

Susan Haack's
Pragmatism as a
Multi-faceted Philosophy

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INTRODUCTION

I remember my first personal encounter with Susan Haack very well, in Cerisy-la-Salle, France, on the occasion of the colloquium *Cents ans de philosophie américaine* in the final days of the month of June 1995 (Cometti and Tiercelin 2003). In addition to Haack, a goodly number of other philosophical luminaries of the American scene were in attendance; for example, Ruth Barcan Marcus, Stanley Cavell, Ruth Anna and Hilary Putnam, Richard Rorty and others. It was really a fascinating event for a young and foreign scholar like me trying to take my first steps into the field of American philosophy, particularly starting the study of Charles S. Peirce and pragmatism.

Although, when I met her I was already familiar with some papers by Haack and with her book *Evidence and Inquiry*—which I had reviewed for the journal *Anuario Filosófico* (Nubiola 1994)—experiencing her engaging personality and strong intelligence made a deep impression on me. Since that encounter in France, Susan Haack and I have had many long conversations that have been very inspiring for me, because she always thinks with exquisite penetration and subtlety, and always says with great clarity what she thinks. In all those kind talks I have been always pleased to perceive an extraordinary intellectual affinity with her. For this reason I am delighted to take part in this volume in her honor, dealing particularly in with her critique of Richard Rorty's reading of the history of 20th century philosophy.

At the end of her paper “Pining Away in the Midst of Plenty”, the Irony of Rorty's “Either/Or Philosophy” (Haack 2016a), a response to a lecture of Rorty's entitled “Universalist Grandeur and Analytic Philosophy”, Haack acknowledges:

As I read Rorty's lecture, I was put irresistibly in mind of Peirce's description of how unclear ideas act “like an obstruction of inert matter in an artery, ..., condemning [the] victim to pine away in the fullness of his intellectual vigor and in the midst of intellectual plenty” (80, *CP* 5.393, 1878).¹

The lecture of Rorty's that caused this reaction in Haack's mind—captured in a phrase from Peirce's “How to Make Our Ideas Clear”—was part of the Page-Barbour lectures that Rorty gave at the University of Virginia in October of 2004. Then still unpublished², this text was chosen by the editors of *The Hedgehog Review* as the centerpiece of a symposium on “The Business of Philosophy”. They offered Rorty's lecture—“along with the responses of three contem-

porary philosophers [Susan Haack, Matthew B. Crawford, and Robert B. Pippin] who, for different reasons, take issue with Rorty's position"—"in the spirit of the ancient symposium".

In order to make sense of Haack's critique of Rorty's reading of the history of 20th century philosophy, focussing on the texts I have mentioned, I have divided my contribution into four sections: 1) Rorty and Peirce: How Rorty discovers and abandons Peirce; 2) Haack and Peirce: How Haack discovers Peirce and learns from him; 3) Rorty and Haack: The two pragmatisms; 4) Haack's pragmatism as a multi-faceted philosophy.

I. RORTY AND PEIRCE

I met Rorty for first time in the Cerisy-la-Salle colloquium just mentioned. I was impressed by his calm style and educated approach. I remember in particular an evening in which, with Jim Conant as moderator, Hilary Putnam and Richard Rorty debated their differences and similarities for about two hours, taking questions from the audience as well. I do not remember if I made a contribution, but I do remember the fascination of that night, the experience of seeing that philosophy was not something that was simply taught, but in that old sense something that was really *done*.

A few days later I went to Stanford as a visiting scholar at the Center for the Study of Language and Information, where I spent the whole summer writing a book on the methodology of research in philosophy. One day, in early August, I went at 2 p.m. to the impressive Green Library, which houses about 3 million books in the humanities and social sciences. The heat outdoors was relentless; though the Library was very comfortable thanks to the air conditioning, on the day in question, it was deserted. While looking for a book I came face to face with Rorty, who was also filling his suitcase with books. We greeted each other politely and he invited me to visit him at his Visiting Professor home on campus. We arranged the meeting by phone and he received me a few days later.

We spent about an hour talking about his habits as a writer and his more general ideas about research in philosophy. At some point I told him that I was studying Peirce, and with great simplicity and frankness he replied that he believed he had wasted two years of his life studying Peirce and that he gave up his attempt when he read Murray Murphey's book *The Development of Peirce's Philosophy* (1961), who came to say—according to Rorty—that Peirce was a failure and that in any case it was not possible to give a reasonable and coherent sense to his texts. I told him that in a recent second edition Murphey had tried to rectify that impression and in fact I sent him a few days later a photocopy of the "Preface" of 1993 in which Murphey wrote (1993, p. vi):

I have discovered, to my great surprise, that some readers of this volume have understood me as saying that Peirce was a failure as a philosopher. I do not know what has led to this misinterpretation, but I should like to take this opportunity to correct it. Charles Peirce was in my judgment the greatest American philosopher; his only rival is Jonathan Edwards. He was, I think, a philosopher of the first rank—the equal if not the superior of any other thinker of the nineteenth century. As a logician, he stands with Frege as one of the two giants of that era, but in philosophy generally he was the peer of any thinker in England or Europe. Let honor be given to whom honor is due.

Shortly after this, I found out that Rorty had written something similar in "The Pragmatist's Progress", his collaboration in the book by Umberto Eco, *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*. In his contribution, Rorty explained that he and Eco had both had to overcome their earlier ambitions as code-crackers, trying to make sense of Peirce's arcane texts. Rorty adds (1992, pp. 92-93):

This ambition [of deciphering Peirce] led me to waste my twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth years trying to discover the secret of Charles Sanders Peirce's esoteric doctrine of 'the reality of Thirdness' and thus of his fantastically elaborate semiotico-metaphysical 'System'. I imagined that a

similar urge must have led the young Eco to the study of that infuriating philosopher, and that a similar reaction must have enabled him to see Peirce as just one more whacked-out triadomaniac. In short, by using this narrative as a grid, I was able to think of Eco as a fellow-pragmatist.

Let me observe, by the way, that in the final lines of her text Haack considers it truly ironic that Rorty, who dismissed Peirce as a “whacked-out triadomaniac” (Rorty 1992, p. 93) whose “contribution to pragmatism was merely to have given it a name” (Rorty 1982, p. 161), “succumbed to exactly the sad fate that Peirce so vividly described” in the quotation taken from “How to Make Our Ideas Clear”: “pining away in the fullness of his intellectual vigor and in the midst of intellectual plenty”.³

In spite of the just and common accusation that Rorty gives us an inaccurate history of philosophy, what I want to add here is that, after his two years “wasted” in trying to make sense of Peirce’s texts, he was the first to point out similarities between Wittgenstein’s *Philosophical Investigations* (1953) and the philosophical framework of Peirce. The view put forward by Rorty in his paper “Pragmatism, Categories, and Language” of 1961 was that Peirce had envisaged and repudiated positivist empiricism fifty years earlier than Wittgenstein, and had developed a set of insights and a philosophical mood very similar to those of contemporary philosophers working under the influence of the later Wittgenstein. That affinity between Peirce’s philosophy and recent tendencies born of the rejection of the *Tractatus* and the positivism of the Vienna Circle, suggested that a closer study of views and themes common to Peircean pragmatism and the writings of the later Wittgenstein would improve our understanding of both philosophers’ work (Rorty 1961; Nubiola 1996). As we now know, scholarship has widely confirmed this fascinating approach (Fabbri-chesi 2014; Boncompagni 2016).

In fact, Rorty in his presentation of pragmatism for the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (1998, p. 633) identifies Peirce as a “brilliant, cryptic and prolific polymath, whose writings are very difficult to piece together into a coherent system”. Perhaps it is useful to say here that the old image of Peirce as a contradictory thinker (Goudge 1950), favored perhaps by the thematic presentation of his works in the *Collected Papers* has now changed completely. In more recent decades a deeper understanding of the architectonic nature of his thought and its evolution over his lifetime has gained general acceptance (Hausman 1993; Parker 1998). In the last decade all Peirce scholars have clearly acknowledged the basic coherence and undeniable systematic unity of his thought as the Charles S. Peirce International Centennial Congress, held in Lowell in 2014, clearly testified.

III. HAACK AND PEIRCE

Susan Haack has in various interviews narrated her intellectual training in Oxford (1963-68) with many of the most distinguished representatives of the analytical tradition (Gilbert Ryle, Michael Dummett, Philippa Foot, David Pears) and Cambridge (1968-71), where she received a powerful intellectual stimulus from Elizabeth Anscombe. In 1971 she moved to the recently founded University of Warwick, where she taught for twenty years until moving to the University of Miami in 1990. During these years, she became notably interested in the naturalized epistemology of Quine—which by the late 1980s she would eschew for its profusion of ambiguities—and discovered the pragmatist tradition:

In the early 1970s I began to read classical pragmatist philosophers—Charles S. Peirce, later William James, John Dewey, George Herbert Mead and, more recently, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.—; and it is from this rich and varied tradition that I have learned more and is what clearly and widely influence my work: for example, in my long-standing efforts to expose the falsity of philosophical dichotomies and my emphasis on continuities or, in Peirce’s terminology, in “synechism”; in the modest naturalism of my epistemology; or in my interest on the growth of the meaning and the limits of formalism, etc. (Haack 2013, p. 574)

Perhaps it is illuminating to quote from another interview of 2014 (p. 82) where Haack explains with extremely beautiful words her relation with Peirce:

Anyway, ever since those first weeks of reading, I have thought of Peirce as a philosophical companion—someone whose wisdom I often consult, whose writings never fail to instruct, illuminate, and inspire, whose ideas I often borrow and adapt—even though, as should go without saying, from time to time we disagree.

And in another previous interview, she gave more details (Haack 2007, pp. 22-23):

My interest in pragmatism began, as I recall, when, after reading the critique of Peirce's account of truth in the first chapter of Quine's *Word and Object*, I began seriously reading in Peirce's *Collected Papers*, and was soon hooked by the work of this quite remarkable philosophical mind! Peirce himself, I might add—besides being a formal logician of broad scope and deep penetration—was always much concerned with philosophical questions about logic, and (though he didn't like or use the term "epistemology") with what he and the other pragmatists called "theory of inquiry."

In fact, Haack's critique of Quine's naturalized epistemology can be considered an instigation for *Evidence and Inquiry* (1993), where she defends her own epistemology ("foundherentism") in detail against foundationalism and coherentism, articulating a more modest epistemological naturalism than Quine's, and rejects the "vulgar" pragmatisms of Stich and Rorty. In the second expanded edition of the book sixteen years later (2009), Haack slightly modified the subtitle: where before we had *Towards Reconstruction in Epistemology*, she now more specifically promises *A Pragmatist Reconstruction of Epistemology*. In this way, Haack's epistemological proposal is inserted explicitly in the pragmatist tradition, particularly as a heir of Peirce's synechism—the permanent search for continuities—and of Dewey's rejection of untenable dualisms.

The Foreword to this second edition deserves careful reading, because it brings into relief the continuation of Haack's discussions with those who were her interlocutors—or perhaps better, her opponents—in the first edition. In this Foreword from 2009, Haack recounts the evolution of her thought in some points and connects the approach to epistemology she adopted in *Evidence and Inquiry* to her treatment of issues work she would tackle in later work. I cannot resist quoting a few lines of a paragraph in the final section of the Foreword where this is explained, since it seems to me that is essential to understand Haack's reply to Rorty's lecture of 2004 (Haack 2009, pp. 26-27):

When the first edition of *Evidence and Inquiry* appeared, [Stan] Thayer told me I reminded him of Dewey [...]. A decade later, rounding out his book on the history of pragmatism with chapters on Rorty and myself, Cornelis de Waal observed that "some call [Haack] the intellectual granddaughter of Peirce, ... an apt description." [...] I now see, much more clearly than I did in 1993, that *Evidence and Inquiry* is through and through an expression of synechism, Peirce's principle that, rather than "doing philosophy with an axe," we should look for continuities; and of course, of Dewey's repudiation of untenable dualisms. That's why I have given this second edition its modified subtitle, *A Pragmatist Reconstruction of Epistemology*.

I think it is important to highlight the fact that Susan Haack mentions in the interview with Chen Bo that as she was reading Peirce she gradually discovered that her own general conception of philosophy had a marked pragmatist character. Let's quote again (Haack 2007, p. 28):

I began my readings in pragmatism with Peirce—an astonishingly wide-ranging, profound and original philosophical thinker. And I have been much influenced by him: by his articulation and

defense of the ideal of genuine inquiry; by his distinction (derived from Scotus) between the existent and the real, and his defense of the reality of generals; and perhaps especially by his “syn-echism,” the “doctrine of continuity.” This idea has of late come to seem to me extraordinarily fertile, as I have explored the continuities not only of scientific inquiry with empirical inquiry generally, but also of social-scientific with natural-scientific inquiry, of philosophy with science, and of inquiry with other human intellectual activities.

This passage deserves full attention, as in it Haack not only sheds light on her intellectual development, but at the same time puts forward the core of her discrepancy with Rorty’s account of the situation of philosophy in America, as presented in «Universalist Grandeur and Analytic Philosophy» and in several other places. While Rorty criticizes analytic philosophers because their problems are irrelevant to society, the analytic philosopher Susan Haack credits her reading of Peirce (and other pragmatist philosophers) as a spur to widening her vision, overcoming the poverty of philosophy understood only as conceptual analysis, and turning her attention to *genuine inquiry*. In his lecture Rorty says that “such problems, preserved in amber as textbook “problems of philosophy,” still capture the imagination of bright students. But no one would claim that discussion of them is central to intellectual life.” When, Rorty adds, contemporary philosophers insist that their problems “are ‘fundamental’ or ‘perennial,’ nobody takes their claim seriously.” In sharp contrast, Haack declares (2016a, p. 78): “Here, I’m with Peirce. Like the sciences, philosophy is at its core a form of inquiry; and, like the sciences, it seeks to discover truths about the world, and so is not purely a priori, but needs *both* reasoning *and* experience.”

IV. RORTY AND HAACK: THE TWO PRAGMATISMS

A close study of these two papers from the *Hedgehog* Symposium makes clear the deep difference between Rorty and Haack about the role of philosophy. Where Rorty finds unsurmountable dualisms, Haack looks for continuities (2016a, p. 77):

First, I’ll urge that we are not obliged to choose, as Rorty seems to assume, *either* clarity *or else* relevance, *either* truth-seeking, explanation *or else* ‘redescription,’ aspiration, meliorism, *either* science *or else* poetry, *either* nature *or else* culture; but that we can, and should, seek a philosophy that has room for all of these.

By contrast to this, Rorty’s claim is that traditional philosophy understood as truth seeking should be abandoned; that philosophy should be understood as a form of literature, as poetry (and that is precisely the title *Philosophy as Poetry* under which the Page-Barbour lectures were finally published in 2016). In fact, Rorty properly acknowledges that his position takes direct aim at philosophy at least as it has been traditionally understood (2016a, p. 73):

I hope I have made clear that this is not a battle about alternative solutions to common problems. It is about whether the traditional problems of modern philosophy are to be taken seriously or set aside. As the battle has worn on, it has come to look more and more like a disagreement about what sort of thing philosophers should take themselves to be doing, about the self-image of the discipline.

When Rorty claims to set aside the problems of modern philosophy, and to do so in the name of a supposed (*neo*)pragmatist tradition of a Deweyan stripe, he is deeply misleading. On this point, it is useful to follow Haack, and also Migotti, in distinguishing from the beginnings of pragmatism two radically different stripes of it, which perhaps explain its so diverse manifestations: reformist pragmatism and revolutionary pragmatism (Haack 1992, pp. 351-2; Haack 1996; Migotti 1988). Reformist pragmatism recognizes the

legitimacy of the traditional questions linked to the truth of our cognitive practices and tries to reconstruct philosophy. Revolutionary pragmatism abandons the notions of objectivity and truth and rejects philosophy as a kind of search for it; Rortian revolutionary pragmatism aims simply to continue the conversation of humanity.

This is not the place to carry out a minute study of Rorty's views ("the shifting kaleidoscope of Rorty's writing", Haack 2006, p. 53). Nevertheless, what has been said already is sufficient to indicate that a rejection of the search for truth under the accusation that it is only a scientific dogmatic dream, and the simultaneous appeal to John Dewey in support of this, is a total distortion of the classical pragmatist tradition. So it is not at all unwise to follow Haack in describing Rorty's pragmatism as "vulgar" (Haack 1993, chapter 9). The post-philosophical literary pragmatism which Rorty supports, aspires only to "keep the conversation going"; and declares that 'true' means nothing more than "what you can defend against all comers", and 'rationality' nothing more than "respect for the opinions of those around [you]". If we take seriously the more radical pronouncements of Rorty—I am paraphrasing Haack—his position is that sciences do not offer objective truths about the world. "Science as the source of 'truth', Rorty wrote (1982, p. 34), is one of the Cartesian notions which vanish when the ideal of 'philosophy as strict science' vanishes". What scientists do is simply to present incommensurable theories and this is their conversation, in the same way as literary conversation is developed by successive literary products and genres. As Haack writes, "given his attitude to science, it is not surprising either that Rorty disapproves of the aspiration to make philosophy more scientific and looks, instead, to an alliance with literature" (2006, p. 53).

As I have already noted, Haack's first goal in replying to Rorty was to urge us to reject a forced choice between clarity *or* relevance, science *or* poetry, and so on, but to encourage to "seek a philosophy that has room for all of these" (Haack 2016a, p. 76). The very apt English expression "to have room" brings to memory the metaphor of the hotel corridor developed by Giovanni Papini and quoted by Haack in several places (2006, p. 384). Let us recall the metaphor in William James' words (1906, p. 339):

Pragmatism, according to Papini, is thus only a collection of attitudes and methods, and its chief characteristic is its armed neutrality in the midst of doctrines. It is like a corridor in a hotel, from which a hundred doors open into a hundred chambers. In one you may see a man on his knees praying to regain his faith; in another a desk at which sits some one eager to destroy all metaphysics; in a third a laboratory with an investigator looking for new footholds by which to advance upon the future. But the corridor belongs to all, and all must pass there. Pragmatism, in short, is a great *corridor-theory*.

The second aspiration of Haack's reply to Rorty, then, is to show that Charles S. Peirce, William James, John Dewey, and George Mead—"the remarkable thinkers of the pragmatist tradition that Rorty so often, but so misleadingly, invoked—had pointed the way to just such a rich philosophy of, not Either/Or, but Both/And" (Haack 2016a, p. 76). While Rorty is claiming for a dissolution of philosophy into literature, or perhaps into silence, since

[...] human beings do not have a nature to be understood, but rather a history to be reinterpreted. They do not have a place in a universal scheme of things, nor a special relation to the ruling powers of the universe. But they are capable of increasingly rich and imaginative self-descriptions. They are finite creatures whose latest self-descriptions have shown an increasing willingness to accept that finitude (Rorty 2006, p. 75).

Haack is bravely defending a kind of renovation of philosophy, a renewed way of doing it seriously, based in the pragmatist tradition, open to contemporary science and to all the human anxieties of our times: "The ideal, again, is a philosophy that help us *both* to understand the world and our place in it, *and*

to redescribe it in ways that help us conceive how we might change if for the better.” (Haack 2016a, p. 77). Nothing could be more opposed to the abandonment of philosophy advocated by Rorty.

V. HAACK’S PRAGMATISM AS A MULTI-FACETED PHILOSOPHY

As it is well-known the analogy of the crossword puzzle in Haack’s *Evidence and Inquiry* is essential to her presentation of a clear and fruitful image of human reasonableness, and her explanation of the role of experiential evidence and the mutual support of the beliefs. On the same vein it seems to me that the best way to understand the fullest significance of Haack’s pragmatism is to realize that it is a powerful multi-faceted philosophy based in the notion of *human inquiry*; and for this reason in her way of doing philosophy there is room not only for science, but also for literature, and all the human intellectual activities. Let’s quote from the penultimate paragraph of Haack’s essay (2016a, p. 79):

Those of us who aspire, as I do, to a multi-faceted philosophy of Both/And want something more than the gnomic late-Heideggerian “poetry” or the hyper-intricate late-Wittgensteinian approach to language that Rorty professes to admire. We won’t confine to ourselves to the realm of discourse-and-social-practice, or content ourselves with the idea that there is nothing more to a belief’s being justified than its conforming to the epistemic practices of our culture. We will hope, rather, for an epistemology that can articulate the differences between genuine inquiry and the sham and the fake, and between stronger evidence and weaker; an epistemology that is informed both by psychologists’ and neuroscientist’ discoveries and by novelists’ imaginative explorations of hypocrisy, self-deception, and pseudo-inquiry; an epistemology that usefully engages with the evidentiary puzzles and dilemmas encountered in the legal system, and with questions about how to organize universities so as to make them more hospitable to serious intellectual work.

This long quotation from Susan Haack enables the reader to admire her powerful writing and the intellectual finesse that always characterizes her texts. At the same time, the informed reader realizes the freshness, originality and novelty of this way of thinking, which—at the same time—is inscribed in the richest intellectual tradition of Western culture: as William James put in the subtitle of his *Pragmatism* of 1907, it is “A new name for some old ways of thinking”. This way of understanding the task of philosophy and of doing it might be called—using own Haack’s expression—a *multi-faceted philosophy*, a philosophy that acknowledges that we human beings live in a various and multi-layered world, and that the different sciences and intellectual human activities are different ways to deal with the same reality presenting us different *faces* of it: “There is *both* natural *and* social reality” (Haack 2016a, p. 78).

I once liked to identify this general approach—which I also endorse—as ‘epistemological pluralism’, but this designation may be misleading, since it can sound as skeptical relativism. But to affirm that reality has different “faces”, and that we do not exhaust it when we know just one (or two or three ...) of them, is not at all skeptical. To affirm that we do know aspects (*facets*) of reality does not imply a renunciation of truth or its subordination to a culturalist perspectivism. Quite the reverse, pluralism not only strives to affirm that there are different ways to think about things but additionally—to use an expression of Stanley Cavell (quoted in Putnam 1990, p. 19)—that there are *better and worse ways of thinking* about problems, and that we can recognize the superiority of one way over other thanks to experience and rational dialogue. Theories are built, like other artifacts, but this does not mean that they are arbitrary or that they cannot be better or worse. The fact that all our theories are human creations means that they should be capable of replacement, correction and improvement according to our discovery of better or more refined versions, just as we make advances in our crossword puzzles as we fill in more entries, better corroborated with one another.

Analytic philosophy—now “intellectually close to exhaustion” (Haack 2016a, p. 77)—repressed during decades its differences with science, in order to present itself as an extension of science, or as an explanation of scientific knowledge. Analytic philosophy was also a *piecemeal* philosophy, a fragmentary approach to the issues concerned. By contrast, Susan Haack, wisely invoking the pragmatist tradition (it has “shown us the way to just such a rich philosophy” (Haack 2016a, p. 77), enhances the continuity of the inquiry between sciences, humanities and ordinary life. In this sense, I like to say that the role of philosophy in the 21st century depends on the effort made by the philosophers to unite in one single field of intellectual activity, both the logical rigor and human relevance, which during decades have been the differential features of two opposing ways to conceive philosophy: “It is perfectly possible to satisfy the demands of clarity and relevance together” (Haack 2016a, p. 77).

I want like to add in a loud voice that Susan Haack has been a wonderful leader in this ongoing process of reintegrating philosophy. Although she feels herself as a member of a resistant minority swimming against the tide, it is not unlikely to expect that the tide will reverse and a lot of young and new philosophers will follow her way:

There surely *are* [...] philosophers who follow a problem where it leads, even if that takes them across into another area, or outside philosophy altogether; and some knowledgeable and modest enough to learn from philosophers of the past. I believe I can claim to be among them. But we in the philosophical resistance are distinctly a minority; and [...] we are swimming against the tide. (Haack 2016b, p. 14)

Moreover, I would like to stress that this distinctive multi-faceted philosophy that Susan Haack defends and personally exemplifies is a kind of *empirical inquiry*. While modern philosophy was understood as an entirely *a priori* enterprise, Haack with C. S. Peirce and the main pragmatist tradition understand philosophy as an empirical enquiry. Let’s quote her once again:

[...] (again like Peirce) though I see philosophy as like the special sciences in being a kind of empirical inquiry, I believe it is unlike them in the kinds of experience it requires. Philosophy needs no fancy instruments, sophisticated experiments [...] What philosophy needs is *keen attention to familiar facts*: such as in my recent work, the fact that, in the small corner of the world in which we humans live, there are not only rocks, mountains, rivers, trees, insects, animals, etc., and the physical particles of which they are composed, but also a host of human creations, physical and mental, intellectual and imaginative; that we can learn from history and from novels, as well from psychological experiments about what makes human beings tick; that we can sometimes successfully predict how this animal, or that stuff, will behave; etc., etc. (Haack 2016c)⁴

Simply, this list of some of the interests of Susan Haack in her recent work shows clearly the openness of her philosophical mind, carrying on the best pragmatist tradition and interested in a multi-layered world. Not only is Susan Haack an outstanding multi-faceted philosopher, but Peirce has also been considered a multi-faceted philosopher (Shook 1998, p. xv) and Haack ascribes to Oliver Wendell Holmes a “multi-faceted legal thinking” (Haack 2019, p. 169). This label of *multifacetism* might be considered almost a derogatory term in the analytic tradition of boring overspecialization, but it seems to me that it is the right mark of philosophy when it is well done. Like scientific work, doing philosophy “is complex, intricate, multi-faceted—yes!—like working on a vast crossword puzzle” (Haack 2003, p. 106).

VI. CONCLUSION

Reading the essays of Richard Rorty and Susan Haack in the “Symposium: On the Business of Philosophy” (*The Hedgehog Review* 2006) is a philosophical experience in itself and makes honor to the subtitle of the journal: *Critical Reflections on Contemporary Culture*. Both texts are beautifully written, but—as Haack writes—Rorty’s lecture leaves the expert reader “with that old, familiar, dizzy feeling, an eerie sense of *déjà lu*” (2016a, 76). As a counterpoint, Haack presents something “that wouldn’t be equally familiar” to her readers. She understands Rorty’s reading of the history of 20th century philosophy very well, and tries to keep all what is valuable in it. Instead of choosing between clarity or relevance, explanation or aspiration, science or poetry, she presents a conception of philosophy that has room for *both*, and she does this in the rich stream of the pragmatist tradition of which nowadays Susan Haack is—I am convinced of this—the most prominent representative. Rorty studied Peirce in his youth and abandoned him as a waste of time; Haack discovered Peirce when she was already a professional philosopher in the analytic tradition. Peirce’s architectonic philosophy has been an illustrious inspiration for Susan Haack’s multi-faceted pragmatist philosophy.

NOTES

1. The *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce* are identified by CP followed by the number of volume and paragraph, indicating also, when available, the year of publication.
2. The three Page-Barbour lectures were finally published by The University of Virginia Press under the title *Philosophy as Poetry* (Rorty 2016b).
3. Hence, of course, the title of Haack’s piece.
4. Haack writes something very similar in 2016a, p. 78.
5. I am extremely grateful to Mark Migotti and Leslie Marsh for inviting me to take part in this special issue honoring Susan Haack in her 75th anniversary. My debt of gratitude towards professor Haack is immense not only from an intellectual point of view, but also from a personal one. Thanks also to Mark Migotti for his corrections and suggestions in the final text.

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