Naturalism, Innocent Realism and Haack's subtle art of balancing Philosophy

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To walk between extremes is a subtle art, whose grace and delicateness can be easily misunderstood by those who love extremes. Those who love art, however, might to think they love it because of the extremes in it, and not because of the subtle harmony and balance the artist found among them. For us, one of the most appealing notes of Susan Haack's philosophy has always been its search for equilibrium. A way to seal between Scylla and Charybdis in every theme she laid her keen mind over. An ability to be a moderate even among moderates.

In this tribute we would like to address two of those themes which are tightly interwoven and represents well the beautiful effort to balance and put down to earth, through a pragmatic instinct, excesses metaphysicians are prone to commit. The two themes are naturalism and realism.

As for naturalism, there seems to be something odd about being a philosopher and a naturalist, since if science can give an account of every aspect of the world, then what is the point of doing philosophy? Moreover, if philosophy is not concerned with giving an account of the world, what is the point of being a naturalist in philosophy? The formulation is paradoxical enough to make us suspect that it means more than it conveys at first glance. Nevertheless, because each of its conditionals points to something generally accepted, its astonishing effect remains.

Indeed, on the one hand, science has become the sole oracle for questions concerning the world and its furnishings. While of course not compulsory, this view entails a kind of naturalism which professes that everything in existence exists within the realm of nature and that beyond nature there is nothing. This thesis is the core of ontological naturalism. Furthermore, since science and its methods, laws, and descriptions provide our only access to nature—this is the core idea of methodological naturalism—no investigation could give an acceptable account of the physical world, or of life, human nature and suchlike beyond that of science. Accordingly, if philosophy were capable of delivering any useful answers to meaningful questions concerning the world, then it would have to be understood as a science, and, as such, to be committed to ontological as well as to methodological naturalism.

On the other hand, it is not unusual to take philosophy as a kind of discourse that is irreducible to a description of what there is. A discourse about discourses; a metadiscourse to which even science, and perhaps especially science, has to be subjected. In this sense, philosophy is not *prima facie* about the world but is about our knowledge of the world, which does not place philosophy outside of nature, but does

grant it a particular role in the acquisition of knowledge, or even in the organization of the knowledge science can deliver.

Haack would say that things are more complex and interwoven. They are indeed, but it takes some biographical perspective to see what she sees. In a text from 2013, where, entirely on her taste, she balanced formalism with content, she described her early days in Philosophy like this: "I was educated, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, first at Oxford and then in Cambridge, largely in the then-dominant-linguistic-conceptual-analytical style" (2013, 235).

Ayer was undoubtedly a central character in defining the "then-dominant" style. His youth manifesto represents quite well one strong defence of a conception of philosophy very much committed to showing that there is a specific methodological relationship between philosophy and science, but their functions and methods are not the same. Ayer points out the role played by philosophy, as he sees it, concerning the acquisition of knowledge:

> And we have also pointed out that it is impossible merely by philosophizing to determine the validity of a coherent system of scientific propositions. For the question whether such a system is valid is always a question of empirical fact; and, therefore, the propositions of philosophy, since they are purely linguistic propositions, can have no bearing upon it. Thus the philosopher is not, qua philosopher, in a position to assess the value of any scientific theory; his function is simply to elucidate the theory by defining the symbols which occur in it (Ayer 1936, 168).

Now, if philosophy is a kind of metadiscourse we can apply to elucidate theories and, therefore, to elucidate science itself, how can it make sense to use a naturalistic approach in philosophy? Would it make sense to try to "defin[e] the symbols which occur [in science]" through a naturalistic method? What exactly would it mean to do so? To define symbols empirically, for example, by merely describing the way people, especially scientists, use theoretical concepts? And if so, why shouldn't that task concern linguistics rather than philosophers?

Much more recently, 2003, Daniel Dennett, another heir of the same tradition, gives to naturalism in Philosophy a place in organizing scientific knowledge as a unified whole:

> My fundamental perspective is naturalism, the idea that philosophical investigations are not superior to, or prior to, investigations in the natural sciences, but in partnership with those truth-seeking enterprises, and that the proper job for philosophers here is to clarify and unify the often warring perspectives into a single vision of the universe (Dennett 2003, 13–15).

How could philosophy fulfil such a unifying task through a naturalistic approach? Let us ask again the question put to Ayer: is it by using some empirical procedure? By describing the way each "warring perspective" pleads its case? Of course, that would give us the theories again, not a unified version of them. Or should clarification and unification only be done with logical tools? Would that even be possible? If not, why shouldn't scientist be also concerned with this task as much as philosophers?

It is clear that hidden in the paradox of philosophical naturalism is a complex relationship between science and philosophy; but also between science and the world, which means between the language of science and the objects in the world. Do we know the external world, or is our knowledge of it a mere shared subjective representation? One that is true if and as long it can be secured against conversational objections? Haack has spent some of the most eloquent pages in contemporary Philosophy struggling against vulgar pragmatism, as she has labelled Rorty's standpoint.

The idea that reality is inscrutable is alluring and up to a point acceptable. Nevertheless, not up to the point that it cannot correct our knowledge of the world, Haack would say. Her shield against a malicious attack to scientific truth comes with a realism which is metaphysically innocent, but undoubtedly not ineffective. If philosophy is there to help sciences to achieve more clarity about their role in human social enter-

prises, it must show how to seek for truth and how truth bear on facts and objects science describes through language.

In order to save truth and with it science from malicious detractors, one has to articulate naturalism and realism in a continuum. The tradition Haack was educated in did it, and she did it her moderate way.

I.   SCYLLA, CHARYBDIS AND HAACK'S NATURALISM

In "Between the Scylla of Scientism and the Charybdis of Apriorism" (BSC), Haack navigates amid two significant figures of the analytical tradition to place her naturalism in an Archimedean setting. Following Strawson's line of reasoning according to which Quine has a "scientific commitment" when putting philosophy "in continuity with" science, Haack makes a distinction between three not harmonious elements in Quine's commitment. The first element consists in the claim that philosophy only differs from the scientific investigation in its degree of abstraction and generality, that its method does not differ from scientific method and must aspire to the same standards of rigour and precision in the search for truth. The second one would be the claim that philosophical issues should be solved within the empirical sciences, such as empirical psychology, which is a stance she calls "reformist scientism." Sometimes Quine goes as far as saying that the philosophical questions that cannot be answered by science, such as the question about the external world, are not "genuine questions," which would commit him with something more substantial: "revolutionary scientism".

There is, to Haack, a logical incompatibility between the first and the second element, since being "in continuity with" science is incompatible with "being identical" to science. The third element is the "extensionalist theme" and refers to Quine's rejection of all philosophical concepts that cannot be explained in purely extensionalist terms, such as "meaning," "analytical," modal terms, properties, propositions and so forth. The use of the extensionalist criterion for the acceptance of concepts and, therefore, also of questions about these concepts "suggests," in Haack's words, "that Quine acknowledges, in effect, only one kind of inquiry, only one kind of truth: the empirical" (BSC, 51). This third element, she concludes, is logically independent of the first one, which states the continuity between science and philosophy.

As for Strawson's philosophical view on the relation between science and philosophy, she also makes a tripartite distinction of independent elements. The first component consists in the claim that "philosophy should concern itself, not exclusively with the concepts and categories of science, but also with those of other disciplines, and, most centrally, with 'the structure of our common thinking'" (BSC, 52). Haack calls this "the theme of extra-scientific scope." The second element is "the conceptual-analysis theme," which describes the analysis of conceptual structures and interconnections as the central task of philosophy. Strawson's claim that the philosophical enterprise should be undertaken with a more descriptive than critical spirit is the third element, viz. "the descriptivist theme."

It is interesting to note that the expression "between Scylla and Charybdis" implies that we face an inescapable dilemma. Haack, however, offers a way out of it. Four constituents or themes delineate her position. The first one is similar to Strawson's "theme of extra-scientific scope". It consists in asserting that there are several philosophical questions, such as questions of ontological choice, questions about when one should consider a theory to be true, or questions about how we perceive external objects, that cannot be answered within empirical science and must, therefore, be investigated within philosophy's realm.

Besides that, Haack also advocates a conception close to Quine's according to which there is a continuity between science and philosophy, which is the second element of her position. The philosophical method should aspire to the same rigour and precision as the scientific method in its search for truth and, in a very general sense, involves "making conjectures, developing them, testing them, judging the likelihood that they are true" (BSC, 54).

The third item of her philosophy is the theme of the "intertwining of the empirical and the conceptual", and it holds that philosophical inquiry is a combination of empirical questions, in Quine's terms, and conceptual ones, in Strawson's terms. Philosophy raises empirical questions because it examines problems

originated in scientific inquiry or because some questions are related, not to science in the proper sense, but to ordinary, daily experience, and also because the concepts it analyzes, whose structures and interconnections, as noted by Haack, are seen by Strawson "as the chief focus of philosophical attention" (BSC, 55), owe their internal complexity to empirical presuppositions, such as "the presupposition that our senses are a source of information about things and events around us," or, in other words, the presupposition of the reality of the external world.

 "Critical commonsensism" is the fourth element of Haack's philosophy. A tag owing to Peirce, who, according to Haack, wanted to start from natural and instinctive beliefs of common sense, but critically, because those beliefs, although seemingly indubitable, need to be reformulated in order to be stripped of their inherent vagueness.

Nevertheless, those four elements are not enough to give an accurate account of Haack's naturalism. In her book *Evidence and Inquiry* (EI) she makes a distinction between aprioristic and aposterioristic naturalism, where the latter claims that the problems of epistemology can be solved *a posteriori*, within the web of empirical belief, while the first claims that philosophy can solve the problems on its own independently of experience.

Quine's reformist and aposterioristic naturalism is a consequence of the denial of the existence of *a priori* truths, i.e. "of his gradualist conception of philosophy as differing only in degree of generality and abstraction, not in the metaphysical or epistemological status of the truths it seeks, from the natural sciences" (EI, 122). Haack follows a path similar to Quine's, assuming that there is not *a priori* knowledge of facts. Unlike him, however, she admits the possibility of working out an *a priori* theory of justification that explains how a true belief might have a justification that is independent of experience.

Despite this concession, she does not share Strawson's aprioristic view according to which philosophy has questions of its own to be answered and must answer these questions in a way that is independent of experience or empirical science, using only the observation of "language facts" originated in "common thought." In her words:

> Anyhow, I see philosophy as depending, as *science* does, on experience; unlike it rather in the degree of indirection of the dependence, and in the kind of experience on which it depends – in requiring special attention to features of experience so ubiquitous as to go almost unnoticed, rather than on special efforts and apparatus to allow us to experience what is not available to everyday, unaided observation (EI, 213).

Although accepting that there are philosophical questions that cannot be answered by science and that philosophy has the task of investigating problems and concepts of everyday life from a point of view that differs, in a sense, from empirical science, Haack maintains a "scientificist" view of philosophy. According to her, the method of philosophy is similar to the one employed by the empirical sciences and keeps, even indirectly, a connection with the "tribunal of experience," or does so when it assesses meta-scientific questions, or when it examines everyday experience from a rather general point of view.

The resulting conception is one that admits a proper space for philosophical questions and a discourse analysis not always directly dependent, as such, on empirical facts. Haack acknowledges, however, that philosophical subjects, even those related to linguistic or conceptual analysis, are embedded in empirical sciences, be it methodologically or in terms of content, and therefore, that if not directly dependent for their truth on empirical facts, they are always tainted by them.

Because philosophical subjects, methods and contents are derivative of scientific theories and practices, one of those questions philosophy alone can address is the question about the degree of reality we can attribute to the objects of scientific judgments, i.e. the kind of realism one is prepared to admit. Haack's realism is the subject of the next section, but it's innocence is of naturalistic origin. Indeed, another central philosophical question is how to justify the truth we can expect of those same scientific judgments.

Although related to the discussion about ontological degrees of reality, the point here is on criteria for the truth of scientific judgments. To that question, Haack's alternative is "Foundherentism".

Foundherentism is a stance coined and engendered by Haack, after which the content of all our beliefs comes, to a certain extent, from experience. She uses Quine's allegory about the socially inherited language tradition to make her point clear. Quine attributes the colour "light grey" to the web that we inherit historically, where there must be, on the one hand, facts (black colour) and, on the other, conventions (white colour) to form this "light grey". Haack departs from that and elaborates a diagram of squares representing sentences in which each one is partly white and partly black. The larger or smaller black surface represents the degree of dependence on experience. However, none of the squares that symbolize the possible sentences we believe in and are present in our "web of beliefs" is completely white. (EI, 51). So, while Quine, because it is impossible to distinguish what is theoretical and what is empirical in a sentence, assumes that there are no pure black nor pure white parts in the "light grey" of one singular belief or in our web of beliefs – although each belief is a result from both – Haack's diagram seems to imply that one can distinguish theoretical from empirical parts in a sentence. Notwithstanding, she holds that one cannot justify any sentence solely empirically, nor purely *a priori*. That is the core of Foundherentism.

What Haack's diagram reveals is, therefore, her view that all sentences of our "web of beliefs" are, to a certain extent, "contaminated" by experience, which leads us to wonder in which sense Haack intends "to combine the conceptual and the empirical" or, in Strawson's terms, the *a priori* and the *a posteriori*. If Haack does not concede the existence of *a priori* propositions to Strawson, then her stance does not seem to be different from Quine's except for the comprehensiveness of the questions raised by philosophy. If so, she would agree with Quine that the whole universe of language is impregnated with *empiria*, but would believe that there are relevant philosophical questions that go beyond empirical science as such. These similar views of Quine and Haack seeing philosophical activity as influenced in content and method by empirical inquiries—at the same time as philosophy has scientific theory and practice as its main subject—although not identical with natural sciences, are entirely opposed to Strawson's claim. In his words: "I see no reason to suppose that further empirical discoveries, however interesting in themselves, could have any significant bearing on the substantial philosophical question(s) at issue" (Reply to Susan Haack, 66).

Haack has always pointed to the constant debt of gratitude to the so-called empirical sciences that philosophy accumulated throughout its history. In multiple ways, she has taught, empirical sciences contributed to the activity of philosophical inquiry both through examples and knowledge.

II. HARPOONS, NETS, CROSSWORDS AND HAACK'S INNOCENT REALISM

In *Defending Science: Within Reason* (2003), Susan Haack faces the problem of bringing together two views of science: the classical view, according to which science is ruled by a strict method of inquiry, and a more modern one, which considers it to be dependent on social, political, economic and cultural contexts. According to this view, these contexts would be determinant for the way a scientific inquiry is conducted. As Haack says, it is not enough to assert the need to reconcile two extreme views. It is also necessary to show, beginning with the description and explanation of several aspects of the scientific inquiry, how science develops and progresses, and which are the relevant aspects of the activities related to it. For instance, a more complete and precise explanation of science—and also of truth—must include both a metaphysical and an epistemological position concerning the possibility of scientific theories establishing a true representation of reality.

It is well known that Haack has an empiricist and pragmatist view of our capacity to know the world (Haack 2003, 125). We are dependent on our capacity for perceiving things around us. Moreover, we depend on the kind of instruments we have developed and constructed to help us in our scientific work; and these are not only material instruments but also theoretical and even fictional or imaginary ones. Human perception has to be complemented by capacities such as classifying, perceiving similarities, imagining contra-factual situations, figuring out general hypotheses, and, as Haack puts it, by a kind of 'instinct' that

helps scientists 'sniff out' the better hypotheses. In metaphysical terms, Haack supports an innocent realism which is related to common sense and is a view which presupposes the feasibility that we can achieve knowledge (truth) about the world, without the guarantee that we can exhaust knowledge, i.e. without the guarantee that we can know everything about it.

Notwithstanding, the kind of realism supported by Haack does not presuppose either that there is just one set of truth descriptions related to what we can observe, or that we should not change, in any circumstances, the lexis or the semantics of the terms used to describe and explain truly observed events. It also presupposes that there is a real world, which is the criterion for evaluating our statements, both in science and in daily life, in terms of truth or falsehood. Haack criticizes the instrumentalist view as well, which avoids discourse concerning truth by claiming that scientific theories are just tools we use to deal with the world, tools that do not need to be classified as true or false.

The flaws we find in scientific theories, together with their inherent incompleteness, are, she says, not sufficient reason to doubt the existence of only one world that we can describe from different points of view, languages and terminologies. While agreeing that incompleteness is part of the imperfect human way of knowledge, she argues against scepticism, and also against pluralism. Again, one can identify in Haack's discourse a vindication of common sense. The main points are the following: a) there is no reason for doubting what we usually believe; and b) there is a world we try to disclose and to explain. Its complexity and the limited way we have of approaching it do not justify scepticism, either concerning knowledge or to existence. In the context of this line of argument, the epigraph chosen by Haack for her chapter about realism in science could not be more accurate: "Let us not pretend to doubt in philosophy what we do not doubt in our hearts" (C. S. Pierce, "Some Consequences of Four Incapacities").

Innocent realism, therefore, could be summarized in the following assertions: a. There is not only one set of true descriptions related to what we can observe; b. we can change the lexicon or the semantics of terms used to describe and explain observed events truly; but, c. there is only one world that we can describe based on different points of view, languages and terminologies; and d. this real world is the criterion for the assessment of our utterances, both in science and everyday life, in terms of truth or falsity.

To cope with issues of the highest importance to the philosophy of science—such as the relationship between observation and theory, the relationship between general expressions and explanation, and the relationship between truth and scientific progress—Haack repeatedly uses the allegory of crosswords, previously introduced in *Evidence and Inquiry*: towards reconstruction in epistemology (1993). This allegory allows us to consider observational statements as being sustained partially by ostension, and also as always being related to other statements and established beliefs. There is not, says Haack, a single boundary between observational statements and theoretical statements: "Is there a privileged category of infallible observation statements, or of observable things? No, and no again. And yet the evidence of the senses ultimately anchors our theories in the world; and it is a real constraint" (Haack 2003, 125). Observational statements are not, in a strict sense, theoretical, because they can be learned through ostension. But this does not make them independent from other statements of the theory. There are semantic links between these observational statements and other statements of a language or theory. As regards theoretical statements, Haack does not deny that they possess specific properties which distinguish them from observational statements: "Neither is it to deny that, at any time, some statements attribute properties which are no way observable – "purely theoretical" statements, as we might say. Surely there are such statements; but the boundary of the "purely theoretical" constantly shifts with advances in instruments of observation" (Haack 2003, 129). In other words, there is always an exchange of information between the so-called observational statements—that can be learned, verified or falsified by ostension—and theoretical statements that sometimes are maintained as if they were *a priori* certain.

Less innocent realistic standpoints which make direct reference to a solution for scientific dilemmas concerning truth are also Haack's target of criticism. Scientific language is closer to ordinary language than to formal language. There is no rigid designation for the terms of scientific language. Names are not harpoons to objects. For Haack, instead of thinking of scientific expressions as singular names that 'point

to' well-defined singular objects in space and time, the harpoon picture (Haack 1978, 64) we should take scientific expressions as referring to objects as general expressions (generals), whose intensions and extensions change in line with the changes that occur in ordinary language or scientific theories. The changing meaning of general terms is related to imagination, which is one of the faculties that allow us to create new meanings to explain the world better. Once again, the allegory of crosswords gives us an indication of how we should regard a scientific explanation: it establishes links between general expressions, it always makes generalizations, and it shows us what particular objects (or sets of objects) have in common by determining the laws that govern their behaviour. We quote: "My approach is realistic about perception, about kinds and laws, about the world, about truth" (Haack 2003, 124).

Nevertheless, we should be cautious when interpreting this quotation. It is essential to observe that Haack does not assert that we cannot classify objects in different ways. In addition, she does not affirm that there is only one possible way of explaining or establishing causal relationships between events which we can truly say are real. It is this kind of liberalness in Haack's position which demands that she attaches the adjective 'innocent'—modest and not extreme—to the realism she maintains.

To understand the relationship between the notion of truth and the identification of 'generals'—a Peircean concept—according to Haack, one should examine how she approaches the problem of identification of 'natural kinds'. She denies that we need to hold a kind of essentialism in order to accept the reality of natural species or to accept the truth of statements that contain general terms. Because: "Whether a (synthetic) description is true or is false depends in part on what it says, which is a matter of human linguistic convention; but, given what it says, whether it is true or it is false depends on whether the things it describes are as it describes them" (Haack 2003, 140). So even if changes in the extensions or intensions of a given classification accur, it could still convey truths (partial ones at least) that could contribute to scientific progress.

Innocent realism is a philosophical perspective the assumes that we can acquire knowledge about the world without having the guarantee that there is a necessary and immutable correspondence between our classification of sets of objects, i.e. without the guarantee that our classifications actually correspond to sets of objects of one and the same kind because these objects are *the* "sets of objects" of one and the same kind given in reality. There is something conventional in our classifications, although they correspond to "knots of properties held together by laws." We do not need to assume that the aggregates of properties to which our general terms refer are such that they require from us the *discovery* of a single set of terminological classification. That is why, when using the example of natural kinds to illustrate her innocent realism, Haack claims that "there are real kinds; but this is only to say that some knots of properties are held together by laws" (2003, 124). On the other hand, if we did not assume the reality of "knots of properties," it would not be possible to explain how we classify objects and living beings. If that were not the case,

> we couldn't categorize things or discover useful generalizations about them; nor could the natural sciences—deeper and more detailed than everyday empirical inquiry, far better unified, more accurate, yet still thoroughly fallible and imperfect—gradually have managed to identify real kinds of thing or stuff, discern their inner constitution, and discover laws of nature. (Haack 2005, 250).[1]

Part of the problem of realism is indeed related to the question of the reference of our general terms for natural kinds. Haack takes a descriptivist position without denying the achievability of a precise reference to objects: "… we can acknowledge that reference is crucial without denying that kind-expressions have descriptive meaning" (2003, 134). Thus, Haack's enters the discussion about the reference of names to kinds, without actually taking a radical position in favour of or against direct designation. She takes an intermediary position in which the possibility of a direct reference to individuals of a kind through expressions-for-kinds is not denied, but in which the reference can be made through a descriptive content connected to the expression: the net picture of fishing objects in the world (Haack 1978, 64). Her moderate stance about the opposition between descriptivists and advocates of direct reference has the purpose of avoiding, on the

one hand, to fall prey to an instrumentalist position in which predicates might be seen just as conventional stipulations restricted to a language context, and, on the other hand, of falling prey to a metaphysical realism in which the relation of reference determines the content of the expressions-for-kinds without the need to presuppose a sort of stipulation of the properties of the kind previous to the relation. In this way, Haack takes distance from more radical externalist approaches in epistemology, such as the viewpoint of the early Putnam (1975a), who for a long time led, in the field of philosophy, along with Saul Kripke (1981 [1972]), the discussions about natural kinds. As known, according to them, the causal relations between objects and between the knowing subject and objects would be the determinant aspects of the semantic relation, i.e. the determinant aspects of what general terms or terms for natural kinds mean. Haack's foundherentism does not entirely exclude this perspective since her approach requires the presupposition that there is a correspondence between what our terms for naturals kinds mean and "real generals": "In fact, as I said earlier, the very possibility of scientific inquiry requires that there be, as Peirce would have put it, 'real generals'; otherwise, though we could describe particular things and events, we could neither explain nor predict" (Haack 2003, 129). However, what are "real generals"? Moreover, how do they differ from real natural kinds? It is in the definition of real generals that the proper realistic aspect in Haack's view, which is recovered from Peirce, appears more clearly:

> I would say, as a rough first stab, that kinds are not simply properties or similarities, but more like congeries of properties held together by laws, i.e., clusters of properties co-occurring because they are lawfully connected; and that a kind is real just in case it is independent of how we believe it to be, i.e., the cluster of properties is lawfully connected independently of our classifications (Haack 2003, 131-132).

What stands out is that Haack's realism goes beyond the possible claim that there are groupings of properties that can receive a standard naming from us. She also claims that these clusters are ruled by laws that are independent of our classifications. In this way, realism gets an unexpected additional strength. However, she does not go as far as to claim that our classifications are always correlated to real natural kinds since classifications can change and be improved. So Haack (2005a) agrees that there is an evolutionary aspect in scientific classifications, i.e. the conceptual changes that are constant in science. However, she simultaneously holds a kind of correspondentism which, although it is not a metaphysical realism, affirms the existence of real kinds to which we get increasingly closer through gradual changes in our terminology.

III. AN INDISPENSABLE ART

Those who expect moderation to be mere conciliation are wrong. In any case, that would be a mistaken way of describing Susan Haack's art, which is not a preference for moderating positions, wherever their starting point, but which is about finding a moderate stance among those who take fundamental notions seriously. Notions like truth, reason, reality, falsehood and science. Notions without which the debate is empty and confusion reigns.

In a world fraught with clashes in which opponents place themselves as far apart as those who disdain science and those who trust it implicitly, Haack does not seek conciliation. With the detractors of the truth, there must be only patience to show that they are wrong. In this regard, one cannot deny, even in the most adverse and unfavourable scenarios, Haack's good disposition and formidable didactic to show to the nefarious detractors of the truth their mistakes. Although efforts to convert hidebound extremists is, more often than not, in vain, the fruits of such efforts may thrive among the novices. Students rescued by her work from the philosophical chatter of those who confuse the mitigation of truth with its denial.

Our tribute to Susan Haack pays homage to her sophisticated art of balancing philosophical positions, whose bases are within the scope of reason, as a means of approaching a more correct one, as a means of

favouring the arduous and gradual acquisition of knowledge. Today as yesterday and always, an indispensable art.

NOTES

1. Here, we do not intend to exhaust the analysis of Haack's use of the notion of "law of nature." In her thought, this notion seems to have a more realistic content than the notion of "knot of properties."

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