

## Response to Wayne

TJ Crow 2014

Response to Wayne Nirenberg's response on July 6 2014 to **Not Reading Rorty**<sup>(1)</sup>

*Pragmatism has been the slut of isms. ... Each new guy comes along with a completely different paradigm and slaps the word "Pragmatism" on it because of what the word means without considering what the category of philosophy [he] was addressing. There have never been such a line of interpretively disloyal philosophers.*

(giggle, giggle...) Well said! I live in a blissful state unencumbered by the weight of my knowledge. I have undoubtedly been misusing philosophical terms. Here's my best understanding of the terms. I think I pretty much use them as stated.

Pragmatism:

Beliefs are true because they are successful ...

NonCorrespondenceTheoryOfTruth:

... not because they correspond to the Thing In Itself.

In particular, I described my fundamental paradigm shift in the Not Reading Rorty paper as a "pragmatic non-correspondence-theory-of-truth type of paradigm shift". I think that's all I'm using as far as basic philosophical ideas go. What do you think?

I'm happy that, as you say, these ideas are becoming common sense in academia. I want this type of common sense to become more widespread and more radical.

We seem to agree on the usage of the word Pragmatism -- aside from me stepping on some philosophical toes. I'm not sure what you mean by Relativity. You'd have to sharpen that up a bit for me by telling me more. Is your Relativity the same as my NonCorrespondenceTheoryOfTruth?

*At times the thought [that feelings are merely neurochemicals] makes me sad. But intellectually I know that sadness is just as much a chemical process and just as ultimately meaningless as being happy, and yet, THAT is the problem that makes me sadder. I step outside of myself to recognize what's going on in both situations, but my reaction isn't to not have any emotion, it's to have negative emotions that I can't control. Such is the way people witness the world. If you've got the mindset, you want to know truth above other ways.*

Here I read you as saying that you're facing the truth about neurochemical processes even though it does not serve a purpose for you to do so. In fact, it only brings you only despair. At first glance this seems like a counterexample to my proposition that "If a belief is not working for you, you won't think it's true."<sup>(2)</sup> Clearly, here's a belief that's

not working for you, yet you believe it's true. (I hope I have this right enough. Please let me know.)

To counter the counterexample, I need to convince you that your belief is in fact working for you even though it brings you despair. But that's easy. Just because a belief is working for you doesn't mean it brings you happiness in the moment. For example, let's say I find out my wife has been cheating on me. Now there's a truth that doesn't make me happy. But apparently the belief is working for me because I continue to believe it. "Working for me" needs to be understood as "Fitting the facts as I see them", or saying "Gee, that explains a lot", or "It makes me sick, but in my gut I know it's true", or any one of a number of things I could say as I grapple with the truth. A belief when it's working for you is hard to shake. It's woven into your previous beliefs and simultaneously advances your whole web of beliefs.<sup>(3)</sup>

*Maybe if we learned very early on when our brains were developing to see things with the reasoning you have, it'd be in the cards and we could consciously decide to not care about the finding the truth where it doesn't benefit us to do so.*

You're saying that in situations where knowing the truth is not to someone's benefit, my philosophy would enable that person to ignore the truth. You go on to contrast this attitude with a person who is compelled to seek the truth no matter what. I think you're being needlessly dramatic. Let's examine that first statement, "Where the truth is not to one's benefit, one can choose not to seek the truth." Look behind its rhetorical punch, and you'll find it's not so remarkable. In fact, we do it all the time. For example, since I'm not a NASCAR fan, it is not to my advantage to learn more about it. Hence, when offered the opportunity, I consciously choose to not seek the truth about NASCAR racing.

*Correct me if I got you wrong but you seem to be equating Pragmatism with Relativism. Peirce clearly believed, as do I, that there is no "There is no World As It Is In Itself." To be clear, there is a paradigm that encompasses all of reality apart from our limited version of it. WE might not be able to know the fundamental bottom of it all, and thereby see it through cultural or human, or consciousness glasses, but these paradigms function the way they do for a reason beyond simply the way we work. Underneath what we can grasp there are consistencies throughout existence.*

I'll finish up by responding to this bit since I see it as such a good example of how the burgeoning common sense mentioned early needs to be more radically logical. As soon as you say that there is no World As It Is In Itself, it suddenly reappears. To talk about "all of reality apart from our limited version of it" is to let everybody know that you do believe there is a World As It Is In Itself. The "fundamental bottom of it all" is just another way to say the "World As It Is In Itself". To say that "Underneath what we can grasp there are consistencies throughout existence" is just rehashing that tired old

Cartesian duality that you claim is getting outmoded these days. The new paradigm described in Not Reading Rorty roots out these logical inconsistencies by denying the existence of the World As It Is In Itself in all its guises.

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<sup>(1)</sup> TJ Crow 2014, *Not Reading Rorty*

<http://www.tjcrow.com/Philo/Not%20Reading%20Rorty%2003.pdf>

<sup>(2)</sup> TJ Crow 2014, *Response to Adam in 15 Pieces*,

<http://www.tjcrow.com/Philo/Not%20Reading%20Rorty%2003.pdf>

<sup>(3)</sup> As I see it, once you drop the Correspondence Theory Of Truth, this Coherentist approach is best . Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, *Coherence Theory of Truth*,

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/truth-coherence/>.