

THE UNSUSTAINABLE THESIS IN THE PRAGMATIC THEORY OF TRUTH: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Every philosophy has a geo-socio-cultural locus. The pragmatic theory of truth is a historically recent contribution to philosophic endeavor from the New World. Although the nuancing can be traced to the Academic Skeptics in Ancient Greece, it is substantially the articulation of American perception of a world view into a philosophy. This paper could not have been done if the claim remained that of an articulation or even encapsulation of a regional world view. The declaration that the world of philosophy is being proffered a theory of truth in the pragmatic theory of truth supplied the raw material for this work. This paper tried to x-ray the principles and character of any truth-claims. The pragmatic theory does not meet-up with subsisting characteristic in truth-claims. It cashes in on the workable, useful, 'successful' and whatever has instrumental or cash-value; that is, that which produces results. Although these elements of the theory can be integrated into a properly developed theory of truth; in the case of the pragmatic theory of truth, this was not done. There were dislocations in the theory which cannot be reconciled to any serious attempt at developing a theory of truth. Due to the glaring deficiencies in the theory, it becomes imperative to note that the thesis in the whole project cannot be sustained. The methodological approaches to the study are the critical, historical, phenomenological and expository methods. The goal was to illuminate the theory through these methods for better appreciation and execution of the task of the paper.

Keywords: pragmatic theory, ontology, phenomenon, fallibilism, scientific community.

Introduction

Theories of truth in whatever sense are inquiries after meaning with the embedded judgment that it is the case; that the thing is as it should or ought to be. Meaning is essential because as humans we need anchor for belief and judgment. The basis of reasonable judgment is the meaning that truth can proffer. The phenomenon of human existence calls for benchmarks upon which to base sound judgments. Such benchmarks have community character and have come to us down through history; in other words, they are human in presupposition. This quest is presupposed on ontology. That is to say, on foundation or source beyond man. Truth thus can only be fully grasped in the context of principles in operation in human society; which principles can always be uncovered or discovered by conscious inquiry and commitment. In a certain sense, truth is always an a priori consideration. Truth is the end of 'scientific' inquiry in the understanding that therein is directed the object of scientific investigation. Science seeks after the truth of things. Whether it will always succeed in this pursuit is contingent on methodology. How is the inquiry conducted and to what end? Besides scientific inquiry, even in the conventional sense, human society is founded and organized around certain principles. These principles in their 'a priori' dimension; and, in their proper comprehension, seek to direct the human person right in the conduct of daily activities. Therefore, it can only be surmised that the relation of the human person to truth properly conceived is 'a priori'. 'A posteriori' considerations can be differentiated from the 'a priori' ontological order especially in the former concretizing the principles which the latter naturally drives. It appears that this cannot be otherwise if the end is cosmic order rather than the diametric opposition.

A properly formulated theory of truth, tends to accede to truth as the ontological order open to intellectual appreciation, and then concretized post-comprehension in the realities of human existence. However, the pragmatic theory, with its diversification in meanings, tends towards the individualization of criterion as springboard for judgment. Sometimes the loss of community character in the scientific and rational human quest for the criterion for cosmic order becomes a feature of the pragmatic theoretical development. The more poignant loss however, seems to be the sense of the 'a priori'. Criterion based on individualism seems to define the path of truth when robbed of community character, especially if we understand that community character is supposedly 'a priori' driven. The individualistic criterion-formulation is at the center of the problematic of the mismatch between judgment and the principles that should inform it; very much comparable to considering the tree apart from the roots. The lie in this approach is deep: metaphysics turns to descriptive physics of a pseudo-meta-principle, stripping the former of ontology; the object of systematic search in scientific endeavors disappears without trace since there is no room for such 'a priori' object – opening the opportunity for scientific manipulation to whatever ends driven by individual egocentricism; the sense of identity and substantiality become replaced by a dispersion of psychological impressions.

The paper will argue that the theory seems not to be of truth per se, but a conversation on a pretension to the notion of truth devoid of objectivity and community scientific character driven by 'a priori' principles. Protagorean subjectivism and material utility seem to be all that are left.

Pragmatism – the historical quest for meaning

Pragmatism is said to have begun with the Academic Sceptics in Ancient Greece who in wrestling with the epistemological problem of authentic knowledge settled with the merely plausible; 'adequate to the needs of practice' (Rescher, 1995, p. 710). When Charles Sanders Peirce (1839 – 1914), the pioneer American pragmatist uses the term 'practice', the true value comes from the community of scientists who make use of observations and experimentations; all under the criterion of scientific control (Rescher, 1995, p. 710). The vulgarization of pragmatism by William James and Dewey destroyed the place of the community of scientific inquiry and their verdicts and settled with truth as the mere adoption of any community of peoples whether those people are rigorously in search for the truth or not (Rescher, 1995, p. 710).

Peirce who coined the term pragmatism aligned it to Kant's notion, 'pragmatisch' which refers to empirical, experimental or principles opposed to 'a priori' (Lawhead, 2015, p. 493). William James, who took pragmatism farther, traced his version of pragmatism to 'a Greek word' that means deed, "action" or "practice" (Lawhead, 2015, p. 493). Some would attribute the tracing of the word pragmatism to the Greeks as belonging to Peirce as well (Stumpf & James Fieser, 2003, p. 395). Perhaps in the etymological leanings, one might begin to decipher as early as possible the difference between Peirce's commitment to scientific quest and the more individualized criterion which James sought to promote. Peirce was given to the scientific method consisting in 'a community of investigators' the result of which would be available to everyone for validation (Stumpf & James Fieser, 2003, p. 396; Rescher, 1995, p. 710; Pirie, 2009, p. 144). In order to ensure that truth is not trivialized by the whims of individualism, Peirce would require the cooperation of the scientific community, 'which cooperation prevents any individual or group from shaping truth to fit its own interests' (Stumpf & James Fieser, 2003, p. 396). Until pragmatism began to evolve principles for the justification of the clearly immoral; traditionally, Peirce meant that pragmatism would exert effort at the genuine search for the truth for enhancing the quality of human existence and *ip so facto*, a better world. In human existential situations, people are capable of springing up surprises consequent on their vulnerabilities. Stumpf and

Fieser have in the piece below done a splendid job in representing Peirce's swipe on the human condition: 'People are capable of lying, stealing and killing. We judge these to be wrong, not only in retrospect, but wrong because we feel that they were not inevitable when they were done. People doing these things could have done otherwise' (Stumpf & Fieser, 2003, p. 401). Only Peirce could have reached this judgment with pragmatism. James' version could have absolved all wrongs with the pre-approved individual criterion of acting. While Peirce is pre-occupied with scientific inquiry, in the sense of genuine community search, James would not have anything to do with inquiry since there is nothing to search for. Hear him, 'As long as our beliefs are successful, we do not need to engage in inquiry' (Lawhead, 2015, p. 495). One can say without equivocation that James' truth is its spontaneous confirmation even if this tide of judgment is anti-reason, anti-order of values, anti-intellectualism, anti-science and the scientific community and anti-knowledge. James repeats the same meaning of truth in different formulations: "'Truth happens to an idea. It becomes true, is made true by events'" (Misak, 2001, p. 499). In another instance, James maintains that an idea 'is useful because it is true' or an idea 'is true because it is useful' (Misak, 2001, p. 500). James carelessly lumps the two statements above together as if they are synonymous in meaning. Truth for James is not the product of rational inquiry for which reason science would have no basis for its continued existence. Peirce's pragmatism strove for impersonality and 'objective standards', while James twisted this criterion into a purely personalized and subjectivist criterion (Rescher, 1995, p. 710). Truth is a personalistic 'happening' in James' idiosyncrasy for while Peirce's is said to be scientifically elitist, James' is psychologically personalistic (Rescher, 1995, p. 712).

Dewey is not far from this conceptualization: for him, since there is no eternal quality in things, no one can think towards truth (Stumpf & Fieser, 2003, p. 405). Dewey particularly tried to avoid the word 'truth' in his works; in the place where he permitted that the word truth should escape from his pen, he opined that truth is "successfully guiding action" (Misak, 2001, p. 505). Dewey drawing from 'modern naturalism' avers that naturalism is an instrument of liberation from 'both metaphysical dualism and intellectualism' (Dreyfus & Wrathall, 2006, p. 469). This of course is an offshoot of social Darwinism. In terms of morals, Dewey maintains that a liberal society is its own criterion of truth without recourse to any principles whatsoever (Schneewind, 2000, p. 154). Dewey's is unarguably the philosophy against existing moral order. As Peirce himself saw it, the whole moral project from James to Dewey is a 'ruination' of the Peircean moral order (Rescher, 1995, p. 710). Russell observed that James denied 'subject-object' relation fundamentally' (Russell, 2000, p. 767). In all, when the concept became a deviation from the intention of the pioneer of the pragmatic project, Peirce, it acquired such elements in its qualifications as 'that which works; that which becomes a 'success', that which has 'cash value'. These will be pursued further.

Pragmatism – diverse theoretical elucidations

The theory of pragmatism is an overloaded theory. The impression that one is dealing with a theory is misleading. Pragmatism shelters diverse truth-claims; some of which do not have enough common grounds to belong together. On the one hand are the diversifications of the truth-claims, and on the other hand is the strangeness of these divergent truth-claims in their respective forms. The curious observation has been made 'that there are as many pragmatisms as there are pragmatists' and the differences are described as 'formidable' and again, in terms of being 'radically opposed, pragmatisms' (Haack, 2003, p. 775). In the spirit of radical opposition to the ideas of the pioneer pragmatist, Rorty would prefer to sustain pragmatism as a conversation that "declares that 'true' means nothing more than 'what you can defend against all comers'" (Haack, 2003, p. 775). For Rorty, truth is a mere cognitive operation whose eristic import does not waver; therefore, the psychological trick towards egocentricism, provided there is the adherence to

individualistic criterion of consistency and commitment to the cause that drives it. Rorty's true position is avowedly a far distantiating from truth; does not seek the latter and indeed a supplantation of the historic community-character of truth by formidable egocentric individualism. One would be inquisitive to know how one who presents truth the way Rorty does fares with 'rationality'. Rorty's reason does not have truth for its end: it is this carrying on of conversation whose end is 'respect for the opinions of those around one' (Haack, 2003, p. 775). Rationality which defines the human person onto the dialogue for truth is in Rorty's pragmatism defined away from the true 'a priori' end onto a purposeless superficiality of mere 'respect for the opinions of those around one'. There is no doubt that in Rorty's theory: truth, rationality and the human essence have all given up on qualitative value in the reductionism to the goals of mere conversation and outward respect.

In a rather different twist that borders on contradicting the vulgarizers, Peirce calls for 'inquiry into the truth for truth's sake' (Haack, 2003, p. 775). Though angling for pragmatism, Peirce stayed quite close to the Correspondence theory of truth. The huge difference lies in the recognition that there is an object which one may have to inquire after. Peirce leveraged on allowing the continued existence of the object of scientific inquiry. James championed the opposite (Russell, 2000, p. 767). Even phenomenologically, Peirce respects intentionality, in so far as he permits subject-object relation since our consciousness is always consciousness of an object (Dreysful & Wrathall, 2006, pp. 69 – 70). Peirce avers to the need for passion for truth, since one cannot seek rigorously that which one does not have emotional relation to. Peirce maintains, 'in order to reason well, it is absolutely necessary to possess ... a real love for truth' (Haack, 2003, p. 775). His idea of truth is not only close to the Correspondence theory position, it is aesthetic: 'truth is so, whether you or I or anybody thinks it is so or not' (Haack, 2003, p. 775). Peirce hints to the objective validity of truth – it is not egocentricism, individualistic conjectures or Protagorean subjectivism. In Peirce, pragmatism seems to acquiesce in the acknowledgement of general principles or objectivity and maintaining standard criterion for interpreting reality.

In the hands of William James (1842 – 1910), the substantial character of pragmatism acquired a new dimension. Peirce's epistemological ideological leanings got lost out entirely. The distance between James and Peirce continued to widen with the gusto of James' popularization of pragmatism. According to James, the criterion of truth is to be premised on utility. This is a clear ontic case far removed from the 'a priori' and ontological notions. James is very clear that, 'The true is the useful, the expedient in the way of belief, that which works' (Haack, 2003, p. 780; Pirie, 2009, p. 145). Truth here is contingent on perception and the judgment that proceeds from perception. First, truth is an 'a fortiori' happening; it is an effect judged to be true on the strength of post-performance. The presupposition here is that there is no object of truth to pursue: truth is nowhere in existence. What is truth is what is so perceived on 'a posteriori' reflections. If a thing is judged to be useful, it is true on the strength of that perception. That which is convenient in terms of lending itself to popular belief is true; most importantly, truth is that which works (Haacks, 2003, p. 780; Pirie, 2009, p. 145). Practicality defines truth. If a thing delivers on practical grounds, then the thing is true. Truth needs no theorizations; what is needed is post-occurrence reflection whereby truth becomes a happening notion.

Pragmatism – post-perception synthesis

Bertrand Russell and G. E. Moore were 'scandalized by what they saw as a crass identification of truth with utility' (Haack, 2003, p.780). Beyond the disappointments of these thinkers with the utility and workability theory of William James, it will make sense to begin to see James' position as the beginning of the vulgarization of the epistemological constructs, which vulgarizations manifested in more weird forms in the epistemological constructs of later pragmatists of the

revolutionary strand: Schiller, Rorty and the likes (Haack, 2003, p. 775). Ontological undercutting can only take the theorist to the sole recognition of concrete truths. Truth to really work in the building of the community needs to be interwoven in principles that will guarantee its endurance in contributing to true humanization of the subjective agent and to proper infrastructural development. Concrete truths without regard to coherence to principles of enduring validity may only pretend to achieve this feat. They cannot be truths because outside of the matrices of the intervening principles of any truth-reference. In this regard, it has been observed that James' 'concrete truths' are no truths at all: 'his distinction is between a belief being true and its being shown to be true – or more accurately, since he allows that what is true at one time 'verified' may later turn out to be false, between a belief being true and its being confirmed' (Haack, 2003, p. 781). The whole idea conveys the impression that truth is our product, 'is made by us, and changes over time' (Haack, 2003, p. 781).

The above picture is not far from the conceptualizations of Dewey on truth. John Dewey (1859 – 1952), begins without presupposed ontology. The human mind, for him, must have to be freed from ontological formidability. For him, the object of truth, if indeed there is an object, 'is not an immutable, independent reality, but is changed, and is in part constituted by our cognitive interactions with it; for inquiry transforms a problematic indeterminate situation with a determinate one' (Haack, 2003, p. 782). Here, truth is the making of the human mind. It is all about cognitization and what is present to consciousness psychologically: for it is these that the human mind interacts with and in that interaction tends to acquire form. The problematic gives way because what passes for indetermination gives in to determination; the formless acquires form through interactions with the human cognitive process. Truth remains a posterior reality of the thought process. There is no object of truth but thought produces the object not as an anterior reality but as a posterior reality of thought. It all begins and ends with human experience and the wrestling with these experiences cognitively. Truth appears to have a phenomenal dimension that draws support from human thought. What Dewey has to contend with is that a truth-instant from human phenomenological dispositions can have as many forms as there are the different humans that cognitize such a truth-instant. There is no truth except as given form from the mind's interaction with the indeterminate problematic – this problematic gives way to determination when the mind gives form to it. Since there is no underlying principle on which to base our determinations, a truth-instant can give as many determinations as there are minds to interact with the experiences that underlie it. With Dewey's pragmatism, there cannot be truth but truths. No community can be built on 'truths' especially in their discordant multiples.

When Peirce became aware of the consequences of the popularization of the theory he pioneered and the continued degeneration, he radically critiqued the trend by a cynicism of the populist and reactionary movement: he rebranded his original version of pragmatism – pragmaticism – and hoped no one would be able to tamper with the substance and quality of his thought any more (Haack, 2003, p. 776). Peirce in showing his provocation by the radicals advocates the death of any philosophy that puts forth the mutability of truth (Haack, 2003, p. 783): the philosophy that claims that truth is mutable must have to die. Peirce denounces the advocates of post-philosophy as 'lawless'. He writes of the need to rescue the goodship of philosophy for the service of science from the hands of 'the lawless rovers of the sea of literature' (Haack, 2003, p. 784). Francis Bradley picked holes with the 'subordination of cognition to practice'; for him, there is 'inherent incompleteness of all merely practical interests' (Misak, 1995, p. 712). Many continental philosophers are disappointed in what pragmatism stands for: surmising from this that the philosophy is nothing save 'the expression of characteristically American social attributes, crass materialism and naïve democratism' (Rescher, 1995, p. 712). Peirce's efforts were reaffirmed including his 'statistical and probabilistic approach to the methodology and proliferation of

induction' among the scientific community (Rescher, 1995, p. 712; Misak, p. 337). In all, the fair assessment is that pragmatism is a 'muddled thinking' that fails to comprehend what is meant by truth or reality (Velasquez, 1994, p. 251).

The pragmatic theory of truth

The pragmatic theory of truth states that truth is that which is useful, that which is expedient to belief and that which works in practice (Pirie, 2009, p. 145). This obviously is the position of William James, whose dominant views on pragmatism seemed to chart the course of the pragmatic movement. James appears to be conveying the impression that there is no truth out there: truth thus is a human invention, an adventitious conclusion as to what happens and the valuation of the force of impact thereof. James thinks of truth in terms of success – the successful is true. This is not tenable. Success may in an instant change to the opposite. This means that the same truth may turn to falsity. The theory falters on stability and objective value. What is the criterion for measuring success? Is success a mere materialistic conception? Is there a moral dimension to the understanding of that which is successful? Is there an abiding value attributable to that which is successful? Until these questions are properly addressed, the pragmatist concept of success remains a case of false value-reductionism.

For Peirce, truth is derived from the effects an action produces since our idea of everything is our idea of its sensible effects (Pirie, 2009, p. 143). Truth is a reality of sensible effects; the resultant impact of the thing in question. It is all about strength and force in their positive and negative valuations. Truth is the human reconstruction of historical realities in relation to how the present fares with it or wants it, not necessarily the facts as they are. Truth does not get pigeonholed into wishes. Peirce maintains that – 'truth is the opinion generally agreed to by all who investigate' (Pirie, 2009, p. 143). In another perspective, Peirce theorizes on the probability of truth – all truth is provisional and probable rather than certain, (Pirie, 2009, p. 143). Peirce takes discretion in not ascribing to the absolutism of truth. Truth should not be construed in the absolutes: at best all that is true is on the way to truth – provisional and probable. One may see in this the aspiration towards the assumption of a modest position in regard to truth and its assertions. At best this implies non-dogmatization, non-absolutization, open-endedness, the possibility of epistemological fallibilism and the readiness to shift position should new facts emerge at any other time. This methodology is not antithetical to the ontologization of truth; it only prescribes methodological process – towards the graduation to truth from any distance on the path to it.

Dewey's approach to truth is transactional. His instrumentalism demands 'cash' value on truth. Truth gives value in the here and now. Dewey 'called his pragmatism instrumentalism and used the term 'transactional' to describe a process which does not refer to an ultimate reality or to the essence of things,' (Pirie, 2009, p. 147). One dares conclude that Dewey theorizes on the materialism of truth. To the extent that truth cannot be based on essentiality, it has to operate based on materialization. If truth is transactional, and the 'essence' so to say, becomes the cash-value, that is, the material worth or result, then truth is the business of truth. In mainstream business transactions, the bargain that works sails through. All that truth stands for is the beneficial value of the thing; the cash for now sort of transaction.

For Schiller, truth is a function of the verifiability principle. Truth has to do with verification, is unequivocally committed to making and mutability (Haack, 2003, p.783). Schiller's truth is dependent on us – relative to our purposes (Haack, 2003, p. 783). This is Protagorean exemplarism: man is the measure of all things. Truth is our invention – psychological, social, cultural, etc. On what is verification to be benchmarked and of what use? If things are what we say they are – then scientific truth can be directed to wished, predetermined or fixated results.

Science may qualify as data collation to justify pre-determinations. This is the exerting of violence on ontology to make way for the crass materialism of truth; not materialism in the Marxian construct but in the sense of absolute denial of the spiritual or non-material dimension of the principles informing truth and the reductionism of these principles to the Protagorean humanistic subjectivism. Schiller buttresses the exposition radically: reality is nothing except as is contingent on us. We are truth, committed to mutability; not given to discoveries but to selections of what is true; since facts are made by us; 'And so is reality; facts are not discovered but selected, even made by us' (Haack, 2003, p. 783). In the milieu of understanding, verifiability is nothing except pretensions to scientific validity. It is mere pretensions: nobody is seeking to discover facts, but to select what can suffice for pre-arranged or predetermined conclusion.

Rorty's radicalism attributes rhetoric-value to any truth propositions – true proposition is rhetoric; (Haack, 2003, p. 783). He goes on to destroy criteriology. This is the absolute undoing of truth since the validity of truth claim is the product of the process to it. There is no epistemological criterion since criterion is selective human construct that may be deployed for convenience-purposes. Criterion is a matter of convention and is not objectively grounded in truth, (Haack, 2003, p. 784). It is paradoxical that a theory of truth would always work against formidable principles or standards for reaching truth. Rorty moves on to attack philosophy: this is logical since failing this move he contradicts himself. Philosophy searches for truth; Rorty denies truth. What then is the need of philosophy? His eyes were already on 'post-philosophy' as a genre of literature or literary criticism (Haack, 2003, p. 784). The makeshift world of literature would suffice for post-philosophy in so far as literature does away with truth and the ontological postulates.

Unsustainable thesis

Between the extremes of the pioneering ideas of Peirce and the radicalism of Rorty, we can begin to categorize pragmatism in terms of genuine inquiry for change and revolution in the negative sense. Peircean pragmatists may be convinced there is need for modifications in the traditional theories of truth for which reason they maintain a positive view of the relevance of some of the traditional epistemological questions on truth and cognitively work on these as factorial elements of the new theoretical development. The negatively revolutionary strand of pragmatism tends to undermine both the traditional epistemological world view on truth and the genuine change agents for perhaps not being radical enough to evolve an autochthonous theorization that would epistemologically chart the course for an independent and un-mined field of truth-claims that are at best pretensions and outright contradictions to community truth-values that respect principles based on 'a priori' values in the ascension to truth. The revolutionary theories radicalize truth-contents away from the substance of truth and propose novel approaches opposed to truth. Truth has to be the untruth of the what-ness of truth. Ontological derivations give way to individualistic impressionisms raised to the status of truth. Pragmatism in this case denies objectivity and the value that derive from it (Haack, 2003, p. 775). The far reaching consequences of the revolutionary strand of pragmatism are more felt in the philosophic enterprise itself: Philosophy is finally undone (Haack, 2003, p. 775). The criterion of truth concerns philosophy deeply as the business of the enterprise is the uncovering of truth and the right path to make this project of uncovering a reality. With revolutionary pragmatism, every inquiry appears as nonsense as it promotes non-intentionality, the material side of the object that needs to be drawn closer to human visualization as a fruit of research. The destruction of ontology which the revolutionary strand promotes appears to be akin to the pulling of the rug from under the foot; and thus the removal of all anchors. The end of the pragmatic school, besides any new propositions it is geared to make, is actually to undercut the source of subsisting historical epistemological perspectives on truth, namely, the metaphysical prop: "one role of

pragmatic maxim is to reveal that 'almost every proposition of ontological metaphysics ... is gibberish'" (Haack, 2003, p. 776). What is this except the confrontation of formidable beliefs based on historically community based traditional notions of truth which in their view, have got to be overturned; a kind of clean-slate show resulting from the wiping away of the results of preceding research and the sense of intellectual history consequent on the historical value representation.

The pragmatist theory of truth is no theory of truth although carelessly, it presents as one. This cannot be sustained because in this movement are theories and not just a theory. The theory is an amalgam of theories: those of Peirce, James, Dewey, Rorty e. t. c. – four distinct theories and counting. These theories do not have so much in common as to merit them being lumped together as a theory. Between the genuine seeking of change and radical, revolutionary and reactionary theories are substantially and diametrically opposed views with regard to the need and value of scientific inquiry, the end of scientific inquiry, the pre-requirements for order in the society as presupposition for any fruitful endeavor whatsoever and the absence of the respect and maintenance of the dignity of the human person whose existence would be chaotic without truth-reference to moral values and the principles that inform these values. The theory of truth that veers from truth as an intentional object of inquiry cannot sustain in the category of methodologies in the quest for truth. Can scientific conferences, symposia and colloquia still hold as valid inquiries after the truth in the search for social, political and technological dynamics for meeting the needs of the times? In so far as this appeals to intentional objects of inquiry which are commonly sought in the spirit of objectivity, then the continuity in the quest for a better world makes impossible the simultaneous sustainability of anti-intentionality and anti-objectivity in the quest for truth. For these theories of truth, there is nothing to inquire since there is no such object: what remains is 'group' or 'community' endorsement of workable or successful guide even when the group has no prerequisites for commitment to research or even when they could be outright fraudulent. Truth becomes a chaotic individualistic whim, which if allowed as prototype, would rather do great harm to the society and the value-integrity of the actor. To the extent to which this is true of the revolutionary theories of pragmatism, then such cannot be sustained as theories of truth.

All pragmatic theories seem to agree on the denial of the presupposition of 'a priori' conceptions. This general denial has to be shown to be false. This presupposition is premised on the denial of metaphysics. Logical positivism had always concluded that metaphysics is meaningless; however, this is in the zero-hour of the denial of metaphysics by the positivist school. The pragmatism of Peirce is a form of positivism while James invented 'radical empiricism' (Haack, 2003, p. 776; Russell, 2000, p. 766). In place of metaphysics, they 'grounded their view of human life on Darwinian biology' (Giere, 2001, p. 308). There is no doubt that the denial of 'a priori' concepts follows from the logical positivist project; while the workability of truth comes from Darwinism. This is because, 'Darwinian evolution occurs by chance variation' while 'usefulness occasionally explains the survival of a new trait' (Velasquez, 1994, p. 249). Since the survival of metaphysics is no longer debatable, should the 'a priori' concepts not survive with it? What is this restoration of the 'a priori' principles except that truth is an ontological reality? Therefore, at the level of human existence, it is an intentional object of inquiry. Science has evolved methodologies of inquiry; of which the clearer we get to the object, the more illuminated the path to truth. The restoration of metaphysics to its premium place in the knowledge domain means that theories evolved in the wake of the spirited endeavor at dethronement of metaphysics can no longer be taken as proper guide to human action. Even at the commonsensical level, there is the incompatibility of the theories of truth that are miles away from truth. Is London a place or Enugu for that matter? Do they have global identities? How can one insist that one is on the way

to London when in actual fact one is on the way to Ontario, Canada? Can the one ever reach his destination? Or one claims one is enroute to Enugu when one is actually heading to Ibadan? Can the one ever reach Enugu by this method? Therefore, the purported theories of truth that theorized their end or intentional objects away from truth or indeed that had no intentional objects but that depended on idiosyncracies, eccentricities and clear individualistic disorientations as criteria for truth, will not be sustained in the claimed theoretical domain.

The only pragmatic-like theory of truth that attempts to rigorously search for the true in the spirit of objectivity and that seeks standards for this task is Peircean 'Pragmaticism'. Peircean pragmaticism is a long distance from the pragmatic theories. Peirce argues for the goals of the scientific community that would be ultimately justifiable as objective following from criterion for standardization. Scientifically, Peircean pragmaticism is instrumentalism: 'the view that theories are not true or false but are better or worse instruments for prediction and control' (Misak, 2001, p. 335). One theory can only be better than the other in scientific research. To that extent, Peirce subscribes to epistemological or for that matter, scientific fallibilism. What this means is that inquiry may not have at any point been pushed so far as to exhaust the truth; in that case, we may never be certain whether we have the whole truth or not at any point in time; and again that truth is 'prone to revision' (Misak, 2001, p. 338; Lawhead, 2015, p. 498). Fallibilism is the claim above all that if we have the truth based on near exhaustive inquiry, we may still entertain the idea that more research in the future may add to what we have been able to know so far. This is very true to scientific research.

Morally, Peirce recognizes that no society can survive the whims and caprices of crass individualism. His objective truth stance based on the standard works of a community of scientists, takes the criteriology of truth from the individual and bequeaths it to scientific collaborators. This is in diametric opposition to the views of the revolutionaries. This towers pragmaticism over and above the other 'theories'.

The challenge which pragmaticism poses to truth is mainly the denial of 'a priori'. Peirce recognizes the fundamentality of subject-object relation. There is the problem that scientific quest, no matter how rigorous, may in the end pose problems to the truth in the real sense. This is because in spite of the rigorous scientific search, since the fundamental presuppositions differ, there may be variations in scholarly end-results of inquiry. In the broader sense, the community of scientific inquiry may end up, after near-exhaustible exertions, with diversifications of views to reflect their ideological inclinations. This can only be the expectation with the different assumptions of 'a priori' and 'a posteriori' as fundamental presuppositions of scientific inquiry. The second problematic with Peirce's theory is the end of the inquiry. In talking about the theory of truth in relation to pragmaticism, we attribute to Peirce's project more than Peirce himself was willing to do. Peirce never intended that his theory be raised to the status of a theory of truth. It was the revolutionaries, and particularly James, who consciously worked his theory into that of truth and referred to it as such. However, none of the theories of the revolutionaries, in their pretensions to truth, qualifies as theory of truth since a theory of truth cannot be seen to radically undo truth.

Peirce in his unassuming dispositions was interested in meaning. He called his project a theory of meaning (Lawhead, 2015, pp. 496 – 498; Rescher, 1995, p. 710). This can be the only reason why despite the application of scientific rigor to its height, the result of scientific inquiry for Peirce is still fallibilistic: nothing says all about anything. Thus, the end is not truth necessarily but at best 'on the way to truth'. Qualified as provisional and probabilistic, the end of scientific research is open to further enrichment from future research (Misak, 2011, p. 863). What bothers the

inquirers is not truth but a good working instrument; the meaning we can get when we engage properly in scientific undertaking. Since the revolutionary pragmatists obviously misfired in theorizing outside the perimeter of truth; the Peircean project seriously considered the possibility of objective quests, never really the theory of truth: he was after the theory of meaning. Therefore, neither pragmatism nor pragmaticism qualifies as a theory of truth; or to capture the diverse presentations of pragmatism, as theories of truth. The sustainability of the thesis in the pragmatic theory of truth is not possible; thus, 'the pragmatic theory of truth' is not a theory of truth: perhaps it may survive as theories of meaning, scientific method, interpretation of the end of scientific research, probabilism, provisionalism and fallibilism on the part of Peirce or theories of post-truth, post-performance, individualistic impressionisms, selections towards pre-arranged results or fixations of adumbrations to truth, clear aversions to subject-object relations in any considerations of truth-theories on the parts of James, Dewey and Rorty.

Conclusion

Theories of truth presuppose subject-object relation. In other words, the condition of possibility of research is a function of the pre-determination of the reality of an object of quest which the researcher intends to relate to in order to make it definite and illuminated in such a way as to make its meaning clearer and less complex. The presupposition of subject-object relation implies the indispensability of ontology. If truth is such that one can say of it that it is, then the ontological character cannot afford extirpation. The un-ontological characterizations of truth, as seen in the 'pragmatic theory of truth', such as mutability, post-performance impressionisms and mere selectivity towards a predetermined result can only portray dynamic-contradictions. The 'a priori' principle which defines what is as abiding, may not equate with the 'a posteriori' principle which defines what is in terms of mutability and human invention or mere choice.

This paper articulated the pragmatic theory of truth in the light of the above expositions. Peirce's endeavor was for objectivity. However, Peirce never angled for truth. Perhaps he considered putting a finger to a thing and saying, 'it is it' to be too much of an ambitious project. Peirce on the strength of his dispositions to the perception of reality was more given to the search for meaning than the search for truth. His standpoint was clear: the pragmatic theory was simply a theory of meaning. What does it mean or how do we interpret the outcome of scientific research? This has to be interpreted in terms of fallibilism.

The revolutionary thinkers' declared intent of putting forward a theory of truth based on that which works, which is useful, and which is successful denied 'a priori' considerations in settling for the mutability of truth. They also seem to underscore the individualistic criteriology of what truth means. The chaotic implications of this in human social existence are unmistakable. The height of all appropriate response to this invention of 'chaos' in the name of truth is that the principles propelling this comprehension are all dynamic self-contradictions and as such far from the conceptualizations of truth. This paper tried to prove this beyond reasonable doubt. It then follows that the pragmatic theory of truth is no theory of truth at all: neither as inappropriately attributed to Peirce who would not have any of the distortion of his project nor from the revolutionaries who were clearly outside any attempt at the theory of truth.

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