

Abstract

In 1962 W. W. Bartley proposed comprehensively critical rationalism---thereafter he renamed it as pancritical rationalism (PCR)---in order to overcome some problems which he saw in Popper's critical rationalism (CR). Since then it has been discussed whether PCR is a better version of CR or not.

The thesis of pancritical rationalism is: "The position may be held rationally without needing justification at all-provided that it can be and is held open to criticism and survives severe examination." As you see in the sentence quoted above, he thinks that in PCR it is rational to hold a position if it survives severe criticism. This is a condition of rationality in PCR.

In my opinion, this condition of rationality in PCR clashes with the first of the conditions of rationality in CR or at least PCR neglects the rest. The conditions of rationality in CR are as follows: (1) it is rational to reject a position if it is refuted by severe criticism; (2) it is rational just to conjecture; (3) it is rational to give a significant challenge to a survived position. They are implicit both in falsificationism and in CR which is based on falsificationism. Therefore, PCR has an undesirable element which CR does not have if you evaluate falsificationism positively.