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Abstract: This paper elucidates the pragmatist elements of Thomas Reid's approach to the justification of first principles by reference to Charles S. Peirce. Peirce argues that first principles are justified by their surviving a process of 'self-criticism', in which we come to appreciate that we cannot bring ourselves to doubt these principles, in addition to the foundational role they play in inquiries. The evidence Reid allows first principles bears resemblance to surviving the process of self-criticism. I then argue that this evidence allows Reid and Peirce a way out of the dilemma between dogmatism and skepticism regarding the justification of such principles, insofar as they are epistemically, and not solely practically, justified.

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