

Examining the Current Divisive State of American Political Discourse through the Lens of Peirce's Triadic Logical Structure and Pragmatist Metaphysics

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Abstract : The polarizing dialogue of contemporary political America results from core philosophical differences. But these differences are beyond ideological and reach metaphysical distinction. Good intellectual historians have theorized that fundamental concepts such as freedom, God, and nature have been sterilized of their intellectual vigor. They are partially correct. 19th-century pragmatist Charles Sanders Peirce offers a penetrating philosophy which can yield greater insight into the contemporary political divide. Peirce argues that metaphysical and ethical issues are derivative of operational logic. His triadic logical structure and ensuing metaphysical principles constructed therefrom is contemporaneously applicable for three reasons. First, Peirce's logic aptly scrutinizes the logical processes of liberal and conservative mindsets. Each group arrives at a cosmological root metaphor (abduction), resulting in a contemporary assessment (deduction), ultimately prompting attempts to verify the original abduction (induction). Peirce's system demonstrates that liberal citizens develop a cosmological root metaphor in the concept of fairness (abduction), resulting in a contemporary assessment of, for example, underrepresented communities being unfairly preyed upon (deduction), thereby inciting anger toward traditional socio-political structures suspected of purposefully destabilizing minority communities (induction). Similarly, conservative citizens develop a cosmological root metaphor in the concept of freedom (abduction), resulting in a contemporary assessment of, for example, liberal citizens advocating an expansion of governmental powers (deduction), thereby inciting anger towards liberal communities suspected of attacking freedoms of ordinary Americans in a bid to empower their interests through the government (induction). The value of this triadic assessment is the categorization of distinct types of inferential logic by their purpose and boundaries. Only deductive claims can be concretely proven, while abductive claims are merely preliminary hypotheses, and inductive claims are accountable to interdisciplinary oversight. Liberals and conservative logical processes preclude constructive dialogue because of (a) an unshared abductive framework, and (b) misunderstanding the rules and responsibilities of their types of claims. Second, Peircean metaphysical principles offer a greater summary of the contemporaneously divisive political climate. His insights can weed through the partisan theorizing to unravel the underlying philosophical problems. Corrosive nominalistic and essentialistic presuppositions weaken the ability to share experiences and communicate effectively, both requisite for any promising constructive dialogue. Peirce's pragmatist system can expose and evade fallacious thinking in pursuit of a refreshing alternative framework. Finally, Peirce's metaphysical foundation enables a logically coherent, scientifically informed orthopraxis well-suited for American dialogue. His logical structure necessitates radically different anthropology conducive to shared experiences and dialogue within a dynamic, cultural continuum. Peirce's fallibilism and sensitivity to religious sentiment successfully navigate between liberal and conservative values. In sum, he provides a normative paradigm for intranational dialogue that privileges individual experience and values morally defensible notions of freedom, God, and nature. Utilizing Peirce's thought will yield fruitful analysis and offers a promising philosophical alternative for framing and engaging in contemporary American political discourse.

Keywords : Charles s. Peirce, american politics, logic, pragmatism

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