcal{D}_2) implies that *if* there are any such bridge principles linking *entailment* and (say) *conclusive evidence*, these will be *inherited* by c . So, we also inherit Harman’s problem!

“Potted History” Version of Goodman’s Argument (#2)

- Some say that “sensitivity to choice of language” is a central/essential theme/aspect of Goodman’s argument.
- But, this *can’t* be the case, for many reasons. Here’s one:
 1. Goodman’s main target was *Hempel*.
 2. Hempel’s c -relation is defined in terms of \models .
 3. \models is *not* (essentially) sensitive to choice of language.
 4. Or, if \models is sensitive to choice of language (and said sensitivity is *essential* to Goodman’s argument), then Goodman’s riddle is *neither new nor peculiar to induction*.
- Carnap’s *later* theories of c are sensitive to choice of language. But, (a) Goodman was not aware of those later theories, and (b) “grue” doesn’t reveal *that* problem anyway.
- In order to pinpoint the (pernicious) language-variance of Carnap’s later c -theories, more sophisticated constructions are required (*e.g.*, David-Miller-esque [15, Ch. 11] constructions).