

Fixation of Belief (in review)

- Inquiry — Sole aim of inquiry is the settlement of opinion (i.e. the fixation of belief).
- Four Methods of Fixing Belief
 1. Tenacity
 2. Authority
 3. A Priori Method
 4. Method of Science
- Cartesian Criticism
 - Rejection of the use of methodological skepticism
 - Deficiencies in the use of the a priori method

How to Make Our Ideas Clear

Central Points

- Cartesian Criticism
 - Descartes tells us that individuals ought to accept those ideas/beliefs that are *clear* and *distinct* to one's mind. What this meant was not made explicit in the *Meditations*.
 - Clearness (defined)
 - Distinctness (defined)
 - Peirce argues that there is a **third grade of clarity** based upon his considerations from the Fixation of Belief (EP1:127).
- Inquiry aims to destroy the irritation of doubt.
 - The sole *purpose* of thought is to fix belief. That means that a meaningful belief will consist of two parts: (1) tangible part, (2) practical part.
 - The **tangible part** consists in the fact that inquiry is a response to the external world and that habits are possible *external actions*.
 - The **practical part** consists in the fact that all thought is directed toward settling belief.
 - If a belief does not have anything to do with the external world or settling belief, then it will be senseless.
 - Example: Transubstantiation (EP1:131 — class)
 - Peirce contends that the only thoughts that have any *clarity* are those of conceived sensible effects as they relate to the *function* of thought.
- Pragmatic Maxim (Articulated, EP1:132)

Consider what [sensible] effects, which might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these [sensible] effects is the whole of our conception of the object. (EP1:132).

Central idea: the meaning of a concept are its *conceivable sensible effects*. Those possible sensible effects (tangible) that would influence the settlement of opinion (practical).

- Examples
 - Hard
 - Reality/Truth
 - Clearness — Familiarity (not fiction)
 - Distinctness — Abstract definition (independent of what anybody may think)
 - Pragmatic — Consider the conceivable sensible effects and their practical bearings
 - Tenacity – Real, whatever I say it is.
 - Highly individual
 - Authority – Whatever
 - Highly arbitrary
 - A priori – Whatever it is natural for me to conclude based upon my own rational discussions.
 - Highly individual (not communal)
 - Arbitrary
 - Scientific Method – the *real* is ultimately agreed upon by all who investigate, the truth is what is represented in this final opinion.
 - Tangible and non-arbitrary since it is independent of what any one person thinks and yet highly practical since it depends upon what is ultimately *thought* in the final opinion. Depends upon the *community of inquirers*.
 - More communal.