

Correspondence Theory as a Genuine Theory of Truth

Micah Phillips-Gary

College of Wooster

I Introduction

The starting point of this paper is a critical examination of Kwasi Wiredu's critique of the correspondence theory of truth and his preferred theory of truth, a Deweyan pragmatist theory of truth according to which a true claim is one which is warrantably assertible from a particular point of view. Wiredu's central claim is that the correspondence theory of truth is tautologous and thus not a genuine theory of truth. I reject this claim on the grounds that a theory can be judged only in relation to a *working definition* and we do not, as of yet, have a working definition of truth. Nor can the correspondence theory serve as one, as it does not clearly identify a phenomenon to be explained. After contrasting his pragmatist theory of truth with what I call Peirce's *pragmatist theory of truth*, in his terminology the *realist conception of reality*, I argue Wiredu's pragmatist theory of truth is not a theory of the sort of truth which correspondence theory is talking about because correspondence theory is a theory of truth *full-stop*, while Wiredu instead offers a theory of perspective-indexed truth. Then I argue that if we take the pragmatist theory of truth as pointing us towards the criteria for truth which we seem to use in everyday life and in our scientific endeavors, the correspondence theory can be seen to have explanatory power, even granting that it is in some sense tautologous. In short, while correspondence theory alone might only give what we already mean when we say "is true," it cannot be our starting point for investigation because it relies on a conception of reality with no internal criteria for application. Given the pragmatist theory of truth as a starting point, correspondence theory then constitutes a *theory* in the full sense that includes the idea of possessing explanatory power.

II The Critique of the Correspondence Theory of Truth

The correspondence theory of truth says a proposition is true if and only if there is some state of affairs which corresponds to it; "*P*" is true if and only if it is the case that *P*. For example, to say that the proposition "It is snowing in Tunisia right now" is true means that it *really is* snowing in Tunisia right now. However, in what sense is this a *theory* of truth? It surely is a *definition* of truth, and one which I am inclined to think does a good job of saying just what we mean when we say something is true in both science and everyday life. The main thesis of correspondence theory is, in some sense, a tautology in English, like "All bachelors are unmarried males." Kwasi Wiredu supports this tautology claim by reflecting on Tarski's logical analysis of truth and the fact that in some languages, such as Akan, there is the same sentence construction for both "is true" and "is the case" (Wiredu, 36, 48). In other words, "*P*" is true if and only if it is the case that *P*" in English is tautologous like "All bachelors are unmarried males" because the translation in Akan of "*P*" is true if and only if it is the case that *P*" is tautologous like "All bachelors are bachelors."

But, as Wiredu says, there are tautologies that expand our knowledge and tautologies that do not (Wiredu, 48). Why should correspondence theory be one of the former? Here is one suggestion. The correspondence theory is supposed to be a *theory of truth*, and a theory must serve to explain some phenomenon. We must, then, have some phenomenon in front of us before we can go about trying to explain it. Further, we must have some idea of what this phenomenon is which precedes our theorizing about it to allow us to identify it intersubjectively; I will call this a *working definition*. To use an example drawn from Nussbaum, we might want to explain the phenomenon of thunder. Before we can do that, we need a working definition of "thunder" such as "That noise in the clouds, whatever it is" (Nussbaum, 286). Only once we have identified the phenomenon at question in some way like this can we debate different explanatory theories about the nature of this phenomenon. While we might ultimately come to define thunder in a more sophisticated manner, drawing from the results of the natural sciences, without the background of such a pre-theoretical working definition from which this scientific account could arise, there would be no sense in which we could say that "the explanatory story citing Zeus' activities in the clouds is a false account of the very same thing of which the best scientific explanation is a true account" (Nussbaum, 286). Two people engaged in discourse on which account is superior would simply be talking past each another without a neutral

working definition.

In order to say that correspondence theory is a genuine explanatory theory, then, we would need to have a working definition of "truth" which precedes it and which identifies a phenomenon that the correspondence theory renders intelligible. Now, one point which might be made in favor of the correspondence theory as a definition of a concept is its obviousness. However, judged as an explanatory theory, this actually counts against it. When we want to understand what it means for a proposition to be true, what is more natural for us to understand by "true" than "corresponds to reality"? The correspondence theory does not expand our everyday understanding of what truth is because in everyday life we *mean* "corresponds to reality" when we say "true." A mere tautology cannot have explanatory power because, being tautologous, it must already be contained in our working definition. Thus, we may conclude, the correspondence theory, being tautologous, cannot be an explanatory theory.

There are two problems with this argument. The first problem is that correspondence theory does not serve to identify a phenomenon. Although the correspondence theory says what we mean by "truth," the role of a working definition is to act as a *criterion*. We are not concerned here with meaning. A criterion would help us identify which propositions are true and for this we must turn to standards of justification. As such, correspondence theory cannot count as a working definition of truth.

Now, strictly speaking, the conclusion of the argument that the correspondence theory is a mere tautology was that the correspondence theory must be contained in our working definition. There was no claim that the correspondence theory *exhausts* our working definition. We must turn to our second point, that the argument ignores the way in which explanatory theories feed back into pre-theoretical understanding. When all the lights go out in my room, it is obvious that there has been a power outage. For an observer not familiar with modern technology, this would count as an explanatory theory. The obviousness of correspondence theory might plausibly be a result of earlier theoretical insights feeding back into our pre-theoretical understanding of the world, such that relative to a more basic working definition of truth it would be explanatory.

III Fallibilism and the Pragmatic Theory of Truth

Even if we reject the argument that correspondence theory must already be contained in our working definition, this is not sufficient to say that correspondence theory provides a genuine theory of truth. As discussed above, the notion of an explanatory theory only makes sense relative to a working definition which identifies a phenomenon that the explanatory theory can be said to explain. We thus find ourselves in the position of searching for a working definition. The starting point for this search will be to look at alternate so-called theories of truth, though as of yet we have no ground to debate their merits as theories. Instead, they will be judged both for internal consistency and by the extent that they can be said to identify the relevant phenomenon (or to point to criteria relative to which they themselves can count as explanations).

Wiredu opposes the correspondence theory of truth to the pragmatic and coherence theories, identifying the former with Dewey's sense of *pragmatism* (Wiredu, 37). For the pragmatist, "*P*" is true if and only if it is *warrantably assertible* that *P*. For the coherentist, "*P*" is true if and only if it coheres with our system of beliefs that *P*. He attempts to reduce these two definitions to one, claiming that in absence of a more developed conception of "coherence," "[T]he coherence that conformity to the canons of rational inquiry confers on the cognitions of a rational person may be all the coherence needed" (Wiredu, 46). These are the same canons that determine whether or not an assertion is warranted, it seems we can identify the coherence theory of truth with the pragmatic.

While this identification might hold under Wiredu's formulation of the coherence theory of truth, there is a small but crucial difference between his formulation and standard coherence theory. The coherentist does not say that "*P*" is true if and only if it coheres with *our* system of beliefs that *P*, but rather that "*P*" is true if and only if coheres with "that further whole, all-comprehensive and fully articulated" system of beliefs that *P* (Blanshard, 268). In replacing "*all-comprehensive* system of beliefs" with "*our* system of beliefs," Wiredu effectively takes coherence theory off the table as well as paving the way for the perspectival turn he makes later on in his paper. In response to an obvious criticism of the pragmatic theory of

truth, namely that we might've been warranted in saying that, for example, the Sun orbits the Earth at some point in human history, but not today, and thus the same proposition "The Sun orbits the Earth" would end up both true and false, he suggests that we must *perspective-index* – my terminology – our propositions. The revised formulation of the pragmatic theory of truth thus looks like this: "*P*" is true from perspective *SI* if and only if "*P*" is warrantably assertible from perspective *SI* (Wiredu, 44).

There are two important points to make here. The first is that the coherence theory of truth is relevantly distinct from Wiredu's pragmatic theory of truth. The second is that according to Wiredu's pragmatic theory of truth the concept of truth *full-stop* or *absolute* truth or, as it is more fashionably put, *capital-T Truth*, drops out from our picture entirely. Or does it? Against the objection that there are warrantably assertible propositions that are not true, Wiredu puts forth the frankly astounding claim that any attempt to show that this is the case would violate *fallibilism* (Wiredu, 44). It is frankly astounding because fallibilism, a position defended by C.S. Peirce, is the "doctrine that our knowledge is never absolute" or in other words that all knowledge claims are in principle subject to doubt and thus might end up being false¹ (Peirce, 1.171). But, this is to say that I might warrantably assert something and it might still be false, despite all the evidence presently available to me being on its side. The very formulation of fallibilism requires truth *full-stop*, while Wiredu's pragmatic theory of truth is really only a theory of *perspectival* truth, or truth *right here right now*, as opposed to Peirce's absolutely fixed immutable truth which will be discussed below. Supposing that truth can be cashed out as perspective-indexed warranted assertibility, to say that all the evidence at present available to me might point towards "*P*" but "*P*" might still be false, is to say that "*P*" might be true but not true, unless some meaningful difference can be found between "warrantably assertible that *P* from my perspective" and "all the evidence presently available to me pointing towards '*P*' being true," such that the latter does not imply the former.

If this is the case, and if Wiredu does not accept a wider theory involving truth full-stop, in what spirit does he bring up fallibilism? After all, as he himself notes, perspective-indexing is sufficient to deal with this objection without invoking fallibilism (Wiredu, 44). It is, I think, to address this dilemma:

If [fallibilism is true], then we can say that the time will, to be sure, can, never come when we shall be in possession of truths, as distinct from warranted beliefs. Either, then, truth is warranted assertibility or it is a certified impossibility (Wiredu, 44).

In other words, because fallibilism implies that truth full-stop is attainable only provisionally we must either mean something other than truth full-stop when we say "truth", namely perspective-indexed warranted assertibility, or else we cannot be said to possess any truths with certainty. The assumption seems to be that any reasonable truth-seeker would choose the former horn, abandoning truth full-stop, for the sake of being able to say that they certainly possess "truths". To take the former horn and say that the person who in the 15th Century asserted with warrant that "The Sun orbits the Earth" said something false, is for Wiredu a violation of "proper epistemological modesty" (Wiredu, 44). By a violation of epistemological modesty, he seems to understand the identification of a belief that is warranted right here right now with a truth full-stop.

On this point the Peircean fallibilist would, I think, agree with Wiredu, at least so long as we specify that *unqualified* identification of warranted belief with truth full-stop counts as epistemological immodesty. But against Wiredu the Peircean fallibilist would positively assert that the proposition that the Earth orbits the Sun is *provisionally* true full-stop as it is entirely possible, and indeed highly probable given existing scientific evidence, that the claim "The Earth orbits the Sun" is one of those claims that would end up being continually confirmed if scientific inquiry were to continue on indefinitely.

Indeed, it strikes me that it is Wiredu here who is in opposition to proper epistemological modesty, not in the sense

1 Peirce's fallibilism amounts to much more than this insofar as it is the "principle of continuity" applied to the sphere of knowledge, or rather insofar as "the principle of continuity is the idea of fallibilism objectified," following the Peircean dictum that metaphysics ought to be based on logic and not *vice-versa* (Peirce, 1.171, 2.36). In other words, it plays a fundamental role in Peirce's metaphysics which it would be beyond the scope of this paper to discuss.

that his view is a violation of it, but in the sense that his view nullifies the normative force of this concept. To eliminate the concept of truth full-stop is to eliminate the concept of being mistaken and then correcting it as all "correction" would consist merely in a change of perspective (excluding those cases where I am unwarranted, even from my own perspective, in asserting the claims I am asserting). It is at least highly plausible that the virtue of epistemological modesty consists in equipping us to alter our opinions when faced with contrary evidence and to bring them in accord with reality. Without the notion of truth full-stop, this virtue has no grip since all perspectives would be on equal footing, none farther from or closer to truth full-stop, and aside from bringing it into alignment with my own perspective, any change in opinion would be not but a lateral move. Under these circumstances it is unclear is there is left for the virtue of epistemological modesty to do. Wiredu seems to be eliminating the virtue of epistemological modesty in the name of the virtue of epistemological modesty.

IV Realism and Nominalism as Theories of Reality

The above largely critical discussion of Wiredu's pragmatist theory of truth avoided our main issue of seeking a working definition of truth. The reason why Wiredu's account cannot be so regarded will be discussed further below. Wiredu does bring our attention, however, to the coherence theory of truth and to Peirce's account of truth. Contrary to what Wiredu suggests, both the coherentist and Peirce in fact accept that the attainment of truth full-stop is not something we can expect to actually achieve (Blanshard, 270; Peirce, 6.581). Truth becomes, so to speak, an ideal limit point for inquiry which we are always approaching but never reach. Or, to be more precise, that all-encompassing system (coherentism) or ultimately settled opinion (Peirce) is an ideal limit point we cannot expect to actually reach. Some of our current beliefs might, however, as a matter of fact accord with this ideal limit point and as such be true full-stop (Peirce, 7.336 Fn 11).

The two theories are sufficiently similar² that I will speak for the remainder of the paper exclusively of the Peircean or *pragmaticist* theory of truth, "pragmaticism" being the term Peirce coined for his specific version of pragmatism, in order to contrast it with the *nominalistic* versions of pragmatism adopted by James and Schiller, which he took issue with in particular on the point that their theories would render truth or reality mutable (Peirce, 6.485).

Peirce's *pragmaticist* theory of truth can be put as follows: "*P*" is true if and only if it would accord with the final, ultimately settled state of inquiry that *P*. Two things are important to note here. First, the parallel between this statement and the coherence theory of truth should be clear. Second, Peirce does not put this claim explicitly in terms of a theory of truth. He tends, rather, to speak of it as a theory of *reality*. Instead of contrasting the correspondence theory of truth with the pragmaticist theory of truth, he contrasts what he calls the *nominalist* and *realist* conceptions of reality (Peirce, 7.339).

In his use of terminology Peirce is clearly drawing from Francis Abbot's *Scientific Theism*, a work he greatly admired (Peirce, 1.20). Abbot argues that we can only know an object by its relations to other objects and as such, by denying that relations between objects exist independently of the mind, *nominalism* necessarily implies a Kantian distinction between mere appearances and unknowable things-in-themselves (Abbot, 4). Peirce maintains that according to the nominalistic conception of reality, what is real is the external cause of our sensations and, as such, of inquiry (Peirce, 7.338). This is in clear contrast to *realism*, the realist conception of reality being that what is real is what would conform to the final, settled state of inquiry (Peirce, 7.339).

And what do we mean by the real? It is a conception which we must first have had when we discovered that there was an unreal, an illusion; that is, when we first corrected ourselves. Now the distinction for which alone this fact logically called, was between an *ens* relative to private inward determinations, to the negations belonging to idiosyncrasy, and an *ens* such as would stand in the long run. The real, then, is that which, sooner or later, information and reasoning would finally result in, and which is therefore independent of the vagaries of me and you. Thus, the very origin of the conception of reality shows that this conception essentially involves the notion of a COMMUNITY, without definite limits, and capable of a definite increase of knowledge (Peirce, 5.311).

2 The similarities between the two conceptions of truth can possibly be accounted for by the Hegelian roots of both theories. Although he is far from consistent, Peirce at times even declares Hegel a realist (Peirce, 1.19; 4.50). This is high praise, as for Peirce nominalism is the central error of modern philosophy.

We may say succinctly, for the former conception the real is the external, for the latter conception the real is the fixed or that which ideally would become fixed in inquiry.

The motives for rejecting the nominalist conception of reality should be clear. By defining the real as the external full-stop, we would have no means of accessing reality. A gap between inquiry and reality is opened with no obvious way to leap it besides some sort of epistemological *deus ex machina*, such as Descartes' "clear and distinct ideas." Or, rather, I should say the motives for rejecting the nominalist conception of reality *by itself* should be clear. As Peirce himself notes, these two conceptions of reality are not contradictory (Peirce, 7.339). We can perfectly coherently regard that which was the external cause of inquiry as having the dispositional property that it would be believed to exist at the final, settled state of inquiry.

The motives for *accepting* the realist conception of reality are, perhaps, more occult. To understand them we need to understand better what Peirce means by "inquiry". Inquiry is defined simply as the struggle to attain a state of *belief* as opposed to *doubt* (Peirce, 3.74). Although both belief and doubt assuredly have their cognitive components, what is primarily important here is their *emotive* and *behavioral* components. To occupy a state of belief is calm, peaceful (Peirce, 5.372). A belief provides a pattern of behavior which brings along with it a certain smoothness in our interactions with the world. To occupy a state of doubt, by contrast, is to be uneasy and unsatisfied (Peirce, 5.372). Our doubts gnaw at us. All of these should be phenomenological facts already known to the reader but it is important to be reminded of them if one seeks to understand Peirce's conception of inquiry. It is this gnawing sense of doubt, for Peirce, which provides the first impulse towards inquiry and a process of inquiry can be said to be complete once this doubt has been sated, i.e. once we have been restored to a state of belief, however this state of belief has been reached.

Two things have to be noted here. First, we must distinguish between a *singular* instance of inquiry and inquiry *as a whole*. Singular instances of inquiry end in the cessation of singular instances of doubt, that is to say, in my establishing a pattern of conduct right here right now which is fixed for the time being and thus quiets my gnawing sense of doubt, while inquiry as a whole would end only at the *final* cessation of doubt, that is, in a belief that never would end up being disturbed. Second, although there are other forms of inquiry, it is *scientific* inquiry that we are primarily concerned with and for the most part when I say "inquiry" I have scientific inquiry in mind. Strictly speaking, scientific inquiry is the only sort of inquiry which allows us to talk about truth or reality (Peirce, 5.384). This is because scientific inquiry is the only form of inquiry in which we can talk about making mistakes (Peirce, 5.385). The other forms of inquiry are all subjective, either in the sense that they make the *individual* person's opinions or tastes the standard or the individual state's or authority's. This is a problem because the fact that other people (or peoples) hold different beliefs from ours is, or at least can be, a cause for doubt (Peirce, 5.378). As such, we need independent standards of justification in order for inquiry as a whole to be a consistent (albeit impossible) project. Given these independent standards, it makes sense to talk about *the* final, settled state of inquiry, such that we can identify the world determined by such an ideal state (reality in the *realist* sense) with the external world (reality in the *nominalist* sense). As for why we should call what is determined by this final, settled state "reality" in the first place, the Peircean response seems to be that otherwise reality would be unknowable in a way that could not even ideally be overcome. After all, we would have no impulse to inquiry supposing we had reached this final, settled state, any beliefs at this final state having survived all possible doubts. We can be said to know reality to the extent that our current state of belief approximates this unreachable ideal³.

V The Explanatory Power of the Correspondence Theory of Truth

The starting point for this paper was Wiredu's argument that the correspondence theory of truth is tautological and thus not a true *theory*. As a *definition* of the English word "truth," of what we mean by "truth" in everyday life and in

³ It is important to note that, while Peirce primarily has in mind empirical science here and while he does think that all scientific claims have to be verifiable by observation, his notion of both verification and observation are much broader than that of the logical positivists. For example, Peirce is willing to say that both modern mathematics and scholastic philosophy engage in "observations" in the requisite scientific sense (Peirce, 1.34). What is important is not that the observations be of empirical objects, but that general claims be checked against particular instances and by a community of inquirers.

science, it might be good but it is not a true theory, we suggested, because it does not have explanatory power. An argument for this claim based on the idea that the correspondence theory, being tautologous, must already be contained in our working definition was rejected on the grounds that theoretical results often come to be ingrained in our everyday conceptions. Further, the correspondence theory appears insufficient to serve as a working definition unless we can identify a phenomenon which it renders intelligible. In what followed, Wiredu's own preferred theory of truth, the pragmatic theory of truth, was contrasted with Peirce's pragmaticist theory of truth or *realist* theory of reality which is similar to the coherence theory of truth.

Although the discussion of the pragmatic theory of truth was generally critical, we did not definitively reject it. But we have two grounds for definitive rejection: The first, internal, ground is that Wiredu's claim that the correspondence theory is tautologous leads him into trouble; his pragmatic theory is a theory of truth *from some perspective or another* whereas what it is supposed to explain is truth as defined by the correspondence theory of truth, which is truth full-stop. Wiredu finds this definition of truth unhelpful and tautologous. But if, as Wiredu says, correspondence theory is tautologous, then the pragmatic theory cannot conflict with it without violating the conditions of meaningfulness. The correspondence theory and Wiredu's pragmatic theory conflict extensionally because they yield different conclusions when applied to the same propositions. "The Earth orbits the Sun" is not a proposition which is *either* true or false on Wiredu's theory of truth but it is on the correspondence theory. It might be true *and* false on Wiredu's theory depending on which perspective is presupposed, e.g. "The Earth orbits the Sun *from perspective S1* and not *perspective S2*."

The second, external, reason to reject the pragmatic theory is that it cannot be an explanatory theory as it cannot be a working definition of truth because it only serves to identify the phenomenon of warranted belief, not of truth, which is what we wanted to explain. This point can be made succinctly by noting that when an assertion that is made with warrant at one point and is then shown to be unwarranted on rational grounds when we take on a new perspective, we say that we merely *thought* it was true rather than that it was true from that perspective and is false from this one. Naturally in saying this I am relying implicitly on a working definition, albeit one that is not yet formulated. It would be more precise to say that the pragmatic theory of truth is not a *formulation* of our working definition for the reasons cited above.

Turning now to the pragmaticist theory of truth, if we consider it an explanatory theory we run into the same problem. We still do not have a working definition (or at least we have not found a way to formulate it). The question then is whether the pragmaticist theory serves as a working definition that allows us to engage in explanatory theorization. To do this it must identify the phenomenon which we wish to explain when we go about trying to come up with an explanatory theory of truth. I want to suggest that it does identify this phenomenon, albeit in an indirect way. The definition of truth as what would accord with the ultimately settled state of inquiry does not directly identify a phenomenon. Insofar as the ultimately settled state of inquiry is a merely ideal state, it does not refer to any actually existent reality at all. It does, however, turn our attention to certain general facts of experience, in particular, the fact that certain beliefs tend to be confirmed over and over again, while others are falsified. To use an everyday example, it is constantly confirmed that my chair supports my weight. The pragmaticist theory of truth turns our attention to these everyday examples, as well as similar examples in the sciences, such as the Earth's orbiting the Sun, as examples of truths while likewise cautioning us that the identification of these beliefs with truth full-stop is always provisional, thus respecting epistemological modesty without eliminating the normative force of the concept

Having suggested that the pragmaticist theory of truth formulates our working definition of truth, we can now ask ourselves if the correspondence theory can be regarded as a genuine theory of truth relative to it. Again, I want to suggest that this is the case. After all, should it not strike us as strange that certain beliefs keep getting confirmed? Why should this be the case? Why should it not be the case that one belief gets confirmed at one moment and its opposite the next? The strangeness of this state of affairs, and our corresponding state of doubt, is resolved by the supposition that these beliefs that keep getting confirmed are ones that fit with some reality external to us, a reality more or less stable and outside of our control. Thus, the correspondence theory of truth counts as a genuine explanatory theory. We may sum up this theory as follows: those beliefs which settle down (are continually confirmed) do so because they correspond to a mind-independent

reality and thus the course of experience, ultimately deriving from those objects, does not challenge them. Put in Peircean language, reality in the realist sense is identified with reality in the nominalist sense.

VI Conclusion

My conclusion is then roughly the opposite of Wiredu's. Wiredu supposes that the correspondence theory is the sort of tautology that does not expand our knowledge. This is certainly true in the sense that we find ourselves already having internalized it, but not in the sense that it is not a genuine explanatory theory. An explanatory theory can be judged only in relation to a working definition that identifies the phenomenon at question. The correspondence theory, having no clear criteria of application, cannot serve as such a working definition. Moreover, adopting as our working definition the pragmaticist theory of truth which I believe does the best job of the theories available of identifying, albeit indirectly, the phenomenon we wish to explain, we find that the correspondence theory does in fact explain why certain beliefs get continually confirmed while others are falsified. In short, the pragmaticist theory provides criteria while the correspondence theory says what we mean by "truth" and has explanatory power. It is only when we take the correspondence theory for granted, as we are inclined to do because it is so ingrained into our language and everyday life, that it appears trivial. Not all tautologies are uninformative, as Wiredu himself says (Wiredu, 48). He is simply mistaken in thinking that the correspondence theory is one of them⁴.

References

- Abbot, Francis. *Scientific Theism*. 2nd ed. Little, Brown, and Company, 1886.
- Blanshard, Brand. "Coherence as the Nature of Truth." *The Nature of Truth: Classic and Contemporary Perspectives*, edited by Michael Lynch, MIT Press, 2001. pp. 266-273.
- Nussbaum, Martha. "The Virtues." In: Rachels J, Rachels S, editors. *The Truth about the World: Basic Readings in Philosophy*, edited by James and Stuart Rachels. 3rd ed., McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2011. pp. 302-313.
- Peirce, Charles S. *The Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, edited by Charles Hartshorne, Paul Weiss and Arthur Burks, Harvard University Press: 1931-1958.
- Wiredu, Kwasi. "Truth and an African Language." *African Philosophy: New and Traditional Perspectives*, edited by Lee M. Brown, Oxford University Press, 2004. pp. 35-51.

4 Even granting that this proposal makes sense in English, we might worry about its translation into other languages. After all, the reason that Wiredu gives for thinking that correspondence theory is tautologous is not that "'P' is true if and only if P is the case" in English is like "All bachelors are unmarried males" but rather that its translation into Akan is like "All bachelors are bachelors." However, it is important to note that "All bachelors are bachelors" is only tautologous in the sense that it doesn't expand our knowledge if we mean the same thing by "bachelor" both times it occurs. In fact, given what we have just said about the realist and nominalist conceptions of reality we might justifiably say that "'P' is true if and only if P is the case", where P is the assertion that some concrete particular x exists, means that "x is real if and only if x is real" but here that is *not* a tautology because the first instance of "real" means reality in the nominalist sense and the second instance of "real" means reality in the realist sense. "'P' is true if and only if P is the case" *as we mean it here* only comes out uninformative tautology in Akan if "P would be believed at the final settled state of inquiry if and only if P corresponds to the mind independent world" also comes out an uninformative tautology.