

Mary Hesse

1. In October 1963, the then head of HPS, Gerd Buchdahl, let me become a Ph.D. student in philosophy despite my having no undergraduate qualifications in that subject. All I had was a Minnesotan Master's degree in chemical engineering with only a minor subject in philosophy of science, admittedly supervised by Herbert Feigl.
2. My proposed thesis topic was the role of analogy in scientific theories, which was why Mary became my supervisor, a job she did perfectly. She was always as helpful as she was demanding, making critical comments that were as constructive as they were acute.
3. But when I started to mitigate my philosophical ignorance by going to all the philosophy lectures I could, I was so taken with Richard Braithwaite's lectures on probability that, when I realised I couldn't add much to the literature, dominated by Mary, on models and analogies in science, I changed my thesis topic to the nature of chance.
4. So, when Mary kindly agreed to go on supervising me, her role changed somewhat. It was now up to me to find and digest the literature, with Braithwaite's help, and to take due account of it. Mary would then tell me where and how my work needed to be clearer, better structured, and more substantial. That was the best training I've ever had in how to write philosophy.
5. The fact that Mary and I often disagreed never mattered: she didn't want disciples – Hessians? – any more than Braithwaite did. For example, she greatly improved my only paper on models and analogies, which argues, against her, that Pierre Duhem's denial that scientific theories need *models* is perfectly compatible with N. R. Campbell's insistence that they need *analogies*.
6. More generally, while Mary and I agreed that natural and social sciences have the same methodology, we disagreed about what it is. I thought – and still think – it's that of the natural sciences as described e.g. by Carl Hempel, since finding out what other people mean, think, feel and want is no harder in principle than finding out what they weigh. Mary, on the other hand, thought that all sciences, natural and social – and theological – depend on interpretation in ways that we philistine Hempelians deny.

7. Yet this dispute, like all our others, was never acrimonious, since Mary was always as willing to listen and learn as to speak and persuade. She set me a standard of philosophical debate that I've tried, not always successfully, to live up to ever since.
8. I also learned a lot from Mary about how to get necessary but contentious things done in academia, in two contexts. One was witnessing her exemplary chairing of the Philosophy Faculty Board, never an easy job, and a completely supererogatory one for an HPS teaching officer like Mary. The other was as her review editor while she edited the *BJPS* from 1965 to 1968, when I succeeded her for three years, until Imre Lakatos's Machiavellian machinations returned the journal to the LSE.
9. To have had Mary as a role model in these various ways was a godsend. She, like Richard Braithwaite, Dorothy Emmet, and David Lewis, in their very different ways, exemplified the academic virtues I most prize: devotion to the subject; no respect for status, as opposed to knowledge, ability, honesty, and helpfulness; clarity of thought and writing; an intolerance of bullshit; and, above all, no ego: in other words – as Frank Ramsey's self-confessedly dimmer younger brother Michael, an Archbishop of Canterbury, said of him – 'a total lack of uppishness'. That was the Mary I knew and admired, and to whose influence and example I owe a very great deal.