

The Middle Peirce's Two Notions of Reality —Peirce on the Relation among the Scientific Method, Truth, and Reality

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Abstract

In the first part of this paper, it is explained why Charles Peirce's notion of reality as the object of the final opinion fails to resolve the problem of buried secrets, which was proposed by Peirce himself; it is then suggested that we do damage control to rescue valuable claims of Peirce's concerning the notions of reality and truth.

In the second part of this paper, two main points are argued for. First, "the Scotus-Peirce conception of reality" ("SPR" for short)—the real is independent of how any inquirer in particular thinks about it, but is cognizable by an indefinite number of inquirers—can be seen in Peirce's papers from 1868 to 1885, especially "The Fixation of Belief" and "How to Make Our Ideas Clear." Second, SPR is not only free from the challenge of the problem of buried secrets, but is also interwoven with two important claims of Peirce's: that the fundamental hypothesis of the scientific method is that there are real things in the sense of SPR, and that the notion of truth accompanying both SPR and the scientific method, is that truth is not determined by the consensus of any finite number of inquirers, but is knowable by an indefinite number of inquirers.

Key Words: Charles S. Peirce, pragmatism, reality, scientific method, truth