

Truth in the Analytic Grade of Clarity: Disquotation and Representation

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My aims in this paper are two. First, I shall argue that current accounts of the pragmatic theory of truth fail. This is for two reasons: (A) current accounts fail to make the pragmatic theory of truth a genuine *rival theory* of truth; (B) current accounts of the pragmatic theory of truth violate the Univocity Constraint on the elucidation of concepts. Second, I shall propose and briefly develop a different account of the pragmatic theory of truth, one that does not suffer from the defects of the former accounts.

Truth on Two Rails

Since the publication of Cheryl Misak's seminal *Truth and the End of Inquiry*, pragmatists have tried to run their theory of truth on two rails. This effort hinges on Peirce's distinction among three grades of clarity in our concepts: clearness, distinctness (or analyticity), and pragmatic adequacy. The second and third shall be our concern here, for it is in providing both the analytic and the pragmatic grades of clarity that pragmatists can run a theory of truth on two rails.

We attain the analytic grade of conceptual clarity when we are able to provide an abstract definition of a concept, one in which the definiens is no wider and no narrower than the definiendum. Peirce writes, "an idea is distinctly apprehended...when we can give a precise definition of it, in abstract term" (W 3.258).

Here we get our first rail. Pragmatists such as Misak endorse a disquotational theory of truth by maintaining that the T-scheme captures the analytic grade of clarity of our concept 'truth'. "P" is true, they maintain, iff p. As Misak notes, "The Peircean response here [to those who claim that the T-scheme must be right and so Peirce must be wrong] turns on the distinction between a definition and a pragmatic elucidation. Peirce would want to retain something like the adequacy condition ["p" is true iff p] but retain it only as a nominal or trivial definition" (2004/ 1991: 127) and "The difference between Peirce's view and the purist's view [a deflationist who tries to keep truth separate from success, inquiry, and verification] [is that] although the deflationist offers a fine nominal definition of truth, more needs to be said" (2008: 117).

However, as Misak stresses, this is only a nominal definition of truth. It doesn't get us much traction on how truth relates to, for example, belief and inquiry. For that, we need to attain pragmatic adequacy with respect to the concept 'truth'.

We attain pragmatic clarity when we know the conceivable consequences of a theoretical statement. As Peirce writes in his earliest statement of the pragmatic maxim: "Consider what effects, which might conceivably have practical bearings, we

conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object" (W3.266). Later, he writes that pragmatism is the doctrine that, "the real meaning of a purely theoretical statement or word, though assuredly it does not lie in any possible practical application, yet does lie in the conceivability, quite regardless of the practicability, of such application" (EP2.457).

Here we get our second rail. The pragmatic view of truth, roughly that true sentences are those that would be believed after a sufficiently long and rigorous process of inquiry,¹ provides us with pragmatic clarity with respect to our concept 'truth'. As Peirce writes, "The opinion which is fated to be ultimately agreed to by all who investigate is what we mean by the truth" (W3.273). He later clarifies that, "I call[ed] 'truth' the predestinate opinion, by which I ought to have meant that which would ultimately prevail if investigation were carried sufficiently far in that particular direction" (EP2.457).

Let's call these two grades of clarity with respect to truth analytic truth and pragmatic truth.

Analytic Truth: "p" is true iff p.

Pragmatic Truth: true sentences are those that would be believed after a sufficiently long and rigorous process of inquiry.

It must be stressed that on current pragmatic accounts these are not supposed to be two different conceptions of truth, as though 'truth' were somehow an equivocal concept. Rather, they are supposed to be different grades of clarity with respect to the very same concept, truth.

However, the fact that these two different grades of clarity are grades of clarity concerning the very same concept raises a question: How do these grades of clarity with respect to truth relate? Mark Migotti (1999) has contended that these are two different aspects of the very same concept. Misak (2004/1991) and Wiggins (2004), in contrast, have maintained that pragmatic truth is an elucidation of analytic truth. Finally, de Waal (1999) has stated that these are two different kinds of definitions of truth.

In what follows, I shall regard pragmatic truth as an elucidation of analytic truth, in line with the views of Misak and Wiggins. However, regardless of whether pragmatic truth be a different aspect or definition of analytic truth or an elucidation of analytic truth, my contentions in the next two sections are (A) that the pragmatic theory of truth so understood fails to be a genuine rival theory of truth at all and (B) that the pragmatic theory of truth so understood violates a substantive constraint on the relationship between analytic definitions and pragmatic elucidations.

¹ This is a general statement of the pragmatic theory of truth in accordance with Misak (2004/1991). There are variations on this statement of the pragmatic theory of truth, among them Wiggins (2002 and 2004), De Waal (1999), and Almeder (1980 and 1985).

(A) A Genuine Theory of Truth?

My first contention is that on present accounts the pragmatic theory of truth fails to be a genuine *rival theory* of truth. In discussing the correspondence theory of truth, David Lewis (2001) identifies two criteria² that must be met for a theory of truth to really be a rival theory of truth. One of those conditions is that the theory must really conflict with other rival theories. The second condition is that the theory must be a theory of truth, not a bundle of claims having nothing especially to do with truth. Current accounts of the pragmatic theory of truth violate both conditions.

To the first condition, that the theory of truth must really conflict with other theories of truth, we find that the pragmatic theory of truth does not really conflict with other theories of truth. In particular, the pragmatic theory of truth does not conflict with the disquotational theory of truth, which is generally regarded as a species of deflationism (see Burgess and Burgess 2011 and García-Carpintero Sánchez-Miguel 1994).

To see more clearly why this is so, it's important to keep in mind that the conceptual analysis of truth is what we get in the analytic grade of clarity; it's analytic truth. The analytic grade of clarity, recall, is:

Analytic Truth: "p" is true iff p.

Now, the disquotationalist is impressed by the fact that on the left side of the biconditional the sentence is quoted and the on the right side of the biconditional it is not. Hence, disquotationalists, unlike redundancy theorists for example, think we need to give an account of how those quotation remarks get removed or inserted. Explaining how this is done is something added to the theory of truth, not the theory of truth itself. The theory of truth is still its analysis: "p" is true iff p.

To explain how those quotation marks get removed or inserted, disquotationalists generally appeal to some variety of verificationism or to what would be believed after sufficiently lengthy and rigorous inquiry. That is what gives us pragmatic truth. Nevertheless, disquotationalists and current pragmatic theorists alike think there is nothing more to the analysis of truth itself than what is captured in the T-scheme. Hence, the pragmatic theory of truth is not a genuine rival theory of truth. Rather, it is a species of disquotationalism. To the extent the pragmatic theory of truth is a genuine rival to anything, it is only a genuine rival to other disquotationalist theories of how quotation marks get inserted or removed.

Moreover, we here glimpse how current accounts of the pragmatic theory of truth violate Lewis's second condition. What pragmatists add on to disquotationalism ends up having nothing to do with the analysis of truth in particular and everything to do with how the quotation marks wind up being

² In his discussion of the correspondence theory, he actually identifies four conditions that must be met for the correspondence theory to be a rival theory. However, only two of those shall concern us here.

removed or inserted. The pragmatic elucidation of truth, pragmatic truth, does not tell us what truth *is*. Rather, it tells us how to use the truth predicate appropriately.

In like manner, if I tell you that what is moral is what a supremely perfect being would command, I need not have told you what morality is, for I could affirm such a claim about morality without endorsing divine command theory. Indeed, I could affirm such a claim while simultaneously endorsing virtually *any* genuine rival theory of objective morality. The same is true of current pragmatic elucidations of truth: they tell us what properties or characteristics accompany true sentences. They don't tell us what truth is. I could be a redundancy theorist, a disquotationalist, or a correspondence theorist and still maintain that true sentences are those that would be believed after a sufficiently long and rigorous process of inquiry.

B. Violation of the Substantive Constraint

The Substantive Constraint

We're now in a position to turn to a second criticism of the pragmatic theory of truth. As I stressed above, analytic truth and pragmatic truth are not supposed to be two different conceptions of truth. Rather, they are two different ways of gaining clarity with respect to the one, univocal concept 'truth'.

Since the concept 'truth' is supposed to be univocal, it follows that were a sentence true analytically, it would also have to be true pragmatically.³ The reverse must also be the case. All pragmatically true sentences must also be analytically true and all analytically true sentences must also be pragmatically true. That is our substantive constraint on the relationship between analytic truth and pragmatic truth.

This constraint, of course, is not limited to truth alone. It's a constraint on any concept whatsoever. More generally, we might express the constraint as follows, calling it the Univocity Constraint:

Univocity Constraint: Let C be a concept, then: (a) if the analytic definition of C entails that X is C, then according to the (correct) pragmatic elucidation of C X could not fail to be C and (b) if the pragmatic elucidation of C entails that X is C, then according to the (correct) analytic definition of C X could not fail to be C.

Someone might worry that the Univocity Constraint reduces the distinction between the analytic grade of clarity and the pragmatic grade of clarity to a triviality, for then the analytic and pragmatic grades of clarity must be equivalent. However, this is mistaken. While its true that the grades of clarity must be

³ Or more precisely: Whenever a sentence is found to be true according to the analytic grade of clarity it must also be true according to the pragmatic grade of clarity

equivalent in scope or extension, it does not follow that they must state the very same thing.

For example, let M be the correct theory of morality and suppose (I think rightly) that the correct theory of morality is not divine command theory. It is nevertheless a pragmatic elucidation of morality that a perfect being would command whatever actions are moral according to M.⁴ It follows that if action A is moral according to M, then it would also be the case that a perfect being would command A. Moreover, if a perfect being would command A, then A is surely moral. Nevertheless, M and the claim that a moral action is whatever a perfect being would command do not state the very same thing (in accordance with our supposition above) even though they are equivalent in extension.⁵

Granting the Univocity Constraint, my aim in the next section is to show that the attempt to run a theory of truth on two rails, as pragmatists have tried to do, violates the Univocity Constraint.

Current Accounts of the Pragmatic Theory of Truth Violate the Univocity Constraint

The problem with running truth on two rails is that it could turn out that a sentence *p* would be believed after a sufficiently long and rigorous process of inquiry but *not-p*. Cases where this might come to pass are easy to come by: Cartesian evil demons deceive us; we suffer consistent and regular spontaneously generated but false (or falsidical) experiences; we're brains in vats; we're virtual reality creations, etc. In any of these scenarios, we might end up believing that the cat is on the mat, and would continue to believe it no matter how long and rigorously we inquired into it, even if there are no cats and even if there are no mats.

If you're sympathetic to the pragmatic theory of truth (and I am!) then you're surely balking right now. After all, there are replies to this line of objection and everyone who has ever endorsed the pragmatic theory of truth is perfectly well aware of them. What I shall show here is that two of those replies do not succeed.

Objection One: I begin with Cheryl Misak. In *Truth and the End of Inquiry*, she notes that Peirce's critical commonsensism is a response to Descartes's project: "Peirce argues that such doubts would be 'paper' or 'tin doubts. They are not genuine and they cannot motivate inquiry" (2004/1991: 50). If that's so, then above worries are shaved off by Peirce's critical commonsensism.

⁴ Maybe you think this is obfuscation rather than elucidation. Perhaps, then, this is more convincing: it would still pragmatically elucidate morality that the Aristotelian *phronimos* would do A, even though (I think, in accordance with the priority problem) that the fact the *phronimos* would do A does not make A moral.

⁵ As another example, consider Peirce's analytic definition of reality as "that whose characters are independent of how you or I think" (W3.271) and his pragmatic elucidation of reality as the object represented in what would be the predestinate opinion of inquiry (W3.273). These are not equivalent in meaning but are (presumably and hopefully) equivalent in scope.

Reply to Objection One: Misak is surely correct that Peirce's critical commonsensism is (at least partially) a reply to Cartesian doubt. However, the question at hand is not whether we should doubt our beliefs based on the possibility of being deceived by an evil demon. Rather, the question is whether sufficiently long and rigorous inquiry might conceivably result in a belief that is not true. The mere fact the evil-demon hypothesis is not a live hypothesis does not make it any less true or any less conceivable. Hence, it may be true that there are no cats and there are no mats even though everyone who inquired into it would believe that there are cats and mats. So, the Univocity Constraint is violated: we can conceive of a scenario where it turns out that some belief is analytically true but not pragmatically true. To put it another way, Peirce's critical commonsensism is a methodical doctrine, a doctrine concerned with ensuring that our methods are efficient, economical, and sound. Our concern with the possibility of being deceived by an evil demon isn't methodical but conceptual, a concern with what is possible. Peirce's critical commonsensism isn't a restriction on conceivability but a restriction of hypothesis adoption.

Objection Two: Cornelis de Waal has sought to reply to these sorts of objections by appealing to Peirce's position that the absolutely incognizable is inconceivable (W2.208 and W2.213). He considers a scenario—the evil demon scenario is just such a scenario—where “p” is true but inquiry into p leads to the settled belief that not-p. He writes of such scenarios that the “only situation in which the object of a proposition falls beyond the realm of any inquiry is when its object is absolutely incognizable” (1999: 756). Since incognizable sentences have no practical effects, they cannot be meaningful (in accordance with the pragmatic maxim) and so are neither true nor false.

Reply to Objection Two: However, de Waal's argument confounds cognizability with discoverability. The object of a proposition may fall outside the realm of inquiry not because its object is incognizable but because it is not discoverable. We cannot discover that an evil demon is deceiving us, and so we cannot inquire into whether it is deceiving us (at least in any interesting sense of the word “inquire”). Nevertheless, we can cognize the sentence “An evil demon deceives us”. Hence, it is possible that an evil demon deceives us, that “p” is true, and yet inquiry into p leads to the settled belief that not-p.

In sum, I do not think pragmatists who run truth on two rails have succeeded in showing that a sentence could not be pragmatically true without also being analytically true. Running truth on two rails, as explained above, violates the Univocity Constraint. Hence, analytic truth and pragmatic truth must not be tracking the same concept 'truth'. What's a pragmatist to do?

What a Pragmatist Is to Do

In the previous section, I stated that I'm sympathetic to the pragmatic theory of truth. How can this be if I think running truth on two rails, as many pragmatists do, fails? My position is that pragmatists should modify their statement of analytic truth.

Pragmatists are correct to distinguish between analytic truth and pragmatic truth, or the analytic grade of clarity with respect to truth and the pragmatic grade of clarity with respect to truth. However, they have the wrong analytic definition of truth. “P” is not true iff p. Rather, “p” is true iff p is a sign that conforms to its object. Peirce writes, “Truth is the conformity of a representamen [=sign] to its object—*its* object, ITS object, mind you” (EP2.380). This, I maintain, is the analytic definition of truth (in the next sections I shall explain what it means). Pragmatic truth is as stated above: what would be believed after a sufficiently long and rigorous process of inquiry. Notice, however, that the pragmatic and analytic grades of clarity with respect to truth do not say the same thing: the analytic definition makes no reference to belief or inquiry.

In what follows, I am going to sketch, in very broad outlines, what this version of the pragmatic theory of truth looks like. Regrettably, space requires that these considerations be brief and underdeveloped, but I hope that they are sufficient to gesture towards what this revised pragmatic theory of truth entails.

Kant and the Nominal Definition of Truth

Misak frequently cites one passage where Peirce seems to endorse a disquotational view of truth. I aim to show here that this passage does not support the conclusion Peirce would endorse a disquotational view of truth. To the contrary, it supports a conformity theory of truth, a refinement of the correspondence theory of truth.

The passage in question is: “That truth is the correspondence of a representation with its object is, as Kant says, merely the nominal definition of it” (EP2.379). This has led Misak to conclude that Peirce would endorse a “minimal” or disquotational view of analytic truth (2004/ 1991: 38).

However, I contend that this passage should be read differently. Philosophical tradition dating to Aristotle (see *De Anima* 413a15–20, for example) understands a nominal definition to be a definition that is useful for getting an initial fix on a concept even if that definition does not analyze the concept. For example, “Thunder is the sound made by lightning strikes” is a nominal definition of thunder. It helps us get an initial fix on the concept “thunder” but it does not tell us what thunder *is*.

Likewise, Kant’s definition of truth as the correspondence of object and sign is a nominal definition of truth. It helps us get an initial fix on the concept “truth” but it does not tell us what truth is. Specifically and as Peirce makes clear, Kant’s definition (a) fails to take into account the fact that truth is a property of sentences or propositions originally or non-derivatively and (b) does not account for the nature of the correspondence of a sign to its object. With respect to (b), Peirce proceeds to note that, “there must be an action of the object upon the sign to render the latter true” (EP2.380).

Peirce’s point is not that we should endorse a deflationary or disquotational definition of truth but that, to have a proper definition of truth, we need to clarify Kant’s definition. It’s not that the correspondence theory says *too much* but that the theory says *too little*. This is what Peirce’s appeal to *conformity* rather than *correspondence* is intended to highlight. True sentences don’t simply correspond to

their objects: "What the sign virtually has to do in order to indicate its object...is just to seize its interpreter's eyes and forcibly turn them upon the object meant. ...So, then, a sign, in order to fulfill its office, to actualize its potency, must be compelled by its object. This is evidently the reason of the dichotomy of the true and the false" (EP2.380).

Peirce's point is that signs conform to their objects when they compel an interpretant to "see" its referent. "It's raining" isn't always true. If I write, "It's raining" in a journal I never again look at, the sentence does not become true whenever it begins raining. It's true only when it turns the interpreter's eyes, in this case my eyes, to the rain falling outside. "It's raining" becomes true by standing in such a relationship, the truthing-relationship, among a sign (the sentence), an object (the falling rain), and an interpretant (me). By analogy, an object—say a watch—becomes a gift by standing in the giving-relationship, a relationship among a gift, a recipient, and giver. The watch isn't always a gift.

This talk of conformity and compulsion might sound confusing, but some (not all!) of the confusion can be dispelled with a little help from Peirce's theory of propositions. According to Peirce, "the subject of a proposition if not an index is a precept prescribing the conditions under which an index is to be had" (EP 2:168, PPM 176). An index is a sign that stands in relationship to its object in a reactive manner. Two examples of indices are weathervanes, which represent their object (the wind) by virtue of being moved by it, and arrows that point to their objects.

On Peirce's view, the subject of the sentence "It's raining" isn't "It" but a pointer to the rain. As Peirce states with respect to perceptual judgments, "In fact, the perceptual judgment I have translated into 'that chair is yellow' would be more accurately represented thus: '☞ is yellow,' a pointing index-finger taking the place of the subject" (CP7.635). If the subject of a sentence isn't an index, then it's a precept. For example, the subject of "Some woman is loved by every Catholic" is the precept "a well-disposed person with sufficient means could find an index whose object should be a woman such that allowing an ill-disposed person to select an index whose object should be a Catholic, that Catholic would adore that woman" (PPM 176).

On Peirce's view, a sign conforms to its object when it points to, or indicates, its object. Alternatively, it conforms to its object when it tells us, the interpretants, how to find the object to which it refers. *That* is how a sentence becomes true: by pointing out its object to us or by telling us how to go find ITS object.

An Argument for the Pragmatic Theory of Truth

It is here that we can glimpse an argument in favor of the pragmatic theory of truth, both for analytic truth as the conformity of a sign to its object and for pragmatic truth as what would be believed after a sufficiently long and rigorous process of inquiry. Truth, nearly all theorists agree, is a property of sentences or propositions. Moreover, sentences and propositions are representations.

Peirce maintains that representation is a triadic relationship among a sign (for example, the sentence "the cat is on the mat"), an object (the cat sitting on the

mat), and an interpretant (in the case, the person who thinks that the cat is on the mat). It's important not to mistake this triadic relation for three dyadic relations (between the sign and object, between the object and interpretant, and between the interpretant and sign) (see EP2.411). For Peirce, the relationship among these three things is not like a triangle but like a tripod. The sign, the object, and the interpretant stand in a relationship *among* each other, not *between*.

To continue, truth is a property of sentences or propositions. Sentences or propositions are representations. Representation is a relationship among a sign, an object, and an interpretant. So, truth must be a property of the triadic relationship among those three things. But what property could it possibly be? The only possible property truth could be is the sign's conformity to its object (ITS object, mind you), a conformity it enjoys by (virtually) seizing the interpreter's eyes and forcibly turning them on the object. So, truth is the conformity of a sign to its object. *That* is analytic truth.

This theory stands in genuine rivalry with deflationary theories of truth and with correspondence theories of truth. Speaking generally, deflationary theories of truth identify truth not with a property of a triadic relationship among a sign, object, and interpretant but with the property of a dyadic relation between a sign and an interpretant. On their view, the nature of truth is just equivalent to what we mean when we use the truth predicate and that meaning is captured in the T-scheme. The pragmatic theory of truth I am articulating differs. A theory of truth requires more than an account of how to insert or remove quotation marks or the truth predicate itself. "It's raining" isn't true just because it's raining. It's true because the sentence draws my attention to the rain falling outside. An account of the nature of truth requires reference to the object of the sentence, how the sentence indicates its object. That is what deflationary theories of truth lack.

Also, the pragmatic theory of truth so articulated stands in genuine rivalry with correspondence theories of truth. The correspondence theory of truth identifies truth with a property of the dyadic relationship between a sign and its object. This property is typically understood to be some sort of isomorphism or correlation between the sentence and a state of affairs or facts. But what is missing here, on the pragmatic theory of truth I am endorsing, is a reference to the interpretant. Truth requires more than just correspondence; it requires the conformity of a mind to its object. My unread journal sentence "It's raining" doesn't become true just because it starts raining, even though the sentence stands in an isomorphic relationship with the raining falling outside. It becomes true because it directs an interpretant's gaze to the very rain that is falling.

Furthermore, we're now in a position to see how the present view of analytic truth is related to pragmatic truth. For what is the practical upshot of calling a proposition or sentence true? It is the assertion that should anyone inquire into the sentence or proposition in question, that person will likewise have his or her eyes forcibly turned to the object that the sign represents. But that is just to say that truth is what would be believed after a sufficiently long and rigorous process of inquiry, whether anyone in fact inquires into it or not.

This is pragmatic truth and, combined with the present view of analytic truth, the Univocity Constraint is not violated. That's because even if the rain that falls

outside is an evil demon's deception or a self-generated experience, the sentence still forcibly turns my gaze to its object, the very rain falling outside, the very rain we all see. *That rain* is to what the sentence refers, no matter the origin of that to which the sentence refers, no matter the origin of *that rain*. To put it another way, even if it should turn out that all of my experiences are self-generated, I still recognize a difference between *the raining falling outside* and *the mere appearance of raining falling outside*. As Peirce states in another context, "It is not intended here to assume the reality of the external world. Only, there is a certain set of facts which are ordinarily regarded as external, while others are regarded as internal" (W2.205). "It's raining" indicates the former "external" object, the raining falling outside, not the mere appearance of raining falling outside. It's not as though my original judgment "It's raining" were suddenly some peculiar elliptical expression for "it appears to me as though it is raining" just because both experiences of *the rain falling outside* and *the mere appearance of raining falling outside* are self-generated.

This, then, constitutes a strange virtue of the pragmatic theory of truth thus explicated: It can affirm that all of our commonsense beliefs about the world are *true* even if they are not *the case*. As I've stated the pragmatic theory of truth, pragmatists must acknowledge that "it is the case that..." and "it is true that..." are not synonymous, if the former is meant to indicate the way things are "out there." That's because it may turn out to be true that "It's raining" even though it is the case that there is no such a thing as rain (because my experience of rain is self-generated, and "out there" in the really external world there is no such thing as rain).

Of course, this is entirely contrary to the history of philosophy since Aristotle, who asserted that "to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true" (*Meta.* Γ 7, 1011b26-27). Yet throwing out such philosophical dogmatism often brings with it great benefits. In this case, it undermines skepticism, for knowledge does not require beliefs about *what is the case* but beliefs that *are true*. On the pragmatic view, beliefs about the "external world" may be true even if we are deceived by evil demons and even if all of our experiences are self-generated.

These distinctions, of course, will be cold comfort to anyone who believes that knowledge should really be getting at the way the world is, at "what is the case." Unfortunately, I do not think such a person can enjoy warm comfort, for there really can be no guarantee that we can get at the way the world is. Of course, we may take it for granted that we can get at the way the world is (we may be entitled to beliefs about the reliability of sense perception even if sense perception is not reliable). If that's so, we might endorse this principle of concomitance:

Principle of Concomitance: what is true is a concomitant of what is the case

On this basis, we can infer what is the case from what is true, but that inference will be based on warrant or entitlement. Someone who endorses the pragmatic theory of truth and the principle of concomitance will really be in no worse an epistemic position than anyone else who takes belief in the reliability of sense perception, memory, and induction to be warranted or entitled but endorses a different theory

of truth. In fact, the pragmatist will be in a better position, for he or she will not have to doubt that we can figure out the truth, only that we can figure out what is the case. Other theorists must doubt both.

This manner of distinguishing between what is the case and what is true has an additional benefit: it provides an easy and straightforward way of responding to the problem of buried secrets. The problem of buried secrets is a problem for the pragmatic theory of truth because it seems as though there are truths that would not be believed no matter how long and rigorously inquiry into them proceeded.

For example, how many atoms made up the 4,000th dinosaur ever born exactly 300 seconds after it began inhaling its first breath? Let us suppose we lined up every sentence that might express the correct answer to this question:

Exactly one atom made up the 4,000th dinosaur....

Exactly two atoms made up the 4,000th dinosaur....

Exactly three atoms....

...

One of those sentences must be the case, if we reject skeptical scenarios denying dinosaurs ever existed. The pragmatist must admit that. Yet, the pragmatist can comfortably deny that any of them is true without denying that one of them is the case. None of them is true because no one would believe any one of the representations after a sufficiently long and rigorous process of inquiry. With respect to analytic truth, none of those sentences will ever stand in the truth-relationship. None of them will ever indicate its object to an interpretant. That does not require rejecting the claim that one of them is the case.

Two Objections and Responses

There are, to be sure, many wrinkles to be ironed out and objections to be levied against the presently proposed pragmatic theory of truth. Unfortunately, space prevents me from addressing them all. However, two especially troublesome objections must be mentioned.

Objection One: The first is that the present theory seems to imply either truth relativism or absurdity. For suppose there to be a universe with exactly two persons both of whom suffer self-generated experiences. For one of them, it now rains and for the other it does not. It would seem that “It’s raining” is then both true and false, which is absurd. Alternatively, truth might be relativized to each person, but truth relativism is for many, including this author, a bitter pill to swallow.

Reply: By way of reply, are the options this stark? No, for a third option here is to endorse a paraconsistent logic and affirm that, in this case, the sentence “It’s raining” is both true and false even though neither person will ever have a good reason to think it is both true and false. Hence, for each of *them* it (the sentence “It’s raining”) will be regarded as one or the other (true or false) but not both. Hence, to each of *them* it will not seem as though bivalence is jeopardized (at least with respect to this sentence!).

Now the question becomes whether this possibility requires *us* to adopt a paraconsistent logic. Here again the answer is no, for we are not ourselves aware of two such people. Of course, there are mentally ill people who believe it's not raining when it is. However, we all know their assertions are false because the subjects of their sentences indicate the raining falling outside, not their own experiences. *That is true even if it should turn out that it is the case there are no other minds except my own.*

In short, all the present objection requires us to admit is that it *might* be both true and false that rain is falling, and so it *might* be the case that we should adopt a paraconsistent logic. But, as Graham Priest reminds us, we need a good reason to think some sentence is both true and false (for example, the Liar sentence may provide us with a good reason) and to motivate paraconsistency. The mere conceivability of the present scenario is not sufficient to provide such a reason.

Objection Two: A second objection is that the view propounded is nothing more than philosophical gerrymandering. What I am calling *the case* is nothing more than what philosophers have always meant by *truth* and what I am calling *truth* is nothing more than what philosophers have meant by something like *warranted assertibility*.

Reply: But this objection is mistaken. First, not all philosophers mean by “true” what is the case “out there.” Many deflationists certainly do not. Second, what I mean by truth is not the same as warranted assertibility. On the present theory, a sentence might be true even if I am not warranted in asserting it. For example, suppose I know that I have just taken LSD. I look outside and judge “It’s raining” and it really is raining. Now, my judgment is true, for the sentence conforms to its object. However, I am not warranted in asserting “It’s raining” precisely because I know I just took LSD and may very well be suffering a hallucination. Third and finally, it is not philosophical gerrymandering to make philosophical distinctions that are well-motivated by argumentation or that solve interesting philosophical problems. I have contended that the present theory of truth is well-motivated and does get some leverage on skeptical problems.

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