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I first heard of Hilary Putnam near the end of my senior year,
^{from}
~~for~~ Ledger Wood, our department's Chairman [Chairs were still pieces
of furniture then]. Ledger had taken me aside and, in a whisper
usually reserved for the most risqué of remarks, informed me that the
department had just hired -- in his words -- a « logical positivist, »
and that I ^{was} ~~was~~ to ~~be~~ his teaching assistant in the philosophy of
science course ^{in the} fall. I had barely *heard* of logical positivists, and the
news had been all bad : they were immoral, and opposed to
metaphysics. But on the other hand, I *had* met *one*, Peter Hempel,
who had visited Princeton in the fall of that year, and *he* had ~~seemed~~
ok, so

Hilary's ^{appointment} was only a 1-year Visiting Assistant
Professorship (Princeton was taking no chances, sight unseen).
Happily, he was soon judged to be relatively harmless and ~~appointed~~
to a tenure-track position starting the following year. In any case,
Hilary started at Princeton the day I began graduate study. Asked
about his plans for the course in which I was to assist him, he revealed

that he intended to teach Princeton freshmen and sophomores the philosophy of space, time, and causality, *à la* Reichenbach. This would involve teaching some relativity and quantum mechanics; moreover, since there was really no text suitable for our purpose, we would have to *tell them* what physics they needed to know in order to appreciate the philosophical points the physics was meant to illustrate. I panicked: since I ~~knew~~^{knew} precious little about relativity and nothing about quantum mechanics, I would be in no position to help the little darlings. How could I even begin to do my job? No problem. Hilary would teach the stuff to me week by week; I would then turn around and teach it to *them*. Insane. But at least I learned it.

Between 1953 and 1961 Hilary was, though not the only philosopher there, certainly the most active intellectually and the lifeblood of the graduate program. The department hired Vlastos and Hempel in 1955, and eventually, a host of wonderful young people, but it was Hilary who was constantly teaching the graduate students new things, both formally and informally. I still recall a seminar on

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recursive functions that Hilary decided ~~to~~ to teach, evenings, to an unlikely and motley group crammed in his Butler Project apartment, just for the hell of it, just because he wanted to *tell* people about that material – (TELLING PEOPLE THINGS was, and I am sure still is, one of his passions). *I found and out dropped* ~~Here is~~ my notebook, ~~and here is~~ a scrap of paper on which Hilary wrote out the ~~the~~ proof that every r.e. set is 1-1 reducible to a creative set – a proposition I was finding particularly opaque.

Those were heady times. Carnap was at the Institute – flat on his back, to be sure – but still *there* and Hilary saw a lot of him. Some things stick in your mind ... like how I was startled one day when I glanced at Hilary's desk and saw ~~some~~ correspondence between them (no e-mail, longhand, if you please). Hilary's letter began :

Dear Carnap,

Let c be a regular c -function with the following additional properties ...

On the Leibnizian model of « Let us calculate. » Those guys didn't monkey around.

Church was in the Math department, though by then no longer the force he had been, except, of course, as Reviews Editor of the *JSL*. Gödel was at the Institute, of course. Kreisel, who recognized Hilary's genius and fed its development would visit the Institute too, and when there, pushed him ^{to do} ~~into~~ logic. The only time I've ever seen Hilary flustered was when he was giving his first logic talk, in Fine Hall. All was going well when, out of the blue, Church, who was sitting in the back row, burst out laughing. We didn't know then that he just DID that from time to time, driven by, I guess, some secret inner life. But it must have been disconcerting.

Although they may seem like a motley, Hilary's publications of his Princeton years contain the seeds of much of the work that was to flourish in later years. Here's a list : « Synonymity and the Analysis of Belief Sentences », « A Definition of Degree of Confirmation for Very Rich Languages », « Reds, Greens, and Logical Analysis », « Mathematics and the Existence of Abstract Entities », « Psychological Concepts, Explication, and

Ordinary Language », « Degree of Confirmation », « Inductive Logic »,
 « Three-Valued Logic », « Decidability and Essential Undecidability »,
 « Formalization of the Concept 'About' », « Axioms of Class Existence »,
 « Eine Unbleitsbarkeitsmethode für den intuitionistischen Aussagenkalkül »
 (with G. Kreisel), « Reductions of Hilbert's Tenth Problem (with Martin
 Davis), «Elementary Logic and the Foundations of Set Theory», « An
 Unsolvable Problem in Number Theory », « Unity of Science as a Working
 Hypothesis » (with Paul Oppenheim), « The Analytic and the Synthetic »,
 « Minds and Machines ». And more (including some reviews that also made
 a splash ...).

There was a purity about the air we breathed then. No hedging. No
 hemming-and-hawing. There were philosophical wars to be fought, with
 good guys and bad guys, and Hilary made no bones about who was which.
 Philosophy, if it was to progress, had to become more like science,
 philosophers more like scientists. Our enemies were everywhere, but there
 was a heavy concentration ^{of them) an} on ~~a small~~ island off the coast of France, smug and
 contemptuous of physics and mathematics and their relevance to philosophy,

either through their content^t or as models of how to proceed. « Ordinary »

was their buzz-word, and we would have none of it. Typical of the ordinary-

Hilary's concise summary of Norman Malcolm's account of dreaming
language-bashing of the day was « Dreaming is remembering what you

dreamt, and remembering what you dreamt is saying what you remember. »

The model was the Russell of « The Cult of Common Usage », where he

gives five reasons for objecting to the philosophy practised around him :

« (1) Because it is insincere; (2) Because it is

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capable of excusing ignorance of mathematics, physics, and neurology in those who have had only classical educations; (3) because it is advanced by some in a tone of unctuous rectitude, as if opposition were a sin against democracy; (4) Because it makes philosophy trivial; (5) because it makes almost inevitable the perpetuation among philosophers of the muddle-headedness they have taken over from common sense."

Hilary's presence in the department was ^{formidable} ~~unmistakable~~. His mind was alive with ideas, which spilled out at every opportunity. There was always a NEW thought -- conversations would frequently ^{resume} ~~pick up~~ where they had left off the previous day, with Hilary saying "I *now* think" -- YES, he did change his mind ^{then} daily, and was not ashamed of it. There was as yet no Putnam whose philosophy students flocked to study and that it was important to lay out and (possibly) even ^{to} defend. For students to see that activity, ^{to} feel that throbbing pulse, was to gain a view on philosophy that just wasn't on offer anywhere else. Accordingly, the better ones flocked to his seminars and upperclass courses. The general attitude was clear; its source, the Reichenbach and Carnap of the day. What was not clear was where it was going to lead. But it didn't matter. ~~His~~ ^{His} energy ~~was~~ ^(rest) revved up a graduate program that, despite some notable ^(rest) successes, was ~~otherwise~~ going nowhere.

As for me, well, immediately upon arrival, Hilary took me under his wing as his teaching assistant, student, friend, and constant companion. From the day he showed up, we were inseparable, spending almost all of our time together, discussing philosophy, eating on occasion, and gradually creeping insidiously under each others' skin, where we remain to this day. Oh sure, it wasn't all philosophy. We played battleships, went to New Hope, took turns defending the view that any view was tenable, ^{the phony} cold-war theory, the exceptional virtues of 17....

I can't tell you what an exhilarating experience that was, and for almost seven years! Hilary was a veritable *torrent* of words and ideas, and, with me at least, patient and painstaking in filling the almost ubiquitous gaps in my philosophical upbringing. Simply to watch and listen was awe-inspiring. To argue, *and be taken seriously in argument*, was, to use a phrase ^{of his} not yet born, empowering. He was incredibly generous with his time, ^{his} support, and ^{his} ideas. That generosity was a model of teaching that I cannot imagine duplicating, at least in intensity, but it nevertheless had a deep impact on how I conceived of the teacher-student relation, and I am grateful for this opportunity to thank him for it.

^{I will} ~~Let me~~ close ^{by quoting} ~~with~~ a remark by a current student that should make you all feel good, but that also nicely spans Hilary's career and says what everyone who has been so privileged has felt [Since you should be able easily to identify the source, I beg you to treat this with the discretion that I flout in reading it to you]:

My course load this term has been a difficult, but rewarding one. I am enrolled in four courses, all in philosophy. They are: Philosophy and of Logic taught by Warren Goldfarb, Wittgenstein and the Philosophy of Mind taught by Richard Moran, Philosophy of Perception taught By Sussane Siegel and Non-Scientific Knowledge taught by Hilary Putnam. Each class is crammed with bright graduates and undergraduates and is taught with a good deal of sophistication. I have been impressed with each and every one of these professors in their ability to present and analyze difficult material in a clear, stimulating fashion---and in the case of Putnam, his ability to present and analyze HIS material with a sheer brilliance which I will forever consider myself fortunate to have witnessed (he is, by the way, retiring after this semester).

Thanks, Hilary, for myself, to be sure, but for all the others too.