

Intellectual Hope as Convenient Friction

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Abstract

In this paper, I examine recent treatments of Peircean truth in terms of regulative principles or intellectual hopes, drawing on work by Christopher Hookway, Cheryl Misak, and Andrew Howat. In doing this I show that recent arguments by Huw Price that Peirce's account cannot provide an effective truth norm do not apply when Peircean truth is construed as a regulative assumption on inquiry. I conclude by comparing the "anthropological" sensibilities of Price's account of truth as *convenient friction*, and Peirce's account of truth as a regulative assumption or intellectual hope.

Keywords: Christopher J. Hookway, Charles S. Peirce, Huw Price, Truth, Inquiry, Regulative Assumption, Intellectual Hope, Quietism, Warrant.

Pragmatist approaches to truth have often been judged in light of a caricature of William James' claim that, "the 'true' is only the expedient in our way of thinking" (James 1909/1975, 6). This unfortunate caricature, where truth is claimed to be 'whatever it's useful to believe', means pragmatist theories of truth are generally seen as non-starters, or unworthy of serious attention. And even leaving aside stalking-horse versions of *classical* pragmatism, there is also a view that whatever *contemporary* pragmatists have been doing with 'truth' it bears little resemblance to the projects that concern analytic philosophers. For example, Rorty's frequent exhortations for pragmatists to turn their back on truth and look only to the warrant of our fellow conversational participants has only served to confirm widespread

suspensions that pragmatists have nothing to say about truth. Of late, however, things have changed.

In recent years, there have been a growing number of pragmatist treatments of truth which simply do not conform to the Jamesian caricature—they are robust, and leave no room for stalking-horse relativism. Moreover, these newer accounts have engaged with the projects that Rorty would have us leave well alone. Intriguingly, a great many of these pragmatist re-engagements with truth have a distinctly Peircean flavour. Work by Christopher Hookway (2000, 2013), Andrew Howatt (2013, 2014), Cathy Legg (2014), Cheryl Misak (1991, 2007) and David Wiggins (2004), for instance, shows just how much fertile ground there is for developing a contemporary Peircean theory of truth. Consequently, one strand of this paper will focus on an approach most strongly associated with Christopher Hookway's claim that Peirce's later work turns to arguments for treating 'truth' as an intellectual hope or regulative assumption on inquiry. We shall return to the details shortly.

Importantly, however, this Peircean re-engagement with truth is not the only game in town for the pragmatist. A second important and influential return to pragmatist truth is found in the work of Huw Price (2003). Price is particularly concerned with countering Rorty's assertion that our ordinary practices of inquiry and conversation have neither a role nor a need for truth. Again, we shall return to the details shortly, but the primary interest here is that whilst Price sees a genuine role and need for truth as playing what he calls "convenient friction" in our discursive practices of agreeing and disagreeing, he is also at pains to stress that nothing like Peircean truth can fill that role. My argument in this paper is that Peircean truth construed as *intellectual hope* can provide *convenient friction*—it is precisely the kind of truth norm that gives our inquiries, conversations, and language games the traction that Price believes is the marker of truth. Whilst this argument is reasonably straight forward given a common interpretation of Peirce's later work on truth, the examination of how a Peircean account of truth can provide convenient friction presented here also gives us an opportunity to bring out a further aspect of Peircean truth that I think is, in many ways, under explored. For Price, truth explored pragmatically is a distinctly "anthropological" rather than metaphysical enterprise (Price 2011, 315). The argument here is that there is a similar anthropological element in Peirce's account, which, when we examine Peircean truth as intellectual hope we can appreciate more fully and explicate more clearly.

The way this paper will proceed, then, is as follows. In section one, I will introduce Huw Price's response to Rorty's claims that we neither need nor use a truth norm in our ordinary discursive practices. I will then examine Price's claim that whilst a truth norm is essential to our discursive practices, nothing like a Peircean notion of truth as the limit

of ideal inquiry can serve as that norm. In section two, I shall introduce an alternative reading of Peircean truth as a regulative assumption, showing how this can provide the “convenient friction” that Price thinks explains our need for a truth norm. In section three, I shall look more closely at what an account of Peircean truth as an intellectual hope would look like, before comparing, in section four, the “anthropological” elements of Price’s view of truth as convenient friction, with Peirce’s view of truth as an intellectual hope.

1. Truth As Convenient Friction

One of the most interesting recent developments in pragmatist accounts of truth comes from Huw Price (2003). Price suggests that truth is a necessary normative feature of inquiry, and that discourse without a truth-norm simply cannot sustain the conversational practices of agreement and disagreement in which we ordinarily engage. This claim, that truth provides the “conversational friction” that allows for agreement and disagreement, is made all the more interesting to pragmatists of a Peircean stripe because Price is adamant that Peirce’s account of truth as belief at the end of inquiry could not serve as the right kind of truth norm. We shall turn to Price’s denial of Peircean truth shortly, but first, we shall examine the details of his account of truth.

1.1 Price’s Account

Price’s treatment of truth as convenient friction is primarily a response to Rorty’s claim that we have no need for truth, that a conversational truth-norm would be behaviourally empty:

The need to justify our beliefs and desires to ourselves and to our fellow agents subjects us to norms, and obedience to these norms produces a behavioural pattern that we must detect in others before confidently attributing beliefs to them. But there seems to be no occasion to look for obedience to an additional norm—the commandment to seek the truth. [. . .] [O]bedience to that commandment will produce no behaviour not produced by the need to offer justification. (Rorty 1995, 287)

Like all pragmatists, Rorty takes any putative difference-maker that makes no practical difference to be philosophically empty, and by such a standard, he claims that truth is a philosophically barren concept. For Rorty, our conversational practices and inquiries can be explained solely in terms of the need to justify ourselves to ourselves and our interlocutors; adding any further requirements about truth simply “makes no difference to my decisions about what to do” (Rorty 1995, 281).

Price, quite rightly, notes that at the heart of Rorty’s position here is an empirical claim about the practical difference made by a truth-norm.

So far as Price is concerned, Rorty has underestimated the difference that a truth-norm would make to behaviour. The problem, as Price sees it, is that the role played by truth is so central to all our assertoric practices that we are prone to overlook it, but the consequences of “giving up truth would be serious indeed, reducing the conversation of mankind to a chatter of disengaged monologues” (Price 2003, 170). What is more, contrary to Rorty’s claims, none of our weaker norms of assertion can generate the same behavioural consequences as a truth-norm. The upshot, for Price, is that we can test Rorty’s claim by examining the behaviours of speech communities using weaker norms than truth. If Rorty is correct, a speech community using weaker norms of belief and justification should be clearly undifferentiated from communities where a further truth-norm is assumed to be operable—the further truth-norm would simply be a behaviourally impotent ornament. However, a simple thought experiment seems to suggest that a truth-norm would make a difference.

To illustrate this, Price identifies the following three norms of assertion:

(SA) Subjective Assertibility—A speaker is incorrect to assert that p if she does not believe that p ; to assert that p in these circumstances provides prima facie grounds for censure.

(PWA) Personal Warranted Assertibility—A speaker is incorrect to assert that p if she does not have adequate (personal) grounds for believing that p ; to assert that p in these circumstances provides prima facie grounds for censure.

(T) Truth—if not- p , then it is incorrect to assert that p ; if not- p , there are prima facie grounds for censure of an assertion that p .

He then goes on to note that the first two norms, (SA) and (PWA), support quite different behaviours than the third norm, (T), in terms of disagreement and censure. For example, individuals in a speech community whose conversational practices were governed only by (SA) and (PWA) might easily display widespread and radical individual variation in the propositions they assert, or in the personal grounds cited in support of their beliefs. However, so long as these individuals believe the propositions they assert (SA), and do so for citable personal reasons (PWA), there can be no censure attached to such disagreement.¹ My non-censurable assertion that baboons are canines and your non-censurable assertion that baboons are primates are clearly in disagreement with each other, but there is no more fault between us here according to (SA) and (PWA) than if we had been disagreeing about how pleasurable we find the taste of dark chocolate.

By contrast, a speech community that uses (SA), (PWA) *and* the additional (T) norm looks as though it allows for censure even where (SA) and (PWA) hold. For instance, although my assertion that baboons are canines and your assertion that baboons are primates are clearly in disagreement but non-censurable by (SA) and (PWA) alone, the inclusion of (T) means that my assertion of a falsehood provides grounds for censure and the apportioning of fault to me in our disagreement. If this is correct, then the addition of (T) to our conversation is clearly allowing us to do something over and above the practices sanctioned by (SA) and (PWA). In particular, they seem to allow our disagreements to amount to something more robust than matters of mere taste, and for our arguments and inquiries to find some actual purchase in our practices. In terms of behaviour and “my decisions about what to do,” this seems to mark an important difference. As Price suggests:

[(T)] makes what would otherwise be no-fault disagreements into unstable social situations, whose instability is only resolved by argument and consequent agreement—and it provides an immediate incentive for argument, in that it holds out to the successful arguer the reward consisting in her community’s positive evaluation of her dialectical position. (Price 2003, 181).

A truth-norm, then, seems to make a difference over and above mere justification—it allows us to make sense of disagreement and why disagreement matters to us in a way that justification alone cannot. Whether or not we agree with the details of Price’s arguments here, the idea that truth plays a crucial role in forcing disagreements to engage with each other, in making conflicting beliefs subject to proper scrutiny, and in compelling us to improve the commitments and claims we make sounds like something the Peircean about truth should be sympathetic to. However, Price has reasons for thinking that (at least some) Peircean accounts of truth are not up to the task he has in mind for a truth norm such as (T).

1.2 Price’s Rejection of Peircean Truth

The canonical version of Peirce’s account of truth is, by now, reasonably well known. In his 1878 paper “How to make our ideas clear,” Peirce famously gives a pragmatic clarification of the concept of reality which results in the following explication of truth as “The opinion which is fated to be ultimately agreed to by all those who investigate” (Peirce, EP1, 139. (1878)). In many ways, however, this early formulation of truth in terms of fated opinion or ultimate agreement is unhelpfully vague, and Peirce’s views are perhaps better captured by later statements which connect truth to beliefs at the ideal limit of a properly conducted inquiry.² Put simply, beliefs which are able to withstand the scrutiny of a

long run proper inquiry and function as an infeasible guide to action are worthy of the label “true”. Understandably, this particular view is often glossed in terms of ‘super-assertibility’ or ‘ideal warrant’²³ where a belief or assertion is rendered “true” by the justification it receives from being infeasible or assertible at a point of complete information or investigation.

With Peircean truth construed in this way, we would seem to have available a form of justification for our beliefs and assertions that goes beyond simple subjective assertibility (SA) or personal warrant (PWA)—a belief or assertion deemed true in Peircean terms is supported by the warrant of a complete communal inquiry. In terms of Price’s claims, contra Rorty, that our conversational practices need and use a truth norm over and above norms of justification, this leads to an interesting question. As Price puts it:

Does the third norm need to be other than a more-than-merely-personal notion of justification? In particular, could it not be a Peircean flavor of ideal warranted assertibility? (Price 2003, 184)

The thought here is that whilst (SA) and (PWA) may not allow us to have meaningful disagreement or engaged inquiry, adopting a truth-norm such as (T) may be unnecessary if something like Peircean truth-as-ideal-warrant is available. An ideally warranted assertion comes with the justification and endorsement of communal inquiry, and would seem to allow the kind of censure that matters should a speaker’s belief or assertion bypass that justification. For instance, a norm for ideal warrant construed in terms of censure, in the same manner as Price’s norms for (SA), (PWA) and (T), looks as though it supports meaningful disagreement.

(IWA) Ideal Warranted Assertibility—A speaker is incorrect to assert that p if it is clear that p would not remain assertible at the limit of inquiry; to assert that p in these circumstances provides prima facie grounds for censure.

There may be better ways to formalise such a norm, but even using this particular gloss, it is reasonable to think that we can generate meaningful disagreement through (IWA). For instance, my assertion that baboons are canines and your assertion that baboons are primates should amount to a meaningful disagreement here, since it is clear that my assertion is not supported by what is assertible at the limit of inquiry. Indeed, very little inquiry would be needed to undermine my assertion and show that I was at fault. Crucially though, if something such as Peircean truth or (IWA) is available, then it seems that our assertions and inquiries could easily find traction with each other

despite the lack of an explicit truth-norm such as (T). Price, however, is resistant to using Peircean truth to play such a role and thinks that such a move should be avoided for at least three reasons. It is worth examining these reasons closely simply because they pose three interesting benchmarks that any Peircean account of truth should perhaps meet.

The first reason Price gives for resisting Peircean truth is that it seems to remain motivated by troubling *ontological* concerns (Price 2003, 184). The standard analytic approach to truth is to try to answer the metaphysically loaded question: “What is truth?” However, this leads us into the task of defining a truth *property*. Price, like most pragmatists, is inclined to see this as the wrong step since it takes on the metaphysical presuppositions of the question—namely, that there is some truth property to define—and misses more important pragmatic questions about what difference truth makes to our practices. Whilst Peircean truth amounts to a denial that there is any substantial truth property to define—we can simply call a belief or assertion true if it remains indefeasible or assertible at the limit of inquiry—from Price’s point of view it nonetheless remains committed to answering the same definitional problem. To answer the straight forward philosopher’s question, “What is truth?”, even if it is with a pragmatically soothing answer, is to remain engaged in a metaphysical problem. Better to shake off that inclination and start out by asking the important pragmatic questions about what we do with ‘truth’ in the first place.

The second important issue raised by Price concerns the *normativity* of truth. Truth is normatively compelling and, according to Price (2003, 184), makes disagreement immediately motivational. If we are to disagree in a substantial or meaningful way, it has to be because we are motivated to be correct and to avoid being the culpable party in a disagreement. It is the normative compulsion of truth that gives disagreement this characteristic. Crucially, though, Price thinks that Peircean truth glossed as something like (IWA) could not have this immediate normative compulsion. As Price puts it:

If someone tells me that my beliefs are not those of our infinitely refined future inquirers, why should that bother me? My manners are not those of the palace, but so what? In other words, it is hard to see how such an identification could generate the immediate normativity of truth. (Price 2003, 185)

The third and final problem that Price suggests for resisting Peircean truth is what we can think of as a simple *presuppositional* problem—Peircean truth in the manner of (IWA) looks as though it already presupposes (T). The claim is that we will need room to disagree about what does and does not count as warrantably assertible if we are to

approach an ideal limit of inquiry, but it is hard to see how we can do this unless we have room for meaningful censure or culpable error in the first place. Most importantly though, the thing which makes disagreement meaningful is simply a norm such as (T). For example, you and I may disagree about whether my assertion that baboons are canines is warranted or likely to remain assertible when all the evidence is in, but it is hard to see why our disagreement matters unless I am already to be held censurable for my incorrect assertion. We might well use assertibility-when-all-the-evidence-is-in as a guide to whether my assertion is good or bad, but we can hardly use this to help us in matters of disagreement about whether the evidence is in or not unless we already have some reason to think that our disagreements matter; (T) is what provides such reasons.

For Price, then, these problems should lead us to set Peircean truth aside. (IWA) might well be a candidate for a conversational norm that gives our disagreements traction without pushing us to concern ourselves directly with truth, but if Price is correct, it cannot extricate itself from metaphysical debates about truth, it gives us none of the normative compulsion we would expect from a truth-norm, and it seems to presuppose a truth-norm anyway. I take these three problems to present an interesting challenge to advocates of Peircean truth, and will assume that any worthwhile Peircean account truth should have something to say about Price's *Ontological*, *Normativity* and *Presupposition* problems. However, I shall leave aside the question of whether Peircean truth construed as something like ideal warrant can give compelling responses to these problems,⁴ and turn instead to an alternative account of Peircean truth; truth as intellectual hope.

2. Peircean Truth As Intellectual Hope

An alternative approach to truth in Peirce's philosophy, particularly apparent in his later work,⁵ is to treat truth as one of a group of regulative assumptions on inquiry. For instance, one especially clear case in Peirce's work is his treatment of the principle of bivalence,⁶ which we can think of as a regulative assumption on inquiry in the following way—taking any given proposition or statement to be either true or false is an assumption that we need to make in order to make any inquiry into such matters a reasonable undertaking. If we could not assume that any given statement is determinately either true or false, then we will have no reason to think that an inquiry into it will yield a definitive conclusion, and so no reason to embark upon such an inquiry.

Clearly, what is happening here is that the principle acts as something like a motivating presupposition for our inquiry—without it, we could not even get our inquiry started. However, it is important to note that by claiming some principle to be a regulative assumption on

inquiry we are not appealing to its status as a law or claiming it to be a conceptual truth. Indeed, we are not making claims about the truth of such assumptions at all. Instead, we are simply noting that unless we make such an assumption we cannot possibly motivate any attempt to answer a question, and we have thereby “blocked the road of inquiry” (CP1. 135 (1899)) from the outset.

Peirce appeals to a variety of regulative assumptions for different forms of inquiry—in abduction, for instance, we need to assume that surprising observations are readily explicable; in induction, we need to assume that the “weak law of large numbers” holds for the question at hand; in matters of deduction, we need to assume that the principle of bivalence holds; and in inquiry more generally, we need to assume that the world is as it is independently of human thought. These claims, and others besides, have to be assumed if we are to have any chance of motivating inquiry at all, and without them we will be “quite unable to know anything of positive fact” (CP5. 603 (1903)). The approach here, then, is to suggest that truth can be clarified in terms of these regulative assumptions.

This talk of necessary presuppositions is apt to strike us as vague, but there are various suggestions from Peirce scholars about how we might best understand Peirce’s notion of regulative assumptions on inquiry. The most interesting are to be found in work by Misak (2013), Howat (2013) and Hookway (2004), each of whom highlight distinct elements in Peirce’s account. We shall examine each of these below, but the core claim found in all of this work, is that truth—which we still identify in familiar Peircean terms as the opinion that emerges at the limit of a well conducted inquiry—functions as an assumption that we must make if we are to keep the road of inquiry free from obstruction.

Beginning with Misak’s (2013) work on regulative assumptions, she highlights an important “modest transcendentalism” in Peirce’s account. As she notes (Misak 2013, 51-2), Kantian transcendentalist arguments were commonly used by such contemporaries of Peirce as Josiah Royce. Peirce, however, was cautious about the commitments of any full-blooded transcendentalism about truth:

A transcendentalist would claim that it is an indispensable ‘presupposition’ that there is an ascertainable true answer to every intelligible question. [. . .] I am not one of those transcendental apothecaries, as I call them—they are so skillful in making up a bill—who call for a quantity of big admissions, as indispensable *Voraussetzungen* of logic.” (CP2. 113 (1902))

For Peirce, to claim that it is indispensable that we assume every proposition (or question) has a truth value that we can determine through

inquiry does not mean that we can take such a claim to be true—the indispensability of some assumption for a practice proves nothing about the truth of that assumption. Nonetheless, it is instructive to understand that our practice of inquiring needs to make such assumptions in order to get started; the attainability of truth is simply one of those assumptions.

A related element in Peirce’s account of truth as a regulative assumption on inquiry is drawn out in recent work by Howat (2013). For Howat, it is instructive to think of Peirce’s treatment of truth as a regulative assumption as related to Wittgensteinian claims about “Hinge Propositions”. Although I shall not explore the fine details of Howat’s comparison of Peircean regulative assumptions and Wittgensteinian hinge propositions⁷ it is enough to note here that hinge propositions are simply those “grounding” propositions that we must assume on pain of having our justifications for making such assumptions become less compelling than the propositions they are meant to justify.

The questions that we raise and our doubts depend upon the fact that some propositions are exempt from doubt, are as it were like hinges on which those turn. [...] We can’t just investigate everything, and for that reason we are forced to rest content with assumption. (Wittgenstein 1969 SS341–343)

What is interesting about Howat’s treatment here is that it highlights important methodological points about the connections between Peircean truth, and an inquiry based epistemology—at some point inquiry has to begin, and importantly, we don’t need to assert any special “truth-like” status to the assumptions we begin with. All that we need to do is note that for a particular class of grounding propositions, asking and answering questions about whether we are justified in making them must give way to more expansive epistemic action.

Where Misak emphasises the modest transcendentalism in Peirce’s account, and Howat gives us a sense of the epistemological grounding of regulative assumptions, in Hookway (2004) we find what I take to be a crucial emphasis on the notion of *hope*, and what we might think of as an *affective* element in Peircean epistemology.

For Hookway, we can easily discern a focus on such affective attitudes as epistemic hope in Peirce’s later treatment of truth. For instance, Peirce claims:

When we discuss a vexed question, we *hope* that there is some ascertainable truth about it, and that the discussion is not to go on forever and to no purpose. (CP2 113 (1902))

For Hookway, the regulative assumption simply functions as an intellectual hope that we are justified in entertaining for the purpose of rational inquiry. Again, as Peirce suggests:

[E]very fact of a general or orderly nature calls for an explanation; and logic forbids us to assume in regard to any given fact of that sort that it is of its own nature absolutely inexplicable. This is what Kant calls a regulative assumption, that is to say, an intellectual hope. The sole and immediate purpose of thinking is to render things intelligible; and to think and yet in that very act to think a thing unintelligible is self-stultification. [. . .] *We must be guided by the rule of hope.* (CP1 405 (1890), italics added)

In many ways, this looks like an alternative statement of the elements highlighted by Misak and Howat. However, Hookway's emphasis on regulative assumptions as *intellectual hope* is that it clarifies an important affective element in Peirce's thinking here—we are often moved to inquiry and epistemological endeavour by what are emotional reactions. Of course, this is a long standing feature of Peirce's doubt/belief model of inquiry—belief is a settled, satisfied feeling; doubt is a state of uneasiness—and it is also clearly an element in this later account of truth and inquiry. We may be making modest transcendental assumptions, these may have the epistemological justification and grounding of hinge propositions, but just as important is seeing regulative assumptions as being accompanied by such motivating sentiments as our “hope of success” [CP5 357 (1869)] and the “justification of desperation” [CP5. 603 (1903)].

Hopefully, then, we have a workable account of what Peirce's notion of truth as a regulative assumption on inquiry is. Truth, or belief at the limit of a well-conducted inquiry, functions as an assumption that we must make if we are to keep the road of inquiry free from obstruction. This is a modestly transcendental claim; we are not claiming any special status or insight for this treatment of truth. Relatedly, we can see that our justification for this claim relies on its “hinge” status; inquiry must start somewhere, and any inquiry into our assumption that truth can be had would need to make exactly the same kinds of assumption to get started. And finally, it is a claim that highlights the affective elements of inquiry; the phenomenology of inquiry in terms of *hope* plays an important role in understanding just how inquirers must address whatever questions they find vexing. But how does this picture address the Prician concern that Peircean truth cannot give us convenient friction?

3. Defending Peirce Against Price

Recall that for Price, there were three reasons to resist a Peircean account of truth: an Ontological Problem, a Normativity Problem and a Presuppositional Problem. These concerns were raised against

Peircean truth considered as a form of ideal warrant. The question here, though, is whether or not the account of Peircean truth as a regulative assumption explained above is equipped to deal with these problems and address Price's concerns? We shall examine the Peircean answer to Price's three problems in turn, and as we shall see, Peircean truth conceived as a regulative assumption on inquiry or intellectual hope is well equipped to deal with these three worries.

3.1. *The Ontological Problem*

Recall that, as Price saw it, the standard view of Peircean truth makes too many metaphysical commitments—it is still addressing the philosopher's question "What is truth?" even if it does attempt to give an analysis that eschews robust truth properties and truth-makers. However, it seems quite clear that Peircean truth construed as a regulative assumption is not seeking to give a reductive analysis of truth. As is made especially clear by Misak's clarification of the modest transcendentalism of Peirce's account, our motivation is not to analyse truth, but to get inquiry started. Most important though, we do not take the assumptions needed to get inquiry started to tell us anything at all about truth. As she says:

Not only should the fact that an assumption is indispensable to our practice of inquiry not convince us of its *necessary* truth, it should not even convince us of its truth." (Misak 2011, 265)

Whatever else a regulative assumption of truth is doing for us, it is not defining or analysing truth, and it is certainly making no metaphysical commitments.

3.2. *The Normativity Problem*

The second problem that Price saw for Peircean truth was that it was not normatively compelling in the way that a worthwhile truth-norm should be. Put simply, the claim that our current beliefs might (or might not) align with those held at the ideal limit of a well-conducted inquiry seems to have no immediate motivational character at all. For Price, truth must be immediately compelling if it is to make our disagreements engage with each other. However, our need to make regulative assumptions of truth, especially once we see the affective dimensions of such intellectual hopes, seems to by-pass this worry. Consider, for example, Hookway's broader body of work in virtue epistemology and the role he notes that emotion and affective states play in epistemic evaluation:

Emotions can be invoked to explain people's epistemic *failings*: anger leads to irrationality [. . .] Emotions or traits of character may also

have a positive role, explaining how we *can* be motivated to reflect more carefully. (Hookway 2003, 80)

This claim is made against the background of Hookway's broader research programme in epistemology, nonetheless, I take the point to be just as applicable here. The affective dimension of the assumptions we make about truth as part of our practice of inquiry can themselves be immediately motivational in just the right way. Indeed, the range of epistemic emotions that Hookway invokes (2003, 80)—*anxiety* about going wrong, *pride* in our epistemic standards and standing—seem to be what really lies at the heart of the motivational immediacy that Price ascribes to his own truth-norm in terms of censure and positive reward (Price 2003, 181). Put simply, truth as a regulative assumption provides plenty of immediate normative compulsion from such affective components as “hope for success” and the “justification of despair”.

3.3. *The Presupposition Problem*

The final problem for Peircean truth was that any construal of truth in terms of ideal warranted assertibility seems to need to presuppose truth. In Peircean terms, if inquiry is supposed to lead us to truth at the end of inquiry, we need a mechanism that makes disagreement matter and drives inquiry along, otherwise, how can we arrive at truth? For Price, however, the only thing that could make disagreements engage with each other and drive inquiry forward is a truth norm:

[A]ssertoric dialogue requires an intolerance of disagreement. This needs to be present already in the background, a pragmatic presupposition of judgement itself. I am not a maker of assertions, a judge, at all, unless I am already playing the game to win. (Price 2003, 186)

But of course, it is clear that a Peircean treatment of truth as a regulative assumption on inquiry readily accepts that this is the case. For Peirce, we can already see that we need to hope our disagreements are resolvable, either by convergence or consensus,⁸ during the ordinary course of inquiry. But we are also committed to the claim that inquiry cannot even get started without an assumption of truth. Peirce and Price are in agreement here. Importantly though, as Misak's reading of Peirce makes clear, whatever assumptions or presuppositions we are making here about truth, they are modest.

4. *Price and Peirce Compared*

If the foregoing is correct, then understanding Peircean truth through the lens of regulative assumptions and intellectual hope gives an interesting result here. The problems that Price thinks bar a Peircean

account of truth no longer look problematic. The Peircean account is not making any attempt to define or analyse truth; it is making a modest transcendental claim. Further, the Peircean account does not lack immediate normative compulsion; hope is an affective epistemic attitude and emotion compels us to act. And finally, the presupposition of truth is really not a problem at all; Peirce is in agreement with Price about the grounding assumptions that we must make. So why does this rather modest recasting of Peircean truth allow us to bypass these problems, and what does the difference between Price and Peirce here amount to?

To begin with, the reason this alternative way of viewing Peircean truth evades the problems that Price poses is that truth as an intellectual hope and truth as convenient friction turn out to be very similar concepts. Price thinks his (T) norm functions by encouraging dialogue, and giving our practices of approval and disapproval conversational friction. The pull of this for the pragmatist is in terms of ordinary practice and practical difference:

[T]hese habits of approval and disapproval tend to encourage dialogue, by providing speakers with an incentive to resolve disagreements. [. . .] The importance I have here attached to dialogue rests in part on the gamble that this question will turn out to have an interesting answer, in terms of the long-run advantages of pooled cognitive resources, agreement on shared projects, and so on. (Price 2003, 183)

And of course, for Peirce, our interest in truth is not with analysing it, but with understanding what purpose we have for it, and what role it plays in the central discursive practice of asking questions and giving answers. For Peirce, an examination of the practical role that truth plays for speakers is simply to give a pragmatic elucidation of a concept. In this respect, then, Price and Peirce have strikingly similar sensibilities on what the pertinent questions about truth are—we are interested in what people *do*, not with what truth *is*.

Given that Price and Peirce both have this interest in doing something “anthropological” in their examination of truth—both are interested in informing our understanding by examining what people do with truth—it is unsurprising that their treatments of truth should be similar. The reason that Price sees problems for Peirce is because he has overestimated Peirce’s interest in what truth is, and underestimated his interest in how and why we use truth as we do. But this brings us to an important and final question. If Peirce and Price are, on closer examination, so similar in their approach that this explains why Peircean truth can evade Price’s problems, what, if anything, marks these two approaches apart? If intellectual hope just gives you convenient friction, are there differences worth noting between Peirce and Price here?

And I think there are important differences between the two that stem from important differences between their “anthropological” interests in truth.

The clearest way of showing the difference between these two accounts is to look at how they handle a common problem facing any pragmatist account of truth. The problem, in short, is how can pragmatists be metaphysically austere about truth, but still say something substantial about practice? The concern is that the pragmatists’ resistance to ontological questions about the nature of truth pushes her towards a deflationary account—to say that *p* is true is to do nothing more than to assert or endorse *p*. However, the anaemic semantics of deflationary accounts of truth leave us with very little to say in response to practical questions about why we talk with truth as we do, and why we assign truth a particular practical role in inquiry and conversation. The pragmatist must tread this uneasy line by telling us something substantial about our practices with ‘truth’ without thereby flaunting our commitment to ontological modesty. The differences between Peircean truth as a regulative assumption or intellectual hope, and Prician truth as convenient friction are most pronounced in how they suggest we navigate this problem.

For Price, the best way to tread the narrow path between metaphysical austerity and saying something substantive about practice is to adopt a form of quietism that he takes to be part of his broader program of expressivist pragmatism (Price 2011, 12–16). As he puts it:

Vocabularies should be *mentioned* but not *used*—theorised about but not employed, at least not in the armchair. As long as the expressivist keeps this in mind—ensures that her initial theoretical perspective only *mentions* the target vocabulary—there’s no danger that her casual deflationary use of the metalinguistic semantic vocabulary will lead her into a metaphysical trap; and no danger either that her subject’s use of the corresponding vocabulary of the object language will draw her into their ontological web. (Price 2011, 314)

For Price then, we have to see our discussions about truth as an examination of the practices of the ‘truth-talkers’ that we are interested in. So long as we only take ourselves to be talking about them and what they do with ‘truth,’ we can say plenty about practice without transgressing against ontological modesty. In short, we must talk about the folk, without talking with the folk; we must talk about truth talk, but without talking truth ourselves.

Peirce’s “anthropological” interests, however, look rather different. Any pragmatic explication of truth in Peircean terms is a matter of asking what we inquirers mean by ‘truth,’ and what we come to expect

from holding some proposition to be true. As Catherine Legg notes in her recent account of Peircean truth:

One might think that the truth-theorist is forced to choose between ontological and semantic accounts [. . .] But the practice based nature of Peirce's theory of meaning, and its teleological explication of concepts, breaks up this dichotomy. If we hold a belief *p* to be true, Peirce can say more about what this means than merely: *p*. Rather, our holding *p* to be true means that we expect that future inquiry will converge on *p*. (Legg 2014, 207)

Now, whilst this seems to involve a kind of quietism about truth—it refuses the metaphysical questions from the outset—it does not embrace Price's conclusion that quietism here means insulating our theoretical perspective from the talk of the folk. On Peirce's view, we cannot separate out the philosopher from everyone else—she is a part of the community of inquirers. As such, any talk about what 'truth-talkers' do will include the practices and practical upshots for philosophers along with any other member of the community of inquiry. Both Peirce and Price avoid ontological questions by casting off any inclination to analyse or define truth—both decline to ask "what are we talking about?". What's more, both bypass the thinness of semantic deflationary accounts by giving us rich answers to the question: "Why do we talk this way?" But a real, and I think significant, difference between them emerges from the role they see the philosopher playing in answering practical and pragmatic questions about why we talk as we do. So why is this significant?

Put bluntly, Price's quietism inherits a form of philosophical exceptionalism. Price certainly makes the pragmatically appropriate move by pushing us to eschew the philosophers go-to ontological questions, in favour of more pragmatically important questions. But the quietism that he takes to follow from doing "something like anthropology" here still treats the philosopher's reflections on truth as somehow separable from other inquiries. By treating the philosopher's reflections as exceptions, we are then compelled to explain just how the philosopher can talk about what the folk are talking about without "talking about" with the folk. Peirce's modest transcendentalism, however, takes on no exceptionalist baggage; doing "something like anthropology" with Peirce means treating the "anthropologist" as part of the mix. The differences here, and the reasons they matter, can be subtle, but by way of an illustrative conclusion, consider the following literary example: Upon completing a variety of quests, Dorothy and her entourage return to visit the Wizard of Oz to obtain the gifts he'd promised them, only to discover the powerful wizard is really a powerless old man, and

the promised gifts empty and illusory. Despite these revelations, the Cowardly Lion, desperate for courage, has the following conversation with Oz.

“But how about my courage?” asked the Lion anxiously.

“You have plenty of courage, I’m sure.” Answered Oz. “All you need is confidence in yourself. There is no living thing that is not afraid when it faces danger. The true courage is in facing danger when you are afraid, and that kind of courage you have in plenty”

“Perhaps I have, but I’m scared just the same,” said the Lion.

“I shall be very unhappy unless you give me the sort of courage that makes one forget he is afraid.” (L. Frank Baum, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (2008, 84))

Here, the cowardly lion asks the wrong question, the philosophers question—“What are we talking about?”. For him, his lack of courage is a deeply ontological concern. He receives wise and pragmatic counsel from Oz—“you’re asking the wrong question; what does ‘courage’ mean in terms of practice?”—which he seems to accept. However, despite embracing Oz’s pragmatic balm here, his final response suggests he is a pragmatist of a Prician stripe—“maybe our practice does explain why we talk this way, but how can you help me to forget all about that?”. For the Cowardly Lion, this theoretical reflection about courage-talk with Oz can’t intersect with his ordinary courage-talk without making him unhappy—just as for Price, he needs a way to insulate one from the other. If the Cowardly Lion were more Peircean, he’d be happy with Oz’s answer, hope his vexed questions about courage had determinable answers, and persist with the practice until it lead him astray.¹⁰

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NOTES

1. Indeed, even when an individual is open to censure for making some assertion, disagreement is not the source of such reprobation in a speech community that uses only (SA) and (PWA).

2. See, for example, (CP1. 485 (1896))

3. Indeed, Cheryl Misak ((1991) and (2007)) has drawn many instructive parallels between Peirce's view of truth as indefeasible belief at an ideal limit of inquiry and Crispin Wright's account of truth in terms of *superassertibility*.

4. I actually think it's clear that the advocate of Peircean truth as ideal warrant does have plenty to say here, but it would be too much of a distraction to dig very deeply here.

5. Appeals to regulative assumptions are by no means isolated to his later work. There are, for instance, early appeals to regulative assumptions too (W2: 272 (1869)).

6. See, for example, NEM 4:xiii (Undated)

7. I would, however, encourage readers interested in Peircean truth to attend to Howat's work here.

8. See Hookway 2000, for instance.

9. As Price says in a related context, when talking about his pragmatic approach to such issues as "truth" and "representation", his approach is not "a way of doing metaphysics in a pragmatist key. It is way of doing something like "anthropology" (Price 2011, 314–5).]

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