The Raven Paradox

"All ravens are black." 

The statement is also a conditional statement with a contrapositive, statement. The contrapositive is: "If a bird is white, then it is not a raven." This is the opposing hypothesis too. This is the Raven Paradox.

Imagine that a scientist, after years of going for long walks in the countryside, observes that every single raven he has ever seen is black. His deduced hypothesis may be that "All ravens are white." Every non-white object, which is not a raven, strengthens acceptance, to minimize the effects of the Raven Paradox.

The chances of someone seeing only one raven in their life, which happens to be white, are tiny. For example, Newton's laws were accepted as truth until Einstein's theories blew them out of the water. In turn, General Relativity is not the answer to fundamental physics and has been superseded by other theories.

However, this is not the same as impossible and that possibility must never be ignored. This is an interesting aside, about 1 in 10,000 raven eggs contain partially or fully albino birds. This is how science evolves, by challenging and adapting established paradigms and laws. The answer is a resounding NO!

Hempel's Raven Paradox stands to remind us all that no theory, however established, should be immune to challenge or debate. As new evidence is uncovered, science must adapt and change to assimilate the new data.

Thus, the notion of falsifiability is questioned and undermined by the Raven Paradox. For example, Newton's laws were accepted as truth until Einstein's theories blew them out of the water. In turn, General Relativity is not the answer to fundamental physics and has been superseded by other theories.

As a dutiful researcher, he uses inductive reasoning that are an integral part of the scientific process. The examples given in the paradox are simplistic and unlikely, merely serving as an exercise to postulate the localized phenomenon. The odds of seeing an albino raven are very small and sightings are rare. Hempel was not trying to comment upon the exact science, but as an aside, "if you think all ravens are black, you have no idea what shape birds are." He provided a memorable view that no theory, however established, can be proved incorrect over time.

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