

# Autobiographical Reflections

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One day in the late 1940s, Robert Turnbull and I drove to the Minneapolis airport to meet Rudolf Carnap, who was coming to speak to the graduate philosophy club and to visit his good friend Herbert Feigl. At the time, I was discussing his *Logische Aufbau* in my seminar in Philosophical Analysis, and we had scarcely settled in the car for the return journey when I began to bombard my captive audience with questions. I have long since forgotten the detail of what I was after, but I vividly remember that his first reaction was to expostulate, "But that book was written by my grandfather!" The aptness of this remark strikes me anew as I attempt to reconstruct, in outline, the philosopher stages which preceded me-here-now. I am struck by major continuities which, like shared traits of character, run throughout the series. Other themes, like fibers in a rope, provide a counterpoint of family resemblance. Autobiography like history is the attempt to rethink the thoughts of others.

I was born in Ann Arbor, Michigan, on May 20, 1912. My father had for several years been instructor in philosophy at the University of Michigan. My mother, a strikingly beautiful young woman, was, like my father, a Canadian by birth and, indeed, a first cousin. In another world she would have been an artist in words and on canvas. In the actual world, she began her adult life with two small children of whom I was the elder, and her sensitivity and creativity, aside from two major works of translation and countless notebooks, remained a private dimension, yet one which, together with her good sense and strength of character, pervaded our lives.

I remember little from my early years that seems relevant. I know by hearsay that my father taught to me to read at the age of three, and I can remember snatches of the experience. Reading was soon an essential part of my life and has remained so ever since. I also remember that I kept largely to myself and did not make friends easily.

Psychologists tell us that a change of environment frees us from stimuli conditioned to anxiety. It cannot, of course, remove us from ourselves but, at least in our more malleable years, can make possible quantum jumps in personal development. I have been exceptionally fortunate in this respect. At an early age, I was not only removed from old environments but placed in exciting new ones. When I was nine years old, I spent some two years away from Ann Arbor, first at school in Providence and Boston. There followed a year in Paris, where my mother, sister, and I lived on the Rue de Tournon, and I was thrown like a beginning swimmer with a rope around his waist into the strange new world of the *Lycee Montaigne*. The experience of living in Paris and struggling with classes in which I had to learn both the language and the subject matter (with my mother's constant help and encouragement) was, in contemporary idiom, mind stretching. Its effect was to snowball in subsequent years in accordance with the true, if disturbing, principle that to him who hath shall be given.

As a ten-year-old in Paris, I was overwhelmed by history. I became an ardent Jacobite, with an assist from Alexandre Dumas, Jr. We had already spent some months in England, mostly in Oxford, where the International Congress of Philosophy was to take place. My most vivid memory from this first stay in Oxford is climbing the ladder to the top of Magdalen Tower, with my mother grimly following.

On my return to Ann Arbor, I not surprisingly lived mostly in my imagination. My school work was at best undistinguished, and I remember the dismay, touched with anger, with which on one occasion my father learned my grade in spelling.

Once again, some two years later, I was saved, or so it seemed, by a change of scene. This time it was the simple move from the public schools to the high school (including junior high) run by the University's School of Education. It does not take much hindsight to realize that my status as a faculty child — which had previously been somewhat of a burden — had something to do with my sense of new horizons. Suddenly I had rapport with my teachers, and once again learning was both possible and exciting. I even acquired the smugness of one who knows that he can get by with a minimum of effort.

I graduated from high school in 1929, upon which I went to the University summer school, taking a course in algebra. I had come to enjoy mathematics, and, while I had in no way begun to think of a career, I probably would have replied "mathematics" if asked what would be my "major." But the question had never really come up. I had no sense whatever of pressure from my parents, and before the fall semester had to be faced, it was decided, almost at the last minute, that I would go to Paris again with my mother and sister, and study at the *Lycee Louis le Grand*. My father would join us when he went on sabbatical leave the following semester. We arrived in Paris at the end of August, and I was not to return from Europe till January 1931.

At the *Lycee*, I was enrolled in the *Classe de Mathematiques* and began a program with a strong scientific orientation. Nevertheless, it was here that I had my first encounter with philosophy. I say "my first encounter" in all seriousness for I scarcely knew that there was a subject called philosophy, let alone that there was such a subject. It had never come up as such in any conversation with my father, at least that I can remember; although I can, on careful reflection, see that some specific topics in philosophy must have caught my ear, particularly while accompanying my father (as caddie) when he played golf, as he frequently did, with DeWitt Parker. I clearly remember one occasion on which I heatedly (and to his scarcely concealed amusement) defended against Parker the thesis of the maturation of chances.

So I was in Paris when the stock market crashed. By this time, I had made the acquaintance of a Jewish boy, also a student at the *Lycee*, who had been educated in England. We gravitated together and were soon boon companions. He had friends who were Marxist in ideology but, to the extent that they were politically involved, strongly anti-Stalinist. Boris Souvarine was the immediate source of ideological influence; though on the horizon was Trotsky, who had just been sent into exile. I, of course, was a complete novice in these matters. But I was soon reading Marxist classics, and adding *l'Humanite* and *Le Populaire* to my daily surfeit of newspapers. My first serious reading of philosophy, then, such as it was in Marx, Engels, Lenin, and, in general, the philosophical and quasi-philosophical polemical literature which is the life blood of French intellectuals.

Nevertheless, my first academic contact with philosophy was, as indicated above, in a course at the *Lycee*. Even as surveys go, it was thin stuff. But it did give me a sense of how philosophical issues were classified and an acquaintance with some of the major philosophers (in French perspective). It suddenly hit me that my father was a philosopher and that I knew nothing about this dimension of his existence. What my mother was able to tell me whetted my curiosity, and, by the time he joined us in February, I was eager to explore this unexpected goldmine.

My father and I had always gotten along well together, but we had found little to talk about besides topics that arose *per accidens* from the events of the day. Indeed, he had been a distant figure who almost daily disappeared either into the University or into his study in the attic, where he turned out book after book. (The muffled sound of his typewriter in almost continuous operation — or so it seemed — was later to haunt me, when I began my own attempts at publication). Thus, there is a sense in which father and son first met that spring in Paris through the good offices of philosophy. Needless to say, I found his views congenial from the start and quickly sloughed off the pseudo-Hegelian jargon of Marxist *Naturphilosophie*. More resistant (as they should have been) were the Hegelian overtones of Marxism as a schema of historical explanation. In any event, a dialogue was initiated which has continued for some forty-two years.

That summer, my father returned to this country to earn the money to support the grand tour, the next highlight of which was six months in Germany, where I learned the language and audited courses at the University of Munich. The economic depression had continued to spread and intensify, and it was clear that in Germany, at least, if things continued to deteriorate, a social and political crisis would be at hand. I soon became convinced that Hitler would in one way or another gain power, unless the opposition could be meaningfully united, which unfortunately, seemed increasingly unlikely. And the idea that Hitler in power could be overthrown by revolution from within struck me as utopian in the extreme.

I returned to this country in January of 1931 and saw the depression I had been reading about from afar. It is difficult to picture the horror of the period. Ann Arbor was, of course, a sheltered oasis, but the real world and, in particular, the demoralized city of Detroit, was always on the horizon of consciousness. I resumed my studies at the University and divided my time between mathematics, economics, and philosophy. I had not attempted the French baccalaureate examination but was able to earn enough credits by examination to keep me abreast of my

classmates. I was active during this period in the socialist movement on the campus and in the 1932 election campaigned on a soapbox at factory gates for Norman Thomas.

This essay, though biographical, is not intended to be a biography, and I have gone into the above variety of detail to give some indication of the context in which I began to think of philosophy as a career. Which reminds me that somewhere along the line I should have mentioned a factor which it is easy for me to forget. I had never experienced those theological anxieties which have pushed so many in the direction of philosophy and which tend to distort it into a secular substitute for religion. Indeed, as a second generation atheist, I was completely at ease about the subject and over the years I have taken great intellectual pleasure in exploring abstruse issues in theology in the classroom and in private discussion.

My first serious work in philosophy was in C. H. Langford's course on Locke, Berkeley, and Hume. Actually, it was at least as much on G. E. Moore and Cambridge Analysis as it was on the Empiricists. I was soon taking advanced courses and seminars across the whole spectrum of the subject, with the exception of ethics. In DeWitt Parker's excellent seminar in metaphysics, I was introduced to McTaggart's classic paper on the unreality of Time and chose to write my term paper on the topic. I was soon deep in the literature and found myself genuinely involved. Philosophy was no longer a storehouse of alternatives to be explored and evaluated but, from that moment on, an unfinished dialogue in which I might have something to say. I soon became convinced that the problem of time was so intimately connected with other classical problems that it, like the mind-body problem, is one of the major proving grounds for philosophical systems.

One of my vivid memories of the period is a running controversy with A. P. Uschenko in which I defended a substantialist ontology of change against the argument that when S changes from being phi to being psi, S must *really* consist of an event which is phi and an event which is psi to be the terms for the relation *earlier than*. My reply was a clumsy anticipation of the subsequent treatment of the topic in "Time and the World Order"<sup>1</sup> and, most recently, "Metaphysics and the Concept of a Person"<sup>2</sup> in the latter of which Gustav Bergmann inherits the role of Uschenko. I was to remain convinced (to put it in more contemporary terms) that the basic objects of the common-sense framework are continuants rather than 'gen-identical' strings of events. I tended to think, in Aristotelian terms, of events in Time (or Space -Time) as metrical abstractions grounded in the reality of changing substances.

I was already in the grips of an empiricist 'abstractionism' and believed categories to be the deliverances of 'abstraction' from the 'given'. Thus, the self was given to us as substance, though it did not follow, I argued contra Parker, that it was conceptually necessary that all substances be 'selves'. Since I also held, in good Sellarsian fashion, that the mind as that which thinks is identical with the brain, I should have been more worried than I was about the givenness of the self. I am afraid I would have said that the givenness is somehow incomplete and generic and let it go at that. In retrospect, I seem to have thought that the self could be a substance which was a whole of material substances and yet be given as a substance without being *given as* a whole of material substances. When, in subsequent years, I attempted to think through the consequences of abstractionism as a theory of categorial concepts, the chief result was to make me receptive of Kant.

During this period, my philosophical thinking was primarily focused on Cambridge Analysis. Yet, while I was duly impressed with its high standards of rigor and clarity, particularly as exemplified by Moore, I rejected, on the whole, its results. I was also impressed, as were my younger contemporaries, with the power of the new logic. Yet I was (and remain) convinced that most transcriptions of philosophically interesting concepts into its logical forms were wildly implausible. Nevertheless, I regarded the strategy as a sound one and believed that the crucial question concerned the manner in which the technical apparatus of *Principia* would have to be fleshed out in order to do justice to the conceptual forms of human knowledge.

During this period I was being exposed to the philosophical aspects of Lewis' and Langford's *Symbolic Logic*, and it is therefore not surprising that I regarded the introduction of logical modalities as a paradigm case of this enrichment. It seemed obvious, even at the time, that this strategy should be extended to the causal modalities. The result was an immediate sympathy with the causal realism of C. D. Broad and, later, W. C. Kneale. Yet I was puzzled by what it could mean to say that necessity (logical or causal) was in the world, which, it seemed, must surely be the case, if modal concepts are genuine concepts and any modal propositions true. Was negation in the world? I was tempted by the approach to negation which grounds it in a 'real relation of incompatibility', and it was

years before I sorted out the confusions (and insights) involved. Was generality in the world? I saw this as one aspect of the problem of universals, which was never far from my mind. It can be seen that my early reading of the *Tractatus* had had but little effect. I regarded it as almost a *reductio* of Cambridge Analysis.

After graduating in 1933, I went to Buffalo as a teaching assistant. From the beginning, I was at home in the classroom. I had already discovered, as a debater in high school, that I could present ideas persuasively to large audiences and, which is more important, think on my feet. I early developed the technique of combining lecturing with extended 'Socratic' exchanges with 'volunteers' who happened to ask the right question and could be guided (or goaded) into representing the *volonte generale* of the class. Marvin Farber led me through my first careful reading of the *Critique of Pure Reason* and introduced me to Husserl. His combination of utter respect for the structure of Husserl's thought with the equally firm conviction that this structure could be given a naturalistic interpretation was undoubtedly a key influence on my own subsequent philosophical strategy.

Although I enjoyed teaching and could contemplate this aspect of an academic career with enthusiasm, writing was quite another story. Like most American students I had almost no experience in writing term papers until the last two years of college. Examinations I took in my stride; the constraints assimilated writing them to the debater's task of thinking on one's feet. With papers, there was always (until the last minute!) the opportunity for second and third thoughts about every step, and, as so often happens, the will-o'-the-wisp of the best made every choice look bad. It wasn't until years later that I learned that no matter how clumsy, gappy, and incoherent a first draft is, it contains the essence of what one has to say; and the comfort of finding raw material on paper to be licked into shape makes writing the next draft an entirely different experience. I have known philosophers whose first draft is the final product, and an excellent one at that. But I contemplate them with the same awe as I do Mozart, who could hear completed symphonies in his head.

I struggled, nevertheless, through an M.A. thesis on Time and, having been awarded a Rhodes Scholarship that Christmas, prepared to continue my studies at Oxford. In those days, graduate studies played a very minor role in the life of the University. I was advised to read for an undergraduate degree and have never regretted the choice. In the fall of 1934, then, I entered Oriel College and began a course of studies which would lead to a B.A. degree in philosophy, politics, and economics, with a concentration in philosophy.

Once again, I had the opportunity for a new beginning. I did an enormous amount of reading on topics with which I was already generally familiar, but in a far more critical spirit. I learned to argue with books as I learned, in tutorials, to be pushed to the limit in discussion. My tutor in philosophy at Oriel was W. G. Maclagan, now at Glasgow, who did an admirable job of questioning my dogmatisms and gently forcing me to clarify my ideas and arguments. I had already come to think of myself as having a system, and in a sense I did. But I became increasingly aware of how programmatic it was and of how little it contained that was clear and distinct.

My experience with Moore, however, had convinced me that clarity and distinctness can be achieved at the expense, to borrow a Spinozistic term, of adequacy, and that one should give one's muddiest intuitions the fullest benefit of the doubt. I had long felt that, although C. D. Broad might not be clearer than Moore, nevertheless he had a more adequate grasp of the problems they shared. I now think that this can be traced to Broad's awareness of, and technical competence in, the scientific background of these problems.

I soon came under the influence of H. A. Prichard and, through him, of Cook Wilson. I found here, or at least seemed to find, a clearly articulated approach to philosophical issues which undercut the dialectic rooted in Descartes, which led to both Hume and 19th Century Idealism. At the same time, I discovered Thomas Reid and found him appealing for much the same reasons.

Of a piece with this development was my growing sympathy for deontological intuitionism in ethics, particularly in the less metaphysically structured form which I found in the writings and lectures of H. A. Prichard. It struck me as far more adequate to the complexities of moral thinking than Moore's ever so clear and distinct Ideal Utilitarianism. I was conscious, however, of being an intuitionist in a Pickwickian sense. As I put it to myself at the time, Prichard's insights would somehow have to be cashed out in naturalistic terms.

When emotivism appeared on the scene, it struck me as wrongheaded in its early insistence on the pseudo-conceptual character of ethical terms, propositions, and reasonings. And yet I also felt, from the start, that it had

located one of the missing ingredients of the solution. Somehow intuitionism and emotivism would have to be *aufgehoben* into a naturalistic framework which recognized ethical concepts as genuine concepts and found a place for intersubjectivity and truth.

But before I could put these perceptions together, I would have to work out a whole new way of looking at the conceptual order. The situation was roughly the following. I had already broken with traditional empiricism by my realistic approach to the logical, causal, and deontological modalities. What was needed was a functional theory of concepts which would make their role in reasoning, rather than a supposed origin in experience, their primary feature. The influence of Kant was to play a decisive role.

I read the *Critique* with H. H. Price of New College as my tutor and began to develop in embryo the interpretation which was to become the core of *Science and Metaphysics*. It grew largely out of my increasing awareness of the importance of concepts pertaining to the intentionality of mental acts for the understanding not only of the Cartesian tradition but of British empiricism, even Hume.

I also saw, on the other hand, that by denying that sense impressions, however indispensable to cognition, were themselves cognitive. Kant made a radical break with all his predecessors, empiricists and rationalists alike. The 'of-ness' of sensation simply isn't the 'of-ness' of even the most rudimentary thought. Sense grasps no facts, not even such simple ones as something's being red and triangular. Abstractionists could think of concepts as abstracted from sense, because they thought of sensation in conceptual categories. This enabled me to appreciate that Kant wasn't attempting to prove that in addition to knowing facts about immediate experience, one also knew facts about physical objects, but rather that a skeptic who grants knowledge of even the simplest fact about an event occurring in Time is, in effect, granting knowledge of the existence of nature as a whole. I was sure he was right. But his own question haunted me. How is it *possible* that knowledge has this structure? The tension between dogmatic realism, and its appeal to self-evident truth and transcendental idealism, in which conceptual structures hover over a non-cognitive manifold of sense, became almost intolerable. It wasn't until much later that I came to see that the solution of the puzzle lay in correctly locating the conceptual order in the causal order and correctly interpreting the causality involved.

Although this larger enterprise was never far from my thoughts, I was not even clear about the terms in which it was to be formulated. It is one thing to be convinced that any adequate philosophy of mind must take seriously the intentional structure of mental acts and quite another to make satisfactory sense of traditional formulations. Thus, while finding the act-content distinction useful, I was aware that in some sense the 'content' of different acts in different minds must be capable of being the same, i.e., identical. Thus, the act-content approach to the mental, with its conceptualistic overtones, threatened to turn into the act-object (or relational) theory, with a resultant commitment not only to standard platonic entities (attributes, relations, classes) but to the whole Meinongian array of objective propositions, possible worlds, possible individuals, and even possible universals. I was convinced that an adequate naturalistic philosophy of mind would have to make sense of these classical dilemmas, but it wasn't until some ten years later, when I began to *equate* thought with language, that the desired synthesis began to take shape. In the meantime, I was prepared to let the alternatives flourish, controlled only by the role that they were to play in a truly Hegelian dialectic.

In the spring of 1936, I took the examinations, and, after spending several weeks in Paris waiting for the results, during which time my chief occupation was reading *War and Peace* from cover to cover, I returned to Oxford and found that I had been placed in Class I. I was particularly pleased to learn informally that my grades had been high all across the board, from Economic History to Logic. I returned to this country in high spirits but with a growing (and sobering) awareness that an Oxford B.A. (in spite of the fact that it automatically becomes an M.A. with the help of time and a fee) was unlikely to earn me a job, particularly at a time when there were no jobs.

I returned to Oxford in the fall and embarked on the pursuit of a D.Phil., undertaking to write a dissertation on Kant under the direction of T. D. Weldon. I had no real sense of how to go about it but read extensively and made countless notes on filing cards. I knew the *sort* of thing I wanted to say and how it differed from received interpretations but simply could not get anything worthwhile down on paper. Actually, my views were so systematically different that it really *was* difficult to know where to begin; or, to put it bluntly, I would have to be clearer about my own ideas before I could write intelligibly, let alone convincingly, about Kant. I continued to be baffled by the fact that I was so effective at writing examinations and talking on my feet and yet so disorganized at

my desk. In spite of the growing anxiety about my prospects for a professional career, I continued to read and discuss philosophy with enjoyment and enthusiasm. The highlight of the year (at least I think it was that year) was a seminar in C. I. Lewis' *Mind and the World Order* led by John Austin and Isaiha Berlin.

Politically, I was still on the left. I had few illusions about the communists but attributed their astonishing tactics in Germany, which helped smooth the way for Hitler, to the ignorance and self-interest of Moscow. It would have been difficult at the time for anyone not directly involved to realize the extent to which Stalin had corrupted political life in western Europe. The French Popular Front was the first encouraging sign after years of demoralizing confusion and defeat. Although the scene was darkened by the isolation and subsequent collapse of the Spanish Republic, one could hope that somewhere the lines would be drawn for a firm stand against fascism. It was already clear, however, that this stand would have to be military and would involve, in all probability, a European war.

In the fall of 1937, I went to Harvard to work for my 'trade-union card'. I remember taking courses with D. W. Prall (Spinoza), C. I. Lewis (Theory of Knowledge), R. B. Perry (Contemporary Philosophy), C. L. Stevenson (Hume), and W. V. Quine (Logical Positivism). It was the last of these which I found most challenging. I had already convinced myself that Ayer's *Language, Truth, and Logic* was a brilliant *tour de force* which led nowhere. In spite of its freshness and vigor, it represented the end of the era initiated by Moore's "Refutation of Idealism" and *Principia Ethica*; a *reductio* rather than a new beginning. In Quine's course, however, the central figure was Carnap, from the *Aufbau* to the *Logical Syntax of Language*. I am afraid that I got little out of the *Aufbau*. I would, I believe, have gained a better appreciation of the power of its technical devices if I had been able to put to one side my violent anti-phenomenalism. Carnap was doing what can't be done, therefore there must be something wrong about how he is doing it. It was not until Goodman's *Structure of Appearance* that I realized my mistake. As for the *Logical Syntax of Language*, I reacted, as did many of my contemporaries, with the idea that while a rigorous account of syntax was clearly a *desideratum*, as far as its *philosophical* content was concerned, Carnap was putting the cart before the horse. Surely (or so it seemed to me) the syntax of language reflects the structure of the world. And since thought deals directly with the world, *that* is where the action is. Yet a seed was planted. It might have sprouted earlier if the impact of *Syntax* had not been blunted by Carnap's own move into his semantical phase, which seemed to support the above reaction.

As for Lewis' increasingly ingenious attempt to salvage phenomenalism, I was most struck by his explicit realistic interpretation of nomological modalities. In the long run, two questions could not be avoided: (a) What was the nature of the inductive evidence for the relevant nomologicals? Could it be stated in terms of the actually given? (b) Was the form of the inductive argument *generalization* (statistical or non-statistical) or was it *hypothetico-deductive*? If the former, was it plausible to suppose that the basic laws of the physical could be stated in purely phenomenal terms? If the latter, doesn't this amount to conceding realism? Early in my reflection on phenomenalism, I had distinguished (in the spirit of the last chapter of A. C. Ewing's *Idealism*) between the thesis (a) that physical objects are tidy patterns of actually existing color expanses, *none* of which is identical with visual sense data, and the thesis (b) that physical objects are patterns — in a more abstract sense — of actual and 'possible' (i.e., conditional) sensations. The positivist thesis that the 'given' is *subjectlos* concealed the same ambiguity. Its basic meaning was that the self which has experiences of (e.g.) color expanses is a construct out of particulars belonging to the same general category. But by itself it leaves open the question of whether color expanses exist outside this bundle. Any which did would, in *another* sense, be *subjektlos*. The thesis that basic laws of macrophysics could be stated in "purely phenomenal terms" was correspondingly ambiguous. I regarded the second alternative as incoherent and the first as inconsistent with our knowledge that of scientific objects. These ideas were to sort themselves out in the course of the next decade.

In the spring of 1938, I passed my prelims and began to look for a manageable thesis topic. At Oxford, I had come to regard ethical intuitionism as my personal property and was consequently shaken to discover how thoroughly and lucidly William Frankena (whom I had known since my days at Michigan) had mastered it. A made-to-order topic had been pre-empted. I could always fall back on Kant, but by now I had no illusions about the dimensions of the enterprise. With the spring came rumors of jobs, and, since I was to be married that summer, the idea of getting out into the real (academic) world became increasingly attractive. After all, I had proved myself in every dimension of academic life — except writing for publication. Surely that could come! Yet the anxiety generated by this question was to be a dark cloud on the horizon for many years to come.

I first met Herbert Feigl in 1931 at a Western Division meeting in Ann Arbor. At that time, he was (or seemed to be) a paradigm logical positivist. Indeed, it is my understanding that he invented the term. Only later did it become clear that the basic motives of his thought were the exclusive right of sense experience and science to tell us how things are, an anti-Cartesian conviction of mind-body identity, and a deep sympathy with the naturalistic realism so convincingly expounded by his teacher Moritz Schlick before the latter was converted to positivism.

Like many radical empiricists of the time, he was haunted by the challenge: How could the existence of material things 'over and above' the 'given' be anything but a hypothesis? And how could it be a hypothesis without being a 'metaphysical' hypothesis, competing, for example, with the idealism of Berkeley and the monadology of Leibniz? Positivist phenomenism seemed to undercut the problem, and the generic theme of Neutral Monism to provide a strategy for defending mind-body identity. Yet the situation was unstable. The development of physicalism — at first as a *methodological* thesis in the philosophy of science and, as such, presumably compatible with methodological solipsism in epistemology, which, however, soon acquired the earmarks of a substantive thesis — and the growing awareness that a "reduction" of statements about scientific objects to statements about laboratory observables could not even in principle be equated with explicit definition were forcing a choice between instrumentalism and scientific realism. Once the issue was clearly posed, Feigl's choice was never in doubt. His reflections on the nature of theoretical explanation soon led him to review his objections to construing physical realism as an hypothesis -- a development which culminated in his lucid, but to my mind, unconvincing "Existential Hypotheses."<sup>3</sup>

But this is not an essay on the history of philosophy, and the relevant fact is that Feigl and I shared a common purpose: to formulate a scientifically oriented, naturalistic realism which would "save the appearances." He was familiar with the general outline of my father's Critical Realism and Evolutionary Naturalism, and when an opening occurred in the University of Iowa Department where he had been teaching since 1931, he suggested that I be invited for an interview. We hit it off immediately, although the seriousness with which I took such ideas as causal necessity, synthetic *a priori* knowledge, intentionality, ethical intuitionism, the problem of universals, etc., etc., must have jarred his empiricist sensibilities. Even when I made it clear that my aim was to map these structures into a naturalistic, even a materialistic, metaphysics, he felt, as many have, that I was going around Robin Hood's barn.

In late August 1938, my wife and I moved to Iowa City and I began my teaching career. I could scarcely have had a better opportunity. The Department consisted of Herbert Martin (the chairman), Herbert Feigl, and myself. My primary responsibility was the history of philosophy. There was a strong demand for the subject from the School of Letters (headed by Norman Foerster), and as a result it was possible to float a two-year sequence from Thales to Mill for upperclass and graduate students. I also designed a two-semester sequence, 'Philosophy of Man' and 'Philosophy in Literature', for the same clientele, of which the former introduced students to the ideas needed for the latter. Although I did not repeat the course more than once, I learned a great deal from teaching it and found it intensely interesting. I also began a rotating sequence of seminars in Theory of Knowledge, Metaphysics, Moral Philosophy, and selected figures in the history of philosophy.

During this period, I studied the whole range of the history of philosophy with a burning intensity, particularly Greek and medieval thought with which I had previously done very little. I became increasingly convinced of the importance of the subject and also came to see that much of the current literature on the subject was imperceptive and uninformed. The probing of historical ideas with current conceptual tools, a task which should be undertaken each generation was long overdue. It will be remembered that during this period the history of philosophy was not only neglected, there was an active campaign to delete it, or at least downgrade it, as a requisite for the Ph.D.

Once again, then, I had an exhilarating new beginning. There was so much to do, and so much sense of achievement in doing it, that the tasks of finishing my dissertation, which I scarcely touched, and of publishing, moved into the background. Herbert Feigl moved to Minnesota in 1941, and Gustav Bergmann, who had come to the University as a Research Associate with Kurt Lewin, joined the Department to teach advanced logic and philosophy of science. During his first semester he gave an excellent seminar in logical theory, based on Carnap's *Logical Syntax of Language*. It was attended by the entire Department, which, by now, included Everett Hall, who had joined us as chairman on the retirement of Herbert Martin. Bergmann became a close collaborator with Kenneth Spence, and I began to take behaviorism seriously. The idea that something like S-R-reinforcement learning theory could provide a bridge between white rat behavior and characteristically human behavior was a tempting one, but I could see no way of cashing it out in the philosophy of mind. In particular, I could not see how

to relate it to the intentionality which I continued to think of as the essential trait of the mental. Bergmann at this time took a fairly orthodox positivistic position with strong overtones of Carnap and Schlick. He and I argued the whole range of "pseudo-problems." The occasion of most of these discussions was an informal seminar in current philosophical literature which met at Hall's house every week and which everybody religiously attended. The Department was still minute and highly involuted. Ideas of amazing diversity were defended and attacked with passion and intensity. It was not easy to find common ground, yet "for the sake of discussion" we stretched our imaginations. It was, I believe, a unique episode — certainly as far as my own experience is concerned. We soon had some first-rate graduate students. Among the earliest and best was Thomas Storer, whose death at an early age was a genuine loss to philosophy.

By the winter of 1942, my involvement in historical studies could no longer mask a growing anxiety about publication. I had made several starts, but still had not solved the problem. The war was also very much on my mind, and my draft classification gradually evolved to 1-A. Eventually, I applied for a commission in the Navy and in the spring of 1943 was commissioned Ensign in the U.S. Naval Reserves, assigned to Air Intelligence. That summer, I went to the training center at Quonset Point, Rhode Island, and, after two months of condensed courses, was posted to the Anti-Submarine Development Detachment of the Atlantic Fleet, also at Quonset Point, where I remained until the spring of 1945.

The change of environment was, once again, anxiety reducing. I plunged into my work with enthusiasm. It involved a combination of giving lectures to squadrons in training on the theory and practice of anti-submarine warfare by aircraft, running for several months a rocket range on Nantucket Island, and, later, working as liaison officer on research projects with civilian scientists. A number of other academic people were affiliated with the organization, and life was pleasant, if strenuous. My work involved a substantial amount of time in the air, sometimes under rather hazardous conditions, but I thrived on it.

I spent the final months of the war in the statistical branch of Naval Air Intelligence in Washington. The work was routine, and I began to look to the future. The sudden end of the war brought me up with a start. I had done little reading or thinking about philosophical topics for some two and a half years, and suddenly it was time to return. My wife and I realized that we simply could not pick up where we left off. She had begun to write short stories with increasing success. A conversion experience on my part was essential. We resolved on a program according to which, on our return to Iowa City, we would work up to ten hours a day, day after day, on writing, however few words we got down on paper. We put this resolve into action and stuck with it. It was a team effort, and it worked.

I began to write a paper, catch as catch can, pushing ahead, letting the argument go where it would — almost in the spirit of writing an examination. I then made marginal comments and criticisms, after which I rewrote it in the same spirit. As I remember it, the paper started out to be about names, the given, and existential quantification. Three months and ten drafts later it began to be "Realism and the New Way of Words." Rewriting large chunks of it at a time became a way of life. Some seventeen major revisions occurred before it finally appeared in print.

At last I had found a successful strategy for writing. And if, in the beginning at least, the result was a highly involuted style, I had learned that revising is a pleasure and that even the clumsiest initial draft takes on a life of its own. It took longer to put into practice the truism that a revision must simplify as well as correct and add. I soon discovered that spinning out, as I was, ideas in a vacuum, everything I wrote was idiosyncratic and had little direct connection with what others had said. Each spinning required a new web to support it, and the search for fixed points of reference became a struggle for coherence and completeness. As a result, each sentence of "Realism" is a "flower in crannied wall." I soon came to see that a dialectical use of historical positions is the most reliable way of anchoring arguments and making them intersubjectively available. In the limiting case, this use of history is illustrated by correspondence and controversial exchanges with contemporaries. Even on paper, philosophy becomes explicitly what it has always really been, a continuing dialogue.

Until "Realism and the New Way of Words," my philosophical development took place *in foro interno*, in the classroom and in private discussion. Since that turning point, it has found a more public expression and is available for critical scrutiny. Nevertheless, as each publication moves further and further into the past (O, A-series!), there comes that time when I am moved to say, as did Carnap, "But my grandfather wrote that!"

## Notes

1. In *Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, Vol . III, edited by Herbert Feigl and Grover Maxwell (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1963): 527-616.
  2. In *The Logical Way of Doing Things*, edited by Karel Lambert (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969): 219-52.
  3. In *Philosophy of Science* 17(1950): 35-62.
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