

Susan Haack on How to Regain the Faith to do Philosophy

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To Susan Haack, with gratitude and admiration.

[I]t is difficult to understand the uneasiness which inevitably pursues anyone who dedicates himself to an intellectual profession. Despite so much science, so true, so fertile and so central to our life, to which so much human toil has been consecrated, the intellectual of today, if he is sincere, finds himself surrounded by *confusion*, *disoriented*, and intimately *discontent* with himself.¹

In my University I found various men interested (or uninterested) in their subjects, but, I think, no man with a view of literature as a whole, or with any idea whatsoever of the relation of the part he himself taught to any other part. [] Those professors who regarded their ‘subject’ as a drill manual rose most rapidly to position of executive responsibility (one case is now provost). Those professors who had some natural aptitude for comprehending their authors and for communicating a general sense of comfort in the presence of literary masterwork remained obscurely in their less exalted positions.²

1. THE INFLUENCE ENDURES

I became interested in philosophy after I was taught that philosophical efforts were directed at fundamental questions about the nature of art and science, and that philosophy was the best way to grasp the essence of these endeavours, to which I was dedicated at the time. Not that I knew much about Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Hegel or whomever, but—I now count it not much more than a glimmering, not real knowledge—I had learned some interesting and moving things: that Aristotle had written a majestic *Poetics* and Aratus a beautiful astronomical poem; that Descartes had invented the analytical geometry and Leibniz the calculus at the same time as Newton; that Newton had spoken about some subtle magnetic spirit and Goethe had composed a theory of colour contrary to that of Newton, and all of these *opera* represented for me achievements of truth and beauty.

For me, this was a sort of melting pot of literature, science, and philosophy, and what was there of truth and beauty in it, and in what proportion, was what I wanted to know.

Like many young philosophy students, I was intrigued by what I'd later discover to be the correlated problems of truth in art and aesthetics in science. Marcel Proust's time and constitution of experience, James Joyce's *epiphanies*, Ezra Pound's *imagist poems*, Faulkner's *monologues* and the problem of the *stream of consciousness* counted for me as problems of truth and knowledge, as well as Descartes' analytical geometry, Newton's *ether*, Faraday's *lines of forces* and Maxwell's electromagnetic *field* counted too, besides their rational construction, as aesthetic insights, results of imagination, or simply as beautiful creations like Descartes' geometry.

It was precisely the consideration of theories as a kind of insightful but not entirely confirmed experience in which imagination, intuition, and even invention were on display that led me to become interested in the philosophy and history of science. But as soon as I began my MA studies, I found in my courses that history of science, philosophy of science, logic, epistemology, metaphysics, and even modern and classic philosophy were disconnected from each other. And this was not even the biggest problem, which was that each subject had its own specialized agenda that occluded the domains of the others, making interconnected paths hard to find and requiring a lot of time and effort just to understand each particular agenda. I found some solace in some works and ideas—of Alexandre Koyré, Irving B. Cohen, Peter Medawar; Mary Hesse and Larry Laudan for example—which leave room for the relation between science and its history, and even for imagination and creativity in the case of Medawar, but I lacked the ability to connect them to a “relevant” present issue in the philosophy of science.

So, in 2012, as a recently graduated student from a Philosophy of Science programme, with a brand-new PhD—if I'm honest, I was deeply confused, disoriented and intimately discontent with myself; I had sadly abandoned all those uncategorizable unspecific philosophical inclinations. Paradoxically, the big thing is that I didn't know it yet—I would discover it gradually, after meeting Susan Haack. Her guidance and teaching opened my eyes to what I'm going to say next; namely that I was terrifically fortunate to meet Professor Haack at a time when my professional academic life was about to begin, in disorientation, and with blurred goals and confused expectations, and I was anxious about my own capacities: was I skilled enough to meet the challenges that my discipline demanded of me? These daunting challenges were mainly that of specialized publishing and research, and had—as far as I can see now if I'm sincere—nothing to do with values, at least not with conscious values, those that you keep in mind in every step of the way, as I would later understand, after reading “Out of Step: Academic Ethics in a Preposterous Environment” (Haack 2013, 251-267).

Through Professor Haack's living example, and without her saying a single word, I eventually found the why, the reason for my malaise: though I had been trained to read, interpret, understand, this had been done mainly through imitation, both of highly specialized scholars and classic authors, those who had constructed and were presently constructing the philosophy of science. Although our training did include the reading of primary texts, the imitation I'm talking of was not supposed to be at first hand, but via interpretations of interpretations of interpretations that came up to us in the form of ultra-specialized vicarious messages that eventually seeded in me the honest and respectful although disoriented desire of “I want to talk, to write and *to act* like them”—like a specialized scholar, I mean—making me perceive my first inclinations as illusory chimeras.

Well, now the career I was pursuing demanded that I *become one of those scholars*, an original, innovative, creative, serious one; but I didn't know how to do that other than enlisting myself in a specialized group and follow their *credo*, their inner figures and their method, and this included thinking, acting and behaving in certain ways. You simply cannot “not do it,” as I painfully learnt sometimes by own experience.

You could say I was quite naive or easily swayed so as not to resist this influence, you could object that I was seeing the things too narrowly. Okay: perhaps I was impressionable, maybe, innocent, but the fact is that I really was being faithful to what I considered to be “THE philosophical way” which implied a certain kind of conduct and manners, even though I didn't know how to continue my philosophical development or even what else to do with my recent work. Granted, there were and still are colleagues and teachers whom I admired and still admire, but what now was expected from me, if I wished to make a living from philosophy, was original and audacious work.

There is certainly no one to blame for these professional limitations of mine; it wasn't my teachers' fault, or my institution's, or my advisor's—perhaps it was my fault, but most likely it was just the aftermath of the institutionalized philosophy atmosphere, where apparently the logic of education states that you must as soon as possible join up with a scholarly faction where one of the first things you start doing is respecting fallacious hierarchies, deferring to certain persons and showing admiration. I am not saying that we must not respect to any institutional authorities, not admire and respect inspiring and honest professors and even less I'm not inciting us to rise up against our mentors. But as I had the occasion to confess to Professor Catherine Lutz—precisely at a congress about *Culture and Affectivity* to which I was invited by one of these encouraging teachers—I have always thought that when you are a student and choose a tradition to follow you are choosing aesthetically or emotionally, not simply rationally, because you don't have enough theoretical background, knowledge and experience to see if your authors or tradition in fact have the philosophical merits you'll later be defending. This is a time when the student mostly needs to study the history of philosophy patiently and carefully, to exercise abilities, capacities and virtues to understand the discipline and its nature instead of pledging his work too early and becoming a paladin. This is a very subtle dynamic, the existence of which is hard to prove and the nature of which not easy to grasp, but I strongly believe that this common feeling exists between students and young professors and I appeal to this.

Of course there have always been students who maintain their independence and intellectual freedom as well as professors and groups that encourage their students, but the fact is that, if you want to make a living at this, your institutional environment encourages you to become as renowned a specialist as you can in as short a period of time as you can, and pushes you to prove this with productions, results, and recognition. The most *natural* way to do this is to follow a group where the opportunities to publish, attend conferences abroad, obtain scholarships and win a name flow, and all this usually requires joining a project where some personal and intellectual commitments have to be made. I'm not saying that we students deliberately and opportunistically choose the best platform to succeed in the task, I am just trying to show that this is the steam that drives the engines of the machinery.

For Haack, the problem arises mainly from a distorted academic dynamic, which, as “Out of Step” points out, gradually and systematically pushes students and professors in the direction of productivity, research grants, publications, specialization, prestige and recognition, turning the need for values into the convenience of abilities to achieve these sorts of results and shaping the original philosophical aims into a mixture of economic-philosophical marketing.

“Out of Step,” the centre of my attention, is a vivid, intense, brave and yet passionate document full of verve—whereby my intention here is not to do a bad paraphrase or a poor imitation in my dull English. I consider this piece a must-read for any philosophy student or professional—not a text to excerpt—so I strongly recommend reading it in full. In what follows, I just want to make clear how it soon became a milestone in my academic life, and in doing this, I seek neither to justify my own mistakes and limitations, nor blame others for what I was doing wrong; I'm just trying gratefully to acknowledge that it was through Professor Haack that I began to recognize the superfluous and unnecessary conditions that make the “academic virtues” go dimmer. In every step of the picture I'm about to draw she is revealed as the opposite sort of spirit, as a philosopher educating you in the virtues philosophy demands.

2. BAD NEWS FROM THE OUTSIDE WORLD: *J'ACCUSE!*?

Certainly for a newbie graduate student, the philosophy he learnt through classic or contemporary-but-fundamental works is in some way different from the institutional philosophy he is meant to carry out. It seems to me that irrespective of whether such a one is a graduate student, postdoctoral researcher, young fellowship holder or on the tenure track, he is expected to *do* professional philosophy, which, institutionally speaking, means (at least) publishing, doing research, speaking at conferences and lecturing classes, organizing specialized academic events, attending group sessions, seminars, supervising students, keeping in

regular touch with the central figures in the field, and on top of this an ever-growing list of administrative tasks: all this displayed as the original results of his own research.

This kind of “productivity” requires at least time, effort, and too much hard patient work, but, in an academic environment where prestige is related to funded projects, money grants, selected scholarships, post-doctoral fellowships—since it’s extremely difficult to get a permanent job right away—and where we, the students or young professors, feel the constant pressure to publish and gain renown, these products soon become the habitual fuel for instant recognition and a possible subsequent position. But the corresponding values have scarcely been taught.

In Latin America perhaps everything is twice as hard, because we are not instilling our students the confidence to write *their* own ideas, not training them from the very first in the “art” and praxis of philosophy, as Tugendhat pointed out to be the case for Anglo-Saxons students (Hernández and Pinzón 2007, 91). Instead here in Mexico there is the common fear that we are inculcating wrong attitudes that soon or later conduct us towards the false idea that philosophy is more a posture than the outcome of real hard work. This situation is nourished by at least two conditions: the first, mentioned above, is the need to be a part of a specialized group, and the other is that each of these groups is trying to show itself to be the uppermost, most celebrated, cutting-edge coterie of philosophers, and this is very often accompanied by a corresponding training.

The structure within these groups is more a top-down hierarchical structure or a concentric circle where power emanates from than a real educational net: the top or the centre being some specialized figure or scholar (we love those who studied abroad—sometimes an administrator or an influential professor is enough) authorized to represent an important philosopher, a tradition, or simply an agenda, the inner lines being the closest colleagues (a cluster of some local but many international colleagues—we have some special predilection for Europeans), the next line being PhD or graduate students (we prefer those who speak another language and have already published *something*) and the outsiders line being undergraduates students and other enthusiasts (those that we need to be “forged” as one of my early professors put it). The vision of philosophy presupposed here seems more a matter of assimilation than education, and its logic is that of hierarchical instructions pouring down from the top or central figures into the students—in a time when the main contribution of we the students is imitation. These imitations commonly include impolite belittling of those below and other indications of “how to seem to know it when you don’t” (Pound 1954,15). One usual discourtesy among the top or central figures is the response “over the next months I’ll be very busy, but eventually I will...”—for whatever you have asked—or attitudes like “Stay away. I am a different person when I’m with important colleagues.” There are honourable exceptions of course.

Soon enough, we students are looking for quickly gratifying kudos rather than serious and gradual, distilled and slowly aged academic recognition. At least that was one of the general conclusions of the symposium “Philosophy as a Profession in Mexico and Iberoamerica” at the 18th International Congress of Philosophy held in San Cristóbal de las Casas in 2016 and organized by the Mexican Association of Philosophy. I was elected the secretary of the symposium’s plenary session on the challenges of the social commitments of philosophy. Among the concerns expressed was what kind of students we were forming and among the conclusions reached was that we need to reassess and even readdress the values that we are (or we aren’t!) inculcating. There was a general concern about fomenting a kind of arrogance in students, training them in intellectual gymnastics or fencing, focused on defeating and knocking down the opponent, without any engagement in the history of philosophy or the social world; whatever tradition they are interested in, in principle we teach them to dismiss the others as not worth it—as, in my own experience, analytic philosophers adhered to the motto “beyond here lies nothing.” This calls to mind Carnap’s and Quine’s supposed personal attitudes to their discipline taken as a philosophical principle.³

In consequence, seminars or courses bringing two distinct traditions together are extremely rare, since we are “the peak of the ultimate reasoning,” and notwithstanding that such interactions have occurred in the history of philosophy. Even Carnap in the *Aufbau* turned to Husserl and Nietzsche for their investigations about the constitution of experience and the problem of the self.⁴ Gadamer acknowledges Witt-

genstein's *Philosophical Investigations* as sharing his positive disposition towards the notion of "language games" (Gadamer 1998. xxxvii, n.13). It's difficult to find courses in which these interesting connections are addressed or even mentioned, although they are signs of intellectual modesty and philosophical honesty. Mary Hesse also has turned to Ricoeur and Gadamer in order to support her cognitive claims for metaphor, partly from a hermeneutical perspective (Hesse 1998, 9, 11-14). *La Métaphore Vive* of Paul Ricoeur is itself a philosophical investigation where philosophy of science and analytic and hermeneutic traditions coexist.

If not completely frozen, the free, reflective, critical philosophical spirit, when trapped within these faddish, specialised groups, is somehow paralysed, fenced-in by barriers in a sort of high walled enclosure; or it has no home at all, but passes from group to group and trend to trend in quick succession. As a Masters' student, I was an enthusiast of science and technology studies, but simply couldn't handle the enormous number of options for a thesis topic: from Husserlian "*Lebenswelt*" to the social impacts of mobile phone base-stations! Sometimes I wonder where those spectacular, massive congresses have gone, organized with grants and huge amounts of money in which it was hard to say if one was doing philosophy, sociology, history, anthropology; developing an economical programme or a humanistic engineering or whatever? Trends and fashions pass quickly, but students under their influence remain the same for decades.

I have seen the theses of most of my teachers, and it has been brought to my attention that they were the result of philosophical issues diametrically opposed to what they're doing right now. This is not necessarily wrong, since intellectual direction is a matter of free choice, but my teachers' themes, I fear, were not particular cases of free choice in their young academic life. Instead, they were following an implicit academic rule; for my teachers' themes reflect religiously the interests of their teachers, just as we reflect our teachers' latest interests—so, depending to whom they were following they have in common theses on their teachers' contemporary enthusiasm: Marxism, Existentialism, Foucault, or Analytic Philosophy, or whatever. Naturally, the problem here lies neither in Marxism, Existentialism, Foucault, Analytic Philosophy nor in the *Zeitgeist*, the problem lies in a kind of intellectual imposition and innocent reception. As far as groups are concerned, the problem is accentuated: what "matters" and what is "worth writing" is passed on to students immediately, automatically, almost affectively, as I said before. It seems to me that this dynamics of teaching and learning is more psychological or sociological than philosophical.

These fallacious hierarchies, of groups versus groups and somebodies versus nobodies, threaten the student's education far too early, eroding his freedom and creativity, and ability to exercise critical attitudes. Students start by asserting themselves over others, sometimes by defending and promoting one tradition over the others based on a figure of authority, some other times under the form of protected technical language, defending the superiority of some language for its technicality and difficulty, and then transmitting this to their respective students when they become professors.

One of the criticisms that recently struck me in a particularly acute way was that of Nancy Cartwright, Roman Frigg, Mauricio Suárez and others at the London School of Economics against the semantic as well as structuralist programmes in the philosophy of science. Their criticism, was straightforward, expressing one of the basic concerns we philosophy of science students have when are being taught this conception. They expressed philosophical reservations against the semantic-structuralist views of theories by noting that structuralists "cannot account for [the fact] that models represent" (Frigg 2002, 2). In other words, they have raised philosophical doubts about how the formal structures (set-theoretical models) can effectively be related to the empirical phenomena they are supposed to stand for, since structures cannot represent. The most important thing for my purpose here is that this is criticism that goes no further—the core of this assessment is *pure* philosophical criticism that doesn't need the highly specialized technicism of set-theoretical semi formalism structuralists love to use. But it is a philosophical objection we the students would be afraid to advance, if I can speak on behalf those schoolmates and colleagues with whom I've been acquainted.

I wonder how many graduate dissertations or professional papers deal with this sort of intuitive fertile criticism. I suspect not many here in Mexico, at least not my own. The fact is that this philosophical oppo-

sition under authoritative voices made the structuralists burst into a flood of defensive arguments (Suárez and Cartwright 2008, 62-63).

Why are we so afraid? So reluctant to learn from these philosophical examples? I think that's because hyper-specialization one way or another tells you that "you have to learn either my technical language or tools and methods before you can criticize me." As far as I can tell from my own experience here in Mexico, this happens among Husserlians, metaphysicians, Heideggerians, and yes structuralists. It seems that the object or the problem—be it theories, knowledge or being—is captured and you have no longer access to it, unless you learn and master the language they speak and use and master the tools they use. The philosophical object is now a product of their own views and not a general problem. These languages, methods, and tools usually take many years of training to understand, undergone at a time you are more a bonded disciple than a free, convinced member of the profession. I remember in passing, I was once invited to a book presentation about one of the present *turns* in the philosophy of science; it surprised me that the author was a well-known member of a group having an entirely different conception about theories to that he was defending in his book. I asked him if he was abandoned his former allegiance and he replied: "sort of," and continued, "after so many years it took me to learn the language, I simply cannot abandon the programme."

I believe specialization threatens first intellectual freedom, embracing very soon personal and intellectual engagements that instead of reinforcing the values that underpin philosophical reflection, undermine creativity and induces us to stray from our personal abilities and interests. How many of our theses and papers are just thickening the bulk of scholarly bibliographies without adding anything original?—unless we think *original* is to apply the group specialized views or treatment to a "new" phenomenon, i.e. a phenomenon to which that specialized treatment hasn't been applied yet.

The LSE's philosophers of science objections that made some structuralists uncomfortable embrace one of the basic concerns many students have in the introductory structuralism courses. Why don't they crystallize into PhD theses or papers for example? They're not a matter of common sense naturally, but usually, an authoritative voice is needed to point out deficiencies, limitations and excesses of an established programme. These hyper-specialized programmes require many years of complex training in which our critical capacities increasingly diminish, and their basic philosophical assumptions are eclipsed for formulas and jargon.

This all along made me think of Hume's warnings against abstruse philosophy in his first inquiry (Hume 1748/1996, 3-16)—one of the most basic limitations of the semantic-structuralist view was in front of us all the time and we couldn't notice it because we were thoroughly imbued with the false idea that we must be an utmost logician-mathematician to find philosophical deficiencies into the programme. To be fair, on the other side of course is always the pernicious dilettantism—In my University some of our philosophical luminaries convey the best of Hellenic philosophy: like Socrates, they write nothing, but spend their time dialoguing like Plato, and walking through the University corridors like Aristotle.

As Susan Haack would happily accept, when she welcomes the label of "Neologicistic Typographical" for her style of philosophy and adopts it "as an accurate self-description" (Haack 1993, preface x), there's nothing wrong with technical languages *per se!* Problems arise when technical details overshadow everything else. In "The Fragmentation of Philosophy: The Road to Reintegration" (Haack 2016, 3-32),⁵ Haack argues that the best and most ground-breaking work has come, not from hyper-specialized work on "X's and Y's interpretation of Z's W," but as a result of hard and serious reflection about philosophical problems and their interconnections, from engagement with the philosophical past, and from attention to the real world. Illustrated with the examples of Plato, Peirce, James, and Dewey among many others and with John Locke's magnificent metaphor urging philosophers to venture into the "great ocean of knowledge," the advice of "The Fragmentation of Philosophy" is that our philosophical spirit should be inspired by the example of these great thinkers instead of by cliques, fads, and fashions.

The linguistic excesses of groups whose slogans impose a heavy emotional and psychological burden also function, it seems to me, as affective conditions that deactivate the critical reflection of students from the very beginning. What happens is that certain phrases, used to identify the colossal objectives or the sup-

posed achievements of certain schools—“strict science,” “apodictic principles,” “ultimate foundations” in the case of phenomenology, or “first philosophy,” “first principles,” “metascientific,” just to mention a few salient examples—are in effect abused, turned into weapons. To say for example that anything that is not metaphysical is “second philosophy” is a strong emotional invitation to think that what one does is the most important and the most difficult thing, that one dwells in the realms of being and knowing.

All this reminds me of an appearance of George Bernard Shaw on film, where he satirically denounces—acting himself, staring into space, looking nowhere with a hint of sadness of gravity—that seriousness, solemnity and genius can always be acted and that it happens that sometimes the knowledge is being acted.⁶ Supposedly, he also advised to be aware that false knowledge is worse than ignorance.

3. BAD NEWS FROM MY OWN TRENCH. HAACK’S CALL FOR REAPPRAISAL

Of course, many of us are tempted to believe that we are capable at any time of turning to the Ionians, Aristotle, St. Augustine and whoever, with enough intellectual ease, but I am here referring to that inability genuinely to connect to tradition through a problem—as Peirce does regarding the problem of the universals and connecting it to his scientific realism, or as Carnap respect to the constitution of experience—and not considering tradition just as a scholarly preamble to our school. I once thought, I confess it with blush now, that St. Thomas Aquinas would have nothing interesting to say about metaphor—it had to be a colleague who brought me out of my mistake. Now I find the little relevance of St. Thomas in cognitive studies on metaphorical thinking surprising. One reads the great philosophers of all time, but presumptuously thinking that truth is not in the past.

Now I must say that all I have just related found parallels in my own development, and that my first encounter with Susan Haack revealed to me what an exemplary echo I was. That first encounter with Professor Haack was prompted by my sending her my book *Science and Metaphor* with a request for her opinion on Black’s and Hesse’s approaches to metaphor. I had formed the belief that metaphor announces new entities, possible worlds that could crystallize within the ontology of theories, and Haack simply replied, if I remember correctly, that hers was “a pragmatic approach not a semantic one.” As a “budding” scholar I in subsequent emails tried unsuccessfully to insist that she ought to engage with Hesse and Black, since they were seminal after all! Haack did, of course, know the traditional tests about metaphor and its philosophical significance, but what I wasn’t able fully to grasp was that she was defending *her own* view about the role, function, scope and force of metaphor, not engaging in, or untangling, specialized problems—it took me some time to understand this philosophical shift. And yes, the scholar starter pack usually includes this kind of naive arrogance.

As for my work, there was another thing I ignored at the time. Not only was my student work only tenuously connected with the main branches of philosophy—epistemology, ontology, semantics—it didn’t seriously consider other traditions in the history of philosophy, and in particular *pragmatism*. My efforts were connected only to current views of views in metaphor, these were all I was concerned with. I could understand the principal authors and their interpreters correctly; I could argue and I could quote and make reference to a massive list of authors, views, conceptions, and concepts, just like the scholars I was taught to quote and to admire—and of course most of them do deserve admiration—but what I am pointing to here is that we scarcely are taught about the values, the efforts, the virtues and hard work it takes to be like them, and, most importantly, about the real purpose of original philosophical research. For me it was only the unconscious need to show that I could write in a sound and eloquently manner, hence only few things in my research were of real value.

I don’t want to be misunderstood, I had a genuine concern about what metaphor was and what its nature and powers in many respects: discovery, creativity, theoretical explanation and the construal of scientific concepts. I did quote Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, Richards, Black, Hesse, Davidson, Quine, Rorty, Haack; and I discussed Black’s semantic interaction view on metaphor and cognitive perspectives. But I had been seeing only a small part of what these intellectual telescopes were showing me; I saw it all as a homog-

enous mass, and took everybody to be in the business of disclosing the *essence* of metaphor, *I hadn't see the metaphor problem* yet. In other words: my resources were correctly interpreted, but my research aim was wrongly oriented. My need to become an expert, to discover only original stuff was taking its first victim: my own work. And I still was looking for a group to join.

Surprisingly, Professor Haack continued our email conversation for almost a month, despite the fact that I was probably talking nonsense most of the time. In the meantime, and with laconic warnings, she saved me from wrong conceptions on metaphor, theories, concepts, propositions, ontology, epistemology, etc., etc. This was the very first lesson I got from Haack: she teaches much by saying little. Later I would learn that she encourages without making concessions, and, without flattering, but recognizing your capacities, pushes you to improve. Haack's conduct towards you is the best example of her ethical behaviour. She educates in philosophy in a vivid passionate way, inculcating in you at the time the values to do the job.

Why was I so disoriented? What was I missing? Reading of "Out of Step" alerted me to my aforesaid situation and showed me that it was indeed an extended situation. Immediately, I could see the problem in a broader and clearer way, and I saw myself as a part of it—first as a former student, later as a Faculty professor.

In "Out of Step" Haack declares that the present academic environment mostly generated by perverse incentives (publish—but quickly! or perish! Don't think twice—produce!) is eroding the very virtues that serious academic life demands, which she lists as: industry, patience, judgement, integrity, focus, realism, impartiality, independence, consideration, and courage. But Haack is inspirational to young professors, encouraging us to reinforce these virtues, so contrary to this "preposterous" environment in which self-promotion, prestige, money grants, production targets, fads, cliques, fashions, pseudo-technique language of highly specialization fuel the engines of "fast philosophy" and fast recognition and are creating a state of confusion. And the core of her own work is a call for the return of a sense of vocation, and the values and character necessary for any patient, solid, hard work.

No need to say that most likely I wouldn't have been able to see these problems by myself—yet, besides them, I pointed out and added above what I consider to be the specific challenge to Mexican philosophical institutions: to fight against these fallacious hierarchies, usually the companion of specialized philosophy groups, that in the form of technical language, baroque problems, principles of authority and even power figures, dim critical minds and diminish philosophical scope, instead of allowing students' creativity and self-confidence to unfold through common philosophical virtues, not through science-like specialized training.

You could still call all this an outrageous embittered *j'accuse*, but this is a call to accentuate the positive, I would call it Haack's *cri de coeur* in defence of serious philosophy, a plea for a return to basic values best suited to bring us peace of mind and many other advantages, to do our jobs better and to outdo our weaker selves. And I think this includes an appreciation of your *own* errors and mistakes. But is this possible in a scenario where they teach you the worst you can do is to be wrong?

From the very moment I met Susan Haack, I felt pushed, and pushed towards both an effort to clarify what I was saying and a subsequent responsibility of make its consequences mine. Last September I asked her to please correct the abstract of a paper of mine about metaphor in science. In my email I explained that I believed that the cognitive power of metaphors lies in their being able to generate new entities, and allow a certain access to them. She simply replied—"Still don't know how anything metaphorical or verbal can CREATE AN ENTITY!" Once again, I was struck by this sudden inquisitor light that highlighted my presuppositions. I agreed, words cannot create physical things, maybe what I was trying to say was something different, that metaphors show us possible ways to unknown entities, explanations, etc.

Yes one of the most valued things I have learned from Professor Haack is that, if we're serious about what we're doing, everything you say or write has consequences, and they go beyond our little group of colleagues' approval or disapproval; every idea, concept, etc. has its proper meaning that has much to do with its proper place in the history of philosophy and the development of thinking and less with groups, fads or fashions. Philosophy is not in the fast lane of science trying to accelerate ever faster.

All that I said supposed commitments and had immediate implications and effects on all my discourse and on that whole universe called philosophy, as she continuously showed me in her relevant responses. My first striking impression? “Susan Haack takes seriously every single word that I, a recently graduated philosophy student, writes or says!” My first reaction? Respect and admiration for that modesty and intellectual generosity. Susan Haack taking her time to read, reply, ask, argue, and only after that correct my questions and my ideas, and yet in a gentle but serious and rigorous manner? That was a thing I wasn’t prepared for! My first desire? to imitate that way of working first and, perhaps later!—still waiting though—that way of thinking. I was making mine the first lesson in philosophy: imitate patient, honest and responsible work, consider the real implications of ideas, perspectives, views, and avoid the blurred vision that comes with the rush for writing and the need to adopt labels. Along with that, respect for others’ work, consideration for their efforts, industry, and a whole lot of other things.

I had had this idea of positive imitation for a long time, I learnt it from Pound’s *credo* that the young writer, like the young painter, must begin imitating the masterpieces—let’s say his major influences, those he admires the most: “As for ‘adaptations’; one finds that all the old masters of painting recommend to their pupils that they begin copying masterwork, and proceed to their own composition” (Pound 1954, 10) and from E. C. Riley theory on “Don Quixote” as well: “There is nothing notably unusual in his seeking to imitate some exemplary hero in life, or, like a courtier, to emulate the best in previous models. But what is noteworthy is that he is also behaving like an artist” (Riley 1996, 64), which in philosophy should mean to exercise freedom, creativity, criticism within responsibility, judgement and prudence. But it seems to me that unlike poetry and painting, we young philosophers here in Latin America keep imitating techniques and manners without ever sail by ourselves to conquer *our* theme. Look, the most modest of our writers have been translated into many languages, the most conspicuous of our philosophers into none.

4. A GRATEFUL TESTIMONIAL

I want to dedicate these last words to Susan Haack’s honesty and integrity by just saying one thing. Constantly, continuously, what I saw in living examples first, I read it in her texts later and vice versa. Several years ago, I wrote to tell her that I had the idea of writing a paper showing that it was Edgar Allan Poe who first proposed a third way of inference that later Peirce would call it abduction. I hadn’t gathered up enough courage and this was crucial for me—she not only sent me material urging me to continue, she encouraged me by saying “you have something very interesting in mind” and she even corrected my first inefficient drafts transforming them in the more decent text it is now (Sampieri Cábál 2017).

Along with her honesty, integrity and serious philosophy, even there’s enough room for humour—should I say British humour?: when I confessed her I learned by myself my poor English by mostly listening *blues*, she replied: “—oh, that’s very sad!”. And once we were travelling from Veracruz to Xalapa city something caught her attention: it was this highways side sign that here in Mexico warns you to “obey the signals!”, with her characteristically humour—now with epistemological emphasis—she suddenly asked what was the difference between this and the other signs in case you are not obeying them!? Why should you obey this one?

This is a grateful testimonial to how Susan Haack has transformed my philosophical world and my conception about what was *right* and *wrong* in doing philosophy. I may have not succeeded yet, but my intention here was this: to say that Haack is a living example of rectitude, integrity, honesty, seriousness, and yet humour. Do I really need to say that? What I still cannot thank enough is that she considers me her student, a real and encouraging honour I wish to deserve.*

NOTES

1. Zubiri 1981, 7.
 2. Pound 1954, 15-16.
 3. Professor Irving Bernard Cohen's testimony says that in two remarkable encounters he could observe the null disposition they both had to the history of science and history of philosophy: Carnap by replying to the Prof. Cohen's invitation to speak to a graduate-student history of science club that "[h]e had nothing whatever to say, [...] about the study of the *history* of scientific ideas that could possibly be of interest to historians!" and Quine by supporting the attributed judgement that "[t]here are two reasons why a person is attracted to philosophy: one is because he is interested in *philosophy*—and the other is because he is interested in the *history* of philosophy" and by remarking that "he was not at all drawn to ideas solely because they were expressed by even the greatest of men; he was only concerned with statements that are true" (Cohen 1977, 310).
 4. Carnap 1928: §§ 3, 64, 65, 124, 164, for Husserl; §§ 65, 67, 163 for Nietzsche.
 5. I'm using here an author's copy though.
 6. I could only find two links that approximate George Bernard Shaw's visit to America that I first saw. The two links below come closest: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aEESoO7cN_g (minute 2:00) and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c60b8gORtTc> (minute 18:43).
- * I wish to thank Mark Migotti for his helpful comments on a previous draft and for his patience and kind help to improve my English version.

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