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Author:	Kasser, Jeff
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Abstract: Peirce is articulate and emphatic about the need for inquirers to remain ready to learn while also resisting disabling and fraudulent versions of skepticism. However, the need to learn and the need to believe do not combine readily. Peirce sometimes copes with this tension by distinguishing sharply between science, in which the will to learn reigns supreme, and practice, in which the need for confidence predominates. As several recent commentators have noted, this strategy carries costs of its own. Distinguishing too sharply between theory and practice can itself seem implausible and can leave Peirce with an excessively Cartesian approach to science and an excessively tenacious approach to matters of vital importance. But without such a distinction, the tension with which we began threatens to return. After a critical engagement with recent treatments of the theory-practice divide in Peirce, this essay suggests that the task has been somewhat misconceived. Instead of trying to figure out how to combine the right amount of pure doubt with the right amount of pure belief, we can make progress by recognizing that the doubt-belief theory allows for motivated variations in the confidence with which beliefs are held. This recognition allows Peirce the flexibility needed to motivate sensibly distinct norms governing science and practice. I suggest that Peirce's innovative discussion of weight of evidence in "The Probability of Induction" helps us to see that, even in 1878, his theory of inquiry contained resources that help render this tension tractable.

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