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FROM FALLIBILISM TO FOUNDHERENTISM: A GENEALOGY OF SUSAN HAACK'S RECONSTRUCTION OF EPISTEMOLOGY*

DEL FALIBILISMO AL FUNDEHERENTISMO: GENEALOGÍA DE LA RECONSTRUCCIÓN DE SUSAN HAACK DE LA EPISTEMOLOGÍA

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Resumen: ***En este artículo relaciono los primeros trabajos de Susan Haack sobre el faliblismo con la génesis de su fundherentismo. En una primera aproximación, el falibilismo se encuentra entre el dogmatismo y el escepticismo, así como el fundherentismo entre el fundacionismo y el coherentismo. Pero mientras que el falibilismo requiere solamente que la falsa dicotomía entre dogmatismo y escepticismo no se considere como exhaustiva, el fundherentismo nos hace ver que la falsa dicotomía entre fundacionalismo y coherentismo no es exhaustiva ni exclusiva. La mayor parte de mi artículo está dedicada a exponer y probar temas seleccionados en "Falibilismo y Necesidad" y "Epistemología con un sujeto de conocimiento", siendo el principal la creciente profundidad y claridad de la distinción entre falibilismo como una tesis sobre el estátus lógico- epistémico de las proposiciones (la cual genera problemas) y el falibilismo como una tesis sobre las capacidades cognitivas del ser humano, la cual abre el camino a seguir.***

Palabras clave: ***falibilismo, escepticismo, dogmatismo, necesidad, fundherentismo.***

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Abstract: ***In this paper I connect Susan Haack's early work on fallibilism to the genesis of her foundherentism. At a first approximation, fallibilism lies between dogmatism and skepticism, as foundherentism lies between foundationalism and coherentism. But whereas fallibilism requires only that the false dichotomy between dogmatism and skepticism is seen not to be exhaustive, foundherentism makes us see that the false dichotomy between foundationalism and coherentism is neither exhaustive nor exclusive. The bulk of my paper is taken up with expounding and probing selected themes in "Fallibilism and Necessity" and "Epistemology With a Knowing Subject", chief among these being the increasing depth and clarity of the distinction between fallibilism as a thesis about the logico-epistemic status of propositions (which works mischief) and fallibilism as a thesis about the cognitive capacities of human beings, which opens the way forward.***

Keywords: fallibilism, skepticism, dogmatism, necessity, foundherentism.

Fallibilism is an original approach to epistemology, foundherentism an original epistemological theory. I aim here to connect the two so as to illuminate both, and do this by showing how Susan Haack's early efforts to develop a credible understanding of fallibilism enabled her to see the need for and the shape of the pragmatist reconstruction of epistemology undertaken in *Evidence and Inquiry* and subsequently amplified, refined, and applied.

Fallibilism emerged in Peirce's campaign against "the spirit of Cartesianism", and is rooted in his conviction that "[p]hilosophy ought to imitate the successful sciences in its methods, … and to trust rather to the multitude and variety of its arguments than to the conclusiveness of any one"[1]. In respect of epistemology—which took shape as a sub-discipline of philosophy in the century or so since Peirce began to articulate the ideas he would later "collect… under the designation *fallibilism*"[2]—the promise of fallibilism is the prospect of habitable ground in between theories that make ambitious claims to have unearthed indubitable foundations for knowledge, and skeptical denials of knowledge in any robust sense.

It is already apparent that a fallibilist approach to epistemology is of a piece with a foundherentist theory of epistemic justification. But whereas fallibilism simply eschews both dogmatism and skepticism (or does so as

[1] C. S. Peirce, *Collected papers*, Charles Hartshorne, Paul Weiss and (vols. 7 and 8) Arthur Burks, eds., Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1931-58, 5.265 (1868). References to the *Collected papers* are by volume and paragraph number, followed by the original date.

[2] *Ibid*.1.13 (c. 1897).

straightforwardly as possible), foundherentism integrates what is sound in foundationalism with what is sound in coherentism. Fallibilism emerges when the supposed dichotomy between dogmatism and skepticism is seen not to be exhaustive, foundherentism when the supposed dichotomy between foundationalism and coherentism is seen to be neither exhaustive nor exclusive[3]. In "Fallibilism and necessity", the first of the three early papers on which I will touch here, Haack observes, aptly enough, that "it is a substantial question"[4] whether the intermediate approach to epistemology signaled by fallibilism is viable—which brings us to our first task.

Locating The Intermediate Ground

"Fallibilism and necessity" takes its cue from Peirce's seeming vacillation about the scope and limits of fallibilism: "When it comes… to the question of whether we are fallible, not only with respect to our ordinary, empirical beliefs, but also with respect to our mathematical beliefs, Peirce's confident anti-dogmatism seems to falter"[5]. Initially, Peirce's hesitation is surprising, since mistaken mathematical beliefs—arrived at, for example, by sloppy calculation—are as common as mistaken empirical beliefs; and once we get clear on "exactly what fallibilism amounts to", we see that Peirce's fear that fallibilism may be incompatible with our ability to grasp necessary truths is in fact groundless—but we also to understand why he might nevertheless have had misgivings.

Importantly, "what Peirce calls 'fallibilism'" is only in part "an epistemological *thesis*"; it is also, in part "an epistemological *recommendation*—that we should always be willing to revise our beliefs in the light of new evidence"[6]. As a thesis, fallibilism must preclude something to which dogmatism is committed. Since infallibilist dogmatism holds that there is a class of epistemologically privileged class of beliefs in which we couldn't be mistaken, fallibilism must deny this. But if we reach for the first convenient formulation of such a denial that may suggest itself, for example the thesis that "any of our beliefs may be mistaken" (in quasi-formal terms "for all propositions p, it is possible that we should believe that p, when not-p"), we can see why applying fallibilism to necessary truth might have troubled Peirce. If it's logically possible

[3] In "Theories of knowledge; an analytic framework" (in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 83 [1983] 143-157)", the paper that introduced foundherentism in print, Haack worked with a threefold classification of pure coherentism, pure foundationalism, and intermediate theories; while the pure versions of the two styles of theory are, by design, incompatible with each other, the very possibility of intermediate theories opens the prospect of integrating sound insights from each camp.

[4] Susan Haack, "Fallibilism and necessity", in *Synthese* 41 (1979), 47.

[5] *Ibid.*, 37.

[6] *Ibid.*, 41

that a proposition is false, it's not logically possible that it's necessarily true; so if fallibilism entails that it's logically possible that any proposition is false, it precludes the existence of necessary truth: and this seems both implausible and not to the epistemological point. But if the modality in "any belief may be mistaken" is epistemological, fallibilism collapses into skepticism; since, if "for all we know, p" is tantamount to "we don't know that not-p", the thesis that all propositions are such that for all we know they are false entails that no proposition can be known to be true.

As Haack demonstrates, this factitious dilemma is born of a false presupposition: that fallibilism is about propositions and their modal status, as opposed to cognitive agents and their capacities[7]. Once we grasp its true object and character, we see that fallibilism is perfectly compatible with the existence of necessary truths, even "self-guaranteeing" ones. For even if a proposition is such that if it's believed it must be true, it may still be possible for us to disbelieve it. The fallibilist point is that if there are necessary and/or self-guaranteeing propositions, it's possible for us to believe their negations.

Properly understood, "there is no real incompatibility between fallibilism and necessity"[8]. And the reason for this brings into relief a neat fit between the fallibilist thesis and the fallibilist recommendation: while the thesis *applies* to cognitive agents, the recommendation is *addressed* to them—and the epistemic benefits of cultivating a willingness to "revise our present beliefs should the evidence tell against them"[9] flow from a due awareness of how ineradicable our liability to false belief is. Of course, I take my present beliefs to be true; but taking a wider view, I can recognize that today's confident conviction may be tomorrow's object lesson in epistemic humility. When this happens willy nilly, as when the storm doesn't make landfall where the meteorologists predicted it would, belief revision in response to "recalcitrant experience" is virtually automatic. And since, arguably, anyone with any interests at all has an interest in not having his expectations foiled, everyone has reason to practice fallibilism when refusing to yield to the evidence has serious costs.

As an admonition, the fallibilist recommendation is especially pertinent in theoretical domains, where it's all too easy to become *un*willing to give up cherished preconceptions and commitments, and very common for such unwillingness not to be "readily checked by experience"[10]. Our mental make-up

7 *Ibid.*, 54. In "Epistemology w*ith* a Knowing Subject" (in *Review of Metaphysics* XXXIII. 2, no. 130 (1979) 309-335), published the same year as "Fallbilism and necessity", but written slightly later, Haack points out that all formulations of fallibilism that "make a relation between a knowing subject and a proposition into a predicate of a proposition" (327) will be somewhat misleading.

8 Susan Haack, Fallibilism and necessity", p. 53.

9 *Ibid.*, 57.

10 C. S.Peirce, *op.cit.*, 2.4 (1902).

has no fail-safe mechanisms that prevent us from obstinately clinging to belief in the teeth of the evidence. In fact, there is probably much in it that actively encourages anti-fallibilistic habits of mind, as long as we don't suffer because of them. The "primitive credulity" to which Alexander Bain draws such apt attention[11] is very variably countered by the "acquired skepticism" required of mature minds in general, and inquiring minds in particular.

Nobody thinks that human beings are infallible; nobody denies that we make mistakes—and this is what accounts for the natural affinity between dogmatism and foundationalism: dogmatist-foundationalists hold that human knowledge rests on a bedrock of privileged beliefs immune to error (or absence of justification, or need for revision or correction, or some such); fallibilists deny this. When it comes to the relation of fallibilism to skepticism, however, matters are less straightforward. How difficult is it to insist that we really have knowledge, even without a bedrock of unshakeable certitude? What is it "really" to have knowledge? Or, perhaps the same question in a different form, what does it mean to affirm, with Peircean fallibilists, that "there is a world of difference between fallible knowledge and no knowledge"?[12] In the first five sections of "Fallibilism and necessity" Haack established that fallibilism "is a real rival of dogmatism", and that it doesn't "*obviously* entail skepticism"; but "[t]here remains a question about whether it mightn't entail skepticism *un*obviously"[13]—which brings us to our second task.

Fortifying the Fallibilist Frontiers

Haack begins her reply to the suggestion that fallibilism may lead to skepticism in some subtle way by noting that the thesis that we can always be wrong is compatible with our sometimes being right; and that this means that the principle that knowledge implies truth, and so, that beliefs that are false can't be knowledge, does nothing to tell against the idea that fallible beliefs, *if in fact true*, can be knowledge. Of course, to say that a belief is fallible is to acknowledge that it might, despite expectations to the contrary, be false; and when entrenched beliefs of ours do turn out, very surprisingly, to be false, we must admit that we never did know something we unhesitatingly assumed we did. So fallibilism tells us that the so-called "KK principle", that if we know something it follows that we know that we know it, has to go.

[11] In *The emotions and the will*, (London: Longman and Green,1875), p. 509. Recent work in psychology has borne out and reinforced Bain's point via such notions as confirmation bias and the anchoring affect. See, for example, Daniel Kahnemann, *Thinking fast and slow,* New York, Anchor Books, 2013, especially Part Three; and Daniel Ariely, *Predictable irrationality,* New York: Harper Collins, 2008, especially Chapter Nine.

[12] C. S.,Peirce, *op.cit.*, 1.37 (c. 1890).

[13] Susan Haack, "Fallibilism and necessity", p. 55.

In any case, no serious epistemologist thinks that the truth of a belief, on its own,qualifies it as a piece of knowledge; to be knowledge, true beliefs must also be justified. Accordingly, Haack turns to the third element in the traditional account of knowledge as justified true belief. If knowledge requires truth plus an *infallible* warrant for belief, fallibilism will entail that we are never justified in believing anything, and so can't know anything. But why believe the antecedent of this conditional? Why gerrymander the concepts of knowledge and epistemic warrant so as to require infallibility? What would we learn about ourselves or the world by doing this? As Peirce indeed would indeed have thought (and as Haack explicitly says) "it is *pointless* to restrict 'warrant' and hence 'knowledge' [so] severely [as to entail strong skepticism, the view that we have no knowledge at all]"[14].

Perhaps, however, a belief is warranted, "and hence, if true, knowledge", only if we can "*prove* that the method employed [in acquiring and sustaining it] is reliable"[15]. If this is so, an infinite regress looms: I won't be warranted "in a belief that *p* acquired by the use of *m* unless I can show that *m* is reliable"[16]; and I won't be warranted in the belief that m is reliable unless I can show that *m**, the method that is supposed to show this,is reliable; and I won't be warranted in the belief that m* is reliable unless …. and so on. But why not take this to be a reason to reject the requirement in question? Fudging the distinction between *being* justified and *showing* that you're justified is no more plausible than insisting that only infallible justification counts as justification at all.

Perhaps, however, any positive reason to endorse fallibilism will turn out to be a reason to accept skepticism. Fallibilists hold that our grip on the truth is neither superhumanly firm, nor hopelessly feeble. To discover this, however, it might seem that we need to compare "the results of our cognitive methods with the *true* results, to show that our methods mostly, though not invariably, give the right answers"[17]. But, the objection might run, "we can't make this kind of comparison unless we have access to 'the true results', and we can't have *that* unless we have some *in*fallible methods"[18]. The argument can be put this way: we think that fallibilism may be true because we believe our propensity to error to be a well attested fact. But "how can we know that we have been mistaken, unless we now know the truth? And doesn't this … require that we have some infallible cognitive methods?"[19]. Fallibilists need to show how our access to the truth can be fallible but not negligible; they

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 56.

[15] *Id.*

[16] *Id..*

[17] *Ibid, p. 57.*

[18] *Id.*

[19] *Id.*

need to explain how we can always be wrong, but still have ways of getting it right[20].

Haack replies by counterexample. À propos the argument that our ability to recognize our mistakes commits us to dogmatism somewhere down the line, she recounts her discovery that the logician Dana Scott was a man, not (despite his first name) a woman.

> My belief that Dana Scott is a man, and hence my belief that my previous belief [that Dana Scott was a woman] was mistaken, is based … judgements which are not infallible (Dana Scott may have been in disguise at her lecture), but judgements in which I justifiably place more confidence than in the belief that "Dana" is exclusively a woman's name, the belief on which my earlier, mistaken (I think) belief was based[21].

À propos the argument that accounting for the imperfect reliability of some of our ways of fixing belief requires us, *per impossibile*, to demonstrate that our reliable (enough) methods are reliable enough, she refers to "the usual schoolroom method for computing square roots". Students who use this method may have good reason to believe it to be reliable—"they may have the teacher's authority for it, and they may have checked its operation for themselves by squaring the answer and finding that the result is the number with which they began"[22]—without knowing the mathematical relations that account for its reliability.

"In sum, then, provided that the fallibilist can hold that some beliefs are better warranted than others, that some cognitive methods are more reliable than others, he is not obliged to admit that any methods are absolutely infallible"[23]. With this, we can see how clarity about fallibilism interlocks with a substantial view about the goals and character of epistemology. For unless some beliefs are better warranted than others and some cognitive methods more reliable than others, it's hard to see how epistemology could have anything to say about learning and the growth of knowledge; without the possibility of improving (or worsening) one's epistemic situation, "dynamic" epistemology (as Haack at this time called it) has no subject matter. Indeed, a willingness to revise belief in response to experience and other sources of evidence is not so much an optional virtue in an inquirer, as a necessary condition of being an inquirer at all. Paying attention to evidence isn't a "cognitive method";

[20] As Peirce puts it, "you have to depend on your natural powers of reasoning being better than tossing up a copper to decide which way the truth lies" (in Richard Robin, *Annotated catalogue of the papers of Charles S. Peirce*, Amherst MA, University of Massachusetts Press, 1967, MS 453).

[21] Susan Haack,"Fallibilism and necessity", p. 58.

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] *Id.*

it's a precondition of any worthwhile effort to find things out, and do so more efficiently by using, refining, and discovering more reliable cognitive methods rather than less reliable ones, so as to settle (*pro tem*) on better rather than worse warranted beliefs. The fallibilist recommendation cuts deep—which brings us to our third task.

Blazing the Foundherentist Trail

Haack had anticipated the agenda of "Epistemology *with* a knowing subject" in a drily understated footnote in "Fallibilism and necessity": "[i]f … fallibilism [is] primarily a thesis about cognitive agents, Popper's attempt to develop a fallibilist epistemology without a knowing subject is misguided"[24]. In this later paper, she begins to develop "[an] account of the role of the knowing subject in a fallibilist epistemology", in the first instance "by comparing and contrasting what I believe to be the most fruitful approach with that favored by Popper"[25]. Her critical scrutiny of Popper culminates in a sustained internal critique; for the fact is that, despite repeated and emphatic disavowals, "a number of themes in Popper's own epistemology actually require the knowing subject"[26].

One of these self-defeating Popperian themes is sounded in that lapidary footnote from "Fallibilism and necessity": Popper thinks he's a fallibilist, but since fallibilism "inextricably concerns both the truth status of the contents of our beliefs, and the capacities or incapacities of cognitive agents", it manifestly "needs the knowing subject"[27]; another cuts to the heart of Popper's philosophical claim to fame: the demarcation of science from pseudo-science. For we find in Popper "two kinds of formulation [of the criterion of demarcation], the formal and the methodological"[28]. As a matter of logical form, Popper holds that "a propositions or theory is scientific *iff* it is universal in form and capable of being contradicted by … a statement reporting the occurrence of an observable event, i.e. *iff* it is falsifiable"; and in respect of the conduct of inquiry, he urges that the method of science, genuinely so-called, "is to subject one's conjectures to severe tests, and should they fail these tests, to reject them rather than patch them up by *ad hoc* maneuvers"[29].

Popper's formal criterion of demarcation may be compatible with an epistemology without a knowing subject; but his methodological criterion isn't,

[24] *Ibid*, p. 62.

[25] Susan Haack, "Epistemology *with*a knowing subject", p. 309.

[26] *Ibid, p.* 318.

[27] *Ibid*, p. 327.

[28] *Ibid*, p. 319.

[29] *Ibid*.

for obvious reasons: like Peirce's fallibilist recommendation, it is meant to be heeded by people. In "Epistemology *with* a Knowing Subject", Haack observes that Popper seems "ultimately to favor [the methodological over the formal criterion"[30], which means that, when push comes to shove, he is committed to an epistemology *with* a knowing subject. To this, I add that the fact that from Popper's point of view push may come to shove is revealing in itself. As Haack implies, Popper's two criteria for being genuinely scientific can enter into a kind of competition, as when theories that are scientific in logical form are allowed to ossify into unchallenged dogma[31]. By contrast, as we have seen, Peirce's fallibilist thesis fits smoothly with his fallibilist recommendation, and both dovetail nicely with a conception of scientific inquiry as (in a later phrase of Haack's) distinguished, but not privileged—certainlyimportant, even exemplary, but of a piece with everyday investigations, detective work, literary or legal scholarship etc. etc..

Haack won't settle her accounts with Popper for good until 2009, in "Just say no to logical negativism"[32],"Logical Negativism" being a useful tag for Popper's signature falsificationist conception of science, which was explicitly formulated in contradistinction to the central tenets of Logical Positivism. In a delightful adaptation of Kierkegaard's image of philosophical system builders who can't actually live in the grand structures they erect, but move to "a shack nearby"[33], Haack notes that "when [Popper] finds his forbidding Logical Negativist castle uninhabitable, he takes refuge in humbler, but more comfortably fallibilist, quarters"[34]. In plain prose, "[f]or all that Popper … purports to provide a picture of the scientific enterprise that is thoroughly fallibilist, and yet still fully cognitivist [, …] what he actually gives us is a kind of covert skepticism"[35]. Where Haack and Peirce succeed, Popper fails; his falsificationist would-be fallibilism is an epistemological pipe dream, a fancy way of obfuscating the deep issues that need to be addressed and avoiding the thorny problems that need to be solved if fallibilism is to be a creditable option in the theory of knowledge.

As Haack observes towards the end of "Epistemology *with* a knowing subject", "[p]art of Popper's intention, in arguing for an epistemology

30 *Id.*

31 Noa Latham suggests to me that a charitable reading of Popper would embed his formal criterion of demarcation within his methodological criterion, the core idea being to restrict yourself to falsifiable hypotheses so that you can test them. On such an interpretation, however, the formal conception of falsifiability manifestly does no independent work in identifying what distinguishes science from other things and other kinds of inquiry.

32 Susan Haack,*Putting philosophy to work*: *inquiry and its place in culture*, Amherst NY, Prometheus Books, 2008, second, expanded edition, 2013, pp. 179-194 (text) and pp. 298-305 (notes).

33 Soren Kierkegaard, *Journals* (1846), in *A selection from the journals of Soren Kierkegaard,* Alexander Dru, ed., London and New York, Oxford University Press, 1938, p. 156.

34 Susan Haack, "Just say no to logical negativism", pp. 183-4.

35 *Ibid.* pp. 183.

without a knowing subject, [is] to stress the independence of epistemology from psychology"[36]; and many epistemologists who share none of Popper's idiosyncrasies would think (and have thought) the same way on this subject. If epistemology aims to show how knowledge is possible (and it is widely thought that this is precisely its chief occupation), it seems to follow that it is disbarred from availing itself of putative items of knowledge that have yet to receive a proper imprimatur. According to this line of thinking, psychology, like all the other positive sciences, relies on epistemology for its normative credentials, which means that epistemology can't turn around and appeal to psychology or any other positive science for *its* normative credentials. But if epistemology can't rely on *anything* we take ourselves to know, it seems that "we can never, in a non-circular way, determine whether, or when, we have knowledge…"[37]. If the only way we could determine whether or when we have knowledge begs the question, we can't really determine this. To insist upon the normative dependence of psychology, and empirical knowledge generally, on epistemology is to court "meta-skepticism", to deprive epistemology of any hope of constructive success.

In reply, Haack observes that "it is not, *in any straightforward sense*, question-begging to appeal to psychology in order to support [a positive epistemological thesis]" (ibid., emphasis added). To argue that we know that *p* because we know that *p* would not really be reasoning at all, the "object of reasoning" being, as Peirce reminds us, "to find out, from the consideration of what we already know, something *else*, which we do not know"[38]. But to suggest, for example, that since that the correct formulation of fallibilism includes a claim about what we can believe and disbelieve, psychological theory, the theory of cognitive dissonance for instance, bears on its truth, is *not* to assume what you purport to prove.

On Haack's "mutual aid" account of the relationship between psychological and epistemological inquiry, what one appeals to in support of the truth, e.g., of fallibilism" is some proposition of psychology which one takes (perhaps wrongly) to be true (e.g. that people can psychologically disbelieve necessary truths). One does *not* appeal to the proposition that we know that proposition (e.g. that we know that people can psychologically disbelieve necessary truths"[39]. The idea isn't to go around in a circle; it's to do justice to epistemological "mutual aid" as a legitimate source of epistemic justification. In a word, coherentism gets something right—which brings us to our fourth and final task.

[36] Susan Haack,"Epistemology *with* a knowing subject", p. 333.

[37] *Id.*

[38] C. S. Peirce, *op.cit.*, 5.365 (1877), emphasis added.

[39] Susan Haack, "Epistemology *with* a knowing subject", p. 334.

Anticipating the Crossword analogy

As an instance of constructive epistemological mutual aid, Haack notes how we adjust our general beliefs to our beliefs about putative counter-instances to them. Confronted with what seems to be a counter-instance to a general belief we sometimes conclude that the erstwhile general belief has been shown to be false; but sometimes our commitment to its truth is such that we will override or "disregard" what we will now call a merely "ostensible"counter-instance[40]. To do this is to incur a burden of "explaining away" the apparent counter instance, but we may still be within our rights to think that what seemed to happen it couldn't have happened, given the rest of what we take ourselves to know.

However sensible this practice may be, there remains, Haack allows, "a residual discomfort"[41] with the idea that it can do the work just assigned to it. For doesn't the reasoning just sketched "depend upon the adoption of a certain, roughly coherentist epistemology" in order to rely on that theory in an argument to show that epistemology is possible?"[42] Haack allows that her conception of epistemology is committed to a meta-level of mutual aid, but is prepared "to grasp this particular nettle, and argue that it doesn't matter that it does"[43].

To admit that "we must make adjustments among our beliefs on the basis of what we (perhaps wrongly) take [ourselves to know]", Haack observes, "… is only to admit that we have no option but to start—as Peirce would have put it—from where we are"[44]. As Peirce did indeed put it:

> [I]n truth, there is but one state of mind from which you can "set out" [to do philosophy], namely the very state of mind in which you actually find yourself at the time you do "set out"—a state in which you are laden with an immense mass of cognition already formed, of which you cannot divest yourself if you would; and who knows whether, if you could, you would not have made all knowledge impossible to yourself[45].

Since we always have to rely on something, and since relying on a roughly coherentist epistemology allows us to account for the possibility of the very subject we wish to pursue, we might wonder why acknowledging this should be thought of as the grasping of a nettle at all. Of course, if coherentism were

40 *Ibid.* 335.

41 *Ibid.* 334.

42 *Ibid.* 335.

43 *Id.*

44 *Id.*

45 C. S. Peirce, *op.cit.*, 5.416 (1905).

indefensible, it couldn't support a defense of epistemology or anything else. And in fact, Haack will agree that in its pure form coherentism *is* indefensible. What the line of reasoning just examined shows is that, while *pure* coherentism won't do, a coherentist dimension is indispensable to a successful positive (non-skeptical) epistemology.

To this, Haack adds that the same goes, *mutatis mutandis*, for foundationalism; and now we're in the realm of foundherentism.As she argues in"Theories of knowledge: an analytic framework", foundationalism is on the right track in insisting that a credible epistemology must be epistemically *in*egalitarian. While pure coherentism is committed to both fallibilism and epistemic egalitarianism, the thesis that "no belief is, in and of itself, epistemically more secure than any other", fallibilism "is quite compatible … with the thesis that some beliefs are more secure than others"[46]; indeed, this is another point at which fallibilism distinguishes itself from skepticism. At least certain skeptical scenarios are implicitly committed to epistemic egalitarianism of a negative sort; the idea is that in some deep philosophical sense, none of our beliefs is any closer to the truth than any other: when challenged, for example, to defend our natural instinct to believe in the external world and not in a world manufactured by a Cartesian demon, we are supposed to be brought up short.

In a searching paper on Peirce's critique of Descartes, Haack sketches a precursor to the analogy of knowledge and inquiry to the solving of a mammoth crossword puzzle: the idea of our view of the world as a jigsaw, "a picture we put together from various pieces (bits of information)"[47]. From this perspective, Descartes Evil Demon hypothesis amounts to a very unexpected jigsaw puzzle: if the world was a Demon world (or we were brains in vats etc.), we wouldn't be putting together the jigsaw we thought we were. Jigsaws that have pictures within pictures have pieces that don't need to be taken "at face value"; the jigsaw might not be of a garden, but of an artist's studio with paintings of gardens. By analogy, "[Descartes's] 'demon' jigsaw puts the *whole* of the 'external world' jigsaw into a picture within the picture"; *none* of the pieces we're working with can be taken at face value, the skeptical scenario jigsaw "*explains away* everything that the external world jigsaw *explains*"[48].

And now a final, pleasing twist: since Popper's crypto-skeptical falsificationism was rooted in his critique of Logical Positivism's crypto-dogmatist verificationism, it's not surprising to find that Haack has no more time for the latter than she does for the former. Allowing that "[v]erificationist attempts

[46] Susan Haack,"Theories of knowledge: an analytic framework", pp. 146, 148.

[47] Susan Haack, "'Descartes, Peirce and the Cognitive Community", in *Monist*, 65.2 (1982), p. 175. Haack borrows this idea from Michael Polanyi, who had put it to use in the context of how most effectively to organize and conduct systematic inquiry rather than the theory of epistemic justification.

[48] *Ibid*. 177.

to refute skepticism by urging that the skeptical hypothesis is unverifiable and therefore meaningless have their attractions", she rightly notes that "it is not easy to persuade oneself that such refutations rely on honest toil rather than (verbal) theft"[49]. By contrast, "[t]he picture-within-a-picture diagnosis suggested by the jigsaw analogy points to where the work needs to be put in: in explaining why the evidence we have is better evidence for the external world than for the demon"[50]; which is to say that Haack's patient explorations and clarifications of the demands and prospects of fallibilist epistemology in the late 1970s and early 1980s paid off in the form of a new batch of hard epistemological problems to be addressed in subsequent years, and so played an integral role in the development of the fruitful, illuminating, elegant, and so far stable, solutions gathered together under the (not quite so elegant, but exactly accurate) heading "foundherentism".

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[49] *Id.*

[50] *Ibid.,* p. 177-8.