

vedanta - paribhasi

Truth:- Theories of Truth :-

About any belief (statement, assertion, proposition, claim, etc.) - Two different questions:-

- ① What is it for this belief to be true, assuming that it is? {The nature of truth}
- ② What are the standards or criteria by means of which it may be determined whether this belief is true? {Theory of justification}

What is it for a belief to be true?

We will limit the discussion to empirical beliefs — those known to be true or false only by observation.

(1) Correspondence theory: —

a belief is true if and only if it corresponds to its object — that is, to what it is a belief about.

Problem: — What is a belief about?

Difficult (i) ties — To what, exactly, does a true belief correspond?

I believe my stapler is on my desk.

Does my belief correspond only to the stapler and to the desk, or does it correspond to the fact that my stapler is on my desk? if later? then,

What is a fact? Do facts exist on the side of the objects — along with the stapler and desk — or are they a contribution to reality made by the mind — do they exist on the side of the belief?

(ii) A second difficulty: — To what do negative beliefs, and general beliefs, and compound beliefs,

and beliefs about future and past events,
 and about mythical entities, and about probabilities correspond, if they are true? To what do beliefs expressed as subjunctive conditional propositions ('if such-and-such were the case, then...') correspond, if they are true? and what about false beliefs? We might say that they fail to correspond. But there are many different false beliefs. Does one failure of correspondence differ from another failure of correspondence?

(iii) What, exactly, is correspondence? In one sense of the term correspond, to say that a belief corresponds to reality just is to say that it is true (it's because the word carries this sense that the correspondence theory seems so intuitively plausible). But in that sense of correspond, we do not clarify or elucidate the concept of truth by saying that a true belief corresponds to reality: we do not make clear in what way or just how a true belief hooks on to reality. After all, a belief is not very much like a fact, if that's what a true belief corresponds to.

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the truth of even empirical propositions,
propositions about the world, must be
analyzed along similar lines. {analogy}

Coherent beliefs must be basically
consistent, and beyond this they must be
connected by some sort of relationship of
mutual implication. \downarrow
what sort?

With the Coherence theory we have only
two things to explain: beliefs and Coherence.
With the Correspondence theory
we have three things to explain: beliefs,
Correspondence, facts.

Difficulties: -

- (i) might there not be more than one internally coherent system of beliefs? (Indeed, might not virtually every belief belong to some system or other?) How does one select from among alternative systems?
- (ii) what's to guarantee the truth of the whole system of beliefs?
- (iii) Because the internal coherence of the system of beliefs constitutes the truth of the system and ~~its~~ member beliefs; what connects the

entire system of beliefs, or any belief within it, to external reality, if indeed there is an external reality?

(iv) Doesn't the theory require that we know everything that is true before we can know anything that is true?

(3) Pragmatic Theory :-

C.S. Peirce (1839-1914)

William James (1842-1910)

John Dewey (1857-1952)

Richard Rorty (1931-)

American.

Contemporary analytic philosophers: - Hilary Putnam and Donald Davidson

Peirce: - the opinion which is fated to be ultimately agreed to by all who investigate, is what we mean by the truth.

James and Dewey seemed both to offer theories of justification, that is, theories concerning when it is appropriate or justified to assert a claim as true.

In scientific affairs, James maintained, the truth of a belief is established by experimental verification; metaphysical and theological beliefs, in contrast, are to be deemed true

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if they provide the individual with "vital benefits". For Dewey, a belief is sth like a map; when you have determined that it helps you find your way out of the woods and safely to home, you may regard your belief map as true.

Rorty: - Truth is not sth that needs a "theory" to begin with.

Coherence theory: - truth is to be explained in terms of a relation among beliefs

the Correspondence theory: - truth is to be explained in terms of a relation between beliefs and the world

the Rortian view: - There really isn't anything about truth to be explained. "True" is just a form of praise we use for a belief that currently is considered so solidly established that we do not think that anything further is required to justify our accepting it. Rorty attaches no significance to the idea of the world "as it really is" independent of the perspective from which it is conceived. Thus he is especially critical of the correspondence theory

an empirical belief is true if and only if it coheres with a system of other beliefs, which together form a comprehensive account of reality.

coheres? :- Just what is it for a system of beliefs to cohere?

We can get some idea of the thinking behind the coherence theory if you consider a false arithmetical proposition, such as " $2 + 3 + 3 = 57\frac{1}{4}$ ".

What makes this proposition false?

Well, it just doesn't cohere with the rest of arithmetic. It doesn't fit into the system.