

# **A LIFE IN THE ACADEMY**

**by**

**Robert Paul Wolff**

**I am nobody  
who are you  
are you nobody too?  
Then there's a pair of us  
shh don't tell  
they'd banish us you know**

**How dismal to be somebody  
how dismal like a frog  
to tell your name the live long day  
to an admiring bog**

**Emily Dickinson**

**"An individual life is the accidental coincidence of but one life  
cycle with but one segment of history" Erik H. Erikson**

## **Part One**

### **A Harvard Education: A Memoir of the '50s**

## Chapter One Growing Up

My entire life having been spent in association with one educational institution or another, it is perhaps appropriate that my very earliest memories are of the nursery school in which my parents enrolled me when I was two. When my mother was about to have her first child in 1930, which turned out to be my sister Barbara, the family moved from Greenwich Village to Queens, where they rented the first floor of a house at 3974 48<sup>th</sup> Street, just north of Skillman Avenue, in the neighborhood called then, and still called today, Sunnyside. I was born three years later, in December, 1933.

This was during the Great Depression, and the Sunnyside Progressive School, as the name suggests, was a red diaper operation. My parents had come out of a socialist background -- my father's father having been a leader of the Socialist Party in New York during the first decades of the twentieth century -- but by the time I was born, their connection with radical politics was limited to reading P.M. every day and voting the straight Democratic Party ticket. I know from family stories that the nursery school was a hotbed of radicalism, and David Horowitz, the leftie turned right-winger who went there somewhat later than did I, claims in his autobiography that the school was designed to turn out committed socialists, but I am afraid my most intense pre-school memory is of an early foot fetish that I focused on one of my teachers.

In May, 1937, Celia Esterowitz, who seems to have been the director of the school, sent to my parents a six page typed report on my activities during the year. I am pleased to be able to

state that my use of the jungle-jim was "resourceful and skillful and showed emotional growth in ideas and ability." But the frequent injections my father had to give me for severe childhood asthma seem to have triggered some sort of emotional difficulty. Here is the rather detailed account in the school report:

At the beginning of the year, Robert's security seemed to have suffered a severe jolt. This was expressed in his relationship with the teacher. He seemed to have a great need for attention and affection. Following the teacher's feet around the roof by himself or with a truck, stroking them, trying to remove the shoes, and even trying to masturbate against them ... all these were almost an obsession with Robert. In the midst of the most engrossing activity, he would drop everything to pursue the teacher. When all efforts at such times to make Robert return to his activity failed and the more drastic procedure of removing him until he was ready to work, only created strong antagonism in him, the teacher decided to try to lead him to more accepted forms of expression of affection. This she did do by lifting him up and embracing him or letting him sit on her lap while she talked to him. Although this embarrassed Robert at first, he soon began to express himself more frequently by a big hug and there was a lessening of concentration on the teacher's feet.

Thus it was, I suppose, that I avoided some of the problems that later afflicted Bill Clinton's politics guru, Dick Morris.

My father, Walter, and my mother, Lotte, were descended from the great migration that brought millions of Eastern European Jews to America in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Walter's parents, Barney and Ella, came from Poland and Vilna -- Barney as a babe in arms in 1880, Ella as a young girl eleven years later. Lotte's parents came from Romania. My two grandmothers actually met as girls when they were working in a glove factory on the Lower East Side of New York, so Walter and Lotte grew up knowing one another. They courted at meetings of Circle One of the Young People's Socialist League, but though my father graduated from Boy's High School and went on to attend City College, my mother was forced to leave

school at sixteen and go to work when her father had a stroke. Because she was a phenomenal typist and a very bright young woman, she was hired by the *Herald Tribune*, where she worked for ten years as the secretary to the City Editor.

Barney supported his family as a cigar salesman for Monday and Sons, but the Socialist Cause was his life. He and his friend, Abe Shiplacoff, started the Brownsville branch of the party in Brooklyn, where first Abe and then Barney ran for public office on the Socialist ticket. In 1917, Barney was elected to the New York Board of Aldermen. Though that was his only electoral victory, he ran six times, and worked both for labor unions and for the Workmen's Circle, a Jewish-American Socialist mutual assistance organization that still exists today.

Barney and Ella wrote hundreds of long, intimate letters to one another, starting before their marriage in 1901 and continuing for more than twenty years. My grandfather's letters are playful, romantic, chatty, and political by turn, reflecting both his devotion to Ella and his involvement in the Socialist cause. Despite his lack of formal education, he was an imaginative and eloquent correspondent. Barney fell in love with Ella when he was fourteen, and was true to her until his death fifty-one years later.

Walter and Lotte also wrote hundreds of letters to one another, in which they gossiped, talked about the books they were reading, and explored the nature of marriage and the proper relationship of a man and a woman. Walter never really had any other girlfriend but Lotte, and despite the fact that he was still in college, they were married in September, 1922, when he was not quite twenty-one and Lotte was twenty-two. Their marriage ended fifty-three years later when Lotte died of a heart attack.

As a young man, my father was deeply committed to Socialism as was his father. He actually got suspended from high school for making political speeches at one point. Once he married Lotte, however, he turned away from political involvements of any sort, focusing on his career as a high school Biology teacher. He was a hiker and wrestler as a young man, vigorous, energetic, and ambitious, but roughly when his father, Barney, died in 1945, he started drinking more and more heavily. After fighting his way up the very competitive Civil Service ladder to become the youngest high school principal in New York City history, he turned away from the opportunity to rise higher in the administrative hierarchy.

Much later on, when my parents were having troubles caused by my father's drinking, I came home to visit them, steeling myself to suggest that they might seek counseling. My mother's reaction was a kind of fond amusement that puzzled me. Only after I had read their letters and come to understand the depth, complexity, and openness of their long relationship did I begin to see that scene from my mother's perspective.

I was a pupil at the Sunnyside Progressive School until June, 1940, when my parents took the enormous, terrifying risk of buying a house in Kew Garden Hills, a newly developing community several miles to the East. Educationally speaking, it was a good time to leave, for shortly after we moved, Stalin ordered Trotsky to be killed in Mexico, and the school split into two irreconcilable factions. My grandfather having sided with the Mensheviks and Norman Thomas in 1917, my father grew up as a fanatic anti-communist, so had we stayed in Sunnyside, he probably would have hurled imprecations at both sides.

Aside from the image of my teacher's feet, I have a variety of memories of the six years that we lived in Sunnyside. I recall walking toward Skillman Avenue and kissing a pretty little blond girl on the cheek [it would be six years before my next kiss.] I **think** I remember a little boy named Phil Green, though perhaps I have only been told that we used to ride together in a baby carriage. Later on, Phil and I went to the same summer camp, and thirty-five years later still, when I moved to Northampton, Massachusetts to take up a professorship at the University of Massachusetts, Phil was teaching political science at Smith College. We discovered that in the interim we had both become radical critics of American society, and reconnected.

I can recall sitting propped up in a bed by a back window and eating vanilla ice cream after a tonsils operation. And I can still see myself taking my first bicycle ride down a back driveway, crashing into some bushes as I reached the street. I can also recall being quarantined at home for scarlet fever. My father and sister were forced to move out, but each day, when my mother returned from work, she was permitted to look in on me. I would ask her whether she had brought me any presents.

Quite the most traumatic event of those years occurred weeks after my birth, but I have no recollection of it -- only two ugly abdominal scars that grew as I grew, and are with me still. At the age of three or four weeks, I developed what has always been described to me as a "strangulated hernia." A portion of the colon knotted up on itself, so that I could not excrete anything. This was a genuinely life-threatening condition, and I underwent a complicated operation to correct it, even receiving a pint of blood donated by my parents' good friend, Vera

Proper. This was January 1934, when operations on newborn babies were not commonplace. I was lucky to survive.

At this time, my father was teaching biology at De Witt Clinton High School in the Bronx. My mother was working -- first as a free lance secretary, then as an office worker at the Child Study Association, a progressive organization devoted to advanced methods of child-rearing. My older sister, Barbara, and I were looked after by Lizzie -- Elizabeth Vaughn -- a kind-hearted, snaggle-toothed woman with a husband, Fred, and a daughter, Honey, who would arrive at our home before breakfast and stay until the dinner dishes were washed. She was simply a part of our household, and I never once gave the slightest thought to what it was like for her to spend so much of her life caring for us, and so little with her own husband and child. Lizzie was extremely affectionate, and gave every sign of genuinely caring for Barbara and me.

Because he was a public school teacher, my father had the summer months of July and August off, a fact that imposed on our family life a distinctive shape and structure shared by generations of teaching families. In 1938, when I was four, the family packed up its belongings, strapped them to the running board of the family car, and set out across country to spend the summer in Colorado. My father had been an enthusiastic hiker and mountain climber as a boy and young man, spending summers in the Catskills, where he walked up Slide, Bellaire, Wittenberg, and the other jumped-up hills that passed for mountains in the country north of New York City. Now he wanted to tackle a real mountain. He chose Longs Peak, a serious challenge in Rocky Mountain National Park, some 14,256 feet high.



It was a long trip in those days, made worse not only by my interminable fights with Barbara but also by my tendency to car sickness. There was a high ridge running down the middle of the floor of the car [containing the transmission, I imagine], and Barbara and I squabbled about who would have to sit so as to straddle the ridge. We played in the petrified forest in Arizona, saw *Alexander's Ragtime Band* from the balcony of a movie theater somewhere in the Midwest, and even stopped at one point to attend a performance of Cox and Box and Pinafore -- my first experience with theater of any sort.

In Colorado, we stayed in a genuine log cabin, around which spread a broad meadow. My principal memory is of the trestle table that served both as dinner table and as my father's work space. He was in the last stages of producing a high school biology textbook, *Adventures With Living Things*, in collaboration with Elsbeth Kroeber, who had been the chair of his Biology Department during his early years as a teacher. Miss Kroeber, as she was always referred to even by my father, was a maiden lady, and I cannot now recall whether I ever met her.

This was to be, as it turned out, the only book my father ever wrote, and a very big fuss was made about it. Years later, Barbara and I both realized that in some way or other, it had been communicated to us that writing books was the very most prestigious and excellent thing a person could do. That and getting a doctorate in science, something my father failed to do, and which Barbara did, by way of fulfilling his unsatisfied longings.

My father spent the summer reading and correcting proof. He said that he could take a set of proofs down to the railroad station near by, and it would be in Boston at Heath and Co.

within two days. Back would come another batch of proof, which would be spread out on the trestle table to be corrected.

Near the end of the summer, a forest fire broke out and we hastily packed up and headed East to avoid being trapped by it. I think my father did in fact climb Longs Peak.

Perhaps the most lasting legacy of those early days [leaving aside oedipal rages and erotic fixations] was an array of facial and bodily tics and twitches that appeared roughly when I was five. The facial tics included eye-blinking, grimaces of my mouth, and nose-twitches. The bodily twitches, although less noticeable, were in some ways more unpleasant. They were a variety of involuntary muscle contractions in my arms, legs, shoulders, and even abdomen. None of this, I am happy to say, was accompanied by explosive cursing -- so it wasn't Tourette's Syndrome, whatever else might have been the diagnosis.

My parents responded by calling the family doctor. This genius decided that the best way to deal with the tics was to stand me in front of a mirror, tell me to look at myself, and point out how ugly the tics made me look. Once I realized this, he reasoned, I would stop them forthwith.

In any event, I did *not* stop them, even though I agreed that they made me ugly, and were very uncomfortable besides. Over the years, a variety of psychiatrists and neurologists have addressed them, with no more success than the family doctor. As I write these words, sixty-nine years after the tics first appeared, I am twitching, sometimes so violently that the eye-blinking makes it difficult to focus on the computer screen. My friends insist that they very quickly become so accustomed to the tics that they are scarcely noticeable, but I don't believe a word of

it. Perhaps the worst moments for me have been the handful of occasions when I have seen myself on television, or in a video. I look so grotesque to myself that I cannot bear to watch. I have never been in much danger of thinking myself handsome, but the tics are, if nothing else, a powerful antidote to vanity.

I have always experienced time spatially. The day, the week, the year appear in my imagination as structured spaces. The year, for example -- this is a reflection of my lifelong residence in academic communities -- begins for me in September at a relatively low level, rises steadily to the holiday period around Christmas and New Year's Day, falls away again in the second semester to another low point in late May or early June, continues at the same level through the summer, and then starts to rise again as the new academic year begins. This perception is reinforced by my pocket calendar, which is sent to me each year by the Harvard Coop in return for my one dollar membership fee. Its pages start in June and continue through the following September. The ordinary annual calendar from my insurance company or car dealer is no use to me at all, since it irrationally begins in the middle of the year, with January, and ends with December, in the middle of the next year.

The time-line of my childhood has a spatial shape as well, punctuated by two major breaks: the move to the new house, when I was six and a half, and the move away from that house to college when I was sixteen and a half. My entire childhood is divided sharply into the six years before the move and the ten years after the move. My body seems to have understood the importance of the move, for as soon as we left Sunnyside and settled into our tiny row house in the new community of Kew Garden Hills, my asthma disappeared, never to return.

With the move, I was enrolled in the nearest elementary school, P.S. 117 in Jamaica, and I then set out on a desperate race to catch up with my older sister, a race that came to an end seventeen years later, when I finally managed not merely to make up the three and a half years between us, but to overtake her, by earning my doctorate a year before she earned hers. Some words of explanation are called for.

In New York City in those days, there were no Middle Schools, only Elementary Schools and High Schools. Children entered Elementary School either in September or in January, as soon after their sixth birthday as possible. Graduations were also held twice a year, so that children born in September through December began school in January, graduated from Elementary School in January, moved on to High School in January, and completed their education, once again, in January.

Barbara was born on August 24, 1930, so when we moved to Kew Gardens Hills, she had just turned ten. She began public school, right on schedule, in the fourth grade. I was born on December 27, 1933, and was thus six and a half when we moved. By rights, I should have gone into 1B, which is to say the second half of first grade. But Barbara had amused herself as a little girl by playing school with me as her captive pupil, and she had managed to teach me to read. So it was decided that I would skip 1B, and begin school in 2A. Several years later, I was skipped again - it was roughly in third or fourth grade, as I recall. Barbara, who was a brilliant student, was several times offered the opportunity to skip a grade, but declined. The result was that she was graduated from P. S. 117 in June, 1944 and started Forest Hills High School the next September, graduating four years later in June, 1948. I was graduated from the same

elementary school in January, 1947, and followed her to Forest Hills, two and a half years behind her. I had made up one of the three and a half years that separated us.

All of us who entered high school in mid-year faced a dilemma. If we proceeded at the normal pace, we would graduate in mid-year, and have to wait six months before going to college. The alternative was to accelerate a semester, by taking some extra courses along the way. This was actually not very difficult, since only five of the eight daily periods were devoted to academic subjects. I chose to accelerate, and so it was that I gained yet another half year, graduating in June, 1950 at the age of sixteen and a half. I was now only two years behind Barbara.

My next move in this peculiar marathon was to go through Harvard in three years instead of four. My ostensible reason was to save my parents the cost of a fourth year of college, but inasmuch as tuition during my undergraduate years was only \$400 when I began, and \$600 when I finished, saving my parents money was hardly a plausible explanation for my acceleration. [Charles Parsons recalls tuition as having been \$600 when we started, not \$400. In light of the fact that his father was a Professor at Harvard -- the famous Talcott Parsons -- he may be right.] Fortunately for me, Harvard was perhaps the easiest college in the country at which to complete an undergraduate degree in three rather than four years. The normal undergraduate academic load at Harvard was four courses a semester, or thirty-two courses for a four-year degree. By taking five courses a semester -- something that all of my students these days at the University of Massachusetts routinely do -- I was able to accumulate thirty courses in three years. It required

only one summer school session of two courses for me to complete the requirements for a B. A. I was now a mere one year behind Barbara.

Both of us were aiming to earn doctorates, I in Philosophy, Barbara in Biochemistry. She completed her degree in six years, despite moving to the West Coast to follow her dissertation director when he left Harvard to take up a post at Stanford. But I finished my degree in four years. So it was that I sped across the finish line in June 1957, a year ahead of my big sister.

**What on earth was this all about?** I have puzzled for years over my anxious effort to overtake my sister, and after all this time, I still do not understand it. Obviously, I was fiercely competitive with Barbara; that goes without saying. But why did it take the form of a race to catch up to her, rather than a struggle to outdo her by getting higher grades? I am now only weeks away from my seventieth birthday, and I still instinctively think of Barbara as "three and a half years" older than I, not as three years older, or merely as older. She is in actual fact not three and a half years older, but three and a third years older, but it never crossed my mind to lay claim to that extra sixth. Obviously "three-and-half-years" was a way of counting school semesters, not calendar months.

Along with this long distance race went a number of more short-term efforts. As a boy, I wanted always to be taken for older than I was. The last thing I desired was to be thought of as a little prodigy. I dated girls older than I, and my proudest moments were when one of them said, for example, "Oh, I didn't realize you are only twelve. I thought you were fourteen." My father's mother was a year older than her husband, and my mother was a year older than my father. My first serious love was fifteen when I first started dating her, though I was only fourteen. The

effort to appear older continued into adulthood. When I first started teaching as a graduate Teaching Fellow at Harvard, I affected a hat in an effort to appear older than my twenty-one years.

Of course, a straight out competition with Barbara for grades held certain perils. She was a spectacular student, and since I followed in the path she had blazed in elementary school and high school, I was constantly being compared to her by teachers who would say, when I showed up in their classes, "Oh, you are Bobby Wolff's little brother." Age so completely trumped performance in my mind that even when I actually did better than she, I could not see it.

In those days, we were given numerical grades in high school, and although the grades proceeded in steps of five points up to 90, from then on the increments were in single points. So you could get an 80 or an 85 in English, though not an 83 or 87, but if you made it beyond 90, then you could get a 91, a 92, a 93, and so on up to a perfect score of 100. Each semester the grades in our major subjects [what would, today, be called College Prep courses] were converted to an average. There was intense competition among the best students in a class for the highest average, and as much turned then on a 97.4 rather than a 96.9 as turns now on a 720 rather than a 690 on the SAT's.

At any rate, one semester, during the two and a half years when we were simultaneously high school students, I brought home a report card with an average that was actually *higher* than hers. Yet when I looked at her card, it literally *looked better* than mine, even though I could see that the grades were slightly lower.

Even in college, this odd competition, entirely in my head, continued. Barbara earned a degree in mathematics and Zoology *summa cum laude* at Swarthmore College. The next year I got only a *magna* at Harvard. Yet what mattered to me was that I had caught up another year. The fact that she had actually done better was of no real importance to me..

A reader of even limited curiosity might wonder how all of this appeared to Barbara. Despite my having an eager and active mind, which was constantly reaching out to new ideas, this thought simply never occurred to me. Indeed, it was only thirty years or so later, when, after the break-up of my first marriage and the death of both our parents she and I began really to talk to one another, that I discovered that my lonely race had actually had an effect on her.

Apparently, from her perspective, I was some sort of Tasmanian devil, bearing down on her with ferocious energy and insatiable appetite, gobbling up the years that separated us. Even though as a teenager I brooded about big things like philosophy and politics and the meaning of life, I was completely incapable of putting myself in her shoes even for a moment, or of wondering what our family looked like from her point of view. It is one of the triumphs of age and experience that now, as we are both septuagenarians, we have managed to talk in an open and friendly fashion about these ancient matters [or rather *I* have managed, for I think she has been much more self-aware than I for at least fifty years.]

One of the consequences of my father's choice of career was that, like many children growing up in New York in the thirties and forties, my life divided sharply into two utterly separate and unrelated segments -- the period from September through June, when I went to school in the city, and the summer months of July and August, which were spent in the country.



There was simply no overlap. When we were at home in the city, we were *in the city*. There were no weekend trips to the country, no carrying-over of the things we did in the country. And when we were in the country, city life completely vanished. Schoolwork, the New York City school system, Kew Gardens Hills -- all were left behind.

This dichotomy in my life was merely the local and personal reflection of an ancient split between the city and the country that developed ten thousand years ago during what archeologists call the Neolithic Revolution -- the more or less simultaneous appearance in the historical record of substantial, permanent cities and systematic agriculture. For all that time, until a mere two generations ago, the city and the countryside stood in antiphonal counterpoint to one another, with poets, painters, composers, and philosophers celebrating the virtues and condemning the vices of one or the other. Dress-up pastorales at Versailles during the reign of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century Louis's; the romantic celebration of Merrie Olde England invented by nineteenth century conservative critics of capitalism; Karl Marx's sardonic remark about the idiocy of rural life; and even Sherlock Holmes' assurance to Dr. Watson that the idyllic villages of rural England hid crimes that would appall the most hardened Londoner -- all reflected the understanding that there was a deep chasm separating the life of cities from that of the rural, agricultural countryside.

In the United States, the erasure of that divide took place in my father's lifetime, first with the invention of the automobile, then with the paving of the roads that connected farm with city, then with rural electrification, and finally with the bridging of the urban and the rural by the suburban. When I was a little boy, travel from a big city into and through the countryside was a

genuine adventure, bringing one into a strikingly different world. By the time I was a young man, Howard Johnson motels, national fast food chains, and a continental culture of movies and radio had all but eliminated any genuine difference between the felt experience of city and country life.

Within New York City itself, I can trace this rapid transformation through the experiences of three generations of Wolff's. My grandfather and grandmother, when they were courting at the turn of the century, liked to take walks northward from the lower East Side of Manhattan into the country, up around forty-second street. By the time my father was a teenager, after the First World War, he could shepherd his younger brothers and sister on outings to the countryside, in the Borough of Queens. At the time that we moved to Kew Gardens Hills in 1940, our little row house community lay at the farthest Eastward urban expansion of New York. There were hills and ponds at the end of our street, where I and my friends played an expansive form of Tag over many acres. But by the time I was fourteen, and trying to earn my First Class Boy Scout badge, the only way I could manage the requisite fourteen mile hike was by walking seven miles East along Union Turnpike, out past Creedmore Mental Hospital, and then seven miles back along the sidewalks of the same city street.

Thus it is that as I look back on my early years, I see two lives, each with its pleasures and horrors, but unconnected one to the other. Though it may seem odd to the reader, it strikes me as perfectly sensible to tell the story of my boyhood years in two discrete narrations -- one devoted to my life in Kew Gardens Hills, the other to my summers in the country. Summers first.

The year after the Colorado trip, the family spent the first of a series of summers in the little town of West Shokan, near the Ashokan Reservoir in the Catskill Mountains of New York State. This was 1939, and there was no modern multi-lane system of interstates. The trip was long enough and difficult enough to constitute a genuine transition between the two worlds. Looking at a map today, I realize just how close that part of New York State is to Manhattan. Ninety-three miles up the New York Thruway to Kingston, then west on route 28, and another five miles or so bring you to the reservoir. You can then get to West Shokan either by bearing left around the southern shore of the reservoir almost to its end, or else by taking the right hand fork and going around the reservoir to come upon West Shokan from the other direction. Today it would be a drive of two to three hours, depending on where in New York City you began.

I have written at length about this little area of the Catskills in the books I created about my grandparents and my parents from the cache of family letters and documents I inherited at my father's death. He had spent his boyhood summers in the same area, staying with his mother and his brothers and sister in Oliveria or Big Indian. It was quite natural to him, I imagine, to return there with *his* wife and children, twenty years later. In 1985, I scattered my parents' ashes in the Ashoken Reservoir, after reading aloud some of the many letters they exchanged in 1919, 1920, and 1921 when my mother was working in New York at the Herald Tribune and my father was hiking and climbing in the Catskills.

The family rented a renovated barn in West Shokan on the property of the Milveys. Their son, Paul, was roughly Barbara's age, and she recalls a good deal more about those early

summers than I do. I have only three discrete sensory memories of the time we spent in that barn, and as subsequent experience has taught me, they may be faulty. The first is of Barbara and me playing one of our many multi-pack card games of War on the floor of the main room, while our parents listened to a radio broadcast that was obviously upsetting them. I think it must have been the news of Hitler's invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, which would have been just before we returned to the city.

The second is of the brook behind the barn, where Barbara and I would wade, and grind colored stones into a paste that could serve reasonably well as paint. The third is of my favorite toy, a little yellow steam shovel with a crank, so that you could actually dig up some dirt with the scoop and then raise it up as though to transfer it to a dump truck.

I think we spent the summers of 1939, 1940, 1941, and 1942 in the Milveys' barn. Then Barbara and I went off to summer camp, and I spent six of the next seven years in the Berkshires.

The war years were the heyday of the summer camp. Hordes of New York kids from middle class families gathered in Grand Central Station on the Fourth of July under the sign for this or that camp, clothing name-tagged and packed in big, cumbersome trunks, and climbed on board trains that took them to upstate New York, Connecticut, or Massachusetts for eight weeks, returning just before Labor Day to go back to school. The camps were staffed in large part by public school teachers who had the same summer vacation as their charges. It was a way for the teachers to earn some extra money and get out of the city. The camps featured swimming, sports, crafts, horseback riding, hiking and camping, and this being the period just after the Great Depression, at least some of them had a distinctively left wing tonality.

It was a reach for my parents to come up with the money to send Barbara and me to camp, but the second summer, my father got a job as a counselor at Camp Taconic, and as part of his package, we were charged reduced rates. In fact, the third and last summer I spent at Taconic, he was Head Counselor, taking the place of Bob Kinoy, who had gone off to war. Camp Taconic [the name, I assume, is Native American, though no one ever explained it to us] was located on the shores of Lake Ashmere in the Berkshires, about six miles east of Pittsfield and no more than twenty miles from the New York border. It still is in business today, sixty years later. I have a tremendous number of fond memories of Taconic, though I have been told that I was a troubled and troublesome child.

I learned to swim, and even though a dip in Lake Ashmere might bring with it a couple of leeches [the camp kept a barrel of salt to assist in removing them], I ran down to the dock each day at swim period to jump in. Making it all the way across the lake to the far shore was one of the standard tests of swimming ability, recognized by having one's name put up on a board in the dining room. A row boat accompanied you on this daring adventure, in case you started to drown. It was said to be a quarter of a mile across -- a challenge for a nine or ten year old boy. I did it one summer, and actually made it over and back the following summer.

For reasons that entirely escape me, I associate the little hut where we changed into our swim suits with the Josh White folk song, "Strange Fruit," which I did not realize then but know now referred to lynchings. That will give you an idea of the political complexion of the camp.

And now, a tribute to the power of the internet and a cautionary word about memory. The music counselor was a broad-chested man with a full head of curly hair and a body-builder

torso, who would lead the willing in early-morning calisthenics outside the dining hall. I have remembered him all these years as being named Jack Fracht, and had a vague notion that during the year [that is, from September to June] he conducted an orchestra somewhere in the South. I tried googling for the name "Jack Fracht" and came up empty [although I did learn along the way that "fracht" is German for cargo -- i.e. freight]. But when I tried "Charleston Symphony Orchestra" and clicked on their "history" link, up came the name "J. Albert Frecht" as one of its first conductors, in the thirties. I would have sworn on my life that his name was Fracht, not Frecht.

As a boy, I suffered unpredictable moments of light headedness or dizziness, which terrified me. I was taught to put my head down and breath deeply until they went away, and I have a clear visual memory of squatting down on the Taconic grounds, head between my legs, trying to get over one of the spells. Now I realize that I was having anxiety attacks, but no one then seemed to have that concept, and putting my head between my legs was the best they could come up with.

Hikes were reserved for the weekends, and they were special events. Bag lunch in hand, sweater tied at the waist, we would set out on some great trek, led by the counselors. We rarely went more then three or four miles, but to a boy of nine, that seemed a true adventure. One hike in particular stands out, though not because of its rigors. We walked to Waconah Falls, and ate lunch by the pool at the bottom of the falls. One of the college students who was a counselor to a girls' bunk stripped down to bra and panties and dove in for a swim. When she emerged, her scanty clothing was plastered to her body and completely transparent. I and the other little boys

gawked and giggled. It must have been ten years before I realized, looking back on that day, that she was deliberately teasing the male counselors.

In August of 1945, my third summer at Taconic, right at the time when some of the campers were preparing to put on the hit new musical, Oklahoma, news came that my grandfather, Barnet Wolff, had died of a stroke. The news made no impression on me at all. I knew him only as a genial mustached old man who ran the Workman's Circle sanitorium in Liberty, New York. It would be more than half a century before I could take the full measure of that remarkable man, and come to understand the extent to which my life had been guided by the vision of his lifelong commitment to socialism.

With the end of the war and the return of the counselors who had gone off to fight, my father lost the position as head counselor. Meanwhile, I had plunged into Boy Scouts at home, and so the next summer, I went off to Boy Scout Camp. Unlike the private summer camps, Boy Scout camp was broken into two week sessions. I signed up for two sessions, but I hated the camp so much that I backed out after the first two weeks. Memories of that experience are a jumble of pitching tents and drinking a poisonous purple liquid at all meals that we called bug juice. But the stint was marked by two significant moments. The first was my first real fight. I cannot now recall what sparked it, but another little boy and I squared off in a clearing in the woods. He hit me in the stomach, I doubled over with the breath knocked out of me, he ran away terrified by what he had done, and that was the end of it.

The other event was a bit more dignified. The Boy Scout oath was then, and is now, so far as I know, "On my honor, I promise to be trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous,

kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent." It was taken with one's right hand raised in a peculiar two-fingered salute. When I refused on principle to say "reverent," all hell broke loose. There was a great confabulation of troop leaders, I stood my ground, and I came very close to being thrown out of the camp. I have always been very proud of that moment. There have been others, but none, perhaps, in which I was so alone and exposed.

Through the Child Study Association, my mother heard of a new camp being organized especially for teenage boys and girls -- something of a novelty at that time. Although its clientele was middle class and professional, and consisted of doctors, lawyers, and teachers who had probably never engaged in manual labor for pay, the Shaker Village Work Camp, as it was called, celebrated labor, along with folklore and the arts. Founded and run by Jerry and Sybil Count, the camp charged a hefty fee so that young people could have the privilege of working with their hands. To promote the new camp through the Child Study Association, the Counts gave my mother a discount on the price, and in the summer of 1947, at the age of thirteen, I became one of the founding campers.

I spent the next three summers at Shaker Village, and have a rich variety of extremely happy memories of the camp, the counselors, the other campers, and the activities. This is actually rather odd, because I was in fact so angry, troubled and disruptive much of the time that during the third summer, the Counts thought seriously about sending me home. I know this to be true from things I have been told, but I simply have no direct memory of this dark side to the experience.



Shaker Village made a half-hearted effort to offer the usual camp fare of sports, swimming, and the like, but the real aim was to give us work experience, art, music, dance, and a hands-on taste of self-governance. Many of the counselors had roots in the various progressive movements that had emerged during the depression, though whether any were actually members of the Communist Party I never knew.

The camp had been set up on the site of an old Shaker Village in Hancock, New York, no more than twenty miles from Camp Taconic. One of the buildings was called Mother Ann's cottage, and was said actually to have been lived in by the founder of the Shaker sect, Mother Ann Lee. The building was in very bad shape, so one of our major work projects was to renovate it. This involved not only pulling old plaster and lath from the attic walls, but also making new pegs for the peg boards. One of the lovely Shaker customs was to keep a room neat by hanging their elegant ladder back chairs on pegs when they weren't being used. The pegs were screwed into pegboards that ran along each wall at eye height. I learned how to use a wood turning lathe and spent many happy hours turning new pegs.

The entire camp was formed into a chorus, regardless of musical talent or ability, and met regularly to sing Bach chorales, Shaker songs, rounds, glees, and classical selections like *Ave verum corpus*. The chorale conductor was a dynamic young man just returned from the Army named Hal Aks. Hal was my favorite camp counselor, if one can use that term to describe him. He had studied with the great Robert Shaw, and conducted very much in Shaw's style with enormous energy, his rounded shoulders hunched over, his already thinning hair shaking with the fervor of his musical passion. Hal made chorale singing an intensely sexual activity -- I don't

know any other way to describe it. This resonated powerfully with me because music was one of the most important parts of my life, tapping erotic feelings in me that went very deep. As a teenager, I formed a passion for early music -- Bach, Gregorian chant, Buxtehude. So the singing was intertwined in my mind with sex, a fact that lifted both to a higher level of feeling.

I was not alone in experiencing the musical activities in this way, I think. We used to meet for chorus in the barn, which was the camp meeting place, and I can still recall the evening that beautiful Jane Shapiro walked in a bit late, wearing a low cut peasant blouse, and caused the entire bass section to drop a full interval.

One of the most exciting activities of Shaker Village was a series of all-camp outings to the Tanglewood Music Festival, which was then only ten years old. In 1949, the camp was quarantined because of a polio scare, and we could not go to the concerts, so Hal arranged for a string quartet of Tanglewood students to come to the camp to play for us! I sat in the hayloft of the barn, almost directly above the players, and looked straight down at them as they played one quartet after another. I have attended many concerts since by world-class string quartets, but I do not think I have ever enjoyed a concert more than I did that night.

Almost as important to me as Hal was Margot Mayo, the short, plump folklorist who introduced us to the mysteries of Child's collection of English ballads in America and taught us folk dancing. Margot was a minor but recognized student of folk dance and song, and the author of at least one book on square dancing. It was her familiarity with the work of Alan Lomax that made us aware of the great Huddie Ledbetter -- Leadbelly -- just at the moment when he was first becoming known in the North.

Shaker Village was unabashedly idealistic in its celebration of manual labor, community democracy, and folk culture. During my summers there, I developed a deep moral, political, and aesthetic commitment to the progressive dreams that had guided so many men and women during the long depression years and the war years that followed. Half a century and more later, I remain convinced that this country was better for those ideals, and would do well to return to them. Recently I saw the movie *Seabiscuit*, in which the unfolding of the tale of the racehorse is interspersed with still photographs from the depression years and a voice-over narration conjuring a time when working people were honored rather than scorned, and it was accepted that the fortunate had an obligation to help those who were down on their luck. I wept unashamedly for a better time. It was not until Black men and women risked their lives for justice and freedom in a great Civil Rights Movement that this country -- all too briefly -- again experienced that honest idealism.

My third summer at Shaker Village, in 1949, brought to a close the segmented country portion of my early days. The next year, I was graduated from high school and set off to college. I would not again feel my life separated into two discrete and unconnected unfoldings.

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Meanwhile, of course, I was going to school. P. S. 117 was a large, brick utilitarian structure under the governance of Tamah Axel, its Principal. The education was pretty standard and unimaginative. English, Math, Science, Social Studies, and the like. I took quite naturally to school, coming as I did from an extended family of teachers. My father, as I have noted, was a High School Biology teacher and Department Chairman. The year I moved up to High School,

he was appointed to the principalship of William Cullen Bryant High School in Queens, having been the youngest person ever to pass the rigorous year-long Principalship examination. One of his brothers, my uncle Bob [after whom I was named, I believe] was a Professor of Physics and Astronomy at City College. His wife, Rose, taught in elementary schools in Harlem and the Bronx for thirty-two years. My father's youngest brother, Ben, was a teacher at secondary schools for difficult children. His wife, Fanny, taught music in the public schools. Even my aunt Rosabelle, the doctor's wife, taught school for a time, as I recall. It would have been odd indeed had I not liked school!

To be sure, there were some bad moments. My eighth grade science teacher was an alcoholic harridan named Mrs. Seagers, whose pedagogical style seemed to draw a good deal from the nuns. When we acted up, she would hit us with whatever came to hand -- a ruler, a pointer, the big wooden pass that we had to carry when we went to the bathroom in order to show that we had permission, sometimes the back of the hand on which she wore a ring with a spherical metal ball, once even a miniature baseball bat that one of the students had brought to class. Her principal target for these undoubtedly illegal forays into corporal punishment was Robert Welch, a precocious trouble-maker who, one afternoon, introduced some of us to the dubious delights of Southern Comfort. Oddly enough, he actually liked Mrs. Seagers, despite the fact that she periodically took a swipe at him.

But far and away my worst moment in grade school came in the fourth or fifth grade, at the hands of Miss Hickman, a fat, unpleasant looking teacher who was -- I now realize -- rather afraid of the rambunctious little boys and girls in her charge. One day, when she was out of the

room momentarily, the boys erupted into an orgy of pin-sticking, pricking the girls with straight pins. I joined in enthusiastically. [The deeper psychoerotic meaning of this event is too obvious to require comment]. When Miss Hickman came back into the room and saw what was going on, she demanded to know which boys had been involved. Anyone who confessed, she said, would not be punished. I was terrified that my goody-two-shoes reputation as class suck-up would be tarnished were I to confess, and so I kept my mouth shut.

Sure enough, someone called out, "Robby Wolff did it too." She confronted me, and I made the fatal error of insisting that I had not been involved. Whereupon, Miss Hickman got the appalling idea of teaching the class a civics lesson about the American judicial system by putting me on trial. I was forced to stand by my desk while members of the class testified against me. I was mortified, red-faced with shame, and sick inside from being exposed as a trouble-maker, a liar, and too much of a coward to admit what I had done. I reported all this to my parents, who reacted furiously by charging into school and demanding an apology.

It was not my finest hour.

A good deal more fun was the daily recess, when we got to play in the schoolyard. At one end were several handball courts, and I got rather good at the version of the game that we played. Unlike grown-up handball players, who use a small, rock hard solid black rubber ball, we would take an ordinary tennis ball and rub it on the pavement until all of the fabric coating was worn off. What remained was a soft red very flexible ball, which did much less damage to our hands. I teamed up with Paul Pavlides and we were pretty regularly the doubles handball champions of the school. The aim was to hit the ball so low to the ground that there wasn't a big

enough bounce for the opponent to return it. This was called a killer. The ultimate was to hit the ball so that it caught the precise point where the wall met the ground. The ball would then simply roll back from the wall without any bounce at all. This was a dead killer, and a sure winner. Paul's father was a waiter at the Stork Club, a famous Manhattan night club that none of us had so much as heard of before he told us about it. One day, he brought in a big glossy menu from the Stork Club and passed it around for all of us to see.

Because the area East of Kew Gardens was expanding, as more and more houses were built, the School Department carried out a redistricting, and at about the point when I was entering sixth grade, my neighborhood was reassigned to P. S. 170, a Jamaica school that had, in an early incarnation, housed the teacher training school to which my aunt Rosabelle had gone a generation earlier. I was devastated by the move, and pleaded with my parents to have me transferred back to P. S. 117. My father pulled some strings, and after a term and a half at P. S. 170, I moved back to complete my elementary schooling at P. S. 117.

This was wartime, of course, and in its own small way the schools were expected to make their contribution to the national war effort. So we carefully peeled off the tinfoil lining from our candy wrappers and assembled large balls of gunmetal colored foil, which we brought in to school on the appointed days to add to the piles of newspapers, all of which, we were assured, would be transformed into guns and bombs for the boys overseas. Perhaps the oddest reflection of the martial spirit of the times was the quasi-military system of monitors and crossing guards that was established in the elementary schools. The alpha males, top students, and teachers' pets were recruited into the monitor corps and given blue felt armbands with military rank on them,

which they wore as emblems of their authority while shepherding the little kids into class lines after recess and such like duties. There were two complete arrays of military ranks, one for the boys and the other for the girls. Each one consisted of quite a few privates, corporals, and sergeants chosen from among the younger children, a handful of middle rank officers, and a single one star, two star, three star, and four star general, positions reserved for eighth graders getting ready to move on up to high school.

Needless to say, Barbara was the four star girl general her senior year, setting a standard that I could not hope to meet. When I reached eighth grade, Paul Pavlides was the four star boy general -- everyone knew that he was, as we didn't say then but would say now, the coolest kid in the school. Rafael Villalba, one of my closest friends, was the three star, and I was the two star. This is emblematic of my entire school career. Two star was pretty good, after all. It said that I was the third coolest boy in the eighth grade. But it wasn't four stars, and so it felt like failure.

Eighth grade was also the occasion of my first serious kiss, if we don't count the Skillman Avenue adventure. It was actually an arranged kiss, having something of the air of an assignation in an eighteenth century French farce. Somehow -- I cannot now recall -- Marilyn Harris and I developed a mutual desire for a romantic encounter. Her seconds met with my seconds, and agreed that the principals would meet in the boiler room of the school. When the time came, we approached one another, kissed *on the lips*, and parted. Nothing further came of it. The act seemed to satisfy our desires quite nicely.

I realize this will seem rather tame to a modern audience, accustomed to tales of *fellatio* in grade school and unwed Middle School mothers. However, as many writers through the ages

have noted, sex is mostly in the head, since the fantasies that drive our behavior have their roots in erotic urges laid down in us when we are not yet toilet trained. Thus the flash of an ankle, the touch of a hand, or a boiler room kiss can carry with it as much excitement as *going all the way*. It is not for nothing that suspicious Iraqi men firmly believe that the wrap-around dark glasses worn by occupying U. S. soldiers have been engineered to see through women's clothing!

Rather more adventurous than the Harris affaire was my flirtation with a full-figured little girl with the intriguing name of Petrina Rini. Her family lived along the route I took when I walked home rather than riding the bus, and I fell into the habit of carrying her books to her house. One day, as we paused outside her home before I continued on, I launched into an elaborate discourse about the structure of the Solar System, which concluded with a demonstration of the orbit of the earth around the sun, featuring Petrina as the sun, my arms as the orbit, and my head as the earth. I am not sure this can quite qualify as "stealing a kiss," since she did not seem resistant to the idea, but I thought of myself as a real devil of a fellow, and smiled all the way home.

Home, as I have indicated, was a row house in the community called Kew Gardens Hills. In the thirties, my parents had a large circle of friends who lived, for the most part, in and around Sunnyside -- the Harritons, the Goldsteins, the Rosenbergs, the Simons, the Lamberts, and the Vieland [of whom, more later]. Some time in 1939 or 1940, Hy Goldstein, who was an architect, reported that a new development was going up several miles to the east, and was, in his judgment, being very solidly built. The whole group decided to leave Sunnyside and buy into the new community. All except Joe and Fera Vieland. Joe was a violist with the New York



Philharmonic, and needed to be close to the subway to get to work, so Joe and Fera moved to Rego Park, near the Independent subway stop just before Continental Avenue. It was then a quick ride on the E or F train to 53<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>, and a short walk up to Carnegie Hall on 57<sup>th</sup> just off 7<sup>th</sup>.

The development consisted of brick two-story attached houses in the Tudor style, with slate roofs and unfinished attics and basements. Behind the houses, in the space between our row and the row one street over, was an extended driveway that fell away from street level to the level of the basement. Along this driveway, jutting out from each house, was a little one-car garage, sized for cars of the 1940 vintage. The top of the garage doubled as a back porch or veranda with a metal railing, accessible from the first floor of the house.

My parents bought the unit at 138-37, 76<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and we moved in at the end of the summer in 1940. 76<sup>th</sup> Avenue makes a big sweeping curve just before 138-37, and heads slightly down hill, in those days to a dead end in a field. Although I remember the house as quite adequate to the needs of a family of four, the plot plan shows it to have been tiny. By my calculation, the two floors, including the walls, took up a tad more than 800 square feet.

Just inside the front door was a tiny entry way with a coat closet. This led into a living room with a fire place [extra] and then, through an arch, into a dining room, off which to the right was the kitchen. Open stairs led from the living room to the second floor hall, with, from left to right, the bathroom, my parents' room, my sister's room [almost as big as that of my parents], and finally my room, just large enough for a bed and a desk. Eventually, my father finished the basement, which had a toilet [also extra] into a paneled, linoleum tiled family room,

where in later years we danced and had parties. He managed to insulate the attic, but never transformed it into a real room, and it remained the repository of old books and family papers until I cleaned it out in 1981, after his death.

On August 29, 1940, at the Ridgewood Savings Bank on Myrtle and Forest Avenues in Ridgewood, Walter and Charlotte Wolff closed on the house. The purchase price was \$5,400, including the fireplace and the basement toilet. [That little toilet was so small that even as a boy, I found it hard to sit down with my knees in front of me without bumping up against the opposite wall. It always seemed cold, and smelled of unfinished plaster.] The mortgage was for the entire purchase price, secured by a 4 2 % twenty-five year loan, to which was added a 2 % surcharge from the Federal Housing Authority. Principal and interest came to \$29.27 a month, a sum that my parents paid faithfully until 1965, by which time, of course, what with inflation and pay raises, it had become trivial. After my father' death, I sold the house with the help of a neighborhood attorney, Bernard Ackerman. The sale price was \$80,000. According to the Consumer Price Index calculator on the website of the Bureau Labor Statistics, the \$5400 was the equivalent of \$35,000 in the year the house was sold, so my parents actually made a pretty good investment.

The buyer showed up to the closing with a suitcase full of small bills, and paid the entire \$80,000 in cash. I wasn't there, but Bernie Ackerman said that the lawyers were so irritated by having to count the money that the sale almost fell through. I have always assumed it was drug money. Who else carries around eighty thousand in small bills?

The little development of row houses into which we had moved filled up very quickly, mostly with Jewish families drawn from the professional and business middle classes. Teachers, lawyers, business men, a scattering of doctors, architects, and engineers. In 1940, these folks didn't have a great deal of money, but as the war years wore on, many of them prospered. Little by little, they began to fix up their tiny houses. First, a finished basement or attic, then an awning or even a wood and metal covering over the back porch above the garage. Each house had a front lawn so small that very little could be done with it, aside from planting a tree [there wasn't room for more than one] and setting a few bushes in front of the house to conceal the basement window well.

America being the land of constant movement that it is, one might have expected the families to move out as their incomes rose, to grander unattached houses sitting on larger plots in better neighborhoods. But in Kew Gardens Hills, a strange thing happened. People grew attached to their homes, and to the life of the community. There were street fairs, block parties, and a feeling of community cohesiveness quite unusual in a city whose proudest boast was that a family could live its whole life in an apartment building and never meet the people in the other apartments. One year, the undertaker next door to us ordered masses of tulip bulbs from Holland and distributed them to the entire block. Everyone planted as many as they could squeeze into the tiny strip of dirt between the sidewalk and the street, and the next Spring, we had a tulip festival, complete with tugs-of-war, three-legged races, and dancing. Our street became known as the golden crescent, and for a long time, no one at all moved away. Only when the men

started dying of heart attacks and the women started moving to Florida did houses on that street actually come on the market.

There wasn't much in the way of commercial activity in Kew Gardens Hills. Three blocks away was the principal thoroughfare, Main Street, which ran from Union Turnpike a bit to the south, all the way into Flushing, where it came to a stop at a T intersection with Roosevelt Avenue. There was a big movie theater at the Flushing end of Main Street, where I once saw *Captains Courageous* with Spencer Tracy. But we all went to the Main Street Theater, the anchor of a little row of delicatessens, candy stores, cleaning establishments, and markets where locals did most of their shopping. Those were the glory days of movies, when twelve cents on Saturday afternoon would buy you two features, a string of cartoons, a News of the Week in Review, previews of coming attractions, and the latest episode of a serial. Another twelve cents afterward for a sundae with two scoops of chocolate ice cream and chocolate sauce, and I still had a penny left over from my twenty-five cent allowance.

By and large, I loved the movies, but there was one early bit of cinematic special effects that invariably terrified me. This was the transformation, before one's very eyes, of someone young into someone old. In *Lost Horizon of Shangri-La*, the great old Ronald Coleman movie, the passengers of an airplane crash in the Himalayas, and stumble on a protected valley that is warm, green, and inhabited by a peaceful, wise community of people who, it turns out, live to a tremendous, virtually biblical old age. Ronald Coleman falls in love with a beautiful woman who, we learn, is several hundred years young, and persuades her to leave the valley with him so that they may return to what he rather blindly insists on considering civilization. As the little

party make their way along an ice and snow filled pathway beyond the valley, his young love begins to age, and before our very eyes, she turns into an ancient hag and dies.

That scene so frightened me that it gave me nightmares for weeks. I had the same reaction to the scene in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* in which the eternally youthful Gray stabs the portrait of himself, on which have been inscribed the visible stigmata of his bestial acts, and then himself turns old and dies, as the portrait is restored to its original youthful beauty. These reactions to film were the first harbingers of what was to become a serious threat to my emotional stability not too much later.

In the days before television, social life consisted for the most part of informal visiting, and there were many evenings when my parents welcomed friends into their living room. Five or six of them would sit on the sofa and chairs with drinks and perhaps a bit of food, talking through the evening about families, children, politics, and-- if the visitors were teachers -- about the hated Board of Education. Until my bedtime, I would be permitted to sit quietly on the first steps of the stairs and listen. My fondest dream was some day to be permitted to take part in the conversation. The point wasn't to win an argument, or make converts, but simply to be one of the voices.

As I grew older, this childhood wish became transmuted first into the desire to be part of the conversation that constitutes the public life of the nation, and then into a larger desire to participate, at least as a subordinate voice, in the Great Conversation of Western Civilization. So it was that when I began to write books, I cared passionately that they be noticed -- reviewed, read, commented upon -- but not at all that they be agreed with. Since most of my books have

been arguments for one philosophical or political position or another, it may seem odd that I have cared so little whether I won any converts and so much simply that my voice be heard, but inside the grown-up Professor and author there still lives the little boy who waited for the time when he could be part of the living room conversation.

At some point when I was seven or eight, I expressed a strong desire to play the violin. There was a piano in the basement, a holdover from the days when both of my parents had played, but for some reason my mind was fixed on the violin. Well, when a little Jewish boy says he wants to study the violin, his parents make sure he studies the violin. My parents [I have only now come to realize, some sixty years later] turned to Joe Vieland for advice. His daughter, Julia, was "taking" piano [as we used to say] from Dorothea Zacharias, the daughter of a violin teacher in Manhattan, and it was fixed up that I would take from her mother, Mrs. Irma Zacharias. My parents bought me a violin, which I still have to this day, for about fifty-five dollars -- a pittance, one might say, but still, let us recall, twice their monthly mortgage payments. **[addendum in 2009: Many, many years later, I devoted a great deal of time and effort to studying the viola, with Delores Thayer the co-principal violist of the Springfield, Massachusetts Symphony. Loree also teaches at Deerfield Academy, and at one point, I donated my old violin to the Academy, for the students. I had it appraised for tax purposes, and it turned out to be worth \$6500!]**

Beverly Rosenberg, the teenage Rosenberg daughter, was taking from Dorothea also, and as the Rosenbergs lived just down the block from us at the end of the row [and therefore in a house not hemmed in on both sides, which cost a little extra], she could take me with her when

she went to her lessons. In the early days, there wasn't yet a bus from Main Street to the Union Turnpike Station on the Independent subway line, so we had to walk the mile or so up the hill to Queens Boulevard. Beverly took the occasion of the walk to teach me some of the elementary rules of courtesy, such as that the man should be on the outside on a sidewalk [even though during most of the mile there weren't yet sidewalks at all.] To this day, I instinctively step to the outside when walking with a lady.

Mrs. Zacharias was a piece of work. Barely five feet tall, plump, and possessed of regal manners acquired in her native Louisiana, she terrified me. Her extended family was actually rather distinguished. Her brother, Admiral Zacharias, had been in charge of something or other in the South Pacific during World War Two. Her son, Jerrold Zacharias, was an M. I. T. math professor who played a central role in the development of what came to be known as the "New math." And her maiden daughter, Dorothea, the piano teacher, was rumored to have been engaged at some point to none other than Ira Gershwin. Charles Parsons tells me that his sister Anne's best friend was Jerrold Zacharias' daughter, yet another of those unexpected intersections of which there seem to be so many.

I had talent, it was said -- the curse of countless little Jewish boys -- but since I rarely practiced, there was really no way of telling. As a child, I had the odd notion that playing in tune was like having naturally curly hair -- something you were born with and couldn't do much to acquire. Nevertheless, I persevered, and eventually became concertmaster of my high school orchestra, an accomplishment that tells you more about the inadequacies of the orchestra than about my accomplishments as a violinist. Mrs. Zacharias [to this day, I cannot possibly think of

her as Irma] had two really good pupils -- Murray Wilk and Beverly Sumac. One year, at the annual student recital held in the parlor of the grand old pre-war apartment, I played the Bach double with Beverly. It was as though someone had yoked a stallion and a donkey to a war chariot.

When I got a bit older, my parents let me go to my lesson alone. The Zacharias apartment was on 71<sup>st</sup> street, just off Broadway, at the point where Broadway and Amsterdam intersect to form a small triangular park. To get there, I took the E train on the IND line from Union Turnpike to 53<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Then I changed to the uptown line, and went past 59<sup>th</sup> and 66<sup>th</sup> to 72<sup>nd</sup> street. [Old trick question among New York math students: in the numerical sequence 42, 49, 59, 66, 72, what is the next number? Answer, 79. The stops on the Broadway line]. When I got out of the subway, in the late afternoon, I would have dinner at the Automat before going to my lesson. For those too young to remember, the Automats were a wonderful depression-era New York fixture, embodying simultaneously the impulse for modern technology and a concern for the needs of the working class. Automats were restaurants in which there were no waitresses. Instead, on one wall, there were columns of class-enclosed compartments in which sat the various dishes, ready to eat. To get one, you inserted the appropriate number of nickels in a slot [this was the 1940's, remember], turned a crank, and opened the window. No sooner had you taken out your food than the whole column would rotate, and workers behind the wall would refill the empty compartments.

You got your nickels from a woman who sat behind a high counter and, with a practiced flick of the wrist, would toss just the right number of nickels as change for your quarter, half



dollar, or dollar. Each week, I would give her my violin to hold, get my nickels, and buy a little pot of baked beans, a chocolate glaze cake, and a glass of milk.

Quite the best part of the lesson was the subway ride there and back. If you stood at the front of the very first car, you could look out the wire-mesh-and glass front window and watch the tunnel rush past, waiting to see whether the red lights would turn to amber and green in time to let the train continue. There was only one problem. Horizontally across the middle of the window was a metal reinforcing bar. When I began taking lessons, I was just too tall to look under the bar, and not quite tall enough to look over. For several years, I would scrunch down and stand, transfixed, day-dreaming until my station came up. I recall how proud I was when I finally grew tall enough to peer over the top of the bar, my face pressed against the window and my violin case resting on end under my hand.

As I approached my twelfth birthday, it became clear that all the other little Jewish boys were going to go to Hebrew School and prepare to be *bar mitzvah'd*. This, as my parents explained to me, meant that they would have a big party and receive lots of presents. Religion had until then played no role at all in my life -- my mother once said to me, "Robby, you are the product of a mixed marriage -- your father is an agnostic and I am an atheist" -- but my parents did not want to deprive me of the party and the presents, if that was what I desired. So they offered me a choice. I could go to Hebrew School and have a *bar mitzvah*, or they would give me a hundred dollars and I could buy myself some presents. Unhesitatingly, I took the hundred bucks. I had for some time coveted Natie Gold's model electric train set, and with the hundred, I bought it from him.

Natie was a fascinating kid. He was smart -- a 169 I. Q., according to the test we were given at school -- but a somewhat quirky intelligence. He once took a standard issue water pistol, rigged up the front of the barrel with a cigarette lighter, filled it with lighter fluid, and produced a quite serviceable little flame thrower. Natie's father worked for the I. R. S., and would get free movie passes from the owners of the theaters he audited in Jamaica. From time to time he would pass them on to Natie, who would then take us all to the movies for free. Rummaging around in the top of a closet, Natie came upon some grainy porno films which we all watched one day when his parents weren't home. Up to then, all that had been available to me had been nudist magazines, and it was, to say the least, a revelation. Needless to say, this experience gave a considerable boost to my fantasy life.

A word about daydreaming, an activity that came to play a significant role in my intellectual work. All my life, I have been an inveterate daydreamer. Rather like Walter Mitty in the famous James Thurber story, my daydreams can be triggered by the slightest stimulus, or indeed by nothing at all. A good deal of the time, I amuse myself with daydreams about sexual conquests and magical powers. I cannot count the number of ways I have saved the world with powers miraculously bestowed on me, nor the number of beautiful women to whom I have made love in my imagination. The shape of my subjective utility curve is such [if I may put it this way] that I get more pleasure from the fantasy than I suffer pain from the inevitable realization that it is not real. Hence, it is always a net gain for me to engage in daydreaming.

But over and above mere fantasied gratification of erotic yens, daydreaming is the way in which I work. All through the day, I am endlessly explaining things to an imaginary audience --

the structure of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, the pros and cons of universal health care, how an airplane stays up, why it makes you cooler to have a breeze blow across your skin, especially when you are wet. I experience abstract arguments as stories, rather like Jack and the Beanstalk. I tell the stories over and over in my mind until I get them right. The audience I conjure up is unforgiving and insistent on clarity. Just as little children will not let you get away with telling the story of Jack without explaining where he got the beanstalk from, so my imaginary audience will not let me slide over a rough patch in the explication of a text with a "you know" or a "sort of." I also speak, in my daydreams, in complete, well-shaped sentences.

The result of this endless, obsessive inner talk is that when I come to set down my thoughts, they flow from me as quickly as I can write or type, and rarely need or undergo revision. I have on more than one occasion written a book straight off, from first to last page, and then sent it to the publisher without so much as showing it to a friend for comments. The corollary to this peculiar fact is that I cannot write at all until the story is clear in my mind. Hence, although I have published a good many books over the course of the past forty years, I actually spend very little time at the typewriter or computer composing.

Someone once pointed out to me that there are styles in the activity of composing music. Beethoven's scores are a chaotic overlay of corrections, rewritings, and editings. Mozart's look like copies made from an already completed score [as Salieri marvels in *Amadeus*]. I imagine, though I do not know, that the same is true of poets. Were someone to look at the first draft of one of my books, she would see what looks like a clean revised copy.

The daydreaming began when I was a boy, and has continued unabated up to the present day. As I write this memoir, I find myself, in the shower, in bed, while swimming or driving, rehearsing passages yet to be written, working out in these imaginary conversations what I will say next. So it is that when I actually sit down at the computer to compose, the physical process of writing is merely a continuation of an activity I have been engaged in without cessation.

But all of this is getting ahead of my story, for I am now graduating from elementary school and about to enter high school.

When I entered Forest Hills High School, it was barely ten years old -- a brand new facility with marble floors, well-equipped labs, and a faculty too good for its student body. This last was not an unusual state of affairs. One of the secondary consequences of the Great Depression was that many highly qualified teachers, who in better times would have found positions in colleges or universities, were forced to spend their careers teaching in high schools. We had a number of teachers with doctorates who gave us some taste of what a college education might be.

Forest Hills was, by New York standards, a mid-sized high school, with three thousand pupils organized into three "schools." It was headed by Acting Principal Leo Ryan, a mediocre mesomorph of no particular intellectual distinction. But he was now my father's colleague, for at the same time, my father took over Bryant High.

I attended Forest Hills from the time I was just thirteen until I was sixteen and a half, and in those three and a half years, I grew from a little boy into a budding young philosopher.

Though that sounds pretentious and self-important -- I was, after all, only in my very early teens -- it captures accurately the way the transition felt to me, and looking back on those years from the perspective of more than half a century, it does seem that a major intellectual transformation took place in me a good deal earlier than one might have expected, even in someone frantically trying to act older than he was.

Needless to say, high school was a complete change from elementary school. Thirty-nine years later, I sat in the Belmont Middle School at the "moving up" ceremony of my older son's ninth grade class, and heard the Principal warn, in an ominous voice, that everything the boys and girls had done thus far was of no significance, whereas from the moment they entered Belmont High School, their performance would be shaping the rest of their lives. This was 1982, and he was talking portentously about the desperate effort to get into an Ivy League college, but it really is true, developmentally speaking, that the move from elementary school to high school is a transition fully as freighted with significance as the culturally more celebrated move to college.

The first big change was that each pupil in Forest Hills had his or her own individual program of courses throughout the eight period day. This meant that each time the bell rang, instead of lining up and marching in a group to the next teacher, we scattered through the halls and found our own way to the next class. What was even more exciting, we actually had some measure of choice, a fact that made scheduling three thousand students each term a nightmare for the school administration. Especially favored students, of whom I made myself one as fast as possible, were accorded the special opportunity of helping with the programming. We would go

to an empty classroom with the teachers who had been stuck with this onerous duty, and rather like the enlisted personnel seconded to headquarters in those WW II war movies [one thinks of Dana Wynter in *Sink the Bismarck*], would put numbers up on the blackboard until all the sections of Sophomore English or French 1 were evened up and had roughly the same number of students.

Almost immediately, I encountered teachers in whose classes Barbara had excelled, as well as a few who knew my father. One in particular, Dr. Paul Brandwein, stands out, and in fact, just a month ago, I learned that his old students were trying to contact one another to share stories about him. Considering the fact that almost sixty years have passed since my sister and I studied with him, this is an extraordinary tribute to his impact as a teacher.

Brandwein was Chair of the Biology Department [hence my father's acquaintance with him]. He was one of those over-qualified high school teachers who gave us such an outstanding education. The best high school teachers then, as now, treated their profession as a calling, and gave of themselves in ways that went far beyond any plausible job description. My father, Paul Brandwein, and many other science teachers regularly took students on weekend nature walks, to Botanical Gardens and country fields and streams. I recall one marvelous Brandwein outing in Manhattan that ended with a visit to a little oriental restaurant, where we were introduced to foods we never imagined to exist. This was a simpler time, and without television, air travel, or summer trips much beyond the Catskills and Berkshires, even those of us from educated families were quite naive and inexperienced. Teachers like Brandwein took it as a part of the job to open our eyes to a larger world.

Two years before Barbara entered Forest Hills, an organization called Science Service Inc. had instituted a nationwide science competition for high school seniors. Sponsored by the Westinghouse Corporation, it quickly became known as the Westinghouse Science Talent Search. Each year, seniors all over the country were invited to take a written examination, testing their general knowledge of science, and then to submit a report of an independent science research project. Forty finalists were selected for a grand trip to Washington D. C., where each boy and girl made a presentation of the project before judges. Finalists and semi-finalists were selected, with the top boy and top girl each receiving a \$2,400 college scholarship as first prize.

Brandwein decided to have Forest Hills make a run at the Westinghouse, and quickly turned the science departments into forcing rooms for youthful projects. By the time Barbara reached her senior year in 1947 -- six months after I entered my Freshman year -- Forest Hills had already won a Westinghouse, and Brandwein was on a roll. That year, I took Freshman General Science with him, and when he discovered that I was Bobby Wolff's brother and Walter Wolff's son, he pulled me out of the class and sent me to the laboratory, where I watched yeast buds reproduce under a microscope and read my way through a college genetics text. [All these years later, I can still remember sitting on the toilet at home, reading about alleles and mutations and such. Was the author named Snyder?]

Barbara was set to work studying fruit flies. To be more precise, she was studying phenocopies in *Drosophila Melanogaster*. A phenocopy, if I may quote my Webster's Collegiate, is "a phenotypic variation due to modifying environmental influences that mimics the expression of a genotype other than its own." Which is a pretty accurate description of exactly

what Barbara was doing. Fruit flies are of course the geneticist's favorite organism, because they have enormous chromosomes and are easily studied. It seems that if you shone ultraviolet light on a bunch of fruit flies, you could get them to develop unusual eyes, a change that *looked* like a mutation but in fact was not transmissible from generation to generation. Barbara undertook to demonstrate this phenomenon. She carried out her work in our basement, where my father had his old microscope and sets of slides dating back to his days as a graduate Biology student at Columbia.

What this meant for the rest of the family was that each evening, when we sat down to dinner around the blondwood dining table that dominated the tiny dining room, clouds of fruit flies hovered over our food. Despite Barbara's best efforts, it just wasn't possible to keep all of the little critters in their cages downstairs, and a steady stream would migrate upward in search of food.

That year, an unprecedented four students from Forest Hills were Westinghouse finalists -- more even than had ever been achieved by Stuyvesant, Bronx Science, or Brooklyn Tech, the elite science high schools of the New York system, admission to which was by special examination only. Brandwein was triumphant, and of course, Barbara was one of the four. Off she went to Washington, where she promptly was named the grand national female winner. The papers were full of the news, and she was instantly famous. You can perhaps see why a straight out academic competition with my older sister did not look like such a good idea!

By an odd happenstance, I actually got in on a piece of the glory. Barbara was invited to make a presentation of her research at the annual New York High School Science Fair, but the



date coincided with her on-campus interview at Swarthmore College, so I was recruited to take her place. I was then a first semester Sophomore, barely fourteen years old, but I dutifully swatted up the info on *drosophila* and phenocopies and gave her report, even responding to questions from the floor.

This event is as good an occasion as any to comment on an odd fact that has characterized my sense of myself during my entire life. Looked at from the outside, it is a bit remarkable that a kid my age was able without much trouble to make a public presentation of a technical scientific subject. But from the inside, it seemed perfectly ordinary. I had no doubt that I could do it. The same sort of bifurcation between the way things felt from the inside, and the way they appeared to others from the outside, characterized my undergraduate experiences at Harvard, and indeed continues even up to the present day. Despite my ability to recognize this split and write about it, the fact is that I have only the dimmest sense of how I am perceived by others.

I was, as I have observed, a troubled youth, rebellious in the face of authority, angry, almost constantly aroused sexually, and deeply absorbed in my studies and inner thoughts. At roughly this time, during 1948, two things took place in my life that changed it profoundly.

The first was the onset, or rather the intensification, of obsessive, terrifying fears of death. I would lie in bed at night, unable to stop myself from thinking about the fact that some day I would cease to exist. I wasn't afraid of pain, or old age, simply of non-being. As I brooded over my eventual non-being, the time I had left seemed to shrink, so that my death, instead of being comfortably far off at the end of the twentieth century or beyond, closed in on me until it

seemed to be immediately imminent. This had nothing at all to do with real world events, like the death of a family member. At that point, no one in my family had died save my grandfather, and though he was only 65 at his death, he seemed to me so ancient that he might as well have been a hundred.

Could the fears have been triggered by my sister's brilliant success and sudden public fame? I have often wondered, but to this day I do not know. The best clue I have ever found to the cause of the fears is the peculiar fact that when I was in the grip of the terror, the one thought that would reassure me was, "maybe I will die before I get there." What was I really afraid of? What was the fear of death conveniently covering over?

I was very soon to have a chance to try to find out, because my parents, alarmed by my manifestly troubled condition, put me into psychotherapy. Once again, it was my mother's job at Child Study that provided the connection. Bertram Schaffner, a young psychoanalyst just back from the war, had set up a practice in Manhattan, and was interested in trying something that was then quite experimental -- standard adult analytic techniques with a teen-age patient. He relayed this to the folks at Child Study, and my mother heard about him. Because he was eager to make the experiment, he gave my parents a break on the price. So once again, I was off to Manhattan by subway, twice and then three times a week. My schedule was rearranged at school so that I had the last period free, and I would take the E train to 53<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> avenue, walk up to Central Park South, turn right half a block, and enter one of the handsome apartment buildings that lined the southern end of the park between 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> avenues.

I remained in therapy for two and a half years, only taking breaks for the summers at Shaker Village. I have virtually no memory of the sessions, which is odd, since there must have been as many as two hundred of them or more. We talked about my facial twitches, which Schaffner thought might be some sort of compulsive looking away from something I did not want to see [my father's heavy drinking, perhaps]. But neither that suggestion, nor later thoughts by other therapists [of whom there would be many], had any effect on the twitching. The fears abated, however, either because of the content of the therapy or the mere fact of it. And something perhaps even more important began to take place. In those sessions, and in many others with other psychiatrists intermittently over forty years, I gained a measure of insight into my own mind, and the minds of others, that has deepened and strengthened my understanding of the world.

I wrote this first volume of my autobiography in November, 2003, as I was approaching my seventieth birthday. My two year long treatment by Schaffner seemed far, far in the past, a memory of my teenage years. Several years later, my sister, Barbara, sent me a copy of the Swarthmore Alumni/ae Bulletin containing a story about Schaffner, a Swarthmore graduate, who, it turned out, was alive, living in that same Central Park South apartment, and still seeing a few patients. To my great surprise and pleasure, I learned that he was a gay man who had been forced by the prejudices of the analytic community to conceal his sexuality for many years, during which time he treated many gay men. Bertram Schaffner finally passed away just last year, on January 29th, at the age of ninety-seven. Since these discoveries about my childhood therapist, I have wondered whether my open and supportive response to the revelation of my

own son's homosexuality was in any way a delayed consequence of my engagement with Schaffner. It seems far-fetched, I know, but I would like to believe that it is true.

The other big thing that occurred while I was fourteen was that I fell in love.

My wife and I have just seen an amusing light romantic comedy called *Love Actually*. At one point in the movie, Liam Neeson, who has recently lost his wife, is talking to his young step-son, who seems troubled. Neeson assumes he is upset at the death of his mother, but the boy confesses that he has fallen deeply, hopelessly in love. Since the lad is only about twelve, Neeson's first response is to suggest that he is a bit young for such emotions, but the boy responds with dead seriousness that he is not, and Neeson's character has the grace and wit to accept this statement at face value and help his young step-son to get the object of his affections actually to take notice of him. When I saw that movie, the thought crossed my mind that I would have liked to have a dad like Liam Neeson when I fell in love with Susie.

Susie Shaeffer was a very pretty girl of fifteen with a great figure and dark shoulder length hair worn in a page boy. She sat in the seat in front of me in home room my sophomore year. Her father, Sam, was an executive with Hearn's Department Store in Manhattan, and they were, by my standards, quite affluent. It turned out that in addition to their Forest Hills apartment, they had a summer home in Westport, Connecticut and belonged to the Country Club. Indeed, in an early preview of the ideological struggles I would engage in my entire life, I tried to convince Susie that her father's salary of \$25,000 a year made the Shaeffer family upper class, but she insisted that they were just ordinary folks.

When I mentioned to my wife that I was writing my memoirs, and had reached the point where I was going to talk about falling in love at the age of fourteen, she said, "cdYou will probably claim that I sat in front of you in home room, but I didn't. I sat behind you." This is an argument we have been having now ever since we got married seventeen years ago. But that is a long story, and will have to wait the telling.

It took a long time and a good deal of spine-stiffening for me to ask Susie for a date. I can still see myself sitting in the dining room at the little corner telephone table, made from the same godawful blondwood, trying to get up the courage to call her. I went over and over in my mind an exit strategy to get me out of the phone call gracefully if she said no. Finally, after a half hour of hesitation, I made the call.

I asked her to accompany me to a showing at a Manhattan art film theater of a revival of the Marcel Pagnol movie, *César*, the third in the pre-war trilogy of life among the fishermen in Marseilles that was later made into the movie, *Most Happy Fella*. She said yes, and off we went on our first date. The movie was what you might expect -- black and white, English subtitles, bad sound track. As I recall, we sat in the balcony; after a bit, I eased my right arm around her shoulder and spent the next hour and a half trying unsuccessfully to cop a feel.

Almost immediately, we fell deeply in love. For my part, I had no doubt that some day we would be married. Aside from the physical attraction, which was very powerful for me, and I think perhaps for her as well, we shared a love of classical music, especially the music of Bach. I would walk her home from school sometimes, and come upstairs to her apartment, where there was an old-fashioned 78 rpm victrola near the front door. We would take out the album of the

great Collegiate Chorale recording of the B Minor Mass, with Robert Shaw conducting, and listen to it together. Later on, we bought season tickets to the performances at the 92nd Street Y of the Bach Aria Group, with Julius Baker playing flute, Robert Bloom playing oboe, and the young Bernard Greenhouse, later an integral part of the Beaux Arts Trio, on cello. We even went to the Davenport Free Theater, which, as the name suggests, was a theatrical operation put on in an old unused space in downtown Manhattan by an aging thespian named Davenport. The acting was perfectly atrocious, but it *was* free, and a great way to spend an evening.

Susie and I went steady, as we used to say in those days, virtually from the moment of our first date. I did not date another girl for the next four and a half years, by which time I was quite committed to our getting married once I finished my education and could support her. At that point, alas, she dumped me for another man, and it took me thirty-four years to convince her that we should marry. Despite my brave talk about being sexually on fire, and the fantasizing I do in my constant daydreaming, I am, it seems, a thoroughly uxorious type. As I have often observed to friends since Susie and I finally married, I have been in love with only three women in my life, and two of them are Susie.

By now it may have occurred to the reader that we did a good deal of traveling around New York by public transportation when we were still only teenagers, and not in the company of adults. New York in those days was a wonderful place to explore. I do not think we ever thought to worry that the subway at night might be unsafe. My parents may have been a bit *avant garde* in sending a boy of ten or eleven alone into the city with a violin in the late afternoon, but we felt as though the entire city was ours for the taking. In 1964, when I moved

back to New York to take up a senior position in the Columbia Philosophy Department, I discovered that the little triangular space just next to Mrs. Zacharias' apartment building was now known as "needle park," and had become a favorite hangout of drug addicts. I did not feel safe even as an adult wandering about Manhattan in the evenings, and I would certainly never have allowed my young son to do so.

Even so, my parents' example must have had some effect on me, for in 1980, when my family moved to Belmont so that my first wife could accept a professorship at M. I. T., we allowed our older son, Patrick, then twelve, to explore Boston alone by riding the MTA and getting out at each stop to look around [kids rode for a dime in those days.]

Nineteen forty-eight was also the year in which I first paid serious attention to national politics. As a little boy, I had been aware of the progress of the war, and can still recall the precise moment when I heard of the death of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. But it was not until 1948 that I really took an interest in politics. It was an exciting year. Harry Truman was running for re-election, having ascended to the presidency on the death of the great FDR. He was opposed by Thomas Dewey, Governor of New York. Also running on minor party tickets were Henry Wallace on the left, candidate of the Progressive Party, and Strom Thurmond [now, at long last, deceased], the standard bearer of the viciously racist States Rights Party. My parents were supporting Truman, but I was sympathetic to Wallace.

I come now to one of those mysteries of memory that bedevil historians and the writers of memoirs. There is a story about Wallace and my involvement in politics that I have been telling for fifty years. It goes like this: One day in the late summer of '48, Johnny Brown and I set out

from Kew Gardens Hills to attend a Wallace rally at Yankee Stadium. When we got there, it was raining, and we decided that our politics were not serious enough to get us to stand in the rain just to hear political speeches. As we left the stadium, the rain let up, and it occurred to us that right across the river the Dodgers were playing the Giants at the Polo Grounds. Since we were both avid Dodgers fans, we walked across the bridge, paid our way into the cheap seats, sneaked down in the nearly empty ball park to the expensive seats, and, after the rain finally let up, watched Rex Barney pitch a no-hitter. It is the only no-hitter I ever saw, and it is forever associated in my mind with progressive politics.

Well, that is the story, and I have, or think I have, visual memories of each element of it -- the rally at Yankee Stadium, the walk to the Polo grounds, and the no-hitter. As I prepared to write this bit of my memoir, I went on line to check the component parts of the story. Sure enough, I found an account of Rex Barney's no-hitter against the Giants, which mentioned a one hour rain delay and showers in the sixth, eighth, and ninth innings. September 9, 1948. I also found an account of the Wallace rally at Yankee Stadium. It turns out Pete Seegar was on the program, which may in fact have been the real inducement, for me at least. *But the rally was held on September 10, 1948, not September 9!* So regardless of what I think I remember, I could not have walked with Johnny Brown from the rally to the game. Did I really go to the rally at all? Did I go to the game one night, and the rally the next?

A month or so after writing that paragraph, I was having lunch with a group of friends in Amherst, all of them professors at the University of Massachusetts, where I was teaching. I told the story as a humorous example of the fallibility of memory, but one of the group, a marvelous



old left-wing emeritus Professor of English named Jules Chametzky, said “But I have been telling that story for fifty years. I was there.” “What do you mean,” I asked, mystified, “you were there?” “Yes,” he said, “I was one of Vito Marcantonio’s lieutenants. [Marcantonio was a Congressman and a left-wing member of the American Labor Party.] My story is that fifty thousand people showed up for the rally, and when it was rained out, all fifty thousand came back the next night!”

So my memory is correct! The rally and the ball game *were* the same night, and it *did* rain on the rally.

Love, politics, and psychotherapy combined with an intense inner life of the mind to transform me very rapidly from a precocious little boy into a young intellectual, even though I was still at an age more appropriate to sports enthusiasms and schoolyard crushes. This evolution was helped along both by the example of my brilliantly successful older sister and by my home life, which encouraged intellectual curiosity. My father was the official intellect of the family -- a high school principal, the author of a textbook, a gifted teacher who also became more and more ponderous and pontifical, perhaps as a consequence of his heavier and heavier drinking. My mother adopted a very deferential attitude toward him in all matters intellectual, and *gvelled* about the accomplishments of her children [she actually had a pair of earrings made from the Phi Beta Kappa keys that my sister and I earned in college!] But Barbara and I knew, though we did not openly acknowledge it until her funeral many years later, that she was in fact the brains of the couple. Though she had been forced to go to work without finishing high school because of her father's debilitating stroke, she had an extraordinarily keen mind, and a

love of words that made her an ideal editor and a ferocious leave-no-prisoners Scrabble player. My father simply refused to play with her, and when my sister and I did, she trounced us unmercifully. It was from her that I learned to do DoubleCrossics and crossword puzzles.

One of the father's favorite books was *Language in Thought and Action* by a student of Korzybskian General Semantics, S. I. Hayakawa. It would take too long and be too boring actually to explain General Semantics. Suffice it to say that Hayakawa had written a quite readable and interesting book about the way in which language shapes our thoughts [as opposed to the older view, which was that our thoughts shape our language.] My father instituted the custom of leading a discussion group at his school each semester for ten or fifteen Bryant students, using Hayakawa's book as a text. When my sister reached sophomore or junior year, she persuaded him to run a semantics group, as it was called, in our home for herself and her friends. [Truth to tell, it took very little persuading. My father loved to teach, and I think missed it a good deal once he ascended into the firmament of school administration.] I sat in on the sessions, and eventually, after Barbara was graduated and went off to college, I and my friends had our own Semantics Group. "Hayakawa" was for us nothing more than a name on a book, and it saddened me greatly, twenty-five years later, to see the very same S. I. Hayakawa serve as a Republican senator from California. To this day, I cannot see any integral ideological link between General Semantics and conservative politics, but a little voice inside me whispers that it is "no accident" that my father, despite his putatively progressive politics, would be so attracted to the intellectual production of a man who turned out to be right-wing. It is the same link, I am convinced, that accounts for the rightward turn of neo-conservatives who in their earlier days

exhibited an apparently progressive sympathy for certain intellectual movements in the humanities and social sciences.

Formal schooling did make some contribution to my intellectual unfolding, although less, I think, than one might imagine. I was an earnest student, however mixed up my inner emotional life might have been. Save for an embarrassing 85 in Freshman English from Miss Doran, I scored high grades, and actually finished up with the third highest average in my graduating class, though I could not quite catch up to Sara Lee Moltz, a tall bespectacled girl with a four-year grade average of something like 97.8.

Three teachers stand out in my mind, aside from Brandwein, who was in a league by himself. The first, whose name I have now lost, was a gorgeous young French teacher whom we all adored, though she never showed the slightest awareness of our lustful looks. I studied French for three years, achieving so little mastery that even now, when Susie and I visit Paris, I live in terror of having to make a dinner reservation or call a cab over the phone. Like many marginal French speakers, I can compose a linguistically acceptable question, but cannot for the life of me understand the answer that comes back rapid fire. Even so, years later as a graduate student and young Instructor, I did succeed in reading entire books of history and philosophy in French. If memory serves, I even once read a Camus novel in French, but if so, I have lost the copy, and with it any physical evidence of this notable accomplishment.

My memory of Milton Zissowitz is a good deal livelier. Milton and his brother Sam Cantor [who changed his name in a completely unsuccessful effort to appear less obviously Jewish] taught English, and one semester I took his journalism course. In those days teachers

seated pupils alphabetically, with the result that I was always at the back of the room. Zissowitz, for obvious reasons, chose to seat students in reverse alphabetical order, so for the first and last time, I got to sit in front. The bit of instruction that sticks in my mind from that class was an exercise Mr. Zissowitz had us perform on the New York dailies. In those days there were quite a few newspapers in New York: the *Times*, the *Herald Tribune*, the *Daily News*, the *World-Telegram*, the *Daily Mirror*, *PM*, among others. We brought copies of these papers into class one day, and Zissowitz had us measure the percentage of column inches in each paper devoted to advertisements. The *Daily News* led the pack with something like 85% of the entire paper taken up by ads. He then had us calculate the revenue from a page of advertisements of different sorts, and it became quite clear that the classifieds were far and away the biggest money producers of all the varieties of advertisements. This simple lesson has stayed with me to the present day.

A teacher of a very different sort was balding, cerebral Dr. Frank, the Chairman of the Math Department. I was fascinated by math, and pretty good at it -- one year, I skipped Trig, learning it well enough in a few days to get a good grade on the state Regents examination and get credit for it. [This is an example of what I described earlier as my inability to see myself as others saw me. Looking back, from the perspective of a teacher, I realize that it must have seemed quite remarkable to the adults in my world that I could learn a subject like Trigonometry in next to no time. But to me, it was just a good way to continue my effort to catch up with my sister by accumulating another one of the credits I would need to graduate in three and a half years.]

Dr. Frank decided that some of us needed to know some math not ordinarily taught in high school in those days -- at least not at ordinary high schools; Stuyvesant and Bronx Science were another matter. So he organized a little class before the start of the school day my senior year, and taught us what was then called Analytic Geometry. At the time, it seemed terribly daring and advanced, a taste of real college. These days, I rather think such things are routinely introduced to students in grade school!

It was of course a foregone conclusion that when my time came, I would try out for the Westinghouse. Brandwein never again could repeat the *annus mirabilis* of 1948, but Forest Hills students continued to win, and I might as well have had a great big W painted on my forehead. Preparation for the written exam meant cramming as much science into my head as I could, but the exam by itself simply sorted out the several hundred Honorable Mentions from the mass of applicants nation-wide. What really mattered was the research project.

My first idea was to do an anthropometric study of first and second generation Chinese-Americans in New York's Chinatown, to see whether environmental factors had changed their skull measurements. I had long been fascinated by fossil man, and frequently spent Saturdays at the Museum of Natural History on Central Park West, peering at the display cases of brain pans and lower jaws of Neanderthal Man and Cro-Magnon Man. Thanks to a *Handbook of Physical Anthropometry* co-authored by the museum's curator, Harry Shapiro, I was easily conversant with gnathions and nasions, bizygomatic widths, ascending ramuses, and sigmoid notches. Even the fanciful recreation of primitive men and women featured in the floor to ceiling glassed in

panoramas in the main exhibit halls, now considered hopelessly old-fashioned and inaccurate, were mesmerizing to me.

I actually went so far as to take metal working shop one semester, choosing as my class project the construction of a metallic sliding caliper. It was an ugly, clumsy thing with which it would have been impossible to take accurate measurements, even if I had been able to get residents of Chinatown to stand still for it. But that project fell by the wayside, and I have long since lost the calipers.

My next idea -- or, more precisely, Brandwein's next idea for me -- was an ecological study of a pond in the Brooklyn Botanical Gardens. [This will give you some idea of how unimpressive our science projects were in those days. In the Intel Science Talent Search, as the Westinghouse was renamed when its sponsor changed, students do molecular biological research that would have won them a Nobel Prize in the forties.] I actually went to the Gardens and collected some little bottles of water, but my heart wasn't in it.

Finally, I fixed on a math project -- a three-dimensional graphical representation of certain polynomials, as I recall. I took the exam, and waited anxiously for the results.

Well, I didn't win. I did get Honorable Mention, but my project simply wasn't in the running. I can still recall the day I found out. Susie and I walked home, and I talked with her about my disappointment at not being one of the forty who would make the trip to Washington. Always supportive, and rather proud of her brainy boyfriend, she assured me that it was a big

deal to have won an Honorable Mention in a national competition, but I knew better. She was an only child, and didn't understand what it was like to play second banana to a star.

It was in my senior year in high school that I first started to read formal philosophy. I had been brooding for some time about questions that, I later learned, were standard subjects of philosophical debate. The most pressing issue, about which I worried a good deal, was whether it was immoral simply to think bad thoughts, or whether it only counted if you acted on them.

The origin of this concern was not my sexual urges. I was quite comfortable with them. My only worry was how to get them satisfied. What turned me anxiously inward in self-examination was the *frisson* of excitement I felt at reading of torture and other acts of deliberate, sensual cruelty. Even today, fifty years and more later, having long since acquainted myself with the notions of *thanatos* and *eros* and the existence [if not the writings] of the Marquis de Sade, I find it difficult to acknowledge these feelings. They seem to me to be genuinely evil, and no amount of psychoanalytic theory or philosophical reflection can relieve me of the dreadful sense that their existence in me marks me as someone truly bad. I finally made some sort of peace with myself by concluding that only actions were morally condemnable. So long as I didn't actually hurt anyone -- and I felt no real force drawing me in that direction -- I decided that I needn't feel guilty.

My philosophical curiosity took me in quite a different direction. The first book I ever read by an actual philosopher was Irwin Edman's memoir, *Philosopher's Quest*, and its sequel, *Philosopher's Journey*. Edman was a Professor of Philosophy at Columbia University -- not a powerful or important thinker, but a graceful writer with a talent for recreating the people he had

met and the places he had traveled during his academic career. Indeed, come to think of it, his book was not too different from what this will become, if I can ever get out of my teenage years.

From there I moved on to Bertrand Russell's big, fat *History of Western Philosophy*. Russell was a truly important philosopher of the first part of the Twentieth century, an English Lord who had made a name for himself with a monumental groundbreaking work of mathematical logic co-authored with the great English metaphysician Alfred North Whitehead. He went on to write fifty or more books on logic, the theory of knowledge, metaphysics, ethics, and politics, actually winning the Nobel prize for literature late in his immensely long life. He had been jailed as a conscientious objector during the First World War and later on, when he was in his eighties, he led sitdown strikes and mass demonstrations against nuclear weapons.

The *History*, if the truth be told, is something of a potboiler, filled with cranky and idiosyncratic opinions about the great philosophers, more useful as a guide to Russell's own views than as an historical overview of Western Philosophy. But after plowing through it [it was all complete news to me, of course], I then moved on to a quite serious work, his *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy*. I did not understand a good deal of what I was reading, but I immediately recognized that this was real thinking, of a sort I had not yet encountered. I was fascinated and challenged, and decided that when I got to college, I would study mathematics and philosophy.

Four authors especially enchanted me during these high school years: Mark Twain, e. e. cummings, George Bernard Shaw, and Charles Erskine Scott Wood. In our attic, I found an old green set of the complete works of Twain. I liked his novels and short stories -- who could not? -



- but it was the non-fiction that especially spoke to me. The ironic, unillusioned, skeptical voice struck a chord in me, and I read gleefully through his send up of Mary Baker Eddy and Christian Science and his devastating exposé of the literary errors of James Fenimore Cooper. It was a little known essay, "In Defense of Harriet Shelley," that came back to me, many years later, when I was searching for a title for what would become my most widely read and translated book.

Shaw too was a revelation. What drew me to him, aside from his obvious intelligence and wit, was the strong socialist moral conscience that suffused his writing. Although I would eventually go on to study the works of Karl Marx closely, and write several books about *Capital*, I have never been completely comfortable with the intense, sectarian, paranoid style of continental radical thought. Although I did not realize it at the time, Shaw gave me the politics without the *angst*. I read my way through *Major Barbara*, *Saint Joan*, *Captain Brassbound's Conversion*, and *Man and Superman*, including the great *Don Juan in Hell* section. Years later, I was to have the extraordinary pleasure of seeing *Don Juan in Hell* in a staged reading, with Charles Boyer as Don Juan, Cedric Hardwick as the General, Agnes Moorehead as Dona Ana, and Charles Laughton as the Devil. I think I can safely say that theater doesn't get any better than that!

Susie and I would read Cummings together, sharing the erotic love poetry as though it had been written especially for us. Along with Sandburg, he was my favorite poet. In anticipation, perhaps, of my eventual college experience, I especially loved his amusing picture of a Radcliffe girl, "Gay is the captivating cognomen of a young lady from Cambridge, Mass."

These were all pretty standard enthusiasms for a fifteen year old with intellectual pretensions. The reader may be forgiven for drawing a blank on Wood. C. E. S. Wood, whose ninety-two years spanned the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, from 1852 to 1944, was, the internet tells me, "a writer, poet, soldier, corporate lawyer, and a lover of books. He was a founder of Portland's Public Library and the Portland Art Museum. A self-proclaimed anarchist, he was a regular contributor to radical journals of the day."

In our attic, I found a little volume by him entitled *Heavenly Discourses*. The book consisted of a series of chapters based on the conceit that the great thinkers of Western Civilization would eventually meet one another in heaven and carry on extended debates about things political and philosophical. This was, of course, the very Platonic ideal of the living room conversations I had longed to enter as a little boy. I was so taken by Wood's book that I used it as the model for the very first paper I ever wrote in college.

As late Summer turned into Fall in 1949, I and my fellow seniors turned our attention to college. Where would I go? You must not suppose that this was a question fraught with great anxiety and productive of great stress. This was well before the explosion of higher education in the late '50s and early '60s that produced the modern college admissions rat race. Barbara was going to Swarthmore, and so I decided that that was where I wanted to go as well. I spent several days visiting the campus, and following her around to some of her classes. It was then, as it is now, a quiet, beautiful, graceful campus peopled by some very smart and attractive young students. I was ready to enroll.

I also applied to Harvard. I am not sure why, but it might have been that a friend of mine from Forest Hills, Herb Winston, had gone there the year before, and reported back that it was a great place. I spent a weekend there as well, hosted by one of Barbara's fellow Westinghouse finalists, Paul Martin [who later became a Dean of Sciences at Harvard]. It was Halloween, and we all put on big rubber masks and ran around the campus writing naughty messages on sidewalks and steps with chalk.

But Harvard had two enormous drawbacks that served as powerful disincentives. First, and most important, you were in those days required to wear a tie and jacket to every meal,

including breakfast. I did not own a tie and jacket, and was afraid I might starve before I adjusted. The other problem was that Harvard was all male [I didn't know about Radcliffe], and though my heart belonged to Susie, I was a firm believer in co-education. My last choice was Queens College, a campus of the City College system. Queens was my back-up school, urged on me by a cautious college advisor.

But I had made the serious tactical error of mentioning in my application to Swarthmore that I was in regular psychotherapy, and in those days, that was a definite deal breaker. Because I had applied to only one other elite school, the Admissions Office at Swarthmore offered me a compromise. If I did not get into Harvard, they would admit me, but if I was admitted to Harvard, they would turn me down and I could go to Cambridge.d

The modern reader will of course conclude that I was either insanely arrogant or very badly advised by my high school teachers, but things were different in those days. I once looked up the figures for my year. Two thousand five hundred and ninety-seven men applied to Harvard for admission to the class of 1950, sixteen hundred fifty-one were admitted, and eleven hundred seventy three actually enrolled. So I had a 63.5% chance of getting in. These days, an applicant to the University of Massachusetts faces worse odds.

There was still the matter of a tie and jacket. The summer after my high school graduation, I worked as a waiter at a camp run by the Chair of my father's Phys Ed department. With salary and tips, I came home with almost two hundred dollars. I bought a typewriter, and in Klein's on the Square, got myself a gray flannel suit and an overcoat. I was ready to go to college.

## Chapter Two A Harvard Education

In September, 1950 I packed up my big black trunk, much as I had done each of the previous eight summers, took the shoreline train from Grand Central Station, and set out for Cambridge, Massachusetts to begin my college career. But this was no summer camp. I was about to embark on the most exciting three years of my life.

At South Station, I took the Red Line to Harvard Square, and crossed over to the entrance to Harvard Yard. Before I had time to find my way to Matthews Hall, I was waylaid by a representative of Gordon Linen, who signed me up on the spot for a weekly supply of sheets, pillow cases, and towels. My freshman year had begun.

At this point, I must take a moment to say something about the tone in which I shall speak of my undergraduate experiences. I am afraid it will strike the reader as comically self-important, a tone appropriate, if at all, only for a young man or woman who will go on to do great things. My purpose in adopting this tone is not to inflate my significance in the hope that the unwary reader will accord me a greater status than I deserve. Rather, it is to record, as accurately as possible, how I experienced these years *from the inside*, as it were.

In 1964, when I joined the Columbia Philosophy Department, the Chair was a sober, serious metaphysician named Justus Buchler. Justus was a very smart, widely read, desperately earnest systematic philosopher who had constructed a full-scale philosophical system, which he was in the process of unfolding in a series of books. Justus was everything that a major philosopher ought to be, and he believed deeply, plausibly, tragically as it turned out, that he

deserved to be considered a major thinker. Unfortunately, almost no one in the field took the slightest interest in his theories. He was reputed to have one disciple, Mathew Lipman, an obscure philosopher who taught, if my memory serves, in Columbia's School of Pharmacy. The contrast between the respect accorded other philosophers and the neglect that was his lot made Justus testy and somewhat resentful. But it did not deflect him by so much as the fraction of a degree from his life's task, which was to spell out the totality of his system. I tried to read one of his books, and found it impenetrable, but that is hardly a major cause for concern in Philosophy.

Justus was perhaps not as smart as Willard van Orman Quine -- few people were. But he was certainly as smart as Wilfred Sellars, or Donald Davidson, or Roderick Chisholm, all of whom were widely read and respected in the philosophical community, and I venture to say that he was probably more deeply committed to his philosophical views than they were to theirs. Justus had read their writings dutifully, and had reasoned objections to their positions, though no one cared to hear them. Subjectively speaking, from the inside, from his own point of view, there was simply nothing to distinguish Justus from these vastly more successful competitors. The only problem, and it is, speaking *sub specie aeternitatis*, a small one, was that few people cared what he had to say.

My awareness of this sad state of affairs came upon me several years later, when the Department was given the opportunity to attempt to replace Ernest Nagel, who had gone to the newly formed Rockefeller University Philosophy Department. As we talked about which famous philosophers to try to woo to Columbia, Justus, who was still Chairman, made a wry face at each name floated. Quine? No. Davidson? No. Kripke? No. Sellars? No. Goodman? No. It seemed that no one was good enough, by his lights, to join us. Finally, in exasperation, I

asked, "Are there any philosophers in the world whom you would support, regardless of whether they speak English?" Justus thought for a moment and said no. Entranced by this madness, I broadened my question. "Forget about alive. How about Descartes?" "Too narrow a conception of experience," he replied. "Kant?" I ventured? "Inadequate grasp of the relationship between possibility and actuality." "Is there *anybody in the entire history of philosophy who would be worthy of joining this department?*" Justus gave that some serious thought and replied, finally, "Aristotle, and Whitehead."

Now, if Justus had undertaken to write his memoirs [which he well may have, for all I know], would it have been appropriate for him to speak of himself as a minor figure, a failure, a philosophical wannabe, so to speak? Clearly not, for that would fail to capture what it had been like for Justus to *be* Justus. It was not *his* fault that the world paid him no mind. His only honest course, and the one that I have chosen for myself, is to describe just what it is like to *be* the subject of one's own life, and leave it to others to decide whether there is a comical disconnect between the subjective experience and the objective reality.

### **Freshman Year**

I entered Matthews Hall, climbed up one flight to Number 7, and settled in. Harvard's accommodations were rather spacious. There were suites for one, two, three, or four students, each consisting of a bathroom, a living room, and a separate bedroom for each student. Matthews 7 was a double. My suite mate, it turned out, was a young man from Worcester, Mass named Howard Jacobson. Howie was a pleasant enough person with whom I had absolutely nothing in common save that we were both at least nominally Jewish, a fact that Harvard

considered fully adequate grounds for pairing us. Howie explained to me that there were seven meat packers in the United States -- four big ones and three little ones. His father, he said, was one of the three little ones. Over the next nine months, we left each other completely alone, save for one notable evening, when his parents came to town and took us out to the Charles Restaurant. The Charles, Mr. Jacobson explained, was one of his customers. I had never so much as seen the inside of anyplace that elegant. For five dollars -- a considerable sum -- one got a buffet from which one could choose steak, lobster, or roast beef.

The immediate task at hand was to select my courses for the Fall semester. As I have observed, the normal load was four, but I had already decided to graduate in three years, so I needed five. Here is an odd fact that says a good deal about the impact that my undergraduate years made on me. I have been teaching at the University of Massachusetts Amherst now since 1971, a total of more than thirty-two years. On countless occasions, I have asked a student, "What are you taking this semester?" Invariably, the student reels off two or three courses, pauses, locates another, and then stares off into space, trying without success to recall his or her fifth course. I do not think I have yet met a single student who can, without hesitation, name all five of the courses he or she is currently enrolled in. And yet, as I began this chapter of my memoir, I took out a pad and wrote down without pause the names, and in more than half of the cases the course numbers and instructors, of every one of the thirty-two courses I took as an undergraduate at Harvard.

Some of my choices were dictated by Harvard's rather relaxed system of distribution requirements. Nineteen-fifty was the second year of the General Education program that would dominate Harvard's undergraduate curriculum for the next thirty years. The centerpiece of the



program was a series of big lecture courses created by some of Harvard's most distinguished senior faculty. The plan was to require each undergraduate to take three full-year General Education courses, one in Humanities, a second in the Social Sciences, and a third in the Natural Sciences. As the program was still phasing in when I arrived, we were required to take only two of the three. The next year, the full requirement kicked in. The General Education courses, together with a writing requirement, a language requirement, and a group of courses in a major field, would satisfy the college's distribution requirements. I had managed to place out of the Freshman Composition course, but despite my three years of high school French, I still needed to take one intermediate level semester of language.

So French was my first course, and I chose Soc Sci 2 as my Gen Ed course for the year. That left three courses.

My original intention being to major in mathematics, I needed to start studying calculus. I had not so much as opened a calculus text in high school, but thanks to Dr. Frank, I was familiar with analytic geometry, which occupied a good part of the first semester of college calculus, so I decided to skip Math 1a and ask that I be allowed to move on to Math 1b. I very quickly discovered that Harvard had an attitude of extreme *laissez-faire* toward its undergraduates. Unlike the elite small private colleges, which tend to embrace rather seriously the notion that they stand *in loco parentis* to their charges, Harvard seemed to take the view that you could do as you pleased, so long as you managed to pass. I was enchanted by this benign neglect, and in the next three years, I took full advantage of it.

Under pressure from my father, who still harbored the dream that I would study science, I was persuaded to sign up for Physics. The normal introduction to physics at Harvard in those days was a three semester sequence, but as an experiment, the younger members of the department had crafted a two-semester accelerated version called Physics 11. Imagining, rather unwisely, that my Honorable Mention in the Westinghouse indicated a talent for the hard sciences, I enrolled.

That left one course to go. Herb Winston told me flat out that I *must* take Philosophy 140, a middle level course which, at Harvard, was taken both by advanced undergraduates and by graduate students. Its subject was symbolic logic, and it was taught by Willard van Orman Quine. Quine had just that year published a little book called *Methods of Logic* which used a new system of formal proof that he called "Natural Deduction." It was the text for the course.

I had my five courses.

Very quickly, I settled into the routine of college life, which for me meant a mixture of classes, study, odd jobs, and movies at the University Theater in Harvard Square. After a summer school session to complete the last credits she needed for a three-and-half-year degree [her birthday is January 16<sup>th</sup>, so she too entered high school in mid year], Susie had enrolled at Connecticut College for Women in New London, eighty miles to the south. I wrote love letters to her almost every day, and when I had accumulated enough money, went down to see her for a weekend. I missed Susie terribly, and talked a good deal about her in the letters I wrote to my parents, but I actually found it peaceful to be all alone at Harvard, free to throw my energies into

the extraordinary intellectual world that was opening up before me. Since I was going steady, I did not date, which saved me a good deal of time and money.

As part of my effort to help defray the cost of my education, I had offered to find my own pocket money. Tuition, room, and board was enough to ask of my parents. So I scrubbed floors, baby sat, waited tables, and every so often inventoried the local Robert Hall clothing store [a great gig, that, paying \$1.25 an hour -- those of us who relied on the college employment office waited hungrily for those semi-annual inventories.] It was too expensive to buy a round-trip train ticket to New London, so when I was able to make the trip, I would get up early on Saturday, put on a white shirt, a tie, and my gray flannel suit, and take the subway and the tram to the farthest south point on the route. Then I would climb down with my suitcase and stick out my thumb. The principal obstacle was Providence, Rhode Island, which lay smack across the road from Boston to New London. In all the years I hitched, I don't think I ever got a ride that actually took me *through* Providence. By early afternoon, I would arrive, and then Susie and I would spend the rest of Saturday together and all of Sunday, until it was time for me to catch the shore line back to Boston.

Susie was majoring in Philosophy and Botany, and even on cold autumn days we would take long walks in the college arboretum and talk about philosophical things. There was no question in my mind that she was the girl for me, and I took it for granted that we would one day marry. It never occurred to me that my parents might worry when their sixteen year old son wrote home so earnestly about wanting to marry his girlfriend, but Barbara, bless her heart, reassured them in her letters from Swarthmore that I was a sensible boy and wouldn't do anything foolish.

I made very few friends in college, preferring to keep my time free for my studies. In a way, it is a pity, I suppose, that I was not more outgoing. The Harvard class of '54 turned out to be a breeding ground for success, and I might, had I bestirred myself, come to know Ted Kennedy, or John Updike, or F. Lee Bailey. But I did find two kindred souls, with whom I spent many happy hours over the next three years singing madrigals. Michael Jorrin was a tall, blond, cheerful basso from Albuquerque, where his father was a professor. Richard Eder, who has since become quite well known as a newspaper reporter and then book reviewer, was a short, saturnine, ironic tenor who walked with a limp, the result, I believe, of childhood polio. In their very different ways, they were perfect companions and friends.

I have no gift for friendship, a fact that I have always deeply regretted. I saw a good deal of Mike for a while in Manhattan when I moved to Columbia. He and his wife, Vickie, were living there while Mike pursued a career as a documentary film maker. But I did not keep up with Dick, and now, more than half a century later, I am saddened by the fact that neither of them is any longer in my life. It is entirely my fault. But I still have the graduation present they gave me in June, 1953 -- a copy of the Kemp Smith translation of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. The inscription reads, "For Bob Wolff, Each even page from Michael Jorrín, Each odd page from Richard Eder. May 28, 1953" It was the copy I used for many years, until it became so tattered from constant reading that I had it rebound, and bought myself another working copy. I have never received a present that came to mean more to me, or that served me half so well.

Mike had roomed his Freshman year with Pierre Matisse. In our sophomore year, when we all sorted ourselves out into the Harvard house system, Pierre teamed up with two other members of our class -- Steve Joyce and Sadri Khan. Paul was the grandson of Henri Matisse.

Steve was the grandson of James Joyce. Sadri, or, to give him his proper name, Sadruddin Ali Khan, was the son of Ali Khan and Rita Hayworth, and the grandson of the Aga Khan. Three more feckless and incompetent students could not have been imagined! Sadri, in his first year, accomplished a feat that many would have thought impossible -- he managed to fail six of his eight courses. The explanation might have been found in a picture on his desk of a New York chorus girl in a provocative pose with the inscription, "To Sadri, with all my love forever and ever, Bubbles." But Harvard, even then, knew which side its bread was buttered on, and permitted Sadri to continue his studies. When he graduated, out of gratitude he endowed the first Harvard chair in Middle Eastern Studies. To be fair, Sadri did not simply disappear from view after graduation. He actually served a term as the U. N. High Commissioner for Refugees, so perhaps Harvard saw more deeply than we who knew him personally.

Most of my courses that first semester were pretty much what a Freshman might expect at college, but the logic course with Quine introduced me to a world that captivated me, so much so that by the middle of the year I had changed my major from Mathematics to Mathematics and Philosophy. A bit later I changed again to Philosophy and Mathematics, and finally, by my Sophomore year to Philosophy *simpliciter*.

Quine was then in his forties, one of a small group of younger philosophers who were transforming the Harvard department. In my first and second years, I took three courses with him -- the elementary logic course, a graduate logic course, and a graduate logic seminar. He had a profound effect on my intellectual development, and is arguably one of the three or four most important American philosophers of the Twentieth Century.

Quine was a tall, balding man with an oblong face and a quizzical look. He was ferociously smart -- perhaps the smartest person I have ever met -- and had a rather dry wit. He could also be very charming, especially in small groups. He must have been rather shy, for when he lectured to a class as large as Philosophy 140, which had perhaps sixty students or more in it, he spoke from a little set of 3 x 5 note cards on which he had prepared his class, and never deviated from them. Even in his graduate logic class, which I took in the first semester of my Sophomore year, he relied on those cards. He would take them out of his pocket, remove the rubber band that bound them, and begin to lecture. As he talked, he had the habit of stretching the rubber band between his two index fingers and rotating them, as though playing a little game of cat's cradle. One day, the rubber band slipped, and went flying into the lap of a student sitting in the front row. Nobody laughed, or so much as breathed, while the student soberly picked up the rubber band and returned it to Quine. He took it, stretched it between his fingers, and continued rotating it while he lectured. From time to time, he would rise and cover the blackboard with logical notation. At the end of the hour, when he left the room, no one would move for several minutes as we tried to catch up with his last lines of logic in our notes.

The text for the course was Quine's own book, *Mathematical Logic*, which he had first published in 1940. We used the second edition, which came out the year we took the course. It is worth saying a few words about what Quine had accomplished in the book, because, though I did not go on to become a formal logician, his style of reasoning and exposition had a very deep influence on my work even in subjects as far afield as political theory and Marxian economics.

Ever since the time of Leibniz in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, philosophers and mathematicians had sought a way to demonstrate that mathematics possessed the same absolute certainty and

complete independence of experience or observation as the syllogistic logic handed down to them by Aristotle. This quest had been called into question at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century by Immanuel Kant in the first part of his *Critique of Pure Reason*, but the dream had been revived by major advances in logical and mathematical analysis by a number of 19<sup>th</sup> century thinkers. The great contribution of Bertrand Russell and Alfred North Whitehead, to which I referred earlier, was actually to carry out a systematic rigorous deductive derivation of elementary arithmetic from a set of assumptions, or axioms, that were manifestly logical in nature, and contained nothing that looked even remotely like mathematics.

But *Principia Mathematica*, in which Russell and Whitehead laid out their results, was a monstrous three-volume work that was extremely difficult to read, and its key logical moves were difficult even for a formal logician to grasp. What Quine had done was to think through the structure of the argument in the *Principia* and find ways to set it forth in an immeasurably simpler, more transparent form. The result was a book that, even with Quine's addition of a good deal of material that had been developed by logicians after the publication of the *Principia*, ran to little more than three hundred pages. Quine's genius as a logician was a capacity for exposition that was at once absolutely rigorous and precise, and elegantly lucid. Without even realizing it at the time, I learned from him that this was the proper standard for philosophical exposition of any sort. Looking back, I see that I have spent my entire career striving to plumb the depths of obscure and difficult arguments which I can then expound simply, clearly, and rigorously.

An activity of this sort, even in the rarefied intellectual atmosphere which Quine inhabited, is of course secondary to the discovering of new logical results, and there were in fact

no famous theorems that bore his name, no Quine's Theorem to stand alongside Gödel's Theorem. One evening, in his math logic seminar the next year, a graduate student asked Quine who were the ten greatest logicians of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Quine thought for a moment and rattled off the obvious candidates -- Hilbert, Gödel, and so forth. The student rather sycophantically asked, "And where do you come on the list?" Quine smiled and remarked dryly, "Right at the top of the second ten." This was probably a pretty accurate self-estimate at that moment in the middle of the century.

Quine's philosophical reputation at that point rested on a number of extremely influential essays on metaphysical, logical, and epistemological topics that had appeared in leading journals. The year I graduated, he published a collection of them with a title taken from a popular calypso song: *From a Logical Point of View*. The lead essay, one of the most famous, is called "On What There Is." The first paragraph gives a very good sense of his wit, the spare clarity of his language, and the complexity of thought that lay behind his apparently simple exposition. Here it is.

A curious thing about the ontological problem is its simplicity. It can be put in three Anglo-Saxon monosyllables: "What is there?" It can be answered, moreover, in a word -- "Everything" -- and everyone will accept this answer as true. However, this is merely to say that there is what there is. There remains room for disagreement over cases; and so the issue has stayed alive down the centuries.

My second year, as I recall it, the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association held its annual meetings in New York City. The meetings always occurred between Christmas and New Year's [which meant that they invariably coincided with my birthday.] I



decided to attend, as I was home for the holidays. The first day, I was standing with a group of Harvard philosophy graduate students, trying desperately to look older than my just-eighteen years, when Quine walked up to the group. We all snapped to attention, as his eyes ran around the circle. Then he looked at me and said, "Well, Wolff. You must be the youngest person here." I was utterly mortified. "Yes," Quine went on, "It's good to see you here. The sooner you start coming to these things, the sooner you will realize they are not worth coming to," and with that, he walked off, leaving me to wish that the earth would open up and swallow me.

Quine did not suffer fools gladly, and as he became more famous, he would more and more often be accosted by eager young philosophers who had spent years puzzling over one of his articles and now wanted to try out their hard won objections on him. He was too polite to brush them off, but incapable of pretending that what they were saying was of the slightest interest to him. His solution was to stand quietly as though he were listening intently, all the while puffing on his pipe. Periodically he would say, "yes, yes," and go on puffing. He would keep this up until the poor young thing ran out of steam and drifted away.

But though he disdained idle chitchat, even with distinguished colleagues, he recognized real intelligence when he encountered it, no matter in what form it presented itself to him. During the time I was teaching at Harvard as an Instructor in Philosophy and General Education, the *wunderkind* Saul Kripke showed up as a Freshman at Harvard, having already had an article accepted for publication in *The Journal of Symbolic Logic*, the leading professional journal in the field. Saul was a piece of work but there was no denying his brilliance, and Quine treated him as an equal, in what I have always considered a manifestation of real academic class.

In 1960, Quine published what was to become perhaps his most influential book, *Word and Object*. Saul read it, and made an appointment with Quine to talk about it. When the day of the appointment arrived, Saul stood Quine up. Now, the morés of the Academy have changed in the past half century, and students these days [if I may speak with a crustiness befitting my age] no longer exhibit an appropriate respect for their elders and betters. But in those days, it was unheard of for a student -- any student -- to make an appointment with a professor and then simply not show up. Saul came slouching around a while later with some excuse, and Quine agreed to another appointment, at Eliot House, where Quine had an affiliation. Marshal Cohen, then a young Assistant Professor, told me that he walked by just as Saul and Quine were saying goodbye, and swears that he heard Quine mumbling to himself, "Maybe I am all wrong. Maybe I have got it all wrong."

Quine obviously had a sensual side to his nature to complement his intellect, as his attractive second wife and his love of food and jazz attested. But I always thought that there was some element of humanity missing from his makeup that gave him a rather cold aura. I came upon him one day in the middle of Harvard Yard talking with some people and stopped to listen. Quine had just returned from a trip to Germany -- this was not yet fifteen years after the war, remember -- and he was describing a tour he had taken of S. S. torture chambers. He exhibited an eerie fascination with the technical efficiency of the facility that struck me as devoid of any real human appreciation for their demonic purpose.

But at the same time, Quine was punctilious about responsibilities that many senior professors routinely sloughed off. Every graduate student who had ever taken a course with him wanted a letter of recommendation when it came job seeking time, of course, and Quine dutifully

cranked them out, even though he could easily have refused in all but a handful of special cases. One day my graduate school apartment mate, Charles Parsons, invited me to a lunch at the Society of Fellows, an extremely exclusive gathering of the very brightest graduate students, of which Quine had, in the Thirties, been a founding member. It was all very elegant and Oxford high table, complete with silver candlesticks. Quine was there in his role as one of the Society's Senior Fellows. At the end of the meal, everyone jumped up and ran off. Without comment, Quine carefully collected up the candlesticks and replaced them in their locked cabinet.

At the end of my first semester, just as I was getting ready to return home for Christmas, my mother suffered a serious heart attack, and was taken to the hospital. Although she recovered and lived for twenty-five more years, the attack was a genuine tragedy in her life, for in those days, medical wisdom dictated that heart attack sufferers stop work and vegetate. She had been a hard-driving, efficient, productive person for thirty-five years, and it was simply impossible for her to adjust to the status of a semi-invalid. As the years passed, she suffered more and more ailments, some real, some imagined, and lost much of the edge that had characterized her for her first half-century. I visited her in the hospital, and told her all about my college experiences.

By the second semester of my Freshman year, I was decisively moving away from mathematics and in the direction of philosophy, though it would take me another semester and more to complete the transition. My Soc Sci, math, and physics courses continued on, but I was happily done with French, and logic had been a semester course, so I needed two replacements to round out the five. My first choice was the second half of a big Introduction to Philosophy taught by the one of the oldest members of the Department, Raphael Demos, who had a very big reputation as a Socrates-like grandfather figure. I rummaged through the course catalogue for

another possibility, and noticed a listing for something called "Logical Philosophy," taught by a visitor from the University of Pennsylvania, Nelson Goodman. I decided to sign up.

At the first meeting, Professor Goodman explained that he was about to publish a book entitled *The Structure of Appearance*. The course would be about that book, which we would all buy as soon as it became available a little later in the semester. I don't think I will be surprising anyone or offending any sensibilities if I say that Nelson Goodman was a very queer duck. In addition to his interest in logic and the formal dimensions of epistemology, Goodman was, it turned out, a connoisseur of the arts who later on wrote extremely important and influential things about aesthetics. This might suggest a certain catholicity of taste and liberality of vision, but if it had been possible to take a spectrographic reading of his mind, it would have looked something like the spectrograph of hydrogen -- several very sharp, narrow, brightly defined lines quite far apart, and nothing in between. Goodman had certain precise interests, scattered, to be sure, across the philosophical spectrum. If you engaged with him on one of those topics, in the terms in which he had defined it, he was acute, immediately engaged, and quite friendly. But if you asked a question that was one ångstrom to the right or left, his eyes glazed over and he exhibited an arctic lack of interest that could wither the most ebullient student. In later years, when he had become famous, he cultivated disciples, whom he would position in an audience when he gave a talk. If a question was asked, instead of answering it, he would nod to one of the *embeds*, who would give the proper answer.

Although the course number indicated that it was open both to undergraduates and graduate students, it was taken for the most part by graduate students, and I must have stuck out like a sore thumb. Goodman's work was driven by a suspicion of such logical notions as "class,"

which he thought did not correspond to anything in the world, and his book was a systematic attempt to see how far one could get with a logic of individuals. His philosophical motivation thus bore a certain resemblance to the constructivist mathematics of the great Dutch mathematician L. E. J. Brouwer. For my final paper, I undertook to construct a calculus of size along Goodmanian lines. I actually laid down some axioms and managed to prove three or four theorems, but I only got a B+ in the course, a fact that bummed me out.

Thus it was that by the end of my Freshman year in college, I had studied at a the graduate level with Willard van Orman Quine and Nelson Goodman, two of the most rigorous philosophical thinkers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In light of this extraordinary fact, it is not surprising that by the time I was a Sophomore, I was beginning to think of myself as a philosopher.

But there was still the little matter of physics. It turned out that I had no real talent for the subject, and wanted very much to drop it at midyear, but my father insisted that I stick it out for both semesters, and I gave in. The problem wasn't the calculations. In fact, because it was being taught at an advanced level, there was very little in the way of computation, and we did not need to use slide rules [which was fortunate for me, since I had never mastered them]. Instead, we were expected to use our insight into theory -- "physical intuition," the Instructor called it -- and I had very little of that. I detested the labs, which we were required to write up meticulously in big notebooks filled with graph paper. I recall one laboratory exercise, which consisted of firing a 22 caliber bullet into a big block of wood suspended just in front of it like a pendulum. The idea was to mark how high the block swung when struck, and then, assuming various values for the muzzle velocity and mass of the bullet and the block, confirm certain elementary laws of physics. The problem was that the margin of error in the calculations was so enormous that

virtually any reading the apparatus could yield would constitute a confirmation of the law of the conservation of momentum.

The culmination of this educational fiasco was the final examination in the second semester. I can still recall one of the questions: "An airplane with a wingspan of 300 feet is traveling at a velocity of 300 miles due north. The earth's magnetic field at that point is 0.6 Gauss downward. Calculate the static charge induced between the wingtips." I actually knew the formula, and cranked out an answer. As I left the exam, I walked along next to another student, who was on his way to becoming a physicist, and asked him what he had gotten on that question. Ever the cautious Harvard student, he replied, "What did you get?" "0.6 times ten to the eighth statcoulombs," I replied. He looked at me incredulously, and asked gingerly, "Do you have any idea how large a charge that is?" I allowed as how I hadn't a clue. "That is a charge so large," he said slowly, "that if it were discharged, it would split the earth in half!" It seems that in the process of converting units, I had multiplied instead of dividing by 10 to the fourth. It was as though someone had used trigonometry to calculate the height of a woman by measuring her shadow and the angle of the sun's rays, and had come to the conclusion that she was eleven miles tall. A little physical intuition would alert him to the probability of error. But I completely lacked that intuition. Clearly, physics was not my subject.

The story has a happy ending, however. When all the grades were in, the instructor looked at the curve and decided it was too low, so my C+ became a B-. Thus it is that I can honestly say I did honors work in physics at Harvard.

Quite the most memorable moment of the entire course was a show put on by a group of young math and physics instructors for the amusement of us students. They called it "The Physical Review," which was apparently the name of a leading professional journal. The show was written and directed by a math instructor named Tom Lehrer, who also sang from the piano. We were the first people in the world to hear some Lehrer classics, such as 'Plagiarize', and his version of the Gilbert and Sullivan patter song, "I am the very model of a modern major-general," with the names of all of the elements substituted for the original words, as well as a rollicking bump-and-grind number called "The Definition of a Derivative." That same Spring, Lehrer gave a concert at the Freshman Union, where all of us took our meals, and he sang his classic religious hymn, "The Father, The Son, The Holy Ghost, and You, Baby." It wasn't all studying that first year.

Before moving on to Sophomore year, there is a small matter of confession that must be attended to. I have been keeping this to myself for fifty-two years, and I think it is about time to come clean and ask for forgiveness. As I have said, periodically I would go to New London to see Susie, but once during the Fall, she came up to Cambridge to see me. We decided that we would spend the night together at the old Essex Hotel, a seedy place just opposite South Station, on the outer edge of Boston's Chinatown. When it came time for us to check in, I was afraid to use my real name, and rather than register us as Mr. And Mrs. John Smith, on the spot I pulled out the name of one of my classmates who was famously proper, and signed us in as Mr. And Mrs. Charles Dacre Parsons. Charlie is now nearing the end of a distinguished career as a Harvard Professor of Philosophy. I have a nightmare vision of some beady-eyed graduate student writing a doctoral dissertation on Professor Parsons' work in the philosophy of

mathematics, and somehow surfacing the fact that in 1950, he registered at a Boston hotel with a lady manifestly not his wife. So if you ever read this, Charlie, please accept my belated apologies.

### **Sophomore Year**

The move from Freshman to Sophomore year was fraught with significance and no little anxiety. In the first year, all students lived in Harvard Yard, in dormitories to which they were assigned. But from Sophomore year onward, one entered the famous Harvard House system. Dunster, Winthrop, Kirkland, Lowell, Adams, Eliot, or Leverett -- where you lived determined your college identity and initiated a network of lifelong friendships and associations. The houses were markedly different from one another. Eliot and Lowell were the *faux* English colleges, much favored by upper crust private school types. Winthrop was the jock house, Adams the home for brains and non-conformists.

At the end of the Freshman year, pairs, triples, and quadruples of students would seek one another out and apply as a group to one or another of the houses. Then there were interviews, at which the Master or his assistant, the Senior Tutor, would attempt to determine whether the group was compatible with the self-image of the house.

I was deeply offended by this process. Having made it into Harvard, I had cleared all the hoops I was going to jump through, so I simply refused to apply. Naturally, I was not admitted to any house. But I *was* a Harvard student in good standing, and something had to be done with me, so I was assigned a cavernous, expensive single in Claverly Hall, the overflow building that



Harvard was using to accommodate the few students for whom there were no house suites. Since it sat across the street from Adams House, I was made an eating member of Adams.

Harvard may have thought it was punishing me; I don't know. But I felt like Br'er Rabbit in the Uncle Remus stories. I had been thrown into a briar patch, and I was right at home. I was all alone. No one knew me. No one cared that I was there. I could sleep as late as I wished, study all night, hitchhike down to see Susie and return with no one even aware that I had been gone. Free even of good advice to ignore, I plunged into a feverish study of philosophy and logic.

In those days Harvard managed quite effectively to create a safe, cushioned space in which I could focus my energies entirely on philosophy. Widener Library, and its newer, more utilitarian undergraduate branch, Lamont, was all the world I needed or wanted. When I left Harvard ten years later, I realized for the first time that research might consist of more than simply going from one floor of Widener to another. It seemed to possess every book every printed, and in musty wings of little visited levels I would come upon original eighteenth century journals and colonial American logic texts. There was even an extraordinary collection of mysteries, courtesy of an alumnus from an earlier age, where I could read my way through every book written by John Dickson Carr, Josephine Tey, Rex Stout, or Agatha Christie.

The world cooperated in this happy, self-imposed inner exile. Although my undergraduate days perfectly coincided with the Korean War, I felt little need to pay attention. Years later, as I watched my students at Columbia struggle with the impossible task of balancing their studies with their fight against America's Viet Nam disaster, I would reflect on how lucky I

had been. They would ask me how to become both a serious philosopher and a committed activist, as I had done, and I would answer truthfully but uselessly, First put the world away from you for a few years and bury yourself in logic and the history of philosophy.

The happiest time of each semester was the long "Reading Period" between the end of classes and the onset of final exams. At Conn College, Reading Period for Susie was a single day, or two at most, but Harvard, understanding that many of its gentlemen-scholars might have fallen a trifle behind on their reading, due to the press of social engagements, allowed a generous week or ten days in which to catch up and cram for finals. During this time, the Harvard radio station held what it described as "orgies." Twenty-four hours a day, they would play classical music, starting with Gregorian Chant and working their way slowly up to the great Romantic composers. A student announcer would say, "And now, sixteen hours of Bach" or "here are Beethoven's nine symphonies." Since I frequently worked straight through the night, I could listen to endless hours of Bach or Vivaldi or Palestrina before having an early breakfast.

It wasn't all studying, of course. There were distractions and amusements aside from the regular visits to the University Theater and mysteries. One evening during my Sophomore year, Carl Sandburg came to give a lecture. Anticipating a crowd, Harvard scheduled the talk in New Lecture Hall, where I had listened to Sam Beer the year before in Soc Sci 5. By the time I got there, every seat was taken, and I had to stand along the side wall. Craggy, weather-beaten, simply dressed in work clothes, Sandburg was everything I had imagined him to be during my high school days. He read from *The People, Yes* and spoke about Abraham Lincoln. Near the end of his talk, he told a joke that has stayed with me to this day. It is the perfect antidote to the

endless public celebration of wealth and success in America that fills our public discourse these days.

It seems, Sandburg began, that two cockroaches, brothers, were riding on a farmer's cart into town one day, when the cart hit a bump, and they were both thrown off. The first brother fell on a big pile of dung, which is seventh heaven for a cockroach. He settled in, ate himself fat and glossy, and prospered. The second brother fell into a deep hole, where there was nothing to eat and scarcely any way to get out. Slowly, laboriously, he dragged himself up the side of the hole, repeatedly falling back and starting again. He grew thin and weak, and his shell lost its sheen, becoming dull and discolored. At long last, by the greatest of effort, he managed to heave himself back onto the road. Looking up, he saw his brother perched happily atop his dung pile. "Brother," he said, looking up, "You are so fat and sleek. How have you managed to flourish like that?" His brother looked down disdainfully over the edge of the dung and said, with a smug self-congratulatory smile, "Brains. And hard work."

Nineteen fifty-two was also the year of the first Eisenhower/Stevenson face-off. But Harvard's universal first choice for the office of president was a small, feckless possum named Pogo. Walt Kelly's cartoon strip, *Pogo*, was to the fifties what *Doonesbury* would later be to the seventies. All of us sported "I Go Pogo" campaign buttons, and on the day that Walt Kelly came to town for a rally, Harvard Square was a solid mass of screaming students. I was in the mob somewhere, but never managed to get close enough actually to see, let alone to touch, the great man.

Rather closer to home and more personal were the occasional student riots that offered an hour's relief from the grind of study. To readers accustomed to televised scenes of riot police, burning cars, and clouds of tear gas, it is necessary to explain what constituted a riot at Harvard. Somewhere in the distant past, the custom had grown up of calling students out of their dorms into Harvard Yard on the occasion of a crisis with the cry "Reinhardt!" None of us had any idea who Reinhardt was, or had been, but we very quickly learned to respond when the cry went up. We would pour out of the dorms and mill around, eager for action but having no notion what that might be. Administrative types would walk quietly through the crowd greeting students by name, on the quite correct presumption that anyone who realized that he had been personally identified was not very likely to engage in genuinely punishable behavior. After a bit, we would look at each other quizzically and drift back to our rooms to continue studying.

My favorite riot took place in the little space just in front of the Lampoon Building, formed by the intersection of Mt. Auburn Street and the extension of Bow Street. A Cambridge politician had ventured into Harvard territory in his car, and in traditional town/gown fashion, we had poured out to jeer him. Several hundred of us gathered, surrounding his car, where we were very quickly joined by Deans, Senior Tutors, and the Harvard Police. Three or four students yelled "To the Yard," and started running up Plympton Street past Adams House, trying to spark a stampede. Half way up the street, they turned and looked behind them, to discover that no one had moved. We were all standing there watching and hoping that something would happen. Harvard in those days was a college of observers, not participants.

I did engage in one small act of political protest that, as it turned out, would come back to haunt me. James Bryant Conant, then President of Harvard, responded to a question by saying

that although he would not fire a faculty member who was a Communist, he would not hire one. I was outraged, and as soon as I had climbed up on my high horse, I wrote a letter to the Harvard *Crimson* in which I condemned Conant for his statement, made allusions to John Stuart Mill [whom I had read just the previous semester], and concluded by saying that if Conant could not uphold the ideals of liberal education, he should step down from his position as President. Another student wrote a reply, and as sometimes happens in these cases, conferred an honorary doctorate on me by referring to me as "Dr. Wolff."

Well, as it happened there actually *was* a Dr. Wolff at Harvard -- Dr. Robert Lee Wolff, Historian and Fellow of the Russian Research Center. Bobby Wolff, as he was known to his friends, was a portly gentleman with social aspirations, an expert on the Byzantine Empire who later in life also wrote a book on Victorian literature. I imagine he came in for some odd looks and comments when "Dr. Wolff" was referred to in the *Crimson's* letter columns, because yet another letter appeared, signed by Robert Lee Wolff, stating that he was *not* the Robert Wolff who had called on the President to step down. Alas, this would not be the last time the Harvard community confused us.

In my three years as a Harvard undergraduate, I only had one encounter with the University police. One evening, as I sat in my third-floor Claverly room studying, I was disturbed by a racket down below on the street. I looked out the window and saw a group of Final Club types dressed in tuxes, clearly drunk and making all sorts of noise. I yelled down to them to be quiet, but they just ignored me. Finally, in exasperation, I pulled out the bottom drawer of my desk, filled it with water from the my bathtub, and dumped it on them. As luck would have it, just as I let fly two Harvard cops came around the corner, drawn, I imagine, by the

noise. They looked up, spotted me, and moved toward the Claverly front door around the corner. I doused the light, stripped off my clothes, and jumped into bed, trying to create the impression that I was sound asleep. Sure enough, they knocked on my door, and when I let them in, primed with my cover story, I realized that there was an incriminating trail of drops leading from the bathroom to the window. They took a look, read the signs, decided to let it go, and left. It was not to be a replay of Miss Hickman and the pins.

That second undergraduate year, I took three graduate logic courses and seminars, three advanced philosophy courses, a year-long course on Modern Algebra, and -- my last token nod to the notion of a general education -- a Humanities course that took us through some classical and modern literature. The third of my three logic courses was an advanced seminar on set theory taught by a young Assistant Professor named Hao Wang. Wang was Quine's best student, and had followed Quine into the Society of Fellows. He was a brilliant logician, and had discovered a contradiction in the first edition of *Mathematical Logic*, thereby necessitating the second edition in which Quine corrected the error. He spoke English with a heavy Chinese accent overlaid with German, perhaps his first Western tongue. The result, which was barely comprehensible, sounded a bit like garbled Spanish.

The Humanities course was a bit of a joke. I felt as though I had gone backwards to grade school, and paid it very little mind, which perhaps accounts for the most hilarious error I have ever made on an exam. The first reading of the semester was a prose translation of the *Odyssey*, which we were asked to read over the weekend between the organizational meeting of the class, on a Friday, and the first meeting on Monday of the small discussion sections in which

the course henceforth met. A bit later on, we plowed through Herodotus, but obsessed by the philosophy in which I was immersed, I paid precious little attention to either book.

On the first quiz, we were given a list of spot identifications, among which was "Nausicaa." I couldn't for the life of me remember who or what Nausicaa was, but it sounded like a city-state to me, so I tossed a mental coin and wrote "Nausicaa -- city-state allied with Sparta in the Peloponnesian Wars." Well, Nausicaa, as it turns out, is the princess who pulls Odysseus from the sea half-drowned. My instructor, Mr. Brown, to his credit, did not mark it wrong. He simply put a long string of exclamation points next to it.

In the Fall semester I took a course on the philosophy of the great eighteenth century Scottish writer David Hume, with another of the new wave of younger professors, Henry David Aiken. Aiken was a brilliant, quirky, energetic heavy drinker who affected speaking out of the side of his mouth and was a special buddy of Quine. For some obscure reason that no one could explain, each of them called the other "Ledger," possibly an in joke at the expense of Ledger Wood. The principal reading of the course was Hume's *hauptwerk*, *A Treatise of Human Nature*. Almost immediately, I got into a nasty *contre temps* with Aiken that foreshadowed bigger trouble to come. A little inside baseball is necessary to explain what happened.

In the opening sections of the first part of the *Treatise*, Hume articulates his fundamental claim, which is that all of the mind's ideas are copies of impressions that it has received either through the five senses or from a process that he called "reflection." In the course of defending this claim, which is the basis for every subsequent argument in the book, Hume observes that there is in fact one exception to this general truth. If we have observed all of the shades of color

in a spectrum save one, he said, the mind can somehow form an idea of the absent impression, so that in this one case, there could be an idea that is not a copy of a preceding impression.

Aiken apparently wanted to build a new interpretation of Hume on this exception, and made much of it in one of his opening lectures. I raised my hand to ask whether it wasn't the case that Hume needed his general rule for later arguments, so that were we to take seriously this supposed exception, it would undermine everything that was to come. Aiken clearly didn't want to pause in his flight of fancy, so rather irritatedly he asked me what later arguments I had in mind. I had not yet read more than a few pages of the *Treatise*, so I said I did not know. "Well," he replied, "when you find one, bring it up," and went on with his lecture.

I was furious at being brushed off, so I went home, sat down, and read through the entire Book One of the *Treatise*, all 279 pages of it. At the start of the next class, even before the bell had rung, I raised my hand. Aiken looked rather startled and called on me. "You will recall," I said, "that I asked last class about future arguments that would be undermined were we to allow Hume the exception he mentions to the general principle that every idea is a copy of a precedent impression. You suggested that I bring this matter up when I could name the arguments that would be affected. Here are some of them," and I proceeded to cite chapter and verse from Book One. When I had finished, Aiken waved his hand, said dismissively, "Well, that isn't very interesting," and began his lecture.

As I buried myself ever more deeply in my studies, I became aware of the rhythms of my mind. I quickly learned that I could not organize my studying neatly with a schedule -- an hour for logic, then thirty minutes of Hume. Very often, when my classes were done and I had eaten



dinner, I would find myself restless and unable to concentrate. I would read a mystery, go to a movie, daydream. It was as though something inside me of which I was only dimly aware was arranging itself. I thought of myself as falling lower and lower into idleness and wasted time. If I tried to make myself work by force of will, telling myself that I had assignments to complete and classes to prepare for, it was no good. I simply could not get started. So I would allow myself to continue falling, learning to trust a part of myself that I could not access directly by introspection. Finally, I would hit bottom and something inside would turn over. I would be at peace with myself, completely integrated into myself, and I could begin to study. Then, I would study with ferocious concentration for hours, often not stopping until the sun began to come up.

There is a beautiful passage in Zora Neale Hurston's great novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, that captures a similar moment of transformation. "Janie stood where he had left her for unmeasured time and thought. She stood there until something fell off the shelf inside her. Then she went inside there to see what it was." [Page 67].

The highlight of the year, as it turned out, was not the seminar with Quine or the passage at arms with Aiken, but a course on the seventeenth century metaphysician Baruch Spinoza, taught by the most extraordinary professor I encountered during my undergraduate career. Harry Austryn Wolfson, Nathan Littauer Professor of Hebrew Literature and Philosophy, was a world-class scholar of apparently limitless erudition who looked like a Jewish version of the cartoon character, The Little King. He was short and round with an accent as thick as my grandmother's, despite having spent his life in Boston. He read Hebrew, Aramaic, Arabic, Latin, Greek, and all of the modern European languages, and was the complete master of the religio-philosophical

tradition that stretched from Graeco-Roman times, across the great medieval fusion of Arabic, Hebrew, and Latin texts, to the early modern period that culminated with Spinoza.

Wolfson rotated teaching a trio of philosophy courses, one each year, on Aristotle, the Church Fathers, and Spinoza. In 1951-52, it was Spinoza's turn, and that Spring I enrolled. Wolfson's unworldliness was as famous as his scholarship, and there were endless stories that circulated about him. He had an office in Widener Library itself, where he was reputed on occasion to snare a new scholarly tome as it came into the library, even before the librarians had a chance to catalogue it. It would disappear into the chaos of his office, and never be heard from again. One day, so the story goes, a young undergraduate came to see Wolfson, who, despite his formidable learning, was actually a rather sweet and approachable man. Unable to find the book he needed to answer the student's question, Wolfson motioned to him to follow, and plunged into the library stacks, making his way to a corner of a subterranean floor that no one but Wolfson had visited in decades. Climbing up on a stool to reach a high shelf, he was about to take the volume down when a thought struck him. Peering down over his large glasses, he said to the student, "You do read Persian, don't you?"

As a bachelor, Wolfson was accustomed to take lunch every day at the Faculty Club, where he would sit at the long table set aside for those who did not have formal lunch plans. Apparently the conversation turned one day to teaching -- not the usual subject of faculty chitchat -- and several of the professors alluded to classroom discussions. Wolfson had never actually conducted a classroom discussion, the students by and large not having anything approaching the scholarly background necessary for a useful colloquy, but he was intrigued by the thought of this pedagogical innovation, and decided to give it a try. When he came into class

the next day, he put a question to the eighty or so of us, undergraduates and graduate students, who regularly attended his lectures: Was Spinoza an atheist? The casual reader of Spinoza [if indeed there is such a person] might think this an absurd question, because every page of the *Ethics* and *Short Treatise* seems replete with references to God. But there had in fact been a considerable furor in Spinoza's own day about his metaphysical beliefs, and he had actually been excommunicated from the synagogue in Amsterdam because of their fear that his unorthodox views would bring the wrath of the state down on the Jewish community.

Well, the graduate students were delighted by the opportunity to express an opinion, and a discussion ensued whose liveliness would have gladdened the heart of any professor. Oddly, though, as the debate went on, Wolfson grew visibly more upset, and finally, he summarily terminated it. It seemed that when he asked the question, Was Spinoza an atheist?, he expected us to cite seventeenth century Dutch opinion on the matter. Once it became clear to him that none of us was at all acquainted with seventeenth century Dutch opinion, he concluded that we could not carry on an intelligent discussion, and he went back to lecturing.

The next year, I took Wolfson's Aristotle course, during which, in an astonishing *tour de force*, he managed to extract from a close commentary on the first five Books of Aristotle's *Physics* the entire sweep of philosophical thought from Plato to Spinoza. There were some delicious moments. Early in the semester, non-Jewish students adopted the practice of sitting next to Jewish students, in hopes of getting a helpful *sotto voce* translation from time to time. The problems caused by Wolfson's accent reached a crisis one day as he was lecturing on Aristotle's theory of matter, which in his pronunciation sounded something like "Eristutl's theory of metter." He spent a considerable time on the absolutely central fact that according to

Eristotle, matter is edible. By and large, one did not ask questions in a Wolfson lecture, and since he was severely short-sighted, he was unlikely to notice a hand even if it were raised, but a mystified graduate student, who couldn't contain himself, managed to wave his hand so vigorously that Wolfson sensed some disturbance in the force and looked up. "Why is it important to Aristotle that matter is edible," the student asked. Wolfson looked puzzled. The student repeated, "Why is it important to Aristotle that we can eat matter?" Now Wolfson knew that he was in the presence of idiocy. "Eat matter? What are you talking about? Edible, edible. Two plus two is two, two plus two is four. Edible."

Wolfson, it turned out, was as big a fan as I of the movies, and I actually saw him on occasion in the University Theater, sitting as far down front as he could get. One day, he was lecturing on ancient notions of contingency and fate, and he observed that the Greek atomists denied the existence of a divine plan or purpose in nature. Niagara Falls was not put there so that Marilyn Monroe could walk in front of it, he explained. It was there, and they simply used it for that purpose. We were all mystified, until we recalled that *Niagara* was playing that week at the University Theater.

The summer after my Freshman year had been spent taking the two courses I needed if I was to graduate in three years, but I now had to find some way of making some money after my Sophomore year. Once again, my mother came to the rescue, this time thanks to her connections at the New York Herald Tribune, where she had served as secretary to the City Editor from 1919 or so until 1929. She still had some connections, and with a phone call managed to arrange for me to spend the summer as a copy boy at the Trib. I lived at home and worked the night shift, from 4 p.m. to midnight five days a week. It was, as it would turn out, the only time in my entire

life that I punched a time clock and did what the rest of the world considers work. At the time I thought of it simply as a job. Not until many years later did I realize that a position as copy boy at the Trib or the Times was an entrée for which even seasoned out-of-town reporters would compete.

Copy boys [there were no copy girls] were essentially city room gophers. We would sit around until someone yelled "copy," and then we would carry paper from one desk to another, or go down to the press room for the long strips of paper on which newspaper columns were printed, or even, on occasion, leave the Tribune Building and run an errand to our major competitor, the New York Times. There were no computers, of course, nor even, as I recall, electric typewriters. The city room was dominated by a big horseshoe-shaped desk at which the rewrite men sat. As reporters called their stories in from the field, the rewrite men would convert them to printable form, and then call for a copy boy to take the copy to the appropriate desk.

The summer of 1952 was an exciting time, what with a national election, the Olympics, the fall of King Farouk in Egypt, and the big Sugar Ray Robinson title fight under the lights at Yankee Stadium. All eyes were on the titanic struggle for the Republican nomination between the hero of old-time small town mid-Western Republicanism, Senator Robert Taft of Ohio, and the charismatic hero of World War II, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the candidate of the Eastern internationalist big business wing of the party. Taft's floor manager was Everett Dirksen of Illinois, the Wizard of Ooze, as he had been christened in recognition of his syrupy, mellifluous tones and orotund rhetoric. Eisenhower's forces were led by Thomas E. Dewey of New York, twice the unsuccessful presidential candidate for the Republicans. The Trib was supporting Eisenhower.

The first test of strength came with the seating of the Texas delegation. There were two competing groups seeking convention recognition, one committed to Taft and the other to Eisenhower. The issue came to a floor vote early one evening, and as the delegations were polled, the national reporters sat in the City Room glued to a radio, waiting for the outcome so that they could write their stories. Polling a convention, state by state, was a tedious and time-consuming process, and the deadline for the early edition approached. The reporters became more and more anxious as the roll call droned on. Then disaster struck. A member of the New York delegation asked that the delegation be polled. He was challenging the figures that the head of the delegation had reported to the convention. In those days, in an attempt to give more convention slots to party faithful, the Republicans had adopted the practice of splitting delegation seats, so that New York, with eighty or ninety votes, might have two hundred delegates, each of whom had to be asked by name how he or she had voted. The reporters finally threw in the towel, and wrote their stories without knowing how the vote would come out.

In the end, of course, the Eisenhower forces prevailed, and he went on to win two terms. It was the last dying gasp of old-time Republicanism. When the party underwent its transformation twelve years later in the aftermath of Johnson's landslide defeat of Barry Goldwater, it had shed its old skin as an honorable home for yeoman farmers and small businessmen, and emerged as the association of reactionary bigotry, religious fanaticism, modern-day racism, and crony capitalism that it is today.

During my two-month tour in the Tribune city room, I actually witnessed that staple of all old-fashioned newspaper movies, the moment when the City Editor picks up the phone and yells, "Stop the presses!" In an attempt to steal a march on the TIMES, the Trib brought out an eight

p.m. edition called the Early Bird, that featured the day's sports results in the two left-hand columns of the first page. Each evening, as the first copies of the presses came up, the men at the city desk would very rapidly skim the entire paper for errors, which could be corrected before too many copies had been run off. The City Editor was an absolute terror of a man named Kalgren, who was called The Count by everyone who worked under him. One evening, Kalgren picked up the paper and read through the sports columns. I happened to be standing nearby when he really did shout into the phone, "Stop the presses." Apparently at the bottom of the story, it said "continued on page 34," but when Kalgren looked on page 34, there was no continuation. Wars, revolutions, and the dethroning of monarchs was all in a day's work, but missing sports news was serious!

Because I was living at home, I was able to see more of Susie. There had been some faint indications of trouble in the relationship, though I was still convinced that we were going to keep going steady until we could get married. In an effort to romance her a bit, I decided to use some of my Tribune earnings for a night on the town. The two of us got dressed up and went along to the Blue Angel, a small night club in Manhattan. There was a twenty-five dollar minimum, but since Susie and I did not drink, we used it up having dinner. The floor show that evening consisted of an opening act by a new young comedian, Orson Bean, and two featured singers, Josh White and Eartha Kitt. I still remember Bean's opening line. He came out, looking rather nervous, and said, "Good evening. I am Orson Bean, Harvard '48. Yale nothing." Josh White sang songs I knew from Shaker Village and even Taconic. It was, as it turned out, the only time I have ever been to a night club. I guess if you get something right the first time, there is no point in doing it again.

## Senior Year

One member of an Adams triple having moved out, I was finally able, for my last year, to experience the joys of House living. My roommates were two cheerful irreverent juniors, Milt Shlein and Judah Rubin. I would still have my own room, but I was now sharing the livingroom and bathroom with others. During much of the year, the livingroom was the site of a running penny ante poker game. I played once and lost fifty cents, which was my life limit, so thereafter I stayed in my room and worked.

By now, I knew that I wanted an academic career as a professor of Philosophy, so I gritted my teeth and signed up for German. My previous encounter with the language had been Mark Twain's hilarious essay, "The Awful German Language." An ominous sign. As a last parting sop to my father, I also took a course on atomic physics for non-majors -- "Atomic Physics for Idiots," as it was popularly known. The rest was philosophy.

By now I was running low on options as I had already taken ten of the department's upper level and graduate courses. But there were some unimagined delights in store for me. The first semester, I signed up for Morton White's course on Analytic Philosophy and Clarence Irving Lewis' undergraduate epistemology course. White was, with Quine and Aiken, the third of the youthful triumvirate who were challenging the department's old guard. A short, balding man [only Aiken seemed to be able to manage a full head of hair], White had been hired in tandem with Henry Bugbee, the two of them being told that one would go up and one would go out. Inasmuch as White was promoted to a tenured Associate Professorship within two years, the handwriting was pretty clearly on the wall for Bugbee. I had taken Bugbee's rather idiosyncratic



course on Hellenistic Philosophy as a Sophomore, and I liked him, but I had to admit Harvard had made the right choice. Since this is the last appearance he will make in these pages, I think I owe it to him to note that he was the only Harvard professor I ever encountered who actually had students to his home for dinner. Harvard was not exactly touchy feely.

But it was Lewis who would come to play a more important role in my intellectual development than anyone else I met at Harvard, including Quine. Mr. Lewis, as he was called by everyone, including his senior colleagues, was a Victorian gentleman who sported a vest and a pince-nez and would begin a seminar by formally introducing each person around the table to each other person, since he believed that one could not hold a proper discussion until one had been properly introduced. Lewis stood in a long and very distinguished Harvard tradition of philosopher-logicians. At many universities, logic was viewed as an adjunct of mathematics, and its practitioners exhibited great technical proficiency but a general lack of concern for the broader philosophical implications of their formal manipulations. In the history of Western thought, of course, logic had been very much the core of philosophy, and the great logicians, from Plato and Aristotle to Descartes and Leibniz, were first and foremost philosophers for whom formal reasoning was an instrument of philosophical investigation.

Harvard had kept alive this honorable tradition, with such figures as Alfred North Whitehead, Lewis, and then Quine. Lewis was a theorist of knowledge -- an epistemologist, to use the philosophical jargon -- who had made important contributions to the early development of modal logic. His work was rooted in the branch of empiricism that had come to be known in America as Pragmatism, but it was rigorous philosophical analysis, not the superficial grab bag of nostrums and life lessons that have come to be grouped under that heading. His most famous

book was a large work called *Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation*, but I think I am not alone in believing that far and away his greatest work, and perhaps one of only two books ever written by Americans that deserve to be called philosophical classics, was his earlier work, *Mind and the World Order*.

My senior year was, as it turned out, Lewis' last, and I quickly realized that I had better take every course he offered, for I would never again have the opportunity to study with him. In the Spring, I enrolled in both of his offerings -- a graduate seminar on epistemology, and the course he had been teaching for so many years on Kant's *First Critique*. The seminar made no very great impression on me, save for the fact that on the last day, Lewis brought in to the class a number of books that he said he would no longer need, and invited the students to select one each. My fellow students made a grab for courtesy copies Lewis had received of the latest publications in the field, but I spotted a copy of *Analysis* and made a dive for it. I am to this day smugly proud of the fact that my copy of *Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation* is inscribed "To Robert P. Wolff, C. I. Lewis, Cambridge, Apr. 29, 1953."

The Kant course was something else again. All of us who ever took it agree that it was the best philosophy course we ever took. I would venture the somewhat bolder judgment that it was the best philosophy course ever taught anywhere by anyone, perhaps with the exception of the courses of lectures that Kant himself gave at Königsberg.

The entire semester was devoted to a study of the *Critique*, and even then, we did not actually get through all of it. Lewis used a teaching method that had become famous over the years, the method known familiarly as the Kant Summaries. Each week, he would assign the

next portion of the book -- roughly fifty or sixty pages each time. We were then to write a subsection by subsection, paragraph by paragraph summary of the text, the entire summary to run between five and seven pages. On the right or left hand side of the page, we were to place a running indication of which passage we were summarizing, using the standard A and B numbers to indicate the first [1781] and second [1787] editions of the *Critique*. There was to be no commentary, no reflection on the larger meaning, just straight summary, as accurate and precise as possible.

As it turned out, the weekly Kant Summary was quite the most daunting task any of us had ever attempted. It took perhaps twenty hours a week to do each summary, and as we soon learned, the space specification was fiendishly designed to force us to master the text sufficiently so that we could make a reasoned judgment of what to put in and what to take out. Too much time spent on Kant's interminable organizational scheme, the Architectonic, and we would not have space to summarize the important arguments. Too much space devoted to one argument, and we would be unable to find room for the others. Shorter would have been easier, because there would have been room only to skim the surface; longer, and we could have paraphrased every sentence without making the judgments that grew out of genuine understanding. By the time we reached the third week, which was devoted to the chapter entitled The Deduction of the Pure Concepts of Understanding, we were so deep into Kant's language and mind that the rest of the world simply fell away.

It was for me a completely transformative experience. I had finally come upon a mind so powerful, so profound, so precise that I could throw myself against it with all my force, secure that it would withstand me. The three months I devoted to the study of the *Critique* changed my

entire life. It is not too much to say that whatever philosophical insight I have achieved, whatever contribution I have made to human knowledge, began in C. I. Lewis' Philosophy 130 in the Spring of 1953.

As I struggled with the Deduction of the Categories, as that pivotal chapter has come to be known, I would think from time to time of a wonderfully evocative phrase in the liner notes written by Alan Lomax for the first album recorded by Leadbelly. Huddie Ledbetter was a hard-driving man, twice convicted of murder and twice reprieved by governors who heard him sing. During his time in prison on brutal Southern chain gangs, Leadbelly would work under the blazing sun all day, and then play for the prisoners and guards at night. Lomax had this to say about him. "Leadbelly, himself, was like the gray goose, indomitable, tougher than life, itself. In the Texas pen he was the number one man in the number one gang on the number one farm in the state." That description became for me the epitome of what it was to be *big league*. The Deduction of the Categories was clearly the most difficult passage in the hardest book by the greatest philosopher who ever lived -- the number one man in the number one gang on the number one farm in Texas. Before too many years had gone by, I would attempt to master that passage, to wrestle it all night until it would yield to me.

What did Lewis do in class that convinced each of us of the greatness of the course? Some years after he retired, a group of us pooled our class notes in an attempt to capture the quintessence of the experience, but the effort was a failure, because there wasn't much there. Was it the summaries, then? Did it really matter that it was Lewis teaching the course? I mulled over this question a good deal, and finally came to a conclusion that I am convinced is correct, at least for me.

In the Harvard department at that time, there were two groups of professors. Quine, Aiken, and White were brilliant, but they treated philosophy as a fascinating game, an opportunity to deploy their splendid intelligence on a challenging and difficult terrain. John Wild and Donald Williams were serious, intense philosophers for whom the philosophical calling mattered deeply, but they couldn't think their way out of a paper bag. Lewis was the exception. He was rigorous, logical, brilliant, but also passionately committed to what he was doing. Though it would have mortified him ever to say so, he clearly believed that it was *morally* unacceptable to be anything less than perfectly clear and precise in one's philosophical reasoning. Though I rather imagine that his politics were a hundred eighty degrees from mine, he radiated a sense of moral seriousness that I admired and have tried ever since to emulate.

At the end of the undergraduate course in the Fall, I submitted a paper tearing apart Hume's arguments on something or other. Lewis treated my efforts very gently, and after remarking that "in this paper, it would be out of place to ask that [the points] should 'add up' to something in conclusion," he wrote, "I should hope that this general character of the paper is not a symptom of that type of mind, in philosophy, which can find the objection to everything but advance the solution to nothing." For the past half century, I have sought to live up to that hope, and I should like to think that if he were alive today, C. I. Lewis would conclude that I had not entirely failed.

As a senior going for honors, I registered for "Tutorial for Credit" in the Fall and looked about for a topic for my senior honors thesis. The department assigned me to Hao Wang, because it was universally assumed that I would do a logic thesis. I realize now that I was being prepped as the next in the line of Quine's protégés, following after Hao Wang himself, and Bert

Dreben, a former member of the Society of Fellows who was then an Assistant Professor in the department.

But what to work on? Wang handed me a RAND Corporation monograph by the famous logician Alfred Tarski called "A Decision Method for Elementary Geometry," suggesting that I write my thesis on it. I took it back to my room and started working through it. Tarski said in the Introduction that his decision method was an extension of something called Sturm's Theorem, which turned out to be a theorem about the number of real roots of a polynomial. I had no idea at all what I was doing, but I labored over the monograph and after several months actually understood it well enough to write a ten page exposition of the argument. I made an appointment with Wang and went to see him.

Wang was a shy man, and did not like to make eye contact with me when he talked. After I handed him my ten pages and asked what I was to do next, he looked up at a corner of the high-ceilinged room in Hunt Hall, a circular building mostly inhabited by architecture students, and said to me, "Put it through in an axiom system." Then he sent me away.

When I sat down at my desk to begin work, I realized that I hadn't the foggiest idea what I was supposed to do. Put it through in an axiom system. What did that mean? Put what through in an axiom system? What axiom system? I was utterly stymied. But I was too embarrassed and ashamed by my manifest inadequacy to go back to Wang and ask for some sort of clarification. I had, after all, taken every advanced logic course offered in the department. If I had no idea what Wang was talking about, it could only mean that I was a complete fraud as a logic student.

I thought seriously about not writing an honors thesis, but there was a problem: I had decided to graduate in three years, for which I needed thirty-two courses. The two semesters of tutorial for credit that I was taking would count as courses only if I actually produced a thesis. Otherwise, I would not graduate. For a while, I simply sat and stewed, anguishing about the situation without making any progress toward a solution. By now it was after Christmas, and I was getting panicky. Finally, I went to see Professor White, who had always struck me as the one genuinely sane and approachable member of the department. I blurted out my problem, and after listening for a while, he undertook to calm me down.

I had just completed his course on Analytic Philosophy, had I not? Yes. And for that course I had read the new book just published by Gilbert Ryle, *Concept of Mind*, was that not true? Yes. Very well, White suggested, write an honors thesis on *Concept of Mind*. He offered to take over from Wang as my advisor for the Spring semester.

I did in the end produce an honors thesis on Ryle, a journeyman effort of 53 pages, elegantly typed by my mother. I still had to pass the second semester German exam, and I was mindful of a story my father liked to tell about *his* German exam in college. It seems that the class was given a passage to translate, in which my father recognized only one word somewhere in the middle of the passage. So he constructed an entire fanciful translation around that one word. The Instructor was entranced by this manifestation of creativity, and flunked him. Fearful that "like father, like son" would be my downfall, I got English translations of all the texts we were going to be tested on, and virtually memorized them. I squeaked through with a B.

Each year, the Harvard chapter of *Phi Beta Kappa* chose twelve outstanding students to be inaugurated into the society at the end of their Junior year. One of my fellow philosophy

majors from the Class of '53, Ronald Dworkin, was tapped for Junior Phi Beta in '52, and inasmuch as C. I. Lewis would soon retire and had been chosen by them to be their speaker at the inauguration ceremonies, Ronnie was deputized to visit the old man and issue the formal invitation. As Ronnie later told the story, he went to Lewis' office and presented the society's invitation, but Lewis sadly declined, saying that as he himself had never been elected to *Phi Beta Kappa*, he did not think it was appropriate for him to serve as their speaker. Ronnie told us that he wept inwardly and wanted to blurt out, "It's all right, Clarence, you have made up for it." But he simply nodded and left. I cannot recall now, but I think it must be the case that Charlie Parsons, whose name I had so shamelessly used two years earlier, was Junior Phi Beta the next year.

In Adams House, I had fallen in with a group of seniors with whom I ate dinner many evenings. As the Spring progressed, we would sit around the table and engage in a competition to see who could express with more histrionic panache our fears concerning honors. I would say, with exaggerated anguish, "Ah, if I could only get a *cum*." Wally, who was well on his way to the Nobel Prize he would one day win in Biology, and whom the world has since come to know as Walter Gilbert, would reply, "Just let me graduate." Then Benny, who was a year behind the rest of us, would speak up. "Well! I won't be satisfied with anything less than a *summa*."

The *Reader's Digest* used to have little features known as "the most unforgettable character I have ever known." Benjamin Muckenhoupt was, without a doubt, far and away by many orders of magnitude the strangest person I have ever come across. To squeeze it all into a phrase, Benny was a tall, skinny, miserly albino piccolo playing mathematician who was a fanatical lover of trolley cars. He used to claim that with one fare plus transfers, he could in



the old days have made it all the way from Boston to New York. Benny did not have the most active social life, but his friend Bob Funk, who was from North Attleboro [home of Joe Martin, Speaker of the House of Representatives], fixed Benny up one weekend with a girl from his home town. All of us waited breathlessly to hear how the date had gone. As expected, Benny took the young thing for a trolley ride, but was very put out when she wanted to get off to get a coke, as this would have necessitated the purchase of a new ticket. But the laugh was on us. When she got back to North Attleboro, she wrote to tell Funk how much she had enjoyed meeting Benny.

As Commencement approached, the emotional core of my life disintegrated. Susie announced that she was engaged to be married to someone named Gordon Hirschhorn that summer. I was heartbroken, and stumbled around Harvard Yard, trying to keep myself together long enough to pass my German exam so that I could at least graduate. There had been problems; we had semi-broken up at the beginning of the year, but then we had gotten back together, and I blindly assumed that all was well. Her news caught me completely unprepared.

We have talked about the breakup in recent years. Here is the very best face I have been able to put on the matter. Susie's father had suffered a heart attack that forced him to retire from his job at Hearn's Department Store. She was terribly concerned about their ability to pay for her college education, and believed that she should make herself financially independent of them as soon as possible. Gordon was the son of a fabulously wealthy Canadian uranium king [it was he who endowed the Hirschhorn Museum in Washington, D. C.] and Gordon would have no trouble supporting her. So they were married, and lived together while she finished her last year at Conn College. During the next year, while I was beginning graduate school, she came to visit me, and although nothing happened between us, I came away with the very powerful sense that she was still drawn to me. As the cliché of contemporary soap operas has it, "she still had feelings for me, and had not moved on." God knows, I still had feelings for her! I would have made up with her in an instant if she had given me the opening.

A private cloud hung over my head during graduation week because of my loss of Susie. Though it was a lovely late Spring week, in my memory of it the weather is always overcast. The big news was the appointment of a new President to take the place of Conant. The Harvard Corporation's choice was Nathan Marsh Pusey, the President of Lawrence College, who had distinguished himself by standing up to Joe McCarthy's red-baiting investigations. As I sat in the

Yard preparing to graduate with the class of '53, I watched the members of the class of '28 returning for their Twenty-Fifth Reunion. With their straw hats and wives and children, they looked hopelessly middle-aged and uninteresting. When the surviving members of the class of '03 marched into Commencement, they seemed to me to be unimaginably ancient -- creatures of another age, born in the 1880's, too young for the Spanish-American War and too old for World War I. What could they possibly understand of the world I inhabited?

Now, all too soon, here I am, as ancient and distant to the graduating class of 2004 as those relics were to me. And yet, I feel young, lively, alert, well aware of the world around me. Is it possible that those '03 graduates felt the same way? When the class of 2004 returns for its fiftieth, as it surely will, it will share a moment in the Yard with the class of 2054. Then they will have the experience I am now having, and a few may even wonder what the class of 2104 will think of them as they return for *their* fiftieth!

### **My So-Called Senior Year**

I had been admitted to the Harvard doctoral program in Philosophy, with a scholarship the first year of \$1475, out of which I would have to pay the \$600 tuition and live for a year. I had told Harvard in my application that I needed a minimum of \$1500, and wondered idly whether the award was some sort of extremely subtle attempt to get rid of me, but I fooled them by accepting, and began graduate school.

My first year was an almost seamless continuation of my undergraduate career, coming as it did in what would normally have been my senior year. At the end of the year loomed the dreaded Prelims, four three hour closed book examinations on Logic, the History of Philosophy, Ethics, and Metaphysics and Epistemology. Not all doctoral students took the Prelims at the end

of their first year, but I had already taken seventeen courses in the department, and it was a little hard to see how I could sustain even as much as an additional year of courses before completely running out of things to take.

Like many senior years, this one was a considerable letdown, made all the worse by the disappearance of Susie from my life. I tried dating, mostly girls who were themselves philosophy majors, but there was no bolt of lightning like the one that had struck me in Sophomore high school home room. I went out a few times with Shirley Johnson, a superbly intelligent young woman who had the great misfortune to look like the Nebraska Homecoming Queen. Every time some sandy-haired mid-Western Harvard boy saw her apple-cheeked, blond good looks at a Radcliffe mixer, he started to dream of picket fences, gingham aprons, and 4-H club meetings. Shirley was forever fending them off. She went on to study economics at Columbia, where she had one of those nightmare experiences that are the worst fear of every dissertation writer. When she turned in a complete draft, her director told her that it was splendid, all save the last chapter, which had to go. The second reader said that there wasn't anything worth saving in the thesis except for the last chapter, which he recommended she expand into an entire dissertation. It took her several years to negotiate her way to a doctorate. The last I noticed, she was a Professor at Vassar.

We were all in love with Adria Holmes, a slender, exquisitely beautiful woman with a precise, graceful mind. Her father was a Philosophy professor who had invented a machine with which you could, by turning a crank, test the validity of a syllogism. I never actually got a date with Adria.

Wesley Piersoll was a tall, spectacular blond who had been Miss Radcliffe her Freshman year. I went dancing with Wesley, but I was not even in the running. Several years later, she went off to Switzerland and lived for a while in a convent near the French border, reading Existentialist philosophy. She published a book on Louis Lavelle, but I never found out whether she managed a career as a philosopher.

I also dated Carol Handler, who was close to red-haired Joan Friendly, the daughter of Henry J. Friendly, then a senior partner in a New York law firm, but later a very distinguished Federal Appeals Court judge. Carol took me along one day to a Sunday brunch at the Friendly apartment on Park Avenue, where Mr. Friendly was hard at work on a briefcase full of papers. Right then and there, I decided that if that was what happened to you at the top of the law game, I wanted no part of it.

My first graduate year also saw the reappearance of Barbara in my life. She was doing graduate work in Biochemistry at Harvard, and had joined a coop house of foreign and American students just north of the Law School, near the grad dorms where I was living. She persuaded me to become an eating member of the house, and for a year, I would have dinners there and share in the cooking.

They were a fascinating mix of people, much more cosmopolitan than any I had ever met: Liesje Boosenkool, Zsu-Zsa Vietorisz, Tommy Reiner, Georg Ishikawa [he called himself Georuku because Georg is hard for Japanese to pronounce, but his name really was Georg -- his father was a German professor in Tokyo.] The high point was a party featuring a punch which the science students spiked with 200 proof laboratory alcohol. It had no taste but made you ferociously thirsty. At 2 a.m, a group of people went swimming in Walden Pond. The low point

came one evening when Georg and I were doing the cooking. As I recall, we were making boiled hot dogs and acorn squash. Since none of us had a car, the coop had rented out the garage. While we were getting ready to serve dinner, someone came in and announced that our garage tenant had turned on his engine and committed suicide in the closed garage. The dinner was not a success.

My accommodation in William James Hall was a considerable comedown from the gracious suites of the Harvard houses. It was a small rectangular room constructed from cinder blocks, with the result that when the student next door smoked, some of it filtered through the walls. My room was on the ground floor, which was actually a half-story below ground level. As I studied, I could look up into the eyes of a squirrel foraging for nuts right outside my window. But the grad dorms did have a t.v. set in the common room, and I spent some hours watching the McCarthy/Army hearings, in which Joe McCarthy harassed a sweating Army Secretary Stevens, dressed in a white suit. I actually saw the famous moment when Joseph Welch, the Army counsel, who was outraged by McCarthy's attempt to smear one of his young associates, turned on the Senator and in a voice of quiet but magisterial outrage, said, "At long last, Senator, have you no decency?" McCarthy was stunned, and had the saving grace to look thoroughly ashamed.

In the Spring, Lewis, who was now retired, returned to give a lecture to the department. All of the students turned out to honor him, and even his former colleagues showed up, a considerable rarity for a Harvard Philosophy Department talk. Lewis had loomed so large in the department that many of the young Turks, especially Quine and Aiken, rather resented him, and had been happy to see him go. At the end of the lecture, when the applause started, I stood up,

which more or less forced Aiken, Quine and the others into a standing ovation. Aiken was very put out, and gave me a furious look.

The combination of the breakup with Susie and the letdown after the intensity of my undergraduate experience triggered a crisis of confidence in me, both about the career I had chosen and about my ability to pursue it. I read *Moby Dick* and *The Fountainhead* and wrote long letters home, anguishing over my future. This was the pre-dawn of the computer era, and there were vague rumors that students with logic training could make careers for themselves outside the Academy. I even went to the Harvard Placement Office and signed up for an interview with the C. I. A. I was given a slip of paper directing me to a downtown Boston building, and when I found my way to the door, I discovered that there was no sign of any sort identifying it as a government location. Inside was a room absolutely empty save for a single desk, behind which sat a man in a suit. We talked for a while, and then he asked me what my glasses prescription was. I said 20/400, and he shook his head. If my eyes were no worse than 20/200, he said, he could get me a reserve commission in the Army, which would exempt me from the draft, but with 20/400, it was out of the question. That was the end of the interview. Before I left, he had me sign a piece of paper swearing that I would reveal nothing that had transpired. Since nothing *had* transpired, this struck me as a bit of cloak-and-dagger theatrics. As I was opening the door to leave, I had the odd sense that if I had whirled about suddenly, the man and the desk would have disappeared.

To prepare for the Prelims, I started systematically reviewing everything I had learned in the preceding four years, even reading major and minor works in the History of Philosophy that I had somehow managed to skip over. The night before the first exam, which was on the History of Philosophy, I cast about for something more to do, and hit on a book that Demos had written

on Plato some years earlier. As I had by now reduced my lecture notes to outlines, my outlines to 3 x 5 cards, and me 3 x 5 cards to keywords, I read through the first chapter, and tried to get some sleep. The next morning, when the exams were handed out, I discovered that the first question had been taken right out of Chapter One of Demos' book. It seemed that the Gods were smiling.

For another week and a half, I sat the exams in Logic, Ethics, and Metaphysics and Epistemology. Then I staggered back to the grad dining commons, bought two large paper cups of beer, downed them both, and fell face down on my bed. At long last, my undergraduate education was over.



### Chapter Three *My Wanderjahr*

By the time I had completed the Preliminary Examinations, I was completely exhausted. The four year marathon from Freshman Year to my Master's Degree had cost me more than I realized, and the loss of Susie, who had been the center of my emotional life since the age of fourteen, left me with no focus for the passionate feelings that welled up inside me. I was utterly incapable at that moment of launching on the writing of a doctoral dissertation, which was the natural next step in my education.

Miraculously, in the final months of my frantic cramming, I was awarded a Sheldon Fellowship for the following year. The Sheldon Traveling Fellowships were an extraordinary Harvard institution that made it possible for impecunious young men like myself to take the modern day equivalent of the Grand Tour. Established in 1909 by the widow of Frederick Sheldon, Harvard Class of 1842, they provided \$2400 for one year of study and travel abroad. There were actually two sorts of Sheldons. Those awarded to graduating seniors literally specified that the holder was *not* to stay in any one place for more than three months, and was *not* to enroll formally in any institution of higher learning. The awards to graduate students were rather more relaxed. One could settle down and study, but one was by no means required to do so. I had been awarded a graduate Sheldon, but very quickly, I turned it into an undergraduate Sheldon. I was off to see the world.

I sailed for Europe at the beginning of July on a large, old creaky ship that held eleven hundred students, most of them on summer vacations. Continuing a family tradition stretching back three generations, I began writing letters home even before the ship got to Southampton, and continued writing until three days before I sailed home thirteen months later. I wrote a total

of sixty-two times, and when my mother transformed my letters into typewritten sheets, to be circulated among my family, they filled well over 200 pages. I wrote travel descriptions, philosophical reflections, political analyses, and gossip. I anguished about my loneliness, my doubts about the career on which I had embarked, my fears of death, and my desperate desire to find a woman. Some of the letters are relatively brief; other run on for eight closely written pages or more.

In this chapter, I offer a selection from those pages, in the chronological order in which they were written. Nothing has been edited, revised, or cleaned up save for some typing errors that resulted from my appalling handwriting, and which I have checked against the originals. The voice is that of a twenty year old on his first adventure, eager, chatty, enthusiastic, callow, self-important, brooding, lonely, introspective, horny.

Here, then, instead of presenting myself as I recall myself now, looking back over the decades at the person I once was, I offer a glimpse of Robert Paul Wolff as he was fifty-seven years ago, in his own words.

*July 8, 1954*

*Dear All,*

*This is the last full day of the boat trip, and I am taking some time now to write a report of it. We are due to dock at Southampton tomorrow at noon... On the first day... I strolled to the rail, struck up an acquaintance with a fellow and discovered that he is a fellow Sheldon scholar. ... He is a typical "world traveller", replete with travel hints, knowing glances, casual offerings of erudite technical knowledge, etcetera.*

*He preys on young innocents such as I, hypnotizing them with the pseudo-lore of the sea. All this, of course, in a most harmless manner. Ah well, I suppose I shall one day be the same....*

*Impression -- the "sea air" is less salty aboard ship than at Jones Beach -- there is almost no salt in the air. I am afraid the encomium heaped on sea air is the product of preconceptions. The air is pleasant, and clean, but that is all. Perhaps people simply pause to observe the odor of fresh air when on board ship, but have not the time, otherwise....*

*We have two stowaways aboard ship! Apparently they boarded on the 30<sup>th</sup> to wish their ladies-fair fond goodby, and became sufficiently polluted to pass into unconsciousness; upon awakening, they found themselves en route to England!!! With 1100 persons aboard, however, they will scarcely be noticed!...*

*Well, dinner is over, and the Scilly Islands are passed. The lighthouse appeared first, and then a bank of reefs and islands -- EUROPE -- we dock tomorrow noon, but by early morning we shall be at Southampton. !! Till now, I have not believed that I would really get to Europe, but now that I am actually within British waters, I am beginning to realize that my dream of many months (and years) is a reality.*

*July 9, 1954*

*I am at Oxford, about to mail this, but before I do, I must tell you one small incident which nicely symbolizes Magdalen College. I just looked out the window of my very lovely rooms, and there on the back lawn, 50 yards away, I saw a group of small deer, running free. Such is Oxford!! -- I met Ryle this morning, and will see more of him before I leave.*

*Grenoble July 18, 1954*

*I've met hordes of Britons here, and they almost always express dislike of the French. I can understand this; I don't particularly care for them myself. They are excessively polite, but not at all warm or friendly in the way the British are. I suspect I shall return with the same opinion as yours -- that England is my favorite country*

*There are also many Swedish girls here, and they have the collective reputation of being extremely free with their affections -- they all speak excellent English, and I may look into the question of the accuracy of the reputation. ... I am not going to classes -- they are hopeless, and the Mlle. who teaches my section is, it turns out, the worst of the lot. I have bought "l'homme révolté", by Albert Camus (author of "The Plague") and I will simply plough through it, learning as I go along. I just can't face the prospect of homework and daily classes. ...I find, by the way, that my fears were justified. I am so excessively verbal that I get strong feelings of malaise and insecurity when in a city that literally doesn't talk my language..*

*July 26, 1954*

*... Pop, I am partially taking your advice -- that is, I am altering my plans. Tomorrow morning, at 6:45 a.m. I hitch-hike out of here. My itinerary is Grenoble-Briancon-Turino-Genova-Pisa-Roma.... A girl is going with me as far as Pisa. Then I go on alone to Roma....*

*At the present moment, I am perched atop the Maison, while people stream toward the point at which the Tour de France will pass. This a bicycle race that starts at Amsterdam, goes all around France, from n.w. to w. to s.w. to s. to s.e. to e. to Paris. They do it in daily laps of 180-240 kilometers, and today, the 17<sup>th</sup> lap passes. They stop here and take off for Lyon tomorrow. After 16 days of grueling racing, the leader is about 3 2 minutes ahead of the second racer! ... Four hours later, after watching the tour de France arrive. I stood 2 hours in the hot sun, but it was fun to see them race in. The characters who came to watch the race were*

*priceless -- dozens of gendarmes, all shaking hands with each other and officiously doing nothing -- three pretty girls working their wiles on the officials to obtain a special place (and of course, succeeding) -- a policeman pulling a dog from the center of the road and being treated to a round of catcalls.*

*Roma July 31, 1954*

*Dear Folks,*

*Well, here I am in sunny Italy, sitting in the Casa della Studente on the Cita Universitaria. My journey from Grenoble to Rome was rather a fabulous one, so without further ado, I shall give as close an account as possible.*

*Monday, I left my hotel room, and brought my belongings to the room of my Scottish friend. There I packed my bag for the trip to Rome... That night, after the festivities attendant upon the Tour de France, I went to sleep.... At 6:30 a.m., Tuesday, I was in front waiting for Marinelle Pilgrim, the West Indian girl with whom I journeyed as far as Pisa. She arrived at 7 a.m., and off we started, full of high spirits and a little sleepy.*

*Our first route was the Cour Jean James, leading out of Grenoble, south and then south-east, toward Briancon... With an initial burst of good fortune, we were picked up by a truck (the first of many) and were conveyed through the Isere valley some 20 k, or so to a small town where we had breakfast. A short walk carried us beyond the center of town, and in a shady spot by a row of venerable flats, we settled down to wait. As the wait was a longish one, during which time we saw France as it went by, rather than by going by it, -- let me take a moment to describe my travelling companion.*

*Marinelle was born in Trinidad, but was raised in Britain. She is slight, about 5'4", with dark skin, features which reflect both her paternal and her maternal heredity, and long, very tightly wavy hair, done up in a bun in the back of her head -- she is pleasant, intelligent, and with her good knowledge of French, and minimal command of Italian, was often the director and liaison officer of our little expedition.*

*C to continue on our way: the next ride was with a priest, and he dropped us off a bit further on, we were in the foothills of the French and Italian Alps. Another ride, after quite a wait, and we were standing in the blazing sun, 100 feet from the beginning of a prodigious rise, culminating, or so the signposts said, in the col de Lauteret, one of the highest passes of the French Alps. All about us rose the Alps -- the barest glimmer of snow on the topmost peaks -- green with an unusually heavy foliage, due to excessive rains, the low hills near us were themselves exciting, but before us lay the most famous mountain range of Europe, and perhaps of the world. The Alps -- over which had crossed three millennia of travellers, invaders, traders, and migrants. There we waited in the beating sun.*

*And now the first of two pieces of luck for which the tour de France was responsible. Not only had we left the tour in Grenoble, where it had ended the night before -- we were travelling toward the finish line of Tuesday's lap as well -- Briancon. The cyclists were to race over the Alps; and finish at Briancon in late afternoon. Late in the morning we were given a ride by a French family off to the col d'Izaard, to see the cyclists come over the hump -- we were to ride all the way to Briancon. We climbed into the back of the truck (a very sturdy affair with canopy supported by cross-beams of wood and iron -- I would estimate it as a 2-ton, or 1 2 ton pickup truck), and began the ascent. Up, and then up again, and still again up -- the meters rolled by as we climbed past valleys dotted with villages, past peaks which gave way always to higher peaks. The road twisted and turned in upon itself, as if attempting to postpone the agony of the climb -- we pushed on, gazing out the back of the truck at a panorama of arretes and passes, forests and fields, villages and barren*

*rock slides. Every turn of the road brought new heights in view, and then, without warning, so dramatically that it seemed part of a story, the truck swung about, and before us, rising in the sun, glittering with its garment of glaciers and fields of snow, was a peak so vast in conception, so monstrous in size, as to dwarf all about it. This was the Alps! Here was the inspiration of an hundred eulogies, the original from which a thousand penny postcards took their reflected bit of glory! As the road arched up and around, this behemoth passed out of view, but always it appeared again, ever larger and more glorious. About it there were grouped a bevy of lesser peaks, any one of which might well be the master of its own range -- I do not know the name of the mountains I have tried, in vain, to describe. Perhaps it is not important. Perhaps it is. I do not really care -- for me, it will ever be "the Alps" -- the symbol, if you will, of that great range of mountains that stretches through Austria, Italy, France and Switzerland.*

*And so, finally, we reached the col de Lauteret, high in the Alps, and stopped for an hour. The air was fresh and clean and cool, though the sun was hot. Behind us lay France and before us, past Briancon, was Italy. We continued on, descending as rapidly as we had climbed, till, a kilometer from Briancon, we left the family and again proceeded "a pied", that most elemental form of travel, to which the infantry and the hitchhikers seem forever doomed.*

*This time, our walk was a long one, and we were forced to mount a steep hill, before arriving in the center of Briancon. It was now about 3 p.m., and the sun was a heavy burden on our backs. Hungry (we had eaten nothing after the café et criossants of our early breakfast) we paused at a restaurant situated directly opposite the finish line of the Tour de France. We knew that no cars would leave Briancon until the tour had arrived, and so we settled down to a meal. It was expensive, I am afraid (531 francs -- \$1.65), but we consumed huge portions of potatoes, bread, salad, veal and wine, thereby making the most of our extravagance.*

*The meal finished, we watched the tour arrive, and then occurred our second stroke of good fortune. This time, we gave it a helping hand, however.*

*You may not know that it is possible to tell from a license plate of an Italian car the city from which it comes... Parked near the race, we saw several cars reading TO, the key letters of Torino, our next major port of call. I urged Marinelle to inquire of these cars (or rather, of their occupants) if they were going to Torino ... After one refusal, we were favored with success, and on we went to Italy...*

*At 7:30 we arrived at Torino... Marinelle had the name and address of a student house in Torino, at which we hoped to stop for the night. When we entered, we found it full, and our hopes began to dim. At that moment, a young fellow (who, it later turned out, was an M. D.), began a valiant effort to find us lodgings, the cheapest hotel in town cost 600 lira (Bear in mind that all which follows was the result of attempting to avoid paying as "much" as \$1 for a room!!! How quickly one's standards alter!) Up strolled another student... He suggested that we go into the countryside to find a farmhouse at which we could stay. So we climbed into his tiny Fiat, and chugged out of town, several kilometers on the road to Genoa (our next goal). After several minutes the driver hopped out and ran to a house to inquire. -- Here again, is one of those inimitable pauses in the life of the "auto-tow" traveller, and so I may use the few moments during which he was away to describe this fellow who had gone so far out of his way to help two itinerant students. He was tall, and large, with an open and pleasant face. Though now working in the leather goods business, importing from England, he had been a student at the University of Torino. By birth he is Yugoslav, and spent part of the war there. He speaks Italian and Yugoslavian, French and a little English, and understands German. -- Ah, back he comes, but this time, no luck. So off we go, further into the country.*

*After one more try (no one home) we got a lead, and into a dirt road we turn. If we have understood his explanation correctly.. we are on the estate of an Italian count! Sure enough.. We pull into the courtyard*



*of a keeper's cottage. - Here, Marinelle and I simultaneously remarked a small point in the actions of our driver, a point which highlighted the difference between Anglo-American and Italian customs. He got out of the car, walked past the woman who had come out to greet us, and went immediately to the man in the doorway -- the man, as lord of the house, decided who stayed and who did not, so one quite obviously spoke to him. Later, he would give to the woman whatever instructions were necessary.*

*But enough of amateur comparative sociology -- after much incomprehensible palaver (we later learned that the count was away, and the director did not feel that he had the right to offer us a bed), it was decided that Marinelle would stay in the director's house, and I would stay elsewhere -- I did not know where. The director and I left Marinelle, he leading the way with a flashlight, and I following with my luggage.*

*We entered a building and I was told to leave my luggage below. Ascending a flight of stairs, we arrived at a high-ceilinged hall, dark and barren. With an air of conspiracy, my host extracted a key from a drawer, and opened a nearby door. I looked through, seeing nothing but a black drop -- into this drop he stepped, motioning me to hold the light, and I then saw a slim board stretched catty-corner to another ledge, which formed the doorstep of a door placed in the midst of the wall, 20 feet above the floor below. Here he made use of a key which he had also taken from the chest of drawers, and entered the mysterious room. -- noise of motion, a light struck, the light vanishes, and back he comes -- the door is locked, the board traversed, the first door locked, the keys returned, and new keys chosen. -- We descend the stairs, turn a corner, and a key is taken from the top of a fuse-box. Another door swings open, and we enter a dirt-floor room, filled with rubble. From beneath a flagstone appears another key, we enter the room beyond, and the director places a ladder against a sheer wall, ascends it, and reaches another door, also suspended, as it were, in mid air. A final key is produced, up the ladder he goes - the door sticks, he descends for a hammer -- up again, and into the chamber -- finally, he emerges, triumphantly bearing -- a mattress!! All this story-book chase of keys and ladders and*

*boards and doors has been a search for a mattress. Back we go, -- down the ladder, key under the flagstone, key on top of fuse box, a turn around the courtyard, up the stairs, and in to a room, covered with grain. Here is to be my bed of the night. The director gives me a box of matches, lights the candle affixed to the wall and, after a pantomime demonstration of how to blow out the light, leaves me to my slumbers. And so I lay down, to my first night in Italy.*

*August 6, 1954*

*My general impression of Rome is that it is hot, reasonably cheap, and not very interesting.... The fault undoubtedly lies with me, for I have discovered that one piece of 2000 year old stone looks frightfully like another. I also was unable to distinguish old Roman ruins from new World War II ruins, the result being a decline in interest in the former, rather than an increased interest in the later.... I saw the Coliseum, and am glad to have done so, but I must confess that what took me by surprise was its smallness, not its grandeur. I also saw the Roman Forum, but it will take a better imagination than mine to clothe those bits of rock with the men who ruled an empire....*

*The third memorable experience was an evening at the Opera... The performance was given in the Baths of Caracalla, ruins of old Roman baths -- the stage between two stark pillars of stone, surrounded by other ruins. The opera was Aida, a fortunate choice, for it is full of spectacle.*

*We arrived early and bought bleacher seats (at 35 cents each). Then, climbing high in the stands (larger than Lewisohn Stadium), we settled down to await the first act. While we chatted, hawkers went through the stands selling soda-pop, pop-corn, and other goodies. Many families had brought the children, and we munched on sandwiches, provided by Ruth.*

*Finally, the opera started. I need say nothing about the music. -- I consider it as unworthy of interest as the telephone book. Except for the saving grace of several marches and a good aria, it is not worth the trouble to play it. However, we were so far from the stage that it was only when the wind was right that we could hear, so we did not suffer overmuch...*

*The real enjoyment came from the spectacle. The cast sported several hundred extras (all of whom were on stage for the triumphal entry of Radames), a team of 4 horses drawing the carriage in which Radames enters, fireworks from the battlements and -- hold on to your hats -- a real live camel for the desert scene. (The damn thing saunters across the stage, led by an Arab, and then is neither seen nor heard from again. Just passing through, I guess. -- It was a two-humper, by the way, and for a moment I couldn't tell whether it was an upright camel or a prone Wagnerian soprano.)*

*Eventually, the bloody mess came to an end, and we departed for saner parts. I doubt whether I will ever see another performance of Aida quite like that one.*

*Aug. 9, 1954*

*Dear All,*

*I have finished a quart of milk at one gulp, and I now turn to the pen again to answer the host of letters which awaited me on my return from Monte Carlo...*

*Mother, about your comments concerning my ability to live an undirected life, from day to day. I find it sometimes disturbing... that the three forms of activity which are, for me, totally self-rewarding... are: social intercourse of any kind, formal or informal; some form of intellectual activity; listening to music. The last of these is, by far, the most important. At almost any time, I can stop and spend any number of hours listening to*

*Bach or Handel or Vivaldi, etc. without wishing to stop, and without forcing myself to continue by telling myself that I am doing something that is worthy of merit (a thought which often occurs to me.) I shall be extremely happy to get back to Oxford, and begin work. I am afraid I am one of those who dream of leisure, but dislike it. If the pressure had been slightly less heavy at Harvard last year, it would have been fun. I am just a tense, hopped-up, inner-directed kid, I guess.*

*Edinburgh Aug. 25, 1954*

*In my last letter, I posed a problem, the answer to which I believe myself to possess. It is a problem which has been forced on my attention by the fact that again and again I have found myself bored by comfortable inaction (at home, as well as in Europe), and interested and entertained by very uncomfortable moments. The answer, quite simply, is that I seek change, alteration, panoply rather than monotony. What I desire, for the greater part of my waking life, is endless variation of my sensory experience. As long as this experience excludes severe pain (but even if it includes great discomfort) I am interested, happy, taken with life, and I avoid the impossible tedium of my own thoughts.*

*Even when I devote myself to thinking, less often than I ought, my mind's efficiency is improved by an external sensual variation... There seems to be a reflection of this trait of mine in my attitude toward art. I am unable to appreciate sculpture or painting, for I cannot stand before one work for more than thirty seconds. And yet, I can spend half a day motionless, listening to music, the very essence of which is alteration. Instead, music, as structured alteration, provides a perfect balance of rational comprehensibility and sensuous variability, and quite possibly it is these two aspects of music which explain its appeal to me.*

*August 29, 1954*

*Over the past weeks, I have had numerous small laughs at various little touches here -- like the parenthetical directions at the bottom of "continued" stories, which read "please turn to page" -- rather than "turn to page --". And the falsies ad which spoke of the "simple and harmless deception"--, apparently addressing itself to a public which was still doubtful of the morality of the inflated bosom.*

*Speaking of inflated bosoms leads one to think of stuffed shirts, and of these, I am happy to say I have encountered few. The British have been almost uniformly polite and friendly, and much more helpful to the visitor than the French.*

*Continuing on past inflated bosoms and stuffed shirts one comes to swelled breasts, and here we find the Englishman at his most amusing. For the dearest and most privy conceit of the Englishman, the virtue transcending all others, which he will never cease to proclaim, is -- that he never blows his own horn. One sees signs of it again and again, always coupled with the implicit suggestion that if he were prone to such boasting, he could go on for hours without returning to a previously named virtue.*

*September 12, 1954*

*I think I shall contact Russell as soon as I return to Oxford. Time is getting short, and he may kick the bucket some day (as did Irwin Edman unexpectedly just a few weeks ago.)*

*Oxford September 15, 1954*

*I am finally getting around to writing to Bertrand Russell. I shall try to send it off today, and then it will be up to him. I hope I am not struck dumb by the great man. Anyway, you shall have a full report, if and when I get to see him.*

*September 19, 1954*

*As I mentioned above, I haven't been feeling very happy lately. I've been lonely here... and I was in Edinburgh, also. I had friends, but no one really close, and of course, no female companionship. I've found it impossible to study. Philosophy offers very little to me at this point. I feel aimless, literally -- without purpose or goal. I'm tired of striving for academic honors, which are a very false kind of goal, and unsatisfactory after a while. But I don't see anything else to do. I think in terms of "getting away", which is rather amusing, inasmuch as I am 3000 miles "away" as it is. The last thing in the world that I want is "enjoyment." I have always fretted during idle periods, and this is no exception. The only trouble is that the work into which I used to throw myself no longer attracts me. And if it doesn't now, what will I do as a professor, when there are no prizes to be won, no grades being given? The only thing about the academic life which appeals to me now is the teaching part of it, which I look forward to eagerly....*

*I have long feared that my interest in work was inseparable from my striving for marks and prizes. But the terrible thing is that I am neither sufficiently free of this, nor sufficiently afflicted with it. I cannot enjoy my work when it is done for its own sake, but my self-consciousness is too great for me to work hard for (subconscious) neurotic reasons. I don't know what I shall do for the rest of the year. ... I am sick of travelling alone, which is not my idea of fun....*

*I don't mind being buffeted by my passions -- I'd as soon be buffeted by them as by anything else -- what I object to is, given the passions, being unable (at present) to satisfy them. If one must be a plaything of one's emotions, a little satisfaction now and then is the least nature can offer. I, of course, must needs desire more than mere physical enjoyment. I crave a union with a woman who can give, and receive from me, affection and love. And, as you doubtless know, this is slightly harder to find.*

*Despite my bantering tone, I am a bit disturbed, because I am fairly sure that this problem will remain with me... If I must immerse myself in any intellectual endeavor, I think it will be philosophy. The difficulty is*

that I have no goal in life; and ironically, my philosophical training enables me to see through any of the ordinary arguments that might be given.

September 25, 1954

*I AM GOING TO BUY A MOTORCYCLE.*

Before attempting to justify this rather extraordinary purchase, let me describe the machine I hope to buy:

<i>Cubic capacity:</i>	<i>197 cc</i>	
<i>Price, with accessories</i>	<i>(£. 125.0.0)</i>	<i>\$350</i>
<i>License, registration, and insurance</i>	<i>\$15.00 (approx)</i>	
<i>Resale at present market, after 1 year</i>	<i>\$250 (approx)</i>	
<i>Speed (cruising)</i>	<i>mph</i>	<i>50</i>
<i>Speed (maximum)</i>		<i>70 mph</i>
<i>Miles per gallon</i>		<i>85-95</i>
<i>Total load</i>		<i>2</i> <i>passengers and some baggage</i> <i>(incl. Driver, or 1 driver and much</i> <i>baggage</i>
<i>Repairs</i>		<i>\$20-25 every 15,000</i> <i>miles -- other, nil.</i>

*The bike I have in mind is second hand.... With it, I am completely mobile... I can take a long tour of Europe, and even the Near East, at low expense. Motorcycles are extremely common in England and on the Continent, and I won't in any way be considered an "exhibitionist." ... Anyway, I have decided to do it.*

*On Weldon's advice, I have been reading *Émile*, by J. J. Rousseau. It is an odd, but interesting work, and one that might interest you, Pop (though I don't recommend it unless you have nothing else to do).*

*It is a jumbled treatise on education, in the form of a description of the education of an ideal child, *Émile*. Much of it impassioned rhetoric (as, e.g. the long plea for breast-feeding and the abolition of the custom of swaddling). Rousseau shows a remarkable ability to identify with a child, adjusting his imagination to see through the senses of the child. Again and again he insists that education must build slowly on those experiences and concepts which the child can grasp from his immediate surroundings. He has a very Dewey-like sound when he argues that every lesson must be an activity, a creative problem which the child feels and cares about and will remember. He rejects rote, preferring ignorance to faulty and superficial knowledge. He insists on a teacher who is a model by which the child may judge himself -- a tutor who anticipates needs, so that the infant will not acquire the habit of crying as a way of getting its desires. There is a wealth of acute observation and judgment in the book. But it is fascinating to see how inadequate are Rousseau's theories, because of his failure to appreciate the existence and importance of subconscious motivation...*

*Sept. 25, 1954*

*I have received a reply from Russell. He asks me to ring him in Late October, to make a date (he will be very busy during the next three weeks.) I have had premonitions of that first telephonic contact with the great man. What shall I say?*



*"Hello, Bertie? Bob here -- let's drop around to the Victoria Arms for a pint, and a bit of a chat."*

*Or*

*"Hello, Lord Russell. Sir? This is Mr. Robert Wolff, sir. -- uh, I wrote to you about coming to see you, uh -- you asked me to call, -- uh" (at this point either he rescues me, or I flee from the booth, never to return.)*

*It is even possible that I shall, at the sound of his voice, lose the use of my own, and greet him with several hoarse cries, and heavy breathing. I am not the slightest comforted by Thurber's essay on the rules of literary pilgrimages, which I have just finished. Thurber's general attitude is that you haven't any business bothering the chap anyway, so the best thing to do is go away and stay away. I begin to think he is right, but I cannot bear to sacrifice the chance to say, some cold winter's evening in Cambridge (Mass.) surrounded by undergraduates and lovely Radcliffe philosophy students: "Yes, an interesting problem, that. I asked Russell about it last time I saw him ..."*

*Sept. 29, 1954*

*I am now the proud, if somewhat bemused, possessor of a motorcycle. It is a small motorcycle, an unpretentious motorcycle, a two-stroke motorcycle but (to complete the phrase in the cliched manner) it is a motorcycle....By the way, despite the fact that I drove a motorcycle yesterday for the first time in my life, I have a license! My U. S. auto license gives me a one year license for a cycle as well as a car.*

*Oct. 4, 1954*

*Your letter and telegram have disturbed me very much, particularly as they both arrived after I had purchased the motorcycle. I think your fears are based on a very false idea of what motorcycling is, and I would like to set you straight.... in England, a motorcycle is a common form of transportation. Many families*

*ride in cycles with sidecars; men take their wives to parties and the theater on them, workers ride to the factory on motorcycles and motorbikes.... I hope you will calm your fears and look at this realistically. If you persist in your attitude, I will sell it again.... It will mean canceling my plans for a tour of the continent, and my little excursions into the English countryside (which will now be covered with rain anyway), but I don't like lying to you, and I can't very well keep you in a state of perpetual terror. But please ask yourself how much of this fear is due to my being so far away, and how much is due to my riding the motorcycle.*

*12 October 1954*

*I have hesitated a bit before writing this letter because something has come up which I was uneasy about telling you. I find it impossible to write to you or speak with you when some important event has occurred which I have not told you; hence the hesitation. However, I'll tell you what it is, and leave you to groan and worry -- there's not much else I can do.*

*A week ago I wrote a long letter to Susie, mostly descriptive of my various travels (I can already hear the moans, and the muttered "not that again.") Yesterday I received an answer. I'll give it to you straight. She and her husband have already talked to a lawyer about divorce -- they have decided to try once more, but Sue says if things do not improve by January (as I rather suspect they won't) then she will go to Fla. to get a divorce. Furthermore, she made it clear that she is still very closely tied to me emotionally (I had indicated the same to her in my letter). Well, there it is. Now let's have no outbursts, no transatlantic phone calls, etc.*

*The problem for me is twofold. (1) how do I really feel about her? And (2) If I decide that I love her, or at least think I do, what ought I do about it? All of this is complicated by several facts: (a) My feelings about Susie, like my feelings about any girl, are closely linked with my compulsive fears of inadequacy -- my fear that I will not be able to find a wife.... Am I more strongly influenced by the ... inadequacy fears when*

*thinking of Susie than when thinking of some other girl? This, you can see, is the crucial issue.... But there are other problems... Can I risk subjecting her to the misery of two unsuccessful marriages? I could survive it, but could she? That is a terribly crucial problem....*

*What should I do? At present, I have decided on the following: I shall correspond with Sue as a friend, saying no more about how I feel, and trying to keep out of my words any hint of my feelings. I will do this until she resolves her marriage problem one way or the other. If they make a go of it, then of course I just drop out of the picture. If they break up, however, then I can plan my actions at that time. The 8 months before I return home should act as an effective buffer, stopping either of us from doing anything prematurely.*

*I am sorry to have to tax you with this problem. I know how you felt about the relationship, and how relieved you were that it had finally come to an end. Now, the whole thing seems in danger of starting anew. I must confess that my attitude, more and more, is that one only lives once, and that to throw away the possibility of happiness because of inertia, or convention, is silly. If I am hurt -- well, life is not infinite in importance or extent, and as I said... reasonably varied alteration seems more important to me than "happy moments."*

*October 23, 1954*

*I read Jane Eyre last Monday, and it raised some difficult problems in my mind.... Is a life more valuable lived according to a set of principles of action... even if the happiness of oneself and others is sacrificed to those principles? I purposely do not specify what I mean by "valuable", since to give the criteria of value would, of course, answer the problem. At first glance, the answer seems to be no. At second glance it is obviously "to some extent, yes." Principles give a structure and purpose to life which makes it richer and more valuable, even if less pleasant. Who among us seriously desires the Polynesian idyll, with all its carefree,*

*tensionless ease (although one could argue that the invasions of anthropologists constitute a great drawback to the Polynesian way of life. Can you imagine anything less pleasant than Margaret Mead peering over your shoulder every time you had intercourse or moved your ceremonial bowels?) It is a difficult problem, and Bronte makes it no easier by manipulating fate so that Jane Eyre can have the fruits of virtue and eat them too....*

*I am going up to London next Monday for several days.... I have to ring up Russell, to make the appointment. I plan to see Patience at the Savoy, done by the D'Oyly Carte. I may also take in the Old Vic. The gallery costs 2 bob. Can you imagine the most authoritative Shakespeare in the World for twenty-eight cents?*

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I did see Russell, in early November, but I was so depressed by the meeting that I could not bring myself to write about it. The closest I came was a brief remark at the beginning of a letter dated 7 November 1954: "I've seen Russell, and will write a long letter about it later. It was rather disappointing, as could be expected, but with a little thought I think I can turn it into an interesting letter." Here is what happened.

I was invited to Russell's home in Surrey, south of London, for tea, and on the appointed day, I drove down, parked, and walked around the block until precisely the appointed hour. I rang the bell and was admitted by his fifth wife to a modest cottage with a small front hall and a center stairway leading up to the second floor. There at the head of the stairs, looking somewhat like a plucked chicken, exactly as in his pictures, was The Third Earl Russell himself. In 1954,

Russell was eighty-two, but despite my concern that he might expire before I could take tea with him, he actually lived for another sixteen years.

He invited me up to his study and poured some tea. Almost immediately, I realized that the interview was doomed to be a disaster. Some background is necessary to explain what went wrong. In the Harvard Philosophy Department in those days there was an odd, reclusive logician named Henry M. Sheffer. In 1913, Sheffer had shown that all of the truth functions -- and, or, not, if then, if and only if -- could be reduced to a single binary function. It was an important discovery that earned Sheffer considerable fame. Then the unpublished papers of the great American pragmatist, Charles Sanders Peirce, were opened to view, and it was discovered that Peirce had scooped Sheffer by some years in the discovery. Sheffer never got over the disappointment. As the years went on he became more and more fearful that his logical work would be stolen by others. He took to recording it on little file cards in a secret code and refused to allow anyone not actually enrolled in his courses to attend his lectures. Even on the occasion of his last lecture at Harvard, which, according to departmental tradition, should have been attended by the entire department as an expression of respect, Sheffer refused to allow his colleagues into the room, shouting "Get out! Get out!"

Russell knew of Sheffer, of course, and it became clear as soon as the tea was poured that I was there as a logic student to give him an account of Sheffer's latest theories. Unfortunately, though I had taken every logic course and seminar that Quine and Wang offered, I had never signed up for Relational Logic, which Sheffer taught each year. As soon as I confessed this, the light went out of Russell's eyes, and my heart sank.

"What are you interested in?" he asked politely.

"Well sir," I replied, "I was interested in mathematical logic, but now I am interested in Kant's ethics."

"Oh," he said, pursing his lips, "You prefer fiction, do you?"

I had about enough moxie left in me for one comeback, and since I had read his *History of Western Philosophy*, I knew that he had written about Kant.

"Well, sir," I stuttered, "Y-y-you studied K-K-Kant yourself, d-d-did you not?"

Looking off into a distance that was forever closed to me, he said musingly, "Well, I have not read Kant seriously since 1897."

My mind will not permit me to recall the remainder of the interview, and it was some time after I returned home that I could bring myself to talk about it. But it had one salutary effect. It cured me, for the rest of my life, of any desire to meet famous authors.

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*Nov. 18, 1954*

*The plans for the trip are proceeding apace. The number of documents is enormous, and terribly complex, but the auto club takes care of all of it. We are beginning to get some winter weather. The fog is completely unbelievable. On several occasions I have had to creep along in second gear driving with my eye on the curb in order to find the road....Pop, I am afraid I can't tell you that I will drive at 35. That is just*

*ridiculous....My motorcycle is built to cruise at 45, averaging, on fair roads, about 35 mph. If I did 35, I would never get anywhere.*

*3 Dec. 1954*

*Well, I am finally on my way.... My costume includes a head to foot vulcanized-rubber motorcycling suit, rubber boots, a helmet, and gauntlets. I look like a storm-trooper, though my motorcycle is about 1/3 the storm trooper's size. Anyway, Rome, here I come!*

*Saturday, December 4, 1954 Oxford -- London -- Rochester -- Canterbury -- Deal -- 143 miles. Stayed at the Black Horse Hotel... My room was comfortable, and, to my surprise and vast amusement, I discovered a hot water bottle in my bed when I slid between the supposedly cold sheets. It was a welcome surprise, however.*

*Sunday, December 5, 1954 Deal -- Dover -- Dover ferry to Boulogne. Boulogne -- Abbeville -- Amiens -- Grandvilliers. 103 miles driving.... I stopped at the Chateau de Montreuil to change some money and ran into 4 chaps from the boat, having lunch. The meal was expensive (1500 frs. Total). But a gourmet's delight. Soup, hors d'oeuvres varies, perfect trout, steak, cheese, apple tart, and coffee. All this before a roaring log fire, in a pleasant French setting. A few dollars are a reasonable price for such a welcome to a new land.*

*Monday, December 6, 1954 Grandvilliers -- Beauvais -- Paris -- Versailles -- Chartres. 130 miles -- stayed at the Hotel St. Pierre.... As I rushed along the route, blasted by wind and chilled even through my protection, I thought a bit on the strange relationship between myself and the innumerable towns past which I sped.*

*To me, a little village meant a brief mention on the signposts, a disregarded warning to slow to 50 kilometres per hour, a few houses, and then another stretch of straight, wide highway. Often, as I passed the meagre scattering of buildings... I thought scornfully, "Is this what they would have me slow down to pass?"*

*And yet, in these little hamlets, with their beret-topped workmen, and staring housewives, were the homes...of persons whose lives were as real as mine, as rich in their way as mine, and often more important by far than mine. Should I then pass them by with no more than a brief relaxation of the throttle?... Finally, Chartres drew near, and as I topped a rise, the dual spires of the renowned cathedral sprang from the earth, dwarfing all else around it. For several miles it hung in view...*

*I have decided to re-open this journal briefly, in order to include a small event which just happened.*

*I went out for a stroll through the crooked, ancient streets of this district of Chartres, before retiring. It was just chilly enough to produce that physical malaise we often mistake for thought. I crossed and recrossed the little "Pont Mallaud" which bridges a river even older than itself, and by various aimless perambulations had come around to another bridge. The houses abut directly on the water, space being at a premium in a city which has seen so many centuries of "housing projects." ...*

*From a window nearby I heard a shout of laughter. A moment later a curtain was drawn back, and a hand opened a casement. It reached out, emptied a bowl into the river with a splash, and quickly released the window, its owner eager to return to the convivial gathering within. Here, in this tiny unnoticed act, on a dark street of a little town, I felt that I had been thrown a line, tying me to the people within. One reads so often in novels of events like this -- "atmosphere," it is called. And yet, to experience it is to know for a moment what the novelist tries so hard to conjure for his audience.*

*Just a woman emptying a bowl into a river. Of such as these are the true pleasures of travel compounded. And now to bed. Tomorrow, Tours.*

*Tuesday, December 7, 1954 Chartres -- Chateaudun -- Fontaine -- Tours. 92 miles. Stayed at Hotel de la Dalve.*



Wednesday, December 8, 1954

*Today was a day one not only does not expect, but also scarcely knows how to handle.... I arose early again, leaving Tours by 8:15 a.m. Again it rained, and again the wind beat upon my face and body. After about a half hour, I realized that my motorcycle lacked power. It accelerated well in first and second gear, but in high it barely managed to maintain 30 mph on the level road....*

*I was in a state of despair. The trouble seemed to repeat itself. Anxiously, I turned back, and made a startling discovery. The same ground that had been so painfully covered, was effortlessly recovered!! ... the truth became clear. The wind...presented a formidable obstacle to my motorcycle!! The large flat surface of the windscreen was an ideal 'sail' which in this case functioned as an anchor.... In desperation, I decided to remove the screen. By the side of the road, clutching my gloves and tools from the disruption of the gale, I unscrewed the supports and removed the shield. But where to put it? ... I removed my knapsack. With my pants belt and coat belt I strapped the screen to my back, fitting it to cover the pack and extend only downwards. It worked! The screen offered no greater obstacle than my own (unavoidable) body... As the wind howled and the rain descended in biblical profusion, I sallied forth once more... like the lost souls of Jean Cocteau's Purgatory ... bearing glass in a leather frame....*

*I rushed through the afternoon, wet beyond notice, numb to cold and prick of droplets... until, with a cough and splutters, the engine stops.... the gas tank was empty.... With 5 litres of 'essence et huile mélangé', I took to the road.... For 45 k I was happy as a nightingale in a hurricane until, farting and spitting and making much stench, my little motor backfired to a stop.... Where was I? Opposite the front door of one of the ubiquitous 'Hotels de France' which dot the countryside.... I pushed the bike into the garage and subsided for the night.*

*The cause of the trouble? Why, the one obvious difficulty left -- the spark plug.... I cleaned and replaced it, and after a final check, mounted the stairs to my room ... And so ends a day which shall appear in my little journal merely as:*

*Wed. Dec. 8, 1954. Tours -- Chatellerault -- Poitiers -- Ruffec. 116 miles. Stayed at Hotel de France.*

*December 9, 1954 Ruffec -- Angouleme -- Perigueux; 86 miles*

*December 10, 1954 Perigueux -- Belve -- Villefranche de Perigord -- Cahors -- Rodez: 171 miles*

*My plans were to make the quick run to Cahors, eighty miles away. As I rode through Perigord, I suddenly had an impulse to cease the rushing that had characterized the trip until then. There was the frost of a bitter night still shining on the grass and trees, but the sun, quickly rising in the East, cast a warming touch on the air and road. I slowed my motorcycle to a leisurely 30 miles per hour, and proceeded to cruise along the winding old road. As I rode, I passed signs pointing the way to Bergerac, the birthplace of the legendary Cyrano. All about me were names I had read in dry Anthropology books, in plays, in the small smattering of Geography I had appropriated in grammar school.*

*It was a day, pop, on which I very much wished you could have accompanied me. This has not always been true during my trip, of course. One does not go slumming in Piccadilly with one's father, nor would I impose on you during my excursions into Philosophy. But on this bright morning in the fields and hills of France, I felt we could have walked slowly along the road chatting, listening to the birds (which you, but not I, might have been able to identify), simply enjoying nature in the way that we have, on those few occasions, in the hills of the Catskills or the Berkshires.*

*December 11, 1954 Rodez -- Millau -- Lodeve -- Montpellier: 120 miles*

*This certainly was the most exciting day of driving during the entire trip. It began, early on a frost-bitten morning, with a skidding upending, five miles outside of Rodez. The frost on the road was deceptively slippery, and my fall, which produced only a slightly twisted leg, bent the left foot support so that I had to ride with my foot slightly elevated. Rather scared by this little fall, I rode slowly through the early morning mist... I could not understand the bitter cold that pierced my gloves and boots, and turned the mist on my gauntlets into crystals of ice. After stopping to warm myself over a cup of coffee, I climbed out of a little valley, and as I passed the edge of the town nestled in the pit of the hollow, I caught a glimpse of a sign which did much to explain the temperature. I was 685 meters above sea level. Practically 2200 feet!...*

*As I drove, I also looked for the beginning of the descent... I knew that Montpellier, my destination, was close to sea level. Where, then, would I begin to lose altitude? Each hill seemed the last, until, as I topped it, another appeared. Despite the hopes of avoiding the fog, I finally entered it, and dipped low into a valley at whose bottom lay the city of Millau. Millau was totally clothed in fog. Its inhabitants were unaware that 'outside' the sun was shining brightly -- for them it was a cold and greyish winter day.*

*I stopped only long enough to warm my knees, and then began the climb out of Millau...Several miles from Lodeve, I entered a long, deep canyon, whose sides plummeted sharply to a river below, which wound its way through the crevice that it had cut during the millennia of its existence. It was, like so many old rivers, lying in the bed which it had made.... Occasional turns in the road, which enabled me to look back at the heights from which I had come, revealed to me a magnificent panorama. Before me, Lodeve, at the end of a descent of nearly a third of a mile. Behind, the cold and windy plateau on which I had driven all morning. The air became warmer as I reached the end of the gorge, and when I left Lodeve, I discovered a flat, straight, warm road which spoke in its every lineament of the nearby Mediterranean.*

December 13, 1954 Montpellier -- Arles -- Aix en Provence: 96 miles

December 14, 1954 Aix -- Cannes -- Nice: 126 miles

*Well, what the hell can you say about the Riviera? The weather was beautiful, naturally, It says so in the constitution.... The motorcycle continued to give trouble.... It developed one trouble, by the way, which aroused deep-seated hereditary fears in my not so subconscious. You must realize that all of the insides of a motorcycle are outside. You are sitting on the motor. Hence, a backfire is not merely a loud noise, but an explosion between your legs! After several of these I swore that I would be goddamned if any lousy machine was going to blow my balls off.*

December 16, 1954 Nice -- Border -- Genova -- Rapallo: 154 miles

December 17, 1954 Rapallo -- La Spezia -- Pisa -- Livorno -- ? 161 miles

*With the 161 miles down the coast of Italy, on the way to Rome, I entered the home stretch. My motorcycle continued to splutter, but I had become immune to fear or concern....*

*This day, however, was one of private and special excitement. For, if you will turn back to the long account, written earlier this year, of my hitchhiking trip to Rome, you will realize that I was retracing exactly my steps during the latter part of that journey. In the letter, you will find mention of such little spots along the road as the corner where we waited for hours (and past which a large American car with N. Y. license plates callously rolled); the signpost outside Livorno, reading Rome 313, under which I stood in the growing dark of evening. The field nearby in which I lay down to sleep, the all-night coffee-shop whose truck-driver patrons so coldly denied my requests for rides; and, farther on, the public fountain at which, on a clear warm summer's morning, I washed away the weary night that had preceded it. Still further, the little house, in front of which I had serenaded two children in a language they did not know. All these and other places passed before my eyes as I hurried down the road to Rome.*

*December 16, 1954?-- Grossetto -- Rome: 160 miles*

*And finally, Rome.... I had traveled 1658 miles through weather that had frozen, flooded, wind-blown and, occasionally, warmed me. There had been moments of despair and annoyance, and a few of great happiness. I had learned a bit about the French, a good deal more about my motorcycle, and, as is always the case after one of these adventures of mine, perhaps a little bit more about myself. I arrived at the ancient walls of Rome, drove past the vaulting basilica Pancrazio, and after a momentary consultation of my map, pulled up to the American Academy. To my astonishment, and relief, I had in fact made it. I was in Rome.*

*December 26, 1954*

*It is now midway between Christmas and my Birthday, and I find myself rather disaffected with Europe. To be quite frank, if I could think of some way to do it without making huge and complicated explanations to millions of people, I'd pick up and come home....I find myself beginning to suspect that I have not yet made my peace with the world. The last four and a half years have gone by quickly, and with an orientation and structure, for the most part. The relationship with Susie, and the break which ended it, were painful experiences in part, but the year after the break was devoted to study toward the preliminary exams, and the success that crowned my efforts made the year seem fruitful. Now, with half a year of idleness and continued uneasiness about my plans and attitudes, I find myself without the conviction that I am directed toward the right ends, or comfortable with the world....*

*December 29*

*My birthday has come and passed, and I am now twenty-one. I suppose I might have predicted this. Anyway, it doesn't come as a particular surprise to me. I imagine I shall now go on to be twenty-two.*

*Jan. 3, 1955*

*On New Year's Eve, instead of going to the party here...I went to a quiet little affair held in one of the oldest sections of Rome...At midnight, when the bells ring and the whistles toot, windows fly open, and pedestrians make a dash for the protecting cover of hallways or doors. The inhabitants of the buildings then proceed to hurl out of the windows bottles, old and broken crockery, pans that are no longer serviceable, and finally, the old year's broom. With this symbolic clean sweep, the windows are closed and the New Year is officially welcomed.*

*Sure enough, at the midnight hour, the crockery began to fly, along with dozens of firecrackers which explode resoundingly in the high, narrow streets. We, on the fifth floor, hurled several empty wine bottles and a glass or two into the street, finding in this activity all of the innocent enjoyment that men everywhere have found ever since the fortuitous invention of glass.*

*One of the most amusing sights of the little chariveree was the stern and business-like aspect of an old Italian woman, whose window could be seen from where we stood. She seemed to make it clear that this was no matter for the frivolous or irresponsible, and it was with unsmiling face that she heaved the broom into the street below....*

*I've been reading Deutscher's political biography of Stalin; I must confess that I cannot suppress the sympathetic feelings for Stalin-Koba-Djugashvili which arise in me. It took one hell of a lot of guts to spend 20 years as he did, working in the underground for the revolution which might never occur. Despite the fact that Lenin appears closer to the type of person I know, I feel less sympathy for him.*

*January 17*

*Little by little, a few pages at a time, I've been reading through Deutscher's political biography of Stalin... The revolutionists gave their entire lives to their work, and spent twenty years before first succeeding. Even after the defeat of 1905, Stalin does not seem to have hesitated for a moment in his devotion to the cause. To a person like myself who day-dreams of great successes and brilliant achievements, this is a terribly important lesson to learn.*

*January 23*

*I have just read a quotation from Kafka which has struck me very forcefully. The line runs:*

*It is enough that the arrows fit exactly the wounds they have made.*

*I can think of no more tragic statement! God, what a man must have felt to make such a demand of the universe! And what fate more cruel than to be denied even that last consolation!*

*Feb. 1, 1955*

*I am now reading H. O. Taylor's "The Medieval Mind", as well as an average of one mystery per day. Again I realize the amusing fact my reasons for reading the Taylor are quite different from those which one professes. I am reading it (1) in order to feel that I am engaged in approved intellectual endeavor and not simply wasting my time (2) in order to be able to say that I have read it, and (3) in order to gather some facts which will be useful and impressive in letters, conversations, etc. -- these are also my reasons for reading Deutscher's book.*

*It all seems so damned pointless. What in God's name does it matter whether I read philosophy or detective stories? The 'intellectual' life seems harder and harder to justify, except by the introduction of extra-intellectual elements, such as teaching.*

*And most amusing of all is that when I become despondent in this manner, and decide to shoot the works, live it up, and say to hell with it all, the result is a 50 cent movie, a \$2 meal, and (no lower can man sink) a rich piece of pastry for dessert. The mediocrity of my vices depresses me more than the absence of virtues. I don't even like to get drunk!*

*Feb. 12, 1955*

*Tomorrow I leave for Geneva, to see Liesje and start some wandering.*

*February 18, 1955*

*Here I am in snowy Geneva, the land of the tourist.... My voyage here, was as usual,, a saga. One of the beneficial results was a discovery: how to write a short story. The trick is to attempt a business transaction of any sort with an Italian. After the entire affair is over, merely record in chronological order everything that occurs.*

*Briefly (I have already told this to Susie in a letter and therefore don't want to go all through it again) I started to wheel my motorcycle to the station, in order to consign it to the care of the baggage car. The first mile was downhill (off the Gianiculum), and quite simple, except for the fact that I stopped to take the carburetor apart in one last vain attempt to fix the blasted thing and just as I got the three dozen bolts and nuts and air filters and gas filters and other assorted doohinkuses on the ground, spread out and ready for cleaning, it started to pour....*

*At the bottom of the hill I began to push. The physical effort expended over several blocks aroused in my mind the image of a truck, transporting the thing, with me riding alongside, and I stopped at a gas pump to make inquiries. My Italian is minimal, but a liberal use of gestures conveyed my meaning. As the attendant*



*made an attempt to fix the motorcycle (I couldn't construct a sufficiently fluent sentence to tell him that I had tried) a cop strolled over to see what was up.*

*Now, in Rome, whenever three people and a motorcycle congregate, and especially when one of them is a cop, every able-bodied man in sight comes over to see what is up. Within four minutes, I was surrounded by a curious and totally non-committal crowd of large, small, dark, light, well- and ill-dressed Italians. As I repeated my request, they nodded sagely (though not offering assistance of any sort), and the attendant screwed back the spark-plug and prepared to have at the carburetor. I sensed, in one of those rare flashes of saving intuition, that this little scene could develop into a three-act play, complete with intermissions for coffee, and with no further word, I seized my machine and wheeled off in the direction of the station.*

*Some two hundred yards later, having emerged from conversations with three taxi drivers and a store owner, my problem still unsolved, I was offered assistance (for a mere 1000 lire) by a quick-minded promoter type who had overheard my exchange with the storekeeper (the owner of a, as it turned out, unavailable truck).*

*Several phone calls (he had no truck, of course, but hoped to procure one and take his cut) produced no positive results, and as I once more trudged toward the station, he made a snap offer: 500 lire and his flunky would push it for me. I agreed, and walked off at a brisk clip behind a small chap who assiduously pushed the motorcycle.*

*At the station, I felt that I had been remiss in permitting someone else to do a bit of physical labor that I could as easily have done, and assuaged my conscience by adding 200 lire to the agreed price. Thus emboldened by what could only be interpreted as complete insanity, the little man tried to con me out of 40 lire for the two phone calls. So tired was I, and so unversed in the ways of the Italian mind, that I almost gave him the money. In time, I caught myself, told him to go to hell, and proceeded to give my motorcycle unto the*

*luggage room authorities. (Let us pass lightly over this complicated procedure. The only point of importance for the remainder of our tale is that I quite definitely made them understand that the cycle was traveling on my ticket, and was to accompany me to Geneva.)*

*Pan quickly (as they say in the movies) to the Italian border. It is noon, I have endured a night on the train, succored by two litres of Frascati wine and myriad nuts, rolls, hams, and so forth. We descend for customs, and I produce my carnet to be stamped. After a puzzled few minutes, the inspector tells me no motorcycle has arrived, and that ... they cannot sign me through customs until such time as it does. What can I do? Wait for the two pm train from Milan, which should be carrying the cycle.*

*I boarded the train to retrieve my luggage, I got off at the next station, I got on a train going the other way, I got off at the border station, I called Liesje, I passed my cycle through customs, I climbed back on the train to Geneva, and at 7:04, I finally arrived. (The recital is so painful that I can barely spill it out in one compound sentence)..*

*February 22, 1954*

*Life here is pleasant. Geneva is a very small town (150,000 - 175,000) and when I drop into one of the local bars ... I meet one or more people I know. I have found one chap with whom to sing madrigals and rounds, and with Liesje, we can handle three part things.*

*February 28, 1955*

*I want to see Berlin... so I may do the following: Hitch-hike and train to Berlin tomorrow. Spend two weeks there, go to Paris to see Mike Jorin for a week and a half... then go on to London. I haven't any*

*idea where you can contact me in Germany, but if I do go through with this... I'll be in Paris in the latter part of March.*

*[Postcard -- No Date]*

*Hail!! Es geht ganz gut hier!!! Will send long letter when I get the time -- I have been taken in tow by a German student of English -- am staying at house of mother of student I met in London -- Am off now to see High Commissioner Conant. Also will see professors, students, the East sector of Berlin, etc. Much activity -- Write to Am. Express in Paris. That's my next stop. -- The view is Kurfürstendamm, Berlin's Broadway. Love to all.*

*16 March, 1955*

*I am now firmly ensconced in the Armenian House... of the Cité Universitaire of the Sorbonne... I begin my report on Berlin.... Germany probably holds more relics, both cultural and geographical, of especial significance to me, than any other European country, including England.... My two greatest loves in the intellectual sphere are philosophy and music -- in each is Germany far and away the greatest modern nation. And it is precisely the German philosophers and composers who have impressed me the most....*

*My first impressions of Berlin were contradictions of much that I had heard. Having read that West Berlin was built up and cleaned up far more than the Eastern sector, I was surprised to discover block after block of rubble, gutted buildings, and empty lots.... Empty lots in the middle of a great city? Square blocks of level ground only several hundred yards from the largest street in the city? Surely there had once been something here! And then the answer, terrible and simple, stood out at me. This was the result of the extensive clean-up of Berlin -- empty lots, rather than fragmentary walls and rubble. In each of these clean areas had stood a group of buildings, destroyed by Allied bombing....*

*And yet, amidst the devastation and regeneration, some signs remain. Where, but in Germany, and perhaps only in Berlin, could an itinerant student of philosophy arrive, during a stroll, at the corner of Kantstrasse and Leibnizstrasse?*

*All is not a monument to dead heroes, however. Berlin has its Clayallee (after General Lucius D. Clay), its Truman House, and, so help me God, a subway station whose name, translated literally into English, is "Uncle Tom's Cabin"....*

*I think I must now introduce some of the persons I met in Berlin, for my visit to that city, more than to any other European metropolis which I have seen, was a series of meetings with students, professors, and ordinary citizens of Berlin.*

*First... responsible not only for my physical comfort but also for the other contacts is Frau Arfert, mother of Henning Arfert whom I met in the London School of Economics. He suggested that I look up his mother if I came to Berlin, and for the first time, I accepted such an offer. Frau Arfert generously permitted me to live (free) in Henning's room. Thus, on my second day I was comfortably placed in an apartment in Friedenau, in the South-Eastern part of the American sector. I saw little of Frau Arfert, for she wisely called the Freie Universität which in turn called the German student who acted as my guide during the next ten days, Harry Mietusch.*

*Harry is an interesting person, as well as one of the main characters in this little story -- a student of American and English literature, he speaks English with an accent that is almost indistinguishable from that of an American.... he worked as a bartender in the officers' club of the Army base during most of two years.*

*I am still unsure as to Harry's real nature. He apparently knows everyone, and was superbly successful in getting me interviews with official personages -- and yet, I often felt that he was using me (and*

*my success in getting interviews) as a means of magnifying his own importance. He managed, for example, to talk his way into my meeting with Commissioner Conant.... Harry and his parents, I learned, lived originally in the Eastern Sector of the city;... they decided to move into West Berlin, losing their furniture and other belongings in the process..*

*I shall briefly recount my meetings...*

*(1) Mr. And Mrs. Mietusch and their friends:*

*This was one of those story-book meetings; people of different countries, trying to bridge the chiasm between them, to form some sort of rapport of knowledge and attitude -- it was, in a way, one of the best events of the visit.*

*I had gone to Harry's house for a casual chat, and his parents were entertaining some friends (also moved from the Eastern Sector). We all sat down to a bite to eat, and for six hours remained there while, Harry translating, I asked and answered questions about Germany and America.*

*...one question, repeated several times, stands out in my mind, for I came to feel that it expressed one of the root-attitudes of the West-Berliners. The Mietusch's friend (an insurance salesman like himself -- they were quite envious of the American habit of buying life insurance early) asked the question first: Could Berliners count on the American People to support Berlin, to stay by her, to understand that she was engaged in a fight against communism that required aid? Did the American people feel that they, and America, were part of the Western alliance, committed to it?*

*Again and again, he and other Berliners came back to this fear of isolation. Physically surrounded by Soviet troops, face to face daily with its own communist half, West Berlin seems to fear that it will be forgotten, abandoned.*

*What did I answer? I said that the "American People" could not be counted on because they do not know and do not care what is happening in Europe. But that the politicians, diplomats, policy makers of both parties were committed, and would not abandon Germany. I tried also to explain to them that America had commitments in Asia, the Near East, and South America which made it impossible for her to think of herself simply as a member of a West-European alliance.*

*And so it went, from late afternoon into the evening -- despite the multitude of Americans in Berlin, they had met almost none, and I felt like they were tremendously eager to draw me out, simply to see what I was like. It was probably as close as any experience could come to the brochure-ideal of 'an interchange of ideas between Americans and others.'*

*(5) Wolfgang Mühlén -- a student at the university, recently returned, by an amnesty, from an East German labor camp, in which he spent 4 years. Wolf flaunts this servitude much like a band of honor (he appeared to think that it was the sort of thing Americans wanted to hear, for he mentioned it in the second sentence after saying 'angenehm.')* but in long discussions with him, I found him an interesting and pleasant person. It was with Wölf that I went to see Prof. Dr. Weischedel, Prof. Of Philosophy at the Frei Universität.

*(6) Prof. Weischedel:*

*One afternoon, shepherded by Wolf, I visited Weischedel's for tea and a long, 2 - hour chat. It turned into perhaps the most successful of my many 'interviews.' Weischedel and I are concerned with the same problem, and in a field as broad as Philosophy, this is rare indeed. With his assistant, a young woman,*

*translating, we ranged over a number of topics. We discovered a mutual acquaintance in Jakob Taubes, now lecturer in Philosophy at Harvard, with whom Weischedel is corresponding.....*

*Wolf was delighted by the casual air of the chat -- he assured me it was not always so -- Professors, while not Gods, received a deference usually reserved for those of semi-divine origins. Indeed, even between students, there is a degree of formality (use of last names, etc), the absence of which, in my brief relationship with Wolf, delighted him.... Harry told me several times that Young Germans tried to achieve this freedom, but still found themselves bound by deep in-growths of traditional formality and rigidity.*

*(8) Dr. Conant*

*This, of course, was a bit of a coup. Conant was in Berlin for only a few days -- through the director of the Ernst-R-Gesellschaft, I obtained permission to see Dr. Conant for a few minutes at 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 9. I presented myself as a Sheldon Fellow (one of the few times during my trip that I have made direct use of my position -- otherwise I could as well have been an imposter).*

*Conant arrived, a bit late, from a formal banquet, wearing pinstripes and morning coat. We chatted in what I believe is known as a 'desultory' fashion. He expressed great consternation at the Soviet habit of proclaiming its elections free! It was not so much the iniquity of the electoral system as the flagrant misuse of the term that disturbed him. He recounted an incident that occurred at a recent diplomatic meeting: Conant collected some evidence of rigged ballots in East Germany and on the 3<sup>d</sup> day of the conference, he and Dulles 'threw it in Molotov's face.' Conant had feared that Molotov would pass it off by denying the authenticity of the evidence, but to his horror, the Soviet foreign minister admitted the validity of the patently rigged ballots, and acclaimed them as just the way we ought to do it.'*

*(10) Jazz musicians of the Eierschaler 'Eggshell') -- Harry and I went, on the first Saturday night in Berlin, to a little club devoted to Dixie-land Jazz. After a wait in line, we entered a dark, closely packed cellar. The first thing one noticed was the music -- solid, classical dixieland, with drums, piano, clarinet, bass, and trombone. It was good, and the place really rocked. At the tables were dozens upon dozens of young boys and girls -- as my eye swept the tabletops, I was horrified to discover coveys of coca-cola bottles -- the dancers were doing varying modes of American jitterbugging, and when the singer stepped to the microphone, he contorted his voice into a hoarse imitation of Louis Armstrong, and shouted out the English lyrics...*

*30 March, 1955*

*Eh bien -- I won't write a long essay on Paris. Suffice it to say it has all the things people say it has -- Eiffel Tower, arc de Triomphe, pigalle, les Halles.... It also has millions of student-types who don't study. I have met another dozen or so Harvard men here (we all agree that Harvard is empty -- there can't be anyone left)...*

*Paris is discouraging. There is so much open love making (this is really true. Every street, subway, or bus has a couple necking), there are so many beautiful women, and I just aint in it.*

*April 11, 1955*

*... Incidentally, you may be interested to know that I have not had word from Susie in almost two months. In the last letter, she said she was getting a separation from Gordon... I have since written her a letter from Geneva, and postcards from Berlin and Paris. With no reply at all. I am worried, but can see nothing to do, so I shall simply not think about it, if possible. If I ever pass thru Chicago I'll look her up.*

*18 April 1955*



*Well, here I am in England.....I've decided to tackle the Critique of Pure Reason again, during my 2 month stay in London. Tomorrow I'll go up to Oxford to get my baggage -- then I'll settled down here and try to work,*

*2 May, 1955*

*Well, here it is May, and time passes.... By the way, Marshall Cohen [first Barbara's friend from Encampment, then mine at Harvard -- a former Sheldon in Philosophy] just got a Junior Fellowship. Hao Wang, Bert Dreben, Noam Chomsky, Stan Cavell, and Marshall Cohen -- all Junior Fellows in Philosophy, and all the favorite students of Quine and White -- and I've decided that Quine and White are for the birds!!! Oh well, such is life. I'm just not willing to do what is necessary to get one...*

*9 May, 1955*

*I've moved again. My address is now 83 Ladbroke Grove, London W. 11.... The motorcycle is finally and totally OFF MY HANDS. I sold it, unrepaired, for £50 (\$140)..*

*I've found a girl, and (this, naturally, is private) she has agreed to be my "mistress" until I leave for the States. She found me this flat, which is two blocks from her home (she is an L. S. E. student), and it looks as if the "seven lean years" are over. Wonder of wonders, she actually appreciates and understands the long, intricate, introspective soliloquies of which I am enamored. It is such a relief to have someone to whom I can say all the things I've been thinking and feeling this year!! And that that someone should understand them as well!!! -- Please keep this strictly between us. I would consider it an insult to her (although not an actual injury to her reputation) if this were told to other people. I'm sure you can understand. -- all I can say is: why at the very end of my trip?... Her name, by the way, is Shirley, and she is Jewish.*

*16 May 1955*

.... *Life is better than it has been at any time this year. Shirley is a totally natural woman, despite an overlay of verbal inhibitions. I don't think there is a square inch of her that is not covered with more than its share of sensitive nerve-endings!!! Because of the clear, explicit, and definite nature of our arrangement, I am experiencing for the first time an affair free of all tension, anxiety, fear, or insecurity. We see each other every day, although she cannot come up to the flat every day. It is so nice to have all the pleasure of such a relationship with none of the unhappiness!! -- I have toyed with the idea of staying on a while longer...*

*No beard. Shirley would throw a fit! By the way, in case you are wondering -- the typical English girl, like the typical American College Girl, leads men on without any intention of sleeping with them. Shirley is an exception....*

*I am afraid you will not live long enough to see me "completely educated, happily married, and at peace with my soul." For I shall die without completing my education, and on the day that I am at peace with my soul, I shall know that I have become an evil man. I pray that I never think myself either. As for the happy marriage, I trust you will see that in the 20 or more years to come.*

*24 May, 9155*

.... It is about time I told you a bit about the flat. I share it with Ian Fulton, a tall, cheerful Scotsman studying at L. S. E. His woman is Sylvia (English), and Suliman Al-Kazi, a Pakistani studying at the Polytechnic Institute. His woman is Susie (Israeli). Thus we are a Christian, a Moslem, and a Jew, each non-practicing. Other people who wander in and out of the flat, occasionally staying the night, are Adrian (West Indian girl), Tom (Canadian, her boyfriend) and of course, Shirley (who unfortunately cannot stay the night, but spends many afternoons here). It is all totally careless, madcap, licentious, and great fun. I spend most of my time shopping, washing, ironing, cooking, reading, and fornicating. What a delightful burden are the fleshly desires! Shortly, I shall work again, however.

Shirley is an absolute wonder. Pop, she would make such total hash of Freud!! This girl combines an almost impossible ignorance concerning sexual matters with a freedom from inhibition that an analysts would pay \$5000 for!! For example, because of the English schooling system, which separates students at 11 years old into Science and Arts, she knows nothing about sperm, eggs, how fertilization occurs, what happens during pregnancy, etc. She had no idea of contraception at all (the one boy -- in Italy -- with whom she'd had intercourse hadn't bothered to explain it). She was totally unaware of the meaning of such words as "organism" and "masturbation" (she'd never tried it!), she was only vaguely aware that people get excited, tense, anxious or etc. about sex (she said she hadn't really believed this in Freud when she's read it) and she assumed that the jokes about frigid Englishwomen referred only to the first night!!!!

Yet, despite all this, she is the most uninhibited woman I have ever met. She says she finds sex pure fun; but during the year between her Italian affair and me, she didn't have any sexual relations because she hadn't found anyone she liked enough. -- Pop, honest, you might find a woman like her in some nice, simple primitive tribe, but in 20<sup>th</sup> century England?? I can't figure it. I would give one hell of a lot of money to learn how to bring up my daughter so that she would feel this way.

29 May, 1955

*...My life continues to be languorous. I had a slight attack of conscience, resulting in the consumption of Isaac Deutscher's latest book, and two things by Freud. I find the latter interesting, though Freud himself irritates me. Despite the opposition which confronted his theories, I feel his constantly belligerent tone to be excessive, particularly in a scientific work. Instead of anticipating a congeries of objections from his readers, and snapping peevishly that they are not entitled to reject his theories until they have spent as much time as he in their study (an obvious impossibility -- one does not devote a lifetime to hard work to the testing of a completely disinterested curiosity), Freud might better have devoted his lectures (given in 1915-17) to detailed and well-butressed exposition. The latter of the two works (a summary of his view, written in 1940) is notably free, for the most part, of the earlier defensive attitude (Freud's rather stiff explanation in his Interpretation of Dreams, of his reasons for not revealing all of the interpretation of his own dreams, is also quite amusing).*

*23 June, 1955*

*... Well, the day of departure approaches. Don't take my extended stay as a rejection of you, Ma. I did it because I had finally found something for which I had long been looking. I might add that the affair with Shirley has cured me of all longing for Susie (by showing me that a woman other than Susie can want me). I consider this by no means an unimportant result of my year abroad. It marks a new and more mature phase in my relationships with other people.*

*1 July, 1955*

*...I am planning ... to room next year with Charlie Parsons (Harvard Summa, Henry Fellow to Cambridge, brilliant student, son of Prof. Talcott Parsons). Charlie will be doing philos. at Harvard and I shall try to find a small flat for the two of us.*

*18 July, 1955*

*The great day approaches, arrangements are completed -- in three days, I sail for Montreal. Then, nine days later, my long trip will be over...I shall bid farewell to London and Shirley this Thursday. This will be my last letter... I shall be interested to re-read my earlier letters. There are at least several which are worth saving, I think,*

## Chapter Four Thesis, Antithesis, Synthesis

I returned to North America on July 30, 1955, just thirteen months after sailing for England. The only affordable passage I was able to find was on a ship bound for Canada. Traveling in the same steerage compartment was a minister returning to Northern Canada, where he had been doing missionary work among a small community of Native Americans. As I complained loudly of the rolling of the ship, he told me tales of his heroic voyage to the South Seas, around the Horn, on the last commercial sailing ship to take that treacherous route.

On the train from Montreal back to my starting point, New York, I made a remarkable discovery. Looking out the window, I realized that in my year-long absence cars had completely changed their appearance. When I left, the family car had been a stodgy affair, with running boards, rounded rear and front, very much like the sorts of cars one sees now in old World War II movies. But there had been an automotive styling revolution. The cars were now multi-colored, and had flat fronts and rears so that at a glance it was difficult to tell whether they were coming or going. There is not the slightest significance to this fact, so far as I can see, but I still remember my shock as I looked from the train window at parking lots and automobile dealerships.

My most important task, upon returning, was to find an apartment for Charlie Parsons and me, but before going to Cambridge, I borrowed my father's car and drove up the Merritt Parkway to Westport to see whether Susie's parents could tell me whether she had indeed been divorced, and how to get in touch with her. She and Gordon had moved to Chicago so that he

could attend the University of Chicago Law School, and since Susie was doing graduate work in Botany, I figured she would stay there even after the divorce.

The Shaeffers had never approved of me, in part because they thought I would never make enough money to amount to anything. They refused to tell me how to get in touch with her, and I went back to New York

Having nothing better to do, I took the subway up to Morningside Heights and hung out on the Low Plaza at Columbia University with an assortment of students who were just killing time until the Fall semester started. Emboldened by my extraordinary adventure with Shirley -- my first real *affair*, since Susie and I had never "gone all the way" -- I struck up an acquaintance with a pretty undergraduate and actually had my first and last one night stand. Two nights, if the truth be told. Sylvia is fixed in my memory as a lovely girl of twenty or so, but of course, time being what it is, she is now seventy-six or seventy-seven. I am reminded of an eerie episode of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, in which Captain Picard has transferred to his mind by a space beacon the experiences of a civilization that has since died, and during a twenty minute period of unconsciousness, lives through an entire long virtual life on the planet, becoming a father and grandfather. When he awakens from the dream, he finds himself on the bridge of the Enterprise, but in his head are a lifetime of memories, as real as those of his actual past. I sometimes think idly that I shall some day awaken from this dream to find myself on Low Plaza, chatting with Sylvia and wondering what my life will bring.

I found an apartment in Cambridge without much difficulty, and moved my few belongings into it, waiting for Charlie to return from Europe. It was the third floor of an old

building at 1134 Massachusetts Avenue, several doors beyond the point where Arrow Street joins Mass. Ave. The rent was \$75 a month, which meant that my share would be \$37.50. I had been awarded a Teaching Fellowship paying \$1440 for the year. Out of this, I would have to cover \$600 tuition and support myself, so finances were going to be something of a problem. As a Teaching Fellow, I would be responsible for three discussion sections of the big introductory course, Philosophy 1, that Raphael Demos had been teaching for so long that he referred to it as "Phil. A," its designation in some bygone pre-war era.

The apartment was hardly palatial, but for the next two years it served Charlie and me very well. At the back end of the little hall, to the Southeast, was a tiny kitchen, beyond which was an even tinier bathroom. Hot water for both was provided by a "geyser," a little gas-fired water heater. At the other end of the hall, looking out on Massachusetts Avenue, was an equally small room which served us as a dining room. Off the hall were two bedrooms. I took the slightly larger back room, having got there first, and Charlie took the front room.

Charlie was a very serious, very brilliant, very compulsive young man of middle height, with sandy hair. He was an academic brat, having grown up in the family home in Belmont during the time that his father was a famous senior professor in the Harvard Social Relations Department. Talcott Parsons had been responsible for introducing American readers to the works and theories of Max Weber, the great German sociologist. But unlike Weber, whose books were deep, powerful investigations of the roots, structure, and functioning of modern bureaucratic capitalist society, Parsons produced vast, empty, classificatory schemes that were devoid of any real power or insight. Poor Charlie, who lived very much in the shadow of the



great man, was in fact much smarter than his father, and I have always suspected that he knew quite well how meretricious his father's theories were. But during all the time I knew him, he never said a word about the matter.

Charlie had inherited from his New England Puritan upbringing a pinchpenny miserliness that was famous among our circle of graduate students. When he arrived from Europe to join me in our new digs, he brought with him, as his contribution to our household, a half-used little cardboard container of pepper and a portion of a stick of butter, both of which he had carried home with him on the ship from Europe. [Charles insists that this cannot be right, inasmuch as he had traveled from Europe on a ship, and the butter never would have survived. Quite possibly he brought it from his parent's home in Belmont.]

My first order of business was to hold office hours, and begin my duties as a Section Man. I had been having serious doubts for some time about my commitment to philosophy as a calling, but I had no doubts at all about teaching. In my letters from Europe, I had many times spoken about teaching as an activity I looked forward to, and for which I felt a natural affinity.

The burdens of a Section Man were not heavy, at least by what have come to be the standards in the Academy. That first semester, I had sections of sixteen, seventeen, and twenty-one Harvard and Radcliffe students. After all these years, I can still call to mind some of the young people who passed through my sections over the next two years: John Costonis, a serious, very smart young man, who gave every evidence of real intellectual talent; Maureen Needham, a slender, ethereal blond woman, also very gifted, but laboring under the burden of an overbearing mother who did everything in her power to deny Maureen the freedom she needed to find her

own path in life. To my delight, several years later I discovered that John and Maureen had fallen in love. Jack McNees, easily the best student I had in either year, who stayed around Harvard and turned up from time to time over the next five years. Eva Augenblick, a charming round-faced girl who went on, I believe, to a distinguished medical career before passing away, much too early, several years ago. Jean Anderson, who married Juan Alonzo, and then showed up in my life thirty years later as a Radical union organizer at Raytheon. It was she who enabled me to get myself arrested in a Harvard anti-apartheid protest, thus easing my embarrassment at never having been arrested in the Sixties. Molly Jones, who was taken advantage of by a rather sepulchral junior member of the Philosophy Department, so outraging Demos, who took an avuncular interest in his students, that he successfully blocked that egregious man's hopes for tenure. I even took Mary Jo Laflin dancing one evening, though I punctiliously waited until she was no longer my student before asking her out.

I seem to recall the women more easily than the men, in part, at least, because they tended to be a good deal brighter. Radcliffe in those days successfully recruited the most talented young women in the country, gave them a superb education, and then did everything in its power to discourage them from going on to pursue successful careers.

Teaching is in my cultural heritage, if not in my genes. For my entire life, I have felt completely relaxed and comfortable in front of a class. I am blessed with the unshakable conviction, grounded in no empirical evidence whatsoever, that my students love me and are pleased to see me when I walk into the room. As a result, I feel great affection for them, a fact which I am sure is communicated by my voice and body language. I love explaining complex

ideas in simple ways, finding the core idea at the heart of a difficult passage and explicating it with images drawn from fairy tales, movies, television shows, or contemporary public affairs. I assume that my students want to know about me, and I am always surprised, but undeterred, when the student evaluation forms come back with the comment, "talks too much about his family."

There has been much wringing of hands about grade inflation in recent decades. Conservative talking heads imagine that a different assignment of letter grades for student performances is somehow connected with a supposed decline in intellectual standards, their minds addled by bad economics into conflating the subject with the depreciation of the currency. That grades have changed, however, there can be no doubt. Looking back at my grade records from my first semester of teaching, I find that to my fifty-four undergraduates I awarded a total of one A, two A minuses, two B pluses, and seven B's. There were twenty-six C's of various sorts, and five D's. The average across the three sections was something on the order of a C+. If I were to hand out these grades today, I would be lynched. Are students today better than students fifty years ago? Of course not. Are they worse? Also no. Does it matter at all that an A of some sort is the customary grade at Harvard, rather than a C? Not in the slightest. No one is fooled, no one is confused, the life of the mind goes on pretty much as it has for the past two and a half millennia.

My most depressing grading experience came in my second year of teaching. The first quiz of the Fall semester posed some brief essay questions about the views Plato had set forth in the *Republic*. After I graded the quizzes and handed them back, a young man came up to talk to

me, very perturbed. He was a short Freshman who was very "shoe," as we said in those days. That meant that he had the look of a rich prep school student and wore the required uniform of gray flannels and white bucks.

"You gave me an A on this quiz, but you wrote at the top, 'this is awful.' I don't understand." I explained that it was a really high-level piece of regurgitation. He had everything exactly right, but he gave no evidence that Plato's troubling arguments had touched him at all.

He still looked completely puzzled, so I asked him what he wanted out of life. He shot back, without a moment's hesitation, "I want to make Phi Beta Kappa and go to Harvard Law School and become a senior partner and make one hundred thousand dollars a year like my father." It was clear that there was no hope for him, so I just nodded and turned away.

Demos was something of a snob, and he took a great interest in the family connections of his students. At the end of each semester, the section men would gather in his office to read out our grades as he recorded them on the official grade sheet. If a student had a last name that suggested the possibility of an important family connection, he would look up and say, "Is he a member of the Boston Cabots?" The closest I came to the social register was Anita de Lobkowitz, who was apparently the daughter of a Polish Count, though someone explained to me that this meant a good deal less in Poland than it might elsewhere in Europe. Demos was also rather apprehensive about the Radcliffe Deans, who were extremely protective of their charges. If a Radcliffe student received a low grade, the instructor was sure to get a call from a Dean inquiring about the precise reasons. If one of us read out a C or C minus for a Radcliffe

student, he would look up from the grade sheet and ask, "Are you absolutely sure she didn't do better?"

Philosophy 1 met twice a week in a large amphitheatrical lecture hall in Sever Hall. We Section Men sat in the last and highest row, listening to the lectures. Demos was a showman and the students clearly identified him with Socrates. Although he cultivated a grandfatherly manner, he was in fact a rather tough old bird. The summer after my Freshman year, I had taken a course with him and Donald Williams on American Philosophy. I sat in the front row, and one day another student asked me a question about logic. I started writing some symbols on a piece of paper, but before I could finish, Demos began his lecture. I completed the little proof I had been constructing, and handed her the piece of paper. Demos looked down, stopped his lecture, and to my complete mortification asked for it. While the entire class sat silently, I got up, walked to the lectern from which he was speaking, and handed him the note. After class he called me up to reprimand me. He handed the note back and said he would not read it, but that I was not to pass notes during his lectures. I desperately wanted him to open it up so that he could see that it was symbolic logic and not a request for an assignation, but he simply dismissed me with a wave of the hand.

By the time Demos got to Kant in the second semester of that first year, I was deep into my study of the *Critique* and knew a good deal about Kant's philosophy. Demos gave the students a rather standard potted version of Kant's theories which I knew to be inaccurate. After listening for a while, I could stand it no longer, and in the midst of one of this lectures, I raised my hand. Demos looked up startled. Short of a medical emergency or a fire in the building, it

was simply not done for a Section Man to interrupt a Professor's Lecture. Rather mystified, he called on me, and I proceeded to explain why I thought his interpretation of Kant was incorrect. In what I have always considered a show of real class, Demos' response to this appalling behavior was to invite me the next year to give one of the lectures on Kant.

Many years later, after Demos passed away, Vanderbilt University, where he had spent several years post-retirement as a Distinguished Visiting Professor, established a lectureship in his memory. I had the great honor of giving the Second Raphael Demos Memorial Lecture, during which I was able to tell this story as a tribute to his generosity of spirit.

Since this is the first extended discussion in these pages of the subject of teaching, I should perhaps take the opportunity to confess just how much I hate grading. Taking all in all, the academic life is about as close as one can come these days to living in the manner that in past centuries was reserved for men and women of gentle birth who enjoyed undeservedly the fruits of the labors of others. By way of example, these memoirs are being written in the midst of a semester for which I am receiving full pay [i.e, in 2003]. What is more, should I be so fortunate as to find a publisher for them, I will be considered to have made a "contribution to scholarship" and will no doubt see my salary increased as a consequence. But I have always confronted stacks of examinations and term essays with an overwhelming aversion. I find it excruciatingly difficult not only to keep in mind what a student has *said* in response to a question, but also what the student has *neglected* to say, what has been left out of an answer. In the early days of my career, I anguished about whether I was grading fairly, and would sometimes read the entire set of papers or exams three times -- first, to get a sense of how everyone was handling the

questions, then to assign grades, and then once again to make certain that I had maintained the same standard when I got to the bottom of the stack as I had adopted when I was near the top. Long experience has enabled me to reduce the process to one read through, but as I am compulsively incapable of passing over a grammatical mistake, syntactic confusion, or stylistic infelicity without making some red ink corrections, it still takes me, after half a century, a tediously long time to get through a set of papers.

Considering how much I dislike grading exams, it is strange that I actually enjoyed taking them at Harvard. A well-constructed exam would challenge me to pull together the material I had been studying and impose some coherent conceptual order on it. The final examination was for me one of the most valuable intellectual experiences of the course. This fact came to my rescue when I turned my attention to what was, after all, the most important challenge of my graduate career: choosing the topic of my doctoral dissertation.

I had gone to Europe planning to write a dissertation on ethical theory. I had made numerous references to that plan in my letters, and at one point, in Rome, had actually drafted twenty pages on the subject. Oddly enough, considering how much incidental detail made its way into my letters, I never actually mentioned what it was about ethical theory that I meant to investigate, and all these years later, I cannot for the life of me remember. But by the time I returned to the United States, I had decided that the topic would not fly, and so I needed to find something to write about.

It was at this point that I recalled an idea that had come to me while I was writing my undergraduate General Examinations. On the History of Philosophy section of the exam, there

was a straightforward question about the relationship between the epistemological theories of David Hume and Immanuel Kant. Since I had studied Hume in my second year and Kant that semester, I decided to answer it.

I knew the standard story that the question was trying to elicit. Hume, the story goes, raised skeptical doubts about the possibility of scientific knowledge in his great work, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, which he repeated and elaborated in a later work, the *Enquiry Concerning the Human Understanding*. Kant became aware of Hume's arguments, and set out to rebut them in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. That was the story told in a hundred histories of philosophy, and it actually corresponded pretty well to Kant's own view of the matter. But in the course of writing the exam answer, it occurred to me that if one looked at Hume's theories in a certain way, one could see that they were actually more similar to Kant's own views than scholars had supposed. In fact, I suggested, it was much closer to the truth to say that Hume and Kant had essentially the same view of the role of the mind in the acquisition of knowledge, with the exception of a single major innovation by Kant -- the introduction into the discussion of the nature and role of consciousness itself. As soon as I remembered this idea, I realized that I wanted to write a doctoral dissertation developing it.

I needed a dissertation director and a second reader. There was no question about the second reader. Henry Aiken was the department's expert on Hume, and despite our clash in his Hume course, he would have to be on the committee. But with the retirement of Lewis, there was no one in the department who knew much about Kant, or indeed had any interest in his philosophy.



This fact was actually an instance of a much larger problem that was rapidly transforming the Harvard Philosophy Department. The glory of the department during this period was its strength in two areas: the philosophical study of formal logic, and the philosophical, as opposed to the merely scholarly, study of the history of philosophy. There was not a single member of the department who was, in the traditional sense, a scholar of some area of the history of philosophy, but almost every member of the department took a serious interest in the great figures from the past, and taught exciting courses on their works. Demos taught the Platonic Dialogues, Lewis taught the *Critique*, Aiken taught Hume -- not as scholars, but as philosophers who found interesting ideas in these great texts. At the same time, students were able to draw on some extraordinary scholars in other departments: Werner Jaeger in Classics, Wolfson in Semitic Languages. One by one, as these men retired, they were replaced by very bright philosophers who had little or no commitment to the history of philosophy, with the result that eventually, the department simply eliminated the requirement that graduate students demonstrate a knowledge of the great figures of the past.

Lewis had been such a towering figure in the department that when his retirement approached, he was given the opportunity to name his own successor. At that time, by a curious coincidence, his two most promising former students were both named Roderick -- Roderick Chisholm and Roderick Firth. Both of them were very gifted young philosophers, but everyone who knew them recognized that Chisholm was far more promising than Firth. Nevertheless, Lewis chose Firth. When asked afterward why he had made that choice, Lewis is reputed to have answered, "Because Firth assents to more propositions to which I assent than Chisholm

does." So it was that Firth spent the remainder of his career at Harvard, and Chisholm spent his career at Brown.

Firth wrote about ethics and the theory of knowledge, and did not really know anything about Kant. Nevertheless, he *was* Lewis's successor, and so by default he became my thesis advisor. Neither Aiken nor Lewis can be said to have guided me in the writing of the dissertation, and if I am completely honest with myself, I must admit that I probably wouldn't have wanted them to. Over the course of the next eighteen months, I think I had a total of seventy-five minutes of formal consultation on my dissertation -- forty-five minutes with Firth and thirty minutes with Aiken. But Firth did give me two invaluable pieces of advice, both of which I have passed on to my students over the years.

The first was this: "Bob, if you say something original in the thesis, put a footnote indicating that it is original, because otherwise your readers won't know that it is and won't give you credit for it." For the second bit of advice, Firth put a little graph on the blackboard in his office, with two lines on it. The first was a straight line that rose slowly from the origin, representing, he said, the rise in my abilities, in what I would actually produce. The second was a line that curved upward, farther and farther from the first line the longer it got. It represented the rise in my standards, my sense of what I ought to produce. "Now," he pointed out, "the longer you take to finish your dissertation, the bigger the gap is going to be between what you produce and what you think you should produce. There will always be a gap, but the faster you finish, the less disappointment you will suffer." This, as it turned out, was brilliant advice. I took it to heart, and decided to finish up in the next eighteen months.

A number of students, including Charlie, who had taken Lewis's Kant course were disturbed by the failure of the department to replace him with someone seriously interested in German philosophy, and we decided to fill the gap by getting together to read Kant on our own. Thus was born the Kant Group, which turned out to be the most exciting and rewarding educational experience of my life. Five of us met each Wednesday evening from 8 p.m. until midnight, all throughout 1955-56. Everyone of us went on to think and write about Kant's philosophy. Charlie and I were the organizers of the little group, and most of the sessions took place at our apartment. The other three were Hubert Dreyfus, Stephen Barker, and Samuel Todes.

Bert Dreyfus is definitely in the running, after Benny Muckenhoupt, as an unforgettable character. He was a very small man, perhaps 5' 4" or so, and surely no more than 95 pounds, with bright orange hair. His brother Stuart, who was into electronics and such, was almost a carbon copy, except that his hair was closer to purple. Bert had written an undergraduate honors thesis on the philosophy of science, but he was now very much engaged with the French philosophical school called Phenomenology, and in fact the next year went off to Paris to study with Merleau-Ponty. Despite his size, Bert was a ferociously fast eater, and I credit him with my superb technique with chopsticks. Every so often, a group of us would get some money together and go to the newly opened Joyce Chen Chinese Restaurant on Alewife Brook Parkway. We would order a round of dishes, all share in them, and then split the check equally. If you were not adept with the chopsticks, you would not get your fair share of the food, and Bert was so fast that the rest of us were forced to ramp up our digital dexterity in self-defense. Bert was actually

very successful with women, a fact that mystified the rest of us, and he eventually developed a relationship with a lovely young artist, Adair Moffat, who somewhat later made me a beautiful chinese screen decorated with musical motifs. Adair, as we shall see, was instrumental in my meeting the woman who eventually become my wife.

Bert's close friend, Sam Todes, was a slender man with a shock of dark hair and a raspy, ironic voice. All of stood in awe of Sam, because he seemed to have in his head an entire systematic philosophy, as elaborate in its way as that of Kant himself, which he was patiently waiting to unfold in a series of books. Bert swore that Sam had actually been born with this system in his head, and two years later, when Bert returned from his year in France, he reported that the very latest theories that Merleau-Ponty revealed to his inner circle of students consisted of ideas that Sam had long since arrived at on his own. Eventually, in a brilliant *tour de force*, Sam wrote a doctoral dissertation that was a kind of materialist version of Kant's Transcendental Idealism, called, as I recall, "The Lived Body as the Ground of the Unity of the Material World."

Steve Barker was a bit older than the rest of us, and far and away the sanest of the lot. A slender man with sandy hair and an air of perpetual amusement at the follies of the world, he was reputed to have accomplished the astonishing feat of scoring a perfect string of A's on the four Preliminary Examinations, a height previously scaled, to the best of our knowledge, only by Hao Wang.

The five of us would gather each Wednesday and work our way slowly through perhaps twenty pages of the *Critique*, debating their meaning, offering interpretations, puzzling over the most impenetrable passages. Despite the fact that all of us had been introduced to Kant by

Lewis, we took widely divergent approaches to the text. Sam and I were the most diametrically opposed in our readings. I was dismissive of Kant's elaborate organizational schemes, which Kant scholars call his "architectonic," brushing them aside in an effort to get at the core idea underlying the philosophically most challenging passages. Sam insisted that the structure of the book was itself an important part of Kant's philosophical message, and he strove constantly to impute some deeper significance to the highly formulaic manner in which Kant had arranged his sections and subsections. This conflict came to a hilarious climax one evening after we had all become rather punch drunk from anguishing over a particularly intractable paragraph.

In an early section of the *Transcendental Analytic*, Kant presents a table which purports to exhibit the logically different kinds of judgments that can be made -- affirmative, negative, universal, particular, and so forth. If you combined these in all the ways possible, you could come up with twenty-seven distinct types of judgments. In the Second Edition of the *Critique*, Kant had rewritten the central passage of the entire book, and as an aid to following the argument, had divided it into sub-sections, which numbered -- *mirabile dictu* -- twenty-seven. In what I can only describe as a state of divine philosophical intoxication, Sam proceeded to argue that each subsection of this new version of the Transcendental Deduction corresponded exactly to one of the twenty-seven forms of judgment.

It was utterly mad, of course, a product of the sort of mind set that would, some years later, generate elaborate conspiracy theories to demonstrate that mankind's first walk on the moon had been staged in a television studio. But Sam persevered with a glint of ironic amusement in his eye, and we finally all collapsed in laughter and declared him the winner.

Those Wednesday evening meetings were the only time in my life that I have experienced the Platonic Ideal of education -- a group of serious, engaged friends, debating theses and interpreting texts for the pure love of ideas. By mid-year, we had made it through the first half of the *Critique* -- the sections entitled *The Transcendental Aesthetic* and *The Transcendental Analytic*. At that point we set aside the First *Critique* and turned to Kant's Third Critique, the *Critique of Judgment*. The Third *Critique* at that time was almost never paid any serious attention by students of Kant, but in the Nineteenth Century, it had actually had a wider influence, both on philosophy and on the Romantic movement in literature and the arts, than any of his other writings. It is a very odd book, a conjunction of two subjects with no apparent relation to one another: beauty in the arts and teleological explanation in the sciences. We labored over it determinedly for a semester, but to this day, I confess myself puzzled by its core meaning.

The graduate student experience is very different from that of undergraduates, even though one sometimes encounters both sorts of students in the same courses and seminars. For undergraduates, the world is the college, but for graduate students the world narrows to the department. It was there that we focused our energies and made our lives. It wasn't all books, exams, papers, and dissertations, of course. There was a social life of a sort, though as anyone will attest who has spent time in an Arts and Sciences graduate program, there is very little of the sort of partying that seems to be the principal concern of undergraduates. For us, the locus of such collective life as we enjoyed was the graduate Philosophy Club, whose principal function was to invite outside speakers to the campus. The department gave us a budget, but it was up to

us to choose the speakers, issue the invitations, and shepherd the visitors about when they showed up.

By long tradition, the members of the Harvard Philosophy Department failed to show up when a speaker appeared, a practice so at odds with the general custom in the Academy that the visitors must have been utterly mystified by it. I often wondered whether the more sensitive of them took the absence of faculty as some sort of obscure insult. But it was wonderful for us, of course, because it meant that we got to ask questions, rather than sitting plastered to our seats while the faculty hogged the discussion period.

Far and away the most memorable visit that first year actually produced a deviation from this custom. The department was seeking to recruit a junior philosopher, and asked us to invite the two candidates for talks so that the members of the faculty could size them up. The first candidate, Rogers Albritton, arrived from Cornell to give a talk on Plato. I was the Treasurer of the Club that year, and was tapped to chair the meeting. When I arrived at the room in the Graduate Center that we had booked for the talk, I discovered to my astonishment that every single senior member of the department had showed up. It was the first time that any of us had ever seen all the members of the department in one place, and judging from their subsequent behavior, it may have been a first for the faculty as well. Aiken plopped himself down next to Firth on a couch just to the left of the speaker, and all during the talk made quite audible remarks out of the side of his mouth, while Firth, a very proper Quaker, tried by every trick of body language to communicate that he was not listening and indeed was not actually there.

Albritton was a short man with short, tightly curled white-blond hair and an odd, quirky manner that appeared to have been derived from Wittgenstein's famously idiosyncratic behavior. He was very brilliant, very convoluted, with those odd hand gestures and twistings of the wrist that Wittgenstein's disciples affected. His talk was a complex, scholarly exploration of the so-called "third man" argument in Plato's *Parmenides*. Philosophers had been chewing over the paradoxes and puzzles in the *Parmenides* for twenty-five hundred years, and Albritton very quickly was up to his eyeballs in quibbles and cavils and digressions.

When Albritton finally ground to a halt, every single member of the faculty raised his hand to ask a question. I panicked. If I called on Firth first, Aiken's nose would be out of joint. If I called on White first, Wild would be irritated. I fell back on tradition, and called on Demos, who was the oldest member of the department now that Lewis was retired. The question period went along quietly enough until Williams offered the view that the forms could participate in themselves. At that, Quine perked up, and inquired whether that meant that the form of humanity could participate in itself. Yes, Williams replied. So the form of humanity is a man? Well, that was a dangerous path to go down, but Williams was stubborn, and stuck to his guns. Yes, he said. So then, Quine inquired quizzically, the form of humanity has arms and legs and hair and teeth? Yes, Williams insisted, steadfastly and implausibly.

Along about now, Albritton gave the appearance of fearing that he had gotten off the bus at the wrong stop and had wandered into the local mental hospital. Meanwhile, Williams and Quine had totally forgotten that they were there to evaluate the speaker for a potential job offer,



and got more and more hotly involved in their dispute, while the rest of the faculty watched what was fast becoming a blood sport.

At long last, the hour allotted for questions was over, whereupon the faculty disappeared, leaving me to guide the shaken Albritton back to his hotel for the night. He was clearly convinced that he had totally blown any chance he might have for joining the Harvard Philosophy Department, although it was difficult for him to see what he had done wrong. But the joke was on him. He got the job.

The Harvard Philosophy Club was also the site of my most brilliant triumph as a graduate student. The occasion was a talk by the famous logician, Alonzo Church. Church was a big, broad man with a large, open face and an extremely ponderous speaking manner. He uttered each word carefully and precisely, as though he were etching it with a chisel in marble. As he spoke, he wrote precise, careful lines of logic on the rolling blackboard that had been brought in for the occasion. Fairly quickly, most of the audience passed from mild interest to boredom to somnolence. Finally, with the board entirely covered with logical symbols, Church stopped speaking. There was a long pause while everybody cast about for something, anything, to ask.

I was as completely at sea as everyone else, my eye idly following along as Church wrote on the board. But I noticed that there was a right parenthesis missing from the end of one of the lines. Quine had drummed into us the importance of counting to make sure that we had the same number of left and right parentheses, not a trivial task when writing a formula with many sub-formulae nested inside the larger ones. I raised my hand, and said, "Excuse me, Professor Church, but I believe you have omitted a right parenthesis from the end of the eleventh line."

Church reacted with a start, looked at the board, and then became elaborately apologetic, thanking me for catching this significant error, as though I had actually called one of his arguments into question. He picked up the chalk and with great care, inscribed the missing right parenthesis at the end of the line.

People looked at me with a mixture of respect and awe. Bob Wolff must really know what is going on, they all but said out loud. I sat back, satisfied to have saved Professor Church from an egregious error. At that point, Quine, who was sitting next to me, asked a real question, for of course he understood perfectly what Church had been talking about, and the two of them quite happily carried on an extended colloquy. I had the great good sense to keep my mouth shut, so as not to reveal that I hadn't a clue. My reputation was made.

While I was in Europe, I had actually achieved my first scholarly publication. The only part of my undergraduate honors thesis that had been even vaguely original was a brief passage of several pages in which I showed that Gilbert Ryle, in *Concept of Mind*, was guilty of an internal inconsistency with regard to the account he gave of something he called "agitations." White had suggested that I submit it as a note to *Mind*, a leading British philosophy journal edited by Ryle. Apparently Ryle had the reputation of encouraging young philosophers, even when they disagreed with him. It had been accepted, and appeared as "Professor Ryle's Discussion of Agitations." Now some chap named Corbett had published a criticism of my criticism of Ryle, and I was given the chance to submit a two-page reply, which appeared the following year as "A Reply to Mr. Corbett." At long last, I had been invited to come down from the steps in my family's living room and enter the conversation.

As one might expect, the Harvard Philosophy Department drew to itself a varied and very gifted group of doctoral students, many of whom have gone on to extremely distinguished careers. One of the most unusual of our number was a Jesuit Priest who had fled from Hungary and come to Boston. His name was Zeno Vendler -- after the ancient Greek philosopher who had propounded a number of famous paradoxes, I imagine -- and although he was steeped in the theological traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, his real philosophical interest was in the school of analytic philosophy that had recently come over from England under the name, "Ordinary Language Philosophy." This was a species of philosophical argument that made much of subtle nuances of English usage. So an Ordinary Language philosopher might devote an entire scholarly article to discussing the differences among a *mistake*, an *accident*, and a *misstep*. We could describe the decision to invade Iraq as a *mistake*, but it would clearly be wrong to describe it as an *accident*, as though we had set out to invade Syria and had become lost in the desert -- that sort of thing.

Now, Zeno's native language was of course Hungarian, and he also spoke several other European languages, not to speak of the conversational Latin that he employed as a Jesuit when traveling abroad in priestly circles. English must have been his fourth or fifth language, yet he exhibited a sensitivity to the small differences among English words that we native speakers had a hard time matching. Even though each of us was required to demonstrate a "reading knowledge" of two languages in order to get the Ph. D., we were for the most part monolingual in the customary American fashion, and we viewed this European facility with languages with awe. Zeno was also a geography buff, something he had in common with Quine, and I can still

see the two of them peering at the bas relief map of Eurasia that decorated the wall where we held our Philosophy Club meetings, competing with one another to identify obscure tributaries of Siberian rivers.

All of us were fascinated and puzzled by Zeno's ability to keep separate the theological teachings of the Church on the one hand, which owed their philosophical underpinnings to the writings of the great thirteenth century Scholastic St. Thomas Aquinas, and the analytic philosophy of England and America on the other, which was modern and thoroughly secular in orientation. He explained to us that he placed them in entirely separate compartments of his mind, somewhat in keeping with the medieval doctrine of the "Double Truth." He would have been perfectly content to continue in this fashion, being a priest and doing philosophy, more or less like someone patting his head and rubbing his stomach simultaneously, but the Boston Irish hierarchy, lacking the refined flexibility for which their French and German counterparts were known, refused to allow it. When he tried to introduce Goodman's writings to seminary students he had been assigned to teach, they cracked down on him and drove him from the Church. Like many other defrocked priests, he married a good Catholic girl named Helen Hennessy, who as Helen Hennessy Vendler went on to become one of America's leading literary critics.

Money was a problem for most of us in graduate school, and even those who were fortunate enough to secure Teaching Fellowships were constantly up against it. My letters home are filled with detailed itemizations of my expenses and the bits of cash that I was able to lay my hands on. By this point, my parents were pretty comfortably fixed, inasmuch as my father was a high school principal and their monthly mortgage payment was still only \$29.27 a month, but I

was determined to be financially independent, and considered it unreasonable to ask my parents for help. As a consequence, I was always on the lookout for odd jobs. Difficult as it will be for those who know me personally to credit, my most lucrative source of extra money came from serving as a male model. Here is how it happened.

When I was in school, my Aunt Rosabelle [my father's baby sister] and my Uncle Anoch [an orthopedic surgeon] had a summer home in Brewster, New York, in addition to the house in Jamaica that also served as my uncle's medical office. Their neighbor in Brewster was an artist named Arthur Lidov whose highly realistic paintings had on occasion appeared on the covers of *Scientific American*. Lidov fascinated me. He was a stocky man with a van Dyke beard who had gone to the University of Chicago during the glory days of Robert Maynard Hutchins, and like all graduates of Chicago, he exhibited a bookish love of ideas that I found irresistible. He and his wife Vickie became very close friends of my uncle and aunt, and served as courtesy aunt and uncle in turn to their three daughters, Miriam, Judith, and Ruth. His striking portrait of the three girls graced the dining room in Jamaica, taking on a memorial significance after Judy's tragic death in a riding accident.

Some years later, Arthur and Vickie broke up, and Vickie entered into a relationship with a commercial photographer, Walt Fischman. Vickie and Walt lived in Greenwich Village, where they came in my mind to exemplify the *avant garde* life. They took me to Chinatown and introduced me to the mysteries of chopsticks. It was in their apartment one evening that I first heard the exquisite old Dietrich Fischer-Diskau recording of Buxtehude's haunting motet, *Apperite Mihi Portas Justitiae*.

Walt made his money from a how-to-fix-it column he wrote regularly for the *New York Daily News*, illustrated with photographs he took of projects in various stages of completion. He decided to do a column on re-upholstering an easy chair, and he wanted a nice looking pair of hands holding the upholstery tools. No faces, you understand, just hands. I wouldn't go so far as to say that my hands are my best feature, but they are not noticeably deformed or warty, so Walt offered me the job. I went down to their apartment for the day, posed holding various hammers and screwdrivers in a reasonable simulacrum of actual upholstery, and was paid the extraordinary sum of fifty dollars. This does not sound like much now, but it was well over a month's rent for me, for several hours of work made doubly pleasant by the opportunity to see Walt and Vickie. Over the next year and a half I posed several times for Walt. This was clearly a major step up from inventorying a Robert Hall clothing store.

All during that first year, I was steadily reading the scholarly secondary literature on Hume and Kant, in preparation for the moment when I would start writing my dissertation. I actually managed at one point to work my way through *Kants Lehre von der Doppelten Affektion Unseres Ich als Schlüssel zu Seiner Erkenntnistheorie*, by the great German Kant scholar Erich Adickes. My original plan was to spend the summer of 1956 drafting a twenty page thesis prospectus or outline, on the basis of which Aiken and Firth would examine me for two hours the following Fall, but as I tried to construct the outline, I kept finding myself putting down complete sentences on the page instead of headings and sub-headings, so I finally gave in to whatever inner need was impelling me, and began to write my dissertation.

There were typewriters in those days, of course, and perhaps even electric typewriters, though I never actually used one. But for something as important as my doctoral dissertation, I felt a need to use a pen and a pad of unlined paper. I would sit at the desk in my room, late at night, hunched over the pad, scrawling sentence after sentence. In the other room, Charlie would read Proust and Mann in the original -- to brush up his French and German, he explained -- or he would improve his Dutch so as to be able to study the constructivist mathematical theories of L. E. J. Brouwer.

This is a good a place to say something more about my roommate, for we spent a great deal of time together during the two years that we shared an apartment. Charlie had a nice sense of humor, and a razor sharp mind, but his upbringing and family experiences, I came to realize, had caused him a good deal of emotional damage, and he had a tendency to brood. From time to time, as I was writing line after line of my dissertation, he would let out a little groan in the next room, and say, with something of a self-amused theatrical flair that nevertheless carried a tone of underlying seriousness, "Oh, I am so wicked. Oh, I am so evil." Needless to say, this was rather unnerving for someone trying to grind out pages.

One story will give some sense of the burdens laid upon him by his parents. Our second year together, Charlie very kindly invited me to join his family for Thanksgiving dinner at their colonial Belmont home. When we arrived, we found that the party was to consist of his father, his mother, his older sister, Anne, an anthropologist who tragically committed suicide some years later, and his younger sister, Susan. Also present was his aunt. Before the meal, we sat in the living room and drank little glasses of elderberry wine that the family had made on their New

Hampshire farm. This was in the days before yuppie rustication, and the farm was genuinely primitive, with no electricity and an outside privy.

A topic was proposed for discussion during the taking of the wine, and we entered into a lively debate, while papa sat in a corner with a pad and pen and wrote another book, nodding into the conversation from time to time without actually joining it. At issue was whether it would be immoral for the aunt to buy a new car before her present vehicle had entirely worn out. Strong views were offered pro and con, but in the end, a consensus was reached that this would indeed be immoral. At no time, I am happy to say, did the discussion descend to the level of considerations of prudence. It was all on a high moral plane.

Finally dinner was served. After we had seated ourselves around the table, Mrs. Parsons, who was herself a social scientist, turned to Anne and said, "Anne, would you bring in the potatoes, please?" She then explained to me, as the guest, "It is traditional in our family for the older daughter to bring in the potatoes." Next, she turned to Susan, and said, "Susan, would you bring in the vegetables?" Once again, she explained, "In our family, it is traditional for the younger daughter to bring in the vegetables." Finally, she turned to her husband, and said, "Talcott, would you carve the turkey?" Yet again, "It is traditional in our family for the father to carve the turkey."

At first, I was utterly mystified by these elaborate explanations, until, with a flash of methodological insight, I realized what was going on. This was a collection of intellectuals who had read in books that one of the latent functions of social rituals was to preserve the unity of kin structures. So they were deliberately, by the numbers as it were, reenacting a social ritual that



they had self-consciously created in an effort to reinforce the ties that bound them. It was a textbook exercise, complete in every way save for any vestige of spontaneous feeling or manifest pleasure.

Professor Parsons proceeded to address the bird, a big, beautifully cooked production to which he applied a carefully sharpened carving knife. He made a series of passes that barely damaged the turkey, producing a neat stack of extremely thin slices. Each plate received one of them, together with a spoonful of the potatoes and the vegetables, a bit of stuffing, and a dollop of gravy. Then we dug in.

Coming as I do from a culture in which eating occupies pride of place among all the bodily functions, including sex, I inhaled my plate of food almost before the others had taken up their knives and forks, and looked around expectantly for seconds. But they were not to be. The turkey, still almost whole, was returned to the kitchen, and plates were ceremonially cleared, ready to be washed, though in my eyes they barely needed it.

Waste not, want not. After the Parsons family had stripped the turkey of its meat, a process that took some days, Charlie inherited the bones, which he then proceeded to attempt to turn into turkey soup. The barren carcass must have boiled on our stove for hours before Charlie finally threw in the towel and added a can of Campbell's turkey soup to the mix. We ate it for dinner.

Charlie's principal academic virtue was, of course, his brilliance of mind, a quality that I came to value in our weekly meetings of the Kant Group. But as a sort of aside, he also seemed

to manage to know everything. This was especially useful to someone like me who has a sieve for a mind. On days when I had sections to teach, I would sit at the breakfast table with my notes and ask Charlie, "When was Leibniz born?" or "What was Descartes' first publication?" Invariably, Charlie knew the answer. It was much easier than looking things up. In our circle of friends, Charlie became famous for this knack, and we developed our own theory of knowledge in response, the sole axiom of which was, "If Charlie doesn't know it, then you can stop looking, because it isn't known."

Charlie led a rather lonely life for the most part, but several months into our first year together, he developed a strong and very rewarding connection with a woman who was sharing an apartment with the woman I was seeing. He blossomed and came out of himself considerably, so that for a while, we actually double dated.

As the year wound to a close, I completed my reading of the secondary literature and began to write my doctoral dissertation. I had continued my undergraduate practice of working late into the night and sleeping in, though I had to pry myself out of bed on Thursday and Friday mornings to meet my discussion sections of Philosophy 1. As each day ended, I would compulsively count the words I had written and place a running total in parentheses in the text, at the end of the last paragraph of the day. I don't mean that I *estimated* the number -- eleven hundred, eight hundred, fourteen hundred and fifty. I *counted* each word, so the running tally might read 5,631 or 9,442. I worried a great deal about how many words I was producing, but not at all about whether they were any good. In some obscure way that I do not really

understand, this quirky habit seems to me to be connected with my equally strange competition with Barbara, which focused on how fast I was progressing rather than on how well I was doing.

There were no xerox machines in those days, and since I was writing, rather than typing, I could not make carbons of what I turned out each day. As a result, I lived in constant fear of somehow losing the sheets that contained the only record of my slowly unfolding dissertation. I began to develop the habit of carrying my dissertation around with me in my briefcase, so that even if there were a fire at 1134 Mass. Ave, I would be able to save it.

Quite often, I would take a break from writing in the middle of the night and go out for a cup of coffee. There were three all night cafeterias in Harvard Square at that time -- Hayes Bickford's, Albiani's, and the Waldorf Cafeteria. As an undergraduate, I had settled on Hayes Bickford's as my turf, in part because it was just across Mass. Ave. from Matthews Hall in the Yard, where I had lived as a Freshman. It was in fact at Hayes Bick's that I first learned to drink coffee, a fact that ruined me for good coffee for some time. The Bick was a Harvard institution, frequented by undergraduates as well as graduate students. It was a brightly lit, utilitarian place at the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Dunster Street [I think – it is no longer there]. Plate glass windows on the street, metal tables and chairs, and a counter at the back where you could get the usual cafeteria fare.

Harvard in those days had a rather peculiar student culture, composed in equal parts of exhibitionism and studied indifference. When one student did something bizarre in an attempt to get noticed, everyone else would put on a game face and studiously pretend not to be impressed. One night, a Radcliffe undergraduate walked into the Bick with an iguana on her shoulder,

secured by a little leash. No one batted an eye. On another evening, a group of Final Club types in tails walked in, set down a linen table cloth and a pair of silver candelabra, laid out a complete formal setting of silver, and proceeded to have coffee and muffins. No one looked up. I tried turning a cartwheel on Massachusetts Avenue in full daylight, wearing the kilt I had purchased at the Edinburgh Festival -- no one took any notice.

I would enter the Bick carrying my briefcase, and instead of setting it down at a table while I ordered my coffee, I would clutch it and juggle the coffee so as not to have to lose physical contact with my thesis. Like as not, I would run in to two of my fellow graduate students, Joe Ullian and Dudley Shapere, and we would spend a few moments consoling one another on the stresses of writing a doctoral dissertation.

Both Joe and Dudley were rather unusual. Joe was a logician, and actually collaborated with Quine somewhat later on, a considerable coup. His father was an engineer; his mother claimed to be the first woman ever to earn a doctorate in Economics at Harvard. Joe was a fanatic sports fan and record keeper. He attended hundreds of baseball and basketball games, sometimes flying to another city just to catch a game, and he kept complete box scores of every game he attended. He could actually tell you what a ball player was batting "for him," by which he meant the player's batting average for the games Joe had seen him play. I once went to Fenway with Joe, and he couldn't sit in the same seat for more than an inning or two. Just as we had settled down in the left field stands he would jump up and insist that we move to short right, or behind home plate, or out to the bleachers. All the while, as we moved around, he would keep up a running commentary in a rasping, nasal voice laced with sardonic asides.

Dudley was a gaunt, sepulchral man with jet black hair and a long face rather like a Jolly Roger skull. He was a philosopher of science, a hot shot ping pong player, and during a stint in the army, he had befriended the young Hugh Hefner, with the result that he had a courtesy gold key to the first Playboy Club.

When Dudley got engaged to Alfreda Bingham, he asked Joe and me to stand up for him at the wedding. Elfy and Dudley were as different as two people could be. She was slender, blond, pretty, and from a famous old upper crust Connecticut family. Her father, Alfred, had started the progressive magazine *Common Sense* in 1931. Her grandfather, Hiram Bingham, was descended from a seventeenth century Colonial American family. He was the discoverer of Machu Picchu, and later served in the United States Senate for eight years. Dudley was marrying royalty.

The Bingham family went in for large families. Hiram had sired seven children, all of whom had married and themselves produced many children. When Joe and I arrived at the Bingham compound, we were surrounded, not so say engulfed, by Bingham family. The compound was dominated by an authentic Japanese tea house that Hiram had brought back from his travels. He himself had died the previous year, but his widow presided over the large extended family, receiving graciously the raucous greetings of her scores of grandchildren.

This was my first encounter with the phenomenon of the WASP upper classes, and I was simultaneously charmed and apprehensive for Dudley. Everyone was engagingly friendly, quite prepared to include two strangers in their parties, swimming, dancing, and general merriment, but I had the distinct sense that if one married a Bingham, one gave up one's own identity and

was simply absorbed into the collective. In a quite harmless, well-intentioned way, they were a bit like the Borg. The marriage lasted long enough for Elfy and Dudley to have a son and a daughter, but it broke up, and I lost touch with them both later on.

Writing all the while, and grading a summer school course for White to make a bit of money, I still found time in the summer of 1956 to make my first and last theatrical appearance. The occasion was a production of John Gay's great eighteenth century romp, *The Beggar's Opera*, staged as part of a summer festival in Sanders Theater. Shirley Jones, of *Oklahoma* fame, had been signed up for Polly Peachum, and her new husband, Jack Cassidy, took the role of MacHeath. Daniel Pinkham arranged and wrote additional music and played harpsichord. A call went out for singers to serve as the pit chorus for the eight performances. Since the pay -- one dollar per performance -- did not draw a terribly distinguished group of applicants, I managed to make it past the audition. We were all fitted out with rags and fright wigs in order to appear as a mob of beggars jailed in debtor's prison.

I have always loved the music, which consists of a lovely collection of songs that Gay adapted from Handel operas and popular tunes of the day. Cassidy was only so-so, although he sings better than Laurence Olivier did in the movie. Shirley Jones had a lovely soprano voice, and was very fetching as Polly. But the show was stolen by the basso who played her father. He was a great comic actor, as well as having a big, rich voice. Pinkham adapted a bravura Handel aria for him at the last moment to take advantage of his talents. What impressed me most was the enormous belch, clearly audible in the last row of the theater, with which he began the first act as the curtain went up.

By the end of the summer, I had written a hundred pages, consisting of most of my new interpretation of the *Treatise*. I submitted it to my committee and prepared to defend it in an oral examination. The practice of having students make a preliminary defense of a portion of the dissertation was new, having just been substituted for the older practice of requiring students to take an oral examination on some general field in Philosophy. The idea was to move students along somewhat faster, so that there wouldn't be so many seventh, eighth, and ninth year graduate students who had still not finished up.

As soon as the oral exam started, it was clear that there was going to be trouble. Aiken led off with some questions about Hume, and perhaps recalling our passage at arms five years earlier, he challenged my reading of a central passage in Book I of the *Treatise*. I responded by opening the book to the passage and reading it out, reiterating my interpretation. Aiken said that that was not what Hume had said. I insisted it was, and read the passage out again. Aiken said I was wrong. By now, I was getting steamed, and I jumped up, wrote the passage out on the blackboard, and pointed at it, virtually shouting, "There it is! Look at it! Do you see the words on the blackboard? That is what Hume wrote!"

It went on this way for an hour and forty-five minutes, while Firth shrank farther and farther back in his chair. Finally, Aiken subsided, and Firth asked fifteen minutes of desultory questions about Kant. I was asked to wait outside in the hall while the two of them conferred on my grade. The door opened, and Aiken said, rather sullenly, "Well, Bob, it is a pass, but it is not a distinguished pass." Then he walked off, leaving me utterly traumatized.

News of the fiasco must have circulated pretty quickly around the department, for two days later, White, now chairman, called me into his office. "Look, Bob," he said in a kindly avuncular tone, "I think you need to view Professor Aiken as an obstacle on the way to the degree, not as the audience for your dissertation. If you have to alter something in the thesis, or adjust your views somewhat, you shouldn't feel badly about it. You should just do it so that you can finish up." At the time, I did not realize how extraordinary this advice was, nor what a breach of academic decorum it was for White to talk this way to a student about another professor.

I had no intention of altering a word in my dissertation, regardless of what Aiken thought, but that was a rather risky course of action, because a significant number of doctoral dissertations in Philosophy were actually turned down at the final oral defense, after the candidate had gone to the expense of having it typed up formally for submission. Only years later did I discover that the general practice in the Academy was quite different.

At every other university I have ever known, the candidate submits each chapter to the director as it is written, for comments, criticisms, and suggested revisions. Only when the director is ready to judge the entire dissertation as satisfactory is it typed up, submitted to the rest of the committee, and defended publicly. If a dissertation makes it all the way to the oral defense and is then rejected, that is as much a judgment against the director as against the candidate. But Harvard regularly permitted doctoral students to submit dissertations that no faculty member had vetted. Indeed, Firth actually considered it *inappropriate* for him to read a student's thesis before it was submitted. He thought that if he read a dissertation and told the student to go ahead and



submit it for defense, he would thereby have compromised his objectivity and would no longer be free to vote against it at the oral. I would estimate that fully half of all the philosophy dissertations that came to the oral defense were rejected, so that the student had to go back and rewrite, hoping to make it through the next time.

People clearly remembered the story of my violent clash with Aiken at the preliminary oral, for when the time came for me to defend the entire dissertation later that next Spring, every single member of the department showed up, an unheard of deviation from the customary practice. Demos began the questioning. "Tell me, Mr. Wolff," he asked, "what got you interested in philosophy?" The questions continued at roughly that level of difficulty for an uneventful two hours, until, with a collective sigh of relief, the faculty declared that I had defended my dissertation satisfactorily, and voted to award me the degree.

Not too long after the fight with Aiken, an entirely extraneous matter arose, one that I had long anticipated and viewed with considerable apprehension. I received a letter from the local draft board in Queens, ordering me to report for a physical, mental, and moral examination to determine my fitness to serve in the Armed Forces. I was about to be drafted.

A few words of explanation are required for those who have grown up in the era of the all-volunteer army. In the '50s, the Army was still filling its ranks with men drafted under the Selective Service system. Each man who was judged fit to serve could be drafted for two years of active duty in the Army, to be followed by three years in the Army Reserve. Young men were required to register with the Selective Service system when they turned eighteen, and were then eligible to be drafted until they were twenty-six. It was possible to get a 2-S student deferment if

one was a full-time student in good standing, but once a man had received a student deferment, he was eligible to be drafted until the age of thirty-five. But the Army really had no interest in drafting men in their late twenties and early thirties. They were more trouble than they were worth. So in practice, if you got a student deferment, and managed to stay in school, renewing it year after year, until your twenty-sixth birthday, you were effectively home free.

This was the moment when my manic race to overtake my sister caught up with me. I had never needed a student deferment, because the Army, working its way down from older to younger eligible men, was tapping the twenty-two and twenty-three year olds for the draft. Since I was planning to finish up the next Spring, when I would be twenty-three, it was clear I would have to serve.

I passed the mental portion of the exam without trouble -- it was little more than a test of basic literacy, and I would have had a hard time convincing the examining sergeant that a doctoral student at Harvard was not adequately literate for the Army, even if I had wanted to. I also got past the physical, despite a letter from the doctor who had treated me for childhood asthma [adult asthma would in fact have gotten me out of serving] and a letter from Dr. Schaffner concerning my adolescent emotional problems [the Army was rather more broad-minded about these matters than Swarthmore College, and besides, considering their line of work, they did not consider fears of death irrational.] But I ran into difficulty on the moral portion of the test.

This was actually a cursory security check, consisting of a series of questions keyed to a copy of the Attorney General's List of subversive organizations. "Have you ever belonged to

any of the following organizations? Have you ever had any business dealings with any of the following organizations? Have you ever attended a meeting of one of the following organizations? Have you ever attended a public function sponsored by one of the following organizations?" And so forth. I looked over the immensely long list. The Communist Party of the United States was prominently featured, but also included were obscure organizations that I had never heard of. Then my eye caught AYD -- the American Youth for Democracy. I remembered that I had attended a Town Hall Pete Seeger concert sponsored by AYD [or maybe it was YPA -- Young Progressives of America -- I could never keep them straight.] So I checked the "yes" box next to that one.

Right in the middle of the mental test, which came next, a sergeant strode into the room where we were filling out the forms and in a parade ground voice shouted, "Wolff, Robert P." I was pulled out of the room and asked a series of questions. A week later, two FBI agents in suits and ties showed up at 1134 Mass. Ave. and spent an hour quizzing me. They returned a week later, claiming rather implausibly that they had lost their notes, and asked me the same questions all over again, presumably to see whether I would tell the same story.

Eventually, the Army, in its infinite wisdom, decided that attendance at a Pete Seeger concert did not make me entirely unfit for duty, although it must have raised some doubts about the extent to which I would be able to bond with my fellow recruits to achieve a militarily desirable level of unit cohesion. But along the way to this resolution of the matter, I was temporarily re-classified 4-F, and I am rather ashamed to report that this elicited from me a rather craven response. Here it is in its entirety:

1134 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge 38, Mass.

15 March, 1957

Selective Service System

Local Board #66

39-01 Main Street

Flushing, N. Y.

Sirs:

I have received official notification of the change in my classification to 4F. At present I do not know the reasons for that alteration, but the fact that I underwent a security investigation leads me to believe that the outcome of the investigation may have influenced the decision of the board. If this is the case, I should like to file a formal notice of appeal with you. I am, and have always been, a loyal citizen of the United States, and I am ready to serve my country in the Armed Forces, or in any other way that my government shall deem fit. Thank you.

Yours truly,

Robert Paul Wolff

S.S. No. 50-66-33-742

The draft board responded by informing me *both* that there was no right of appeal to a classification of 4-F, *and* that I had been re-classified 1-A. Those who have come to know me in later years as a defender of the anarchist position that no organized government is morally legitimate may well take this as irrefutable evidence of clay feet.

Once it became clear that I would meet the April 1 thesis submission deadline for those who wished to receive the degree at the June Commencement, I began to worry about what I would do once I had the degree in hand. The obvious answer was a teaching position at a college or university, and I asked White and Firth to put me in for such jobs as might open up.

Nowadays, after decades of fair employment practices laws and Civil Rights and feminist protests, the academic marketplace is governed by an elaborate system of rules designed to give every aspiring young would-be professor an equal chance to present his or her credentials for consideration. In a field like Philosophy, all available positions, even at the most prestigious schools, are listed in a publication of the American Philosophical Association called *Jobs for Philosophers*. There are strict deadlines for the submission of applications, and the initial review of the applicant pool is followed by personal interviews at the annual professional meetings. At my own university, which is punctilious about such matters, an essential step in the announcement of an opening is a meeting with the Associate Chancellor for Equal Opportunity, who then reviews the steps the department must take to insure an absolutely fair and transparent process. Even though the current holder of that position is the Chair of my own department, we were required to meet with her before announcing an opening last year. [Written in 2003, remember]

None of this was even contemplated by visionary reformers in 1957. The old boy network was not merely alive and well; it was the only mechanism for placing new Ph. D.'s in entry-level teaching positions. When a department had an opening, the Chair would write to the handful of graduate departments known to be turning out philosophers, and would ask whether they had anyone suitable at the moment. A few phone calls or a note to a friend would lead to an interview, and the young aspirant would be placed. It was easy, efficient, comfortable, and thoroughly unfair.

Despite my passages at arms with Henry Aiken, I had been doing well at Harvard, and my protector, Morton White, indicated that he thought I would have no trouble finding a good job. I didn't make up a *vita*, solicit letters, or mail out my dossier. I simply waited for the department to nominate me wherever they thought I would be a suitable candidate. And nominate me they did. My name was put in at Amherst College, at Duke University, at Wayne State University, and at many other schools whose names I cannot now call up. I traveled out to Amherst to be interviewed by Joe Epstein. I had an interview with George Nakhnikian of Wayne State while sitting on a bar stool. I was very definitely in play. Indeed, White told me he thought I would, in the end, have my choice of several jobs.

But nothing happened. One after another, the schools where my name had been put in let me know that they were not interested. As the Spring of 1957 progressed, I submitted my dissertation, defended it, taught my sections of Philosophy 1, and waited. Finally, I went to see White, in despair, and asked him to level with me. "This is my career," I said, "and it is ending before it has even begun. Is there something I don't know that is blocking me from getting a job?"

Is it my facial twitches? Has someone written a letter for me that has killed my chances?" White insisted that he was as mystified as I. He could not understand why I was not getting any play from the schools where my name had been put in, and he reiterated that he thought I should have a choice of positions.

In the end, White was right, though not quite in the way he imagined. He did *his* part. He called together a meeting of what I have always described in my mind as the Jewish Mafia: White himself; Burton Dreben, a logician, Quine student, and former Junior Fellow, who was now an Assistant Professor in the Department; and Marvin Fox, then a member of the Ohio State department. I wasn't there, of course, but as I understand it, White said to them, in effect, "This is a nice Jewish boy. We have to find something for him."

Finally, two weeks into May, I received *two* job offers on the same day. The first was a telegram from Ohio State, offering me an Instructorship with twelve hours of teaching a week at a salary of \$4,800 a year. The second was a letter from the President of the United States, that began "Greeting: You are ordered to report for induction into the Armed Forces of the United States, and to report at Joint Examination and Induction Station, 39 Whitehall Street, N. Y. C., at 7:30 a.m., on the 27<sup>th</sup> of May, 1957 (Rear Entrance)." Over the years, I have joked about this fiasco to my students, saying that after carefully weighing the two offers, I decided that the President's had better future prospects, and so I turned down the Ohio State job. But the truth is that when I finally came to it, I did not want to serve.

My reluctance was not motivated by a principled opposition to American military policy, nor by a fear of combat. Nineteen fifty-seven was a peaceful time in America, four years after the end of the Korean War and six years before the first "advisors" were dispatched by John Kennedy to Viet Nam. I simply thought that two years as a Private would be a monumental waste of time.

My first problem was to figure out some way to graduate. Harvard held its Commencements in June, and my induction date was May 27<sup>th</sup>. I petitioned my draft board to postpone my induction until after June 12<sup>th</sup>, so that I could receive my degree, and they agreed, re-classifying me 1-S-C until June 15, 1957. They turned down my request for a one-year deferment to allow me to take up the Ohio State job.

By now, with my dissertation approved and classes about over, there was nothing to do but hang out at Tulla's, a coffee house on Mt. Auburn Street that had become a favorite haunt of amateur folk singers and graduate students. I was sitting there one evening, complaining about having to go off to the Army for two years, when Henry Nunberg asked me why I didn't join the National Guard. Then I would only lose six months. Since I had, as a back-up plan, applied for, and had been awarded, a Social Science Research Council post-doctoral fellowship to study political theory, I could postpone the fellowship for six months and have something waiting for me when I came off active duty. "But I can't join the Guard," I replied. "I have been drafted. You can't join the Guard if you have been drafted." I pulled out the letter I had received from the draft board, granting me the delay so that I could graduate, but indicating that I would have to go as soon as the Commencement was over. Nunberg studied the letter, and then pointed out that the board had *cancel*ed the order of induction; they had not *postpon*ed it. Technically, he said, I



did not stand under an order of induction, regardless of what I and they knew they intended to do.

The very next day, I took the T to Central Square, found my way to the Guard Armory, and took an oath to defend Massachusetts from its enemies, foreign and domestic [which I interpreted to mean Connecticut.]. I was now a member of the Massachusetts National Guard, serial number NG 21-26-81-21.

On June 12, 1957, I marched in the Harvard Commencement, wearing the beautiful silk crimson doctoral robe that my parents had given to me as a graduation present. Charlie and I then closed down our apartment. He began a meticulous division of the kitchen crockery and utensils, but I told him with a wave of the hand to keep them. I put my books in storage, and waited for my induction date, meanwhile attending Tuesday evening meetings of the Guard, even though I did not yet have a uniform. On July 7<sup>th</sup>, I boarded a bus with a group of other Guard recruits for the drive to Fort Dix, New Jersey, where we would all go through Basic Training.

## Chapter Five A Martial Interlude

As we got off the bus at Dix, a sergeant started screaming at us. That pretty well set the tone of the next nine weeks. Basic Training used to be a rite of passage shared by a wide variety of young men in America. It may surprise those who know me through my radical political writings to hear that, in an odd way, I enjoyed the experience, and have for the past forty-five years been glad that it was thrust on me.

Not that it was fun, or that I liked it. It was bloody hell, and I hated every minute of it. But it was a stress-free sort of bloody hell, and I wasn't supposed to like it. In fact, it was the first place I had ever been that I felt perfectly free to dislike, and once I had absorbed this fact, I found Basic rather relaxing.

We spent the first four days at something called Reception Company, standing in endless lines to receive our boots, helmets, shirts, helmet liners, fatigues, dress uniforms, and other gear. Most of the time I just hung around, not getting much sleep because the young boys in the barracks were excited at being away from home for the first time and stayed up talking and playing loud music on their radios. Late in the week, we were sorted out into training companies, broken down into platoons, and sent off to the four corners of Fort Dix to start the official eight weeks of Basic.

I was assigned an upper in a double-decker bunk, above a big, slow-moving lunk named Wilson, who came from Boston. Each training company consisted of three platoons, and each platoon of three squads. The NCO's were mostly Korean War vets, a good many of them Black or Hispanic. This was the first time in my life that I had seen men in positions of authority who

were not White, but this made very little impression on me. Budding anarchist though I might be, I very quickly absorbed the fundamental rule of the Army, which was that it was the stripes on your arm or the insignia on your collar that mattered.

Those who have never served in the Army may imagine that military training is all about how to kill people. Not a bit of it. In eight weeks, we can't have spent more than eight or ten hours learning how to do things that could conceivably be injurious to anyone's health. The first thing we had to learn was how to make our beds. We were shown the secrets of hospital corners by a corporal who warned us that we would be inspected every day, and that each of us was expected to pull his top blanket so tight that he could bounce a quarter on it. Next we were shown the precise layout for the toilet articles in the top shelf of the footlocker that served as our closet, and also the precise position of the foot locker at the end of the bed. This, too, would be checked daily, and as we stood at attention each morning, the foot locker was to be open for inspection. Which brought up the matter of standing at attention. The Army had quite definite ideas about how one's fingers were to be curled when the hands were at one's sides, and took particular interest in whether one's thumbs were exactly aligned with the seams of one's fatigue trousers.

I have always been something of a neatnik. During the seven years that I lived on my own at Harvard and in Europe, I kept my room picked up and made my bed every day. When my sons come to visit me now, I am always astonished at the speed with which they can reduce a nice guest room to something that looks like a Goodwill drop-off center. So I was not too troubled by the Army's somewhat idiosyncratic notions of neatness.

We also spent a good deal of time in the early days learning how to march in step to commands, and how to stand at attention, at parade rest, and at ease [this last no less precise and regulated despite its name.] Now, marching is basically a form of folk dance, not too different from the East European kolos in which a group of men join hands and do identical steps in a circle. Done well, it is rhythmic, physically invigorating, and aesthetically pleasing, even when it is directed by a drill sergeant interspersing commands with imprecations. Anyone who has seen an old Busby Berkeley movie, watched the Radio City Music Hall Rockettes, or attended a performance of Riverdance will appreciate the attractions of synchronized movement.

When I was young, dancing was enormously important to me. I was, if I may say so unblushingly, a terrific fox trotter, jitterbugger, and folk dancer, although not in the same league as my sister, who had achieved performance levels in modern dance and folk dance. So I actually looked forward to our sessions on the parade ground. I especially liked the more intricate maneuvers, in which, on command, an entire platoon would wheel on its right foot and continue marching in the opposite direction, or turn abruptly to the right or left.

As we marched, we shouted out the old familiar marching chants, both to keep us in step and to lift our spirits. "Sound off! One two! Sound off! Three four! Sound off! One two three four one two -- three four." "You want to go home but you can't! You're right [this last shouted as the right foot hit the ground]. You want to go home but you can't! You're right! You want to go home where the buffalo roam but you're stuck at Fort Dix in a tent! You're right. Sound off! ..." and so forth.

The chants were usually led by the drill sergeant, but I was bored, and had nothing else to do, so I started making up new marching chants that incorporated bits of daily news from our platoon. The other men loved this, since it was a variation on the tedious old chants, and as I was doing this as part of a marching exercise, I could get away with some digs at the corporals and sergeants who were making our lives miserable. Very quickly, I became, in effect, the platoon minstrel.

I was also introduced almost immediately to the peculiar dialect of English spoken on Army bases. I was familiar with dialects like Pig Latin, of course, which consists of moving the first consonantal syllable to the end of a word and adding on "ay." But the Army dialect involved infixes as well as prefixes and suffixes. Although this was complicated, and took some getting used to, it was made easier by the fact that in every case, the prefix, infix, or suffix was some variant of the same basic phonological unit -- "fuck." I had used this word on occasion, of course, although it would be another decade before it became acceptable to use it in polite society. But I had never actually heard it inserted between two syllables of a multi-syllabic word, or even, in the hands of a real virtuoso, inserted several times into the very same word. Still, one could with a little practice achieve a certain rhythmic effectiveness that would have pleased a Welshman.

We also spent a considerable amount of time doing calisthenics, or p. t., as it was called. I had been a gymnast in high school, spending my phys. ed. period in the distinctive purple pants with gold seam of the Captain Corps, so I was in pretty good shape when I went off to college. Even though it had been seven years since I had done any sort of organized exercise, I was still

only twenty-three, and my body had not yet begun the long, slow, inexorable slide that I now struggle to impede with diet and dogged laps in a pool. It was mostly sit ups, push ups, assorted jumping jacks and such. The day was organized into one hour blocks, with fifty minutes for a class and a ten minute break for some exercise. There were incentives aside from the constant yelling of the sergeants. At the entrance to the mess hall, for example, there was a chinning bar, and you had to do two full chin ups before being admitted.

It was actually during a sit up session that I achieved the intellectual breakthrough that transformed my experience of the military. We were paired off, with one of us doing the sit ups and the other holding the first one's legs. As usual, a sergeant was yelling at us, telling us that if even a single one of us was unable to do thirty sit ups in a minute by the end of Basic Training, our entire unit would get a black mark. At first, I reacted in true Pavlovian fashion to this stimulus by straining to do my sit ups faster. Then, a thought came unbidden into my mind, and I felt the weights falling away from me in a moment of supreme liberation. "So what?" I thought. "I don't care whether my unit gets a black mark, and I don't even care whether I am the cause of it. I am not trying to get ahead here. I am just trying to get out."

I claim no originality for this thought, even though it preceded by five years the publication of *Catch-22*, which raised it to the level of genius. But it was for me a true revelation. All my life, I had been trying as hard as I could to meet the demands of teachers, principals, and dissertation advisors. I had been rebellious, angry, a constant challenger of authority. But it had never crossed my mind, when presented with a hurdle, simply to decline to jump.

Hard on the heels of this *eclaircissement* came a second, with even more profound sociological and pedagogical implications. It wasn't I who cared whether I could do the required number of sit ups in the time specified. It was my platoon sergeant, and beyond him, my Company Commander. The Army held *them* responsible for the performance of their men. If a platoon failed to meet the minimum standards set by Army regulations, that would be a black mark on their records, and might very well stand in the way of their advancement to higher rank. Since they were lifers -- career soldiers for whom the military was as important as the Academy was to me -- their energies were entirely focused on making sure that we performed at least adequately.

This truth in turn implied two others which, taken together, determined the character and conduct of Basic Training. First of all, if it was absolutely essential to the career ambitions of the men in charge that every soldier perform up to standard, then the standard would have to be one that every soldier was capable of meeting. A sergeant might shout and threaten; he might warn us that we were about to be ordered to double time all the way to the rifle range, and that if anyone fainted along the way, his ass would be grass. But should that platoon be so much as fifteen minutes late to the range, thus throwing the intricate schedule of the day out of kilter, it was the sergeant's ass that would be grass.

This may seem like a miserable tautology, as we say in logic seminars, but it constitutes a complete contradiction of the principles on which a university fashions its curriculum. Universities like to think that their curricula embody the knowledge accumulated over millennia of intellectual investigation. They then offer this invaluable treasure to students on their own

terms. If the students fail to master it, that is *their* fault, and can certainly not be held against their professors, whose job it is to *maintain standards*. Universities assume that some fraction of the students whom they admit, and whose money they take, will fail to meet the standard and be flunked out. In post-colonial countries like South Africa, universities fail half or more of their students, and then congratulate themselves on the rigor of their standards. The result, of course, is that universities routinely make a considerable number of their students feel like failures, and they take no responsibility for this fact, placing all the blame on the students.

The Army, in contrast, makes only such demands on its recruits as they can be counted on to be able to meet. It yells at its recruits, tells them they are going to fail, browbeats them, harasses them, and then at the end of Basic Training tells them they have all passed. The result is that by the end of the eighth week, the men are standing tall and feeling very good about themselves. And I was no exception, even though I had figured this out. I was proud that my bed was so tautly made, that my foot locker was precisely aligned, that my boots and my belt buckle shone, that I could march and salute and stand at attention or at ease in precisely the correct manner. I marched out of Basic Training thinking that I was one hell of a fellow.

The second implication had equally profound consequences for the pedagogical style of the Army. Since every recruit had to master certain basic skills and a basic set of facts, and since, in every platoon, there were men of very different native abilities, the teaching had to be pitched to the *slowest* learner, not to the quickest. If learning was your thing, as it was mine, this made for some pretty dull classes. But there were slower learners in our platoon who had been mocked, looked down upon, ridiculed, and given bad grades in every school situation in which



they had ever found themselves. The Army was the first school in which every classroom was tailored to their learning speed. In a class on military justice or infiltrating behind enemy lines or surviving in the Korean countryside [the Army always prepares for the last war], they could be sure that if they asked a question in the proper military manner [which for the most part meant prefacing it with, "Sir"], they would be given a polite answer designed actually to help them understand.

Far be it from me to call into question the ethos of the institution in which I have spent my entire adult life, but I sometimes think that universities might have something to learn from the Army about teaching and the responsibilities of teachers.

There were of course a very small handful of men for whom even the Army's demands were too much. A soldier who was judged mentally unfit for military duty could be given what was called a Section Eight discharge. I never did find out what this rule was section eight of, or what the other seven sections dealt with. One such soldier turned out to be Wilson. Wilson moved very sluggishly, and just didn't seem to be able to handle such arcana as lacing up his boots, making his bed, and standing at attention. Marching in step was completely beyond him. After about three and a half weeks, he was given a Section Eight, and disappeared. Several weeks later, a group of us were sitting around the barracks, idly aiming our empty rifles at the Company Commander across the road and reminiscing about "stupid Wilson." "I wonder where stupid Wilson is now," one man said. "Probably in Boston," another said, "Stupid fucking Wilson." "Yeah," we all said, "stupid fucking Wilson." "You know what gets me?" someone threw in. "He actually has a fucking high school degree. How the fuck can someone get a

fucking high school di-fucking-ploma and fucking not be able to tie his fucking boots?" [We all talked in Army dialect when we were off duty.] We thought about that for a bit, and then a thought struck us, more or less simultaneously. We were in an Army barracks, sweating through the sixth week of Basic, and Wilson was back in Boston, walking around free. To this day, I wonder whether Wilson wasn't a genuine organic intellectual who grasped the inner nature of military life as soon as he got to Reception Company and crafted a successful plan to get out.

Far and away our most important piece of equipment was the M-1 rifle. Each of us was issued a rifle on the first day, and from then on we were responsible for it. We were told to memorize its serial number, which we were liable to be tested on during rifle inspections. The M-1 was a 30 caliber air-cooled gas-operated semi-automatic firing piece, to give it its proper description, which we were told had a range of 3,500 yards. As that is just a tad under two miles, it is perhaps understandable that the Army was not eager to let us actually put ammunition in it. The M-1 held a clip of eight bullets, which was inserted by cocking the piece with the heel of the right hand, depressing a spring mechanism with the thumb, and then snatching the thumb out of the way while simultaneously forcing the clip into the rifle. Done improperly, this could do serious damage to your thumb, and I never carried out the little maneuver without a twinge of anxiety.

For the first six weeks or so, we spent a good deal of our time marching with the rifle, cleaning it meticulously, learning how to do things with it like presenting arms, and practicing taking it apart and putting it together again until we could disassemble it, or "field strip it," as the saying went, in ten seconds, and reassemble it equally quickly.

I had seen "Sergeant York" with Gary Cooper, so I knew that this was mother's milk to country boys, but I was a city boy through and through, despite my summers in the Berkshires. I had never so much as held a rifle in my hands before Basic, and I grew rather fond of it. I even learned how to do the Queen Anne's Salute, which is a nifty bit of juggling that involves spinning the rifle about and ending up in a kneeling position with it held on one's shoulder. We were even instructed in the proper way to use the sling as a steadying device while aiming the rifle standing, sitting, and lying prone.

Finally, when the Army could not put it off any longer, we were marched double time to the firing range and actually permitted to fire at some targets set up a considerable distance away. We started out prone, stretched out in a long line, three or four feet apart. Behind us walked an unusually large number of corporals and sergeants, watching our every movement with eagle eyes. I thought this show of caution somewhat excessive, until a confused young man with a fully loaded rifle and his arm entangled in the strap turned and started to get up to ask a question, thereby swinging the rifle around so that it swept the entire line of recruits. Three NCO's sprang into action and wrestled him to the ground before he could kill any of us.

I don't think we got to fire more than a few dozen rounds, taking all in all. I turned out to be an indifferent marksman, perhaps because my eyes are not so good, or maybe because it takes real skill and a capacity for inner stillness to hold a rifle steadily enough. I could wrap the sling around my arm so as to freeze the rifle into immobility, but the bullets did not go quite where I aimed them.

The most realistic moment of Basic Training is supposed to be the live fire exercise, during which you have to crawl on your belly or slither on your back under a network of barbed wire while real machine gun bullets whiz overhead. We had gotten word of this bit of fun from some soldiers whom we met at the PX during Reception week, but it never happened. In the cycle before us, a confused young man had actually stood up in the middle of the exercise, and had been cut down by the machine guns. Since Dix was not very far from New York, there was a good deal of newspaper coverage of the incident, and the Army suspended live fire exercises while it made a great show of carrying out an investigation to discover how a soldier could possibly have been killed when standing up in the line of machine gun fire.

I had just been awarded a doctorate in Philosophy by Harvard University, of course, but that fact, which became known in our Company, made little or no impression on my fellow recruits. One soldier did come up to me and say, "Hey, Wolff. You got a Ph. D., huh? That's great. You graduated from college yet?" This was my first experience of a world that had no interest in my rather specialized accomplishments, a fact that I found restful. If you are a frog, there is no point in straining to puff yourself up when there are no other frogs around to take notice. Egrets and water snakes have quite different ways of calling attention to themselves, and won't even realize that you are doing something remarkable.

The eight weeks finally came to an end, our Company was declared to have passed Basic Training satisfactorily, we put on our dress uniforms and marched in a final parade, and then we were sent off on a three day pass with orders to report to our next unit for specialty training. Some of the men were headed south for Advanced Infantry or Heavy Weapons training, but the

Massachusetts National Guard assigned me to training in Communications, which I was to receive at Fort Devens in Ayer, Massachusetts, thirty miles west of Boston.

When I got to Devens, I discovered that I had been placed in a training platoon of six months lodged within a regular Army Company. My platoon mates were all members of the Mass National Guard, and many of them were college graduates. Our first sergeant was Dooley, a bullet-headed by-the-book lifer who actually was a college graduate himself. When he heard that I had a Ph. D., he set me to work typing passes for the men in the platoon. Josephs came in and asked to help, telling Dooley that he had an M. A. Dooley was unimpressed, and told him to sweep the floor.

Communications has a hi-tech sound to it these days, but in 1957 it had a slightly different meaning. We started off mastering the mysteries of the Prick-10. The PRC-10, which presumably stood for something like "Portable Radio Communications," was a hand-held device weighing maybe five pounds, attached to a long black rubberized line that unrolled from a drum. The idea was to string the line out maybe a thousand feet or so to the next unit on the battlefield and hook it up to a second PRC-10, so that the two units could talk to one another. After we had learned how to roll out the wire, we were introduced to the protocols of Prick-10 communications.

This brings me to a subject that has, for the past forty-five years, been an especially sore point with me: the proper use of the terms "over" and "out." A PRC-10 worked the way a CB radio works. To talk, you held down a button. So long as you held the button down, your radio would transmit your voice. When you lifted your finger from the button, the radio stopped

transmitting. If you were holding the button down, the person at the other end of the line could receive, but he could not transmit until you released your button.

To avoid the confusion that would result from two people trying to transmit at the same time, the Army used the standard ham radio operator's technique. When you were finished transmitting, you would say "over," which meant, "I am finished transmitting; I am lifting my finger from the button; now you can transmit and I will listen." In this way, two people could carry on an extended conversation without stepping on each other's lines. It was, in a way, a device ideally designed for Charlie Parsons, who could not engage in the customary give and take of half finished sentences that is the typical mode of most casual conversations, but instead would persist obsessively until he had reached the end of whatever sentence he had started. When you were all finished with the exchange, you would say "out," which meant "I am done talking and I don't want you to transmit any longer, because I am not listening."

Now, a moment's reflection will make it perfectly obvious that "over" and "out" are intended to send contradictory messages. But for my entire adult life, I have been listening to hotshot characters in action movies saying into various handheld devices, "over and out." Having done my time in the military, I know that is just not right.

The second sort of communications equipment in which we were trained was signal panels. These were large oblong pieces of colored cloth, with loops around the edges for pegs, that could be staked out on the ground in various arrays to send a message to an airplane flying overhead. Our schedule called for a three hour class on the proper method of setting out signal panels. A luckless Spec-4 was assigned the task of conducting the class. It was a prematurely

cold November day, and we were all going a bit stir crazy. The instructor marched us out to a flat piece of turf, sat us down on the cold ground, and began his lecture. When we realized what the subject of the morning was, and that we would be there, shivering, for three hours, we spontaneously rebelled.

He began by saying a few words about the purpose of the panels, and then showed us how to put the wooden pegs through the little loops, driving them into the ground with the heel of a boot. When he got done, someone raised his hand and said, "Sarge, what are the panels for?" He had just said what the panels were for, but as I have explained, the Army pitched its instruction at the dimmest bulb in the chandelier, not the brightest. So he repeated his set speech about signaling planes. Someone else piped up, "What are the pegs for, Sarge." "Ah well," he replied, warming a bit to his task, "those are for holding the panels down, in case it is windy." "But what are the loops for?" "To put the pegs through." "And why put the pegs through the loops?" "To hold the panel down." "But Sarge, what happens if it gets windy?" Showing just the faintest bit of concern, "Then you put the pegs through the holes."

Well, we kept it up for the better part of three hours, round and round and round, rapidly driving the poor man crazy. But there was nothing he could do, because it would be on *his* head if it turned out that we had failed to master the proper placement of the signal panels.

Far and away the greatest challenge of our communications training was learning to climb telephone poles, using lineman's gaffs. These are pairs of big sharp steel spikes attached to a metal and leather frame that fits under the foot and straps onto the leg in such a way that the spike, or gaff, points down and in at an angle from the inside of the ankle. To climb, you jam the

gaff into the pole, hold on with your hands, put your weight on the gaff and step up. Then you jam the other gaff in higher up, and proceed like this, walking up the pole. When you get as high up as you need to go, you "belt off." This means that you unsnap one end of a long leather strap from a ring on a belt around you waist, pass it around the pole, and snap it back onto the ring. If you then lean back, resting your feet on the gaffs, your hands are free to work with the tools that are also hanging from your belt. To come down, you reverse the process, pulling one gaff out of the pole and lowering it before jamming it back in, then lowering the other one. An accomplished lineman can move so fast that he looks as though he were running up and down the pole like a squirrel.

Done properly, pole climbing with gaffs is quite easy. There is, however, a problem. If you get nervous and think you are going to fall, you must do the totally counterintuitive thing and lean *back* from the pole. The reason is that if you lean forward and hug the pole, the angle of your gaffs with the pole narrows, they pull out, and you slide down the pole collecting splinters as you go. Leaning back increases the angle of the gaffs with the pole, and makes them catch more securely.

Most of the men in my platoon were a good deal younger than I, and it mattered to them not to lose face by showing that they were the least bit scared. The Army counted on that, as it turned out. One day, when we had mastered the basic elements of getting up and down the pole, the training sergeant told us to try moving around the pole once we got to the top. To accomplish this, one had to pull out a gaff and edge around part of the pole before jamming it



back in. If you try to see this in your mind's eye, it will be obvious to you that this little move is a good deal scarier than just going straight up and straight down.

When it came my turn to try, I froze. I was only ten feet or so in the air, but I was terrified, and I didn't move. "Wolff," the sergeant shouted, "move around the pole." "I can't, Sarge," I replied, "I'm scared."

This posed a problem with which he had never before been confronted. I wasn't refusing a lawful order -- there were clear rules about that. I was willing to move around the pole; I wanted to move around the pole [if I may paraphrase Mr. Doolittle in Shaw's *Pygmalion*]. But I just couldn't do it. The sergeant spent some time trying unsuccessfully to cajole me, encourage me, shame me into moving around the pole, but when I responded to every effort with the statement that I was scared, he told me to come back down. The other men were, of course, just as scared as I was, and when they saw that I had got away with confessing my fear, they all started to say they were afraid. After a bit, the sergeant gave up and canceled the class. We never did learn how to move around the pole.

Along about October, Sargent Dooley was reassigned, and we got a new platoon sargent, Sgt. McVicker. Life suddenly got a good deal worse. The rumor was that Sgt. McVicker had been removed from duty at the Fort Dix Stockade because he was too hard on the prisoners. He walked in the first day, took one look at us, and announced in a voice we hadn't heard since Basic that we were going to shape up. He started holding daily inspections, and each time we failed, which meant every day, we had to get up a half hour earlier to G. I. the barracks. When he arrived at 6 a.m., fresh from his daily inspection of his six children, he lined us up outside the

barracks and subjected us to an inspection complete with rifle drill and snap questions about current news events. He once ordered me to tell him my rifle serial number backwards, and snarled when I stumbled over two of the digits. On the morning of October 5<sup>th</sup>, when we fell out after an hour of barracks scrubbing, he had us look into the sky to watch Sputnik move sedately overhead. The next morning at inspection, he asked us for its altitude and velocity.

Unlike Dooley, McVicker held no brief for college boys. When he heard that I had a Harvard doctorate, he said with a malicious grin, "Well, Wolff, I guess you think you have leadership potential. O.K. You are now in charge of the latrine cleaning squad."

Just as I was earning this promotion, the Magazine Section of the Sunday *New York TIMES* published an article by the famous World War Two war correspondent and cartoonist Bill Mauldin, on the "new army." The thrust of the article was that the Army was failing to make use of the talents and educational accomplishments of the college graduates who were being drafted. I thought my own military experience might have something to contribute to the discussion, so I wrote a short letter to the *TIMES*, which they published. Here it is in its entirety:

To the Editor:

As a private in the United States infantry, I read with great interest Bill Mauldin's article on intellectuals and K. P. I hold a Ph. D. in philosophy from Harvard University and am a member, therefore, of the group of soldiers of which Mr. Mauldin wrote. I feel that my experiences may serve to counteract somewhat the bad impression of the army which he sought to create.

When I first entered this company, I was assigned to daily latrine duty. Each morning at 0530 hours I cleaned the sinks and bowls and

scrubbed the floors. So far, one might think the Army was making little use of my advanced education. However, as soon as my platoon sergeant learned of my several university degrees, I was elevated to the position of *chief* latrine cleaner. I became, in effect head man. This position I held for some time, and I flatter myself that I discharged my duties so as to reflect favorably on the university which trained me.

Private Robert Wolff

B.A., M.A. Ph. D.

Ft. Devens, Mass.

The rigors known as "shaping up" have a certain unavoidable inner rhythm. They accomplish their purpose only if they eventually come to an end. So after a bit, McVicker was forced to ease up on us, and allow us to go off base like the regular soldiers when the official Army day was done. I had no transportation, but a number of the other men had brought cars to the base, and since most of them were from the Boston area, I could usually catch a ride into town.

I headed for Cambridge, naturally, and having nothing better to do, I would visit Adair Moffat in Whitman Hall at Radcliffe. I was just looking for somewhere warm and friendly to sit and talk. One afternoon in November, when I showed up at Whitman, a very pretty young woman was sitting at the bell desk. Men were not allowed above the first floor, so when a man arrived to pick up his date, the student with bell duty would call her floor and announce his presence. Sometimes, a student would wait downstairs to save her the trouble, as this young

woman was doing. I was very taken with her, and asked Adair who she was. Adair told me that she was a senior named Cindy. Her full name was Mary Cynthia Griffin, and, Adair warned me, she was Catholic, so she was probably not someone I wanted to get too interested in. I could see the point of the caution, but I was really attracted, and called the next day to ask whether she would like to go dancing.

Cindy said she would let me know, and when I called back, she said yes. It was only some while later that I learned why she had agreed. Apparently, she was on the point of getting engaged, but the other students thought that one ought to be nice to our boys in uniform, and told her she should go out with me.

We went dancing Thanksgiving eve. I was smitten, and sent her flowers the next day, a move that was apparently just right. I started coming in to Cambridge every chance I could to see, her, and by December 9<sup>th</sup>, I was ready to announce to my parents in a letter home that I had fallen in love.

Cindy was from a very wealthy Shaker Heights family. Her father was the manager of the Cleveland Group of Sears, Roebuck stores, one of the largest groups in the country. He had been made a Knight of Malta for his services to the Church, and served on the national board of the National Council of Christians and Jews. Cindy was an English major, but she was pre-med, and planned to attend medical school as soon as she graduated. She was slender, pretty, with short brown hair, very feminine, and she had a razor sharp mind. I can still see her sitting in a little café near the Radcliffe Quad, drinking coffee and talking. I gave her a logical puzzle I had heard about eight coins and an apothecary's scale, and she solved it right off the bat. I think she

must have fallen in love with me as quickly as I with her, because I never heard any more about the boy she was about to get engaged to.

Cindy had a quick, intuitive mind, and the ability to penetrate the surface of literary texts to get at the inner feelings and thoughts of the author. She told me that as a young Sophomore, she had taken the Shakespeare course taught by the famous critic Harry Levin. Her first paper had not received a very good grade, so she had gone to the graduate student grader to find out how she might improve her work. He started to explain the sorts of things she might have said in response to the question, but before he could get very far, she had said, "Oh, that is what you are looking for." After that, she had never gotten less than an A again in the course.

Cindy was writing a senior honors thesis on Thomas Hardy's novel *Jude The Obscure*, under the direction of Albert J. Guerard, another quite well known literary scholar. I had never read any Hardy, so I went right out and bought a copy of the novel, which I read during boring Army lectures on communications in order to be able to talk to her about it. *Jude The Obscure* is a dark, gloomy novel about unhappy, tortured people, which perhaps does not adequately differentiate it from other novels by Thomas Hardy. As I plowed through it, I found it hard to make it comport with the gay, charming, sexy woman whom I found so entrancing. There are actually notations in the margins of my copy, with comments like "Why is she working on this?" and "Good grief. What does she find in this?"

Cindy's parents had bought her a long silver gray Plymouth with big tail fins as a kind of advance graduation present. During my last weeks in the Army, she let me use it, so that I could come into Cambridge virtually every evening to see her. Meanwhile, I was getting ready to

return to civilian life. One of my last military duties was to take a twenty-four hour turn on guard duty. The guard detail slept on cots in a room heated with a coal stove. We would spend four hours walking up and down in the freezing December air, and four hours lying around trying to get warm. Our rifles were loaded with real bullets, and we were supposed to be ready to shoot someone who did not halt when challenged and identify himself, but nobody ever came by when I was on duty. During my middle of the night turn, I walked my route, looking at the stars and thinking, "Now you are cold and miserable, but in only a few weeks, you will be lying in a warm bed, remembering this night and feeling happy that you are not on guard duty." It got me through the hours.

A number of Regular Army soldiers transferred into our unit to wait out the last few months before the end of their three-year tours of duty. They were mockingly superior about our anxious desire that the last two weeks be over. They had been thinking of themselves as short-timers since before we had gone on active duty. In the end, the Army decided that it wasn't worth their while to send us home on Christmas leave and then bring us back just to send us home again, so they lopped the last few weeks off our six month obligation, and mustered us out in late December. Step by step we retraced the process we had gone through in Reception Company. We turned in our fatigues, our dress uniforms, our rifles -- everything except our boots, which we were told to take with us back to our Guard units. I was still wearing those boots twenty years later.

After spending Christmas with my parents, I returned to Cambridge to attend the annual meetings of the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association, and to see Cindy.

We consummated our love affair New Year's Eve, in the Beacon Hill apartment of a friend of mine, in a bed that was said to have belonged to Edmund Wilson. As I recall, we broke the bed.

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For the first time since my parents had enrolled me in the Sunnyside Progressive School, I was completely without prescribed academic goals. I had run out of grades to advance through. There *was* nothing beyond the Ph. D. I settled into an apartment at 12 Prentiss Street in Cambridge, a single family house converted to apartments on a quiet side street several blocks north of the Law School, set up a desk, unloaded my books, sharpened my pencils, and tried to figure out what to do next. I needed some sort of structure to substitute for the exams and orals and degrees that had given shape to my entire life thus far. As I first approximation, I settled on lists. My fellowship called for me to study political theory, so I made a list of every major work and a good sampling of the minor works in the history of Western political theory, and I began reading my way through them. The Army had turned me around, getting me up at the hour when I had been accustomed to go to sleep, but very quickly I fell into my old habit of working at night. This actually posed certain logistical problems. I had to set my alarm if I wanted to rise early enough to get to the bank before it closed at 2 p.m.

I still have the careful notes I took, organized in three tattered ring binders with a label pasted on the front listing in order the books summarized within. The *Defensor Pacis* of Marsilius of Padua was a great find, as was Jean Bodin's *Six Books of the Republic*. Cicero was a total waste of time -- superficial and derivative -- and Aquinas was something of a disappointment. Wolfson had led me to expect something better. I find, in looking through

those old notebooks, that I actually read my way through volume one of Marx's *Capital*, but I was quite unprepared as yet to appreciate its greatness, and I made some disdainful and dismissive remarks about it in a letter home to my father.

Cindy and I were very happy in those early days, spending as much time together as we could while she finished up her honors thesis and took her last semester of courses. She got into Harvard Medical School, which meant that we would be able to go on seeing each other when the term ended, although she would be ferociously busy. She engaged in endless disputes with her parents, who disapproved of her plans for medicine and of her involvement with me, as they had earlier disapproved of her decision to attend Radcliffe. Although she did not talk with them about religion, she was also in the process of drifting away from the Church. Almost from the time we first met, we talked about marriage, but there were very difficult years ahead, and it would be almost five years before we finally became man and wife.

Although I had no official position at Harvard, it was very much my turf, so I began hanging about the Square and even attending several graduate seminars. My first effort along these lines was a comic disaster, though I put it to good use in later years. Robert McClosky, a distinguished Canadian-born professor of Government was offering a seminar on the Constitution, and I decided to go round to see what it was like. The seminar was listed as meeting in Littauer, a large white building just north of Harvard Yard that was home to several social science departments. I had never set foot in it during my seven years as a student, and did not know my way around in it at all. I found what I thought was the right room, which, as I had got there early, was empty. I went in, walked to the other side of the seminar table, and took a



seat. As people started to wander in, they looked very peculiarly at me, but no one said anything so I just smiled. Finally a young man walked in briskly carrying an enormous load of mimeographed copies of a very thick paper. When he handed them out, I realized that it was a computerized one hundred sector input-output analysis of the United States economy. I was obviously in the wrong room, but I was on the far side of the table, some distance from the door, and I was too embarrassed to get up and excuse myself, so I hunkered down through an hour and more of incomprehensible macroeconomics. Many years later, when I became friendly with a brilliant young economist named Franklin Fischer, who had been there that day, I discovered that I had stumbled into a meeting of the faculty seminar of the Harvard Economics Department. They knew I didn't belong, but they were too polite to ask me to leave.

Ever since then, at the first meeting of each of my courses, I announce the title of the course and my name, I tell this story, and I then invite students to leave if they wish, turning my face toward the blackboard for a few moments so as not to embarrass them.

Living on the second floor, just above me, was Hugh Amory, who, as Demos would have said, was one of the Boston Amorys. Hugh was a graduate student in the English Department. We struck up an acquaintance, and I introduced him to Cindy. In very short order, we were "taken up" by Hugh's branch of the Amory clan. Hugh was the son of "Buzz" Amory [thanks to an aquiline nose which his college friends thought made him look like a buzzard]. When Buzz died, Hugh's mother, who was a flamboyant *grande dame*, married Phillips Ketchum, a rather older senior partner of a Boston law firm. They lived in an elegant apartment in town, but summered on a big estate out South Natick way, as I recall. Hugh's birthday was July 4<sup>th</sup>, and

the family combined it with the nation's birthday in an annual celebration. Cindy and I were invited to join them in South Natick for the affair. Hugh was an easy-going casual man, but we knew this was our entry into old Boston aristocracy, so we dressed to the nines and brought along a magnum of champagne as a present. When we got to the estate, we discovered that it was a clambake, and we were hideously over dressed. Everyone else was wearing T-shirts and sawed off jeans.

It was a *real* clambake, the first I had ever seen. There was an enormous pit in the back yard, into which had gone a layer of hot stones, a layer of seaweed, a layer of lobsters, another layer of seaweed, and then successive layers of clams, lobsters, seaweed, corn, and more lobsters -- enough and more to feed the scores of people lounging about on the lawn. I got a plate and walked up to the buffet table to get some food. Mrs. Amory was just ahead of me, and when she came to the pile of lobsters stacked on a platter, she picked one up, tore off the tail, and threw the rest away. I was horrified, since I came from a family that squeezed every last bit of lobster meat from even the slenderest tentacles. She saw the look on my face and laughing gaily, said "Life is too short."

I loaded up my plate and looked around for someplace to sit. I settled down at the corner of a blanket on which seven or eight people were eating and chattering. Needless to say, I knew no one, but I figured that I ought to try to be sociable, so after listening to them talk for a bit about the Boston Arts Festival, I turned to the young man sitting next to me and asked, politely, "Are you associated with the Boston Arts Festival?" He looked at me with the very slightest show of disdain and said quietly, "I run it." It was that kind of day.

As the Spring wore on, I started to worry about what I was going to do when the grant ran out, in the middle of the following year. My first thought was to get a half year extension, but despite the best efforts of McClosky, whom I had finally managed to meet, the SSRC said no. I had also been sitting in on a Political Theory seminar taught by a grand old man named William Yandell Elliott. Elliott was actually a rather distinguished character, having been Staff Director of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House and Vice-Chairman of the War Production Board, but he was a godawful windbag who regularly got panned by students in the semi-annual totally unofficial *Crimson Confidential Guide to Courses*. Elliott had a go at arranging a joint Instructorship or Assistant Professorship for me in Government and General Education, which would have been marvelous, but nothing came of it.

In the end, I was saved by the desires and aversions of the Harvard senior philosophy professors. Harvard had for a long time been offering group tutorial to Sophomores and Juniors who elected to try for an honors degree, and individual senior tutorial for those writing honors theses. In practice, this meant that about a third of undergraduates received tutorial. But with the ever more selective admissions procedures made possible by the dramatic increase in the applicant pool each year, classes were getting academically stronger. Finally, the Harvard faculty decided that its undergraduates were *all* honors material, and it voted to require every Harvard and Radcliffe Sophomore and Junior to take tutorial in his or her major field.

One obvious and immediate consequence of this decision was that unless something were done quickly, senior members of the Harvard Philosophy Department were going to have to come into regular personal contact with undergraduates, something that had not by and large been a part of their lives to that point. The Department requested and was granted permission to

hire an Instructor who would handle all of the additional tutorial chores. They calculated that this would absorb roughly three-fifths of the energies of the Instructor. The other two-fifths could be devoted to teaching in the General Education Program. Morton White, who was faithfully looking out for me, suggested that I be appointed. The Department agreed, so now all that was needed was to find a two-fifths slot in General Education.

For readers who are not *au courant* with Harvard's rather odd way of calculating faculty responsibilities, I should explain the repeated reference to fifths. In the eyes of the Harvard Administration, each member of the faculty was responsible for five-fifths of academic duties of some sort. Senior faculty were required to teach three courses per year -- perhaps two in the Fall and one in the Spring. That was three fifths. Each professor was then given one-fifth teaching credit for the research that he [or, in rare cases, she] was doing, and a fifth fifth of credit for administrative duties. Junior faculty were required to teach four courses a year, despite the fact that they were under tremendous pressure to publish and usually had the most onerous administrative tasks dumped on them.

White looked around for somewhere to locate me in General Education, and discovered that there was a group of young Assistant Professors of History putting together Social Sciences 5, a new General Education course covering the history of Western Europe from Caesar to Napoleon. It was intended as an ideas-oriented alternative to the straight historical Soc. Sci. 1, and apparently they thought it would be great fun to have a philosopher teaching with them. So it was fixed up. I was offered a three year Instructorship in General Education and Philosophy. The salary was \$5,500 a year. I was beside myself with happiness.

There *was* one small problem, though I made no mention of it to White. I had never taken so much as a single course on European history, either as an undergraduate or as a graduate student. Indeed, my last organized encounter with the subject had been Mr. Wepner's Modern European History course my Junior year in high school. To be sure, I had enjoyed the course. When I lay in bed at night, before going to sleep, I would for the fun of it choose a year in the seventeenth or eighteenth century and then see whether I could remember what was happening in each major European country in that year. But somehow I thought that might not quite suffice as preparation for teaching History at Harvard.

My future colleagues were a collection of hotshots destined for greatness. James Billington, a tall, aristocratic and very serious Christian, is currently the Librarian of Congress. Hanna Holborn Gray, daughter of the famous Yale historian Hajo Holborn, went on to become Provost of Yale and President of the University of Chicago. She currently sits on the seven-member Harvard Corporation. Arno Mayer has had an enormously distinguished career as a Professor of History at Princeton. George Nadel founded the journal *History and Theory* two years after we started teaching the course. I was going to have to tap dance pretty fast to keep up with them.

There was nothing for it but to learn some European history, so I made another list. Over the next three months, I plowed through twenty thousand pages of history, starting with the ancient world and working my way right through the Roman Republic, the early Roman Empire, the Conversion of the Empire to Christianity under Constantine, the barbarian invasions, the Merovingians, the Carolingians, the low Middle Ages, the high Middle Ages, the Renaissance,

the Reformation, the rise of the modern state, the rise of capitalism, the English Revolution, the French Revolution, and finally, the Napoleonic Wars. I was as ready as I was ever going to be.

## Chapter Six Coming of Age in Harvard Square

During the time I spent as an Instructor in General Education and Philosophy at Harvard, I became an engaged, vocal, politically active critic of American society and governmental policy. I also matured into a scholar and philosopher ready to enter the Great Conversation as a full participant with my own distinctive voice. Though I did not realize it then, those three years worked a substantial transformation in me.

But first, I had to face thirty-three Harvard and Radcliffe undergraduates. Soc. Sci. 5 met as a group each Monday at 10:00 a.m. in Burr Hall for a lecture given by one of the six of us who were co-teaching the course. On Wednesdays and Fridays, we broke up into sections. There were thirty lectures a year, so each of us would give a block of five. I drew the segment covering the rise of capitalism, the scientific revolution, and the French Revolution, which meant that I would not have to perform in front of my colleagues until well into the Spring semester.

In the '50s, as many as half of all Harvard undergraduates were products of elite private schools, where classical subjects were still given pride of place. It was a good bet that many of my students would know a great deal more about Roman history than I. Nothing daunted, I worked up some lecture notes and went along to my assigned room to meet my class.

After a few introductory remarks about reading assignments, required papers, my office hours and the like, I launched into the story of the Roman Empire. "We begin," I said, "with Caesar, who was camped outside Rome with his legions." A young man in the middle of the second row began to shake his head very slowly back and forth. I froze. This was the first day of my entire career, and I was already crashing and burning. I thought seriously of chucking the

whole thing and returning to the Army, which, I was sure, would permit me to enlist for a full three year hitch. Giving it one more go, I pressed on. "Now, there was a law that no Roman general could bring his legions into the province of Rome itself." The young man very slowly nodded his head up and down. I breathed a sigh of relief, and never looked back.

My rule of thumb was to stay one century ahead of the students, which took some doing as we rushed past the Merovingians and the Carolingians, barely pausing for the investiture of Charlemagne on Christmas Day, 800 A. D. I even brought in some authentic medieval helmets, courtesy of Fogg Art Museum, which to my astonishment allowed me to remove these eight hundred year old artifacts for a few hours from their collections. As the months went by, and my folders of lecture notes grew thicker and thicker, I grew more confident. The preppies were not as big on the Middle Ages as they were on ancient times, and with two millennia to cover in thirty weeks, we did not linger.

There were some bad moments, of course. One day in the Spring a student asked me what the difference was between a Jacobite and a Jacobin. I had read about both, of course, during my manic survey of European history, but I could not quite call it to mind that a Jacobite was a seventeenth century supporter of James 1<sup>st</sup> and a Jacobin was an eighteenth century French revolutionary. Still, Soc. Sci. 5 was supposed to be about *ideas*, and there I was in my element. I had no trouble fielding questions about scholastic metaphysics or the theory of the social contract.

My colleagues' Monday morning presentations were marvels of erudition. One of the odd quirks of the Harvard culture in those days was that even very senior professors, who gave



short shrift to doctoral dissertation students or senior honors thesis writers, poured their hearts into the lectures they prepared for big undergraduate courses. Jim Billington led off with five lectures on the Roman Empire and the Constantine Conversion. Jim was an historian of pre-revolutionary Russia whose first scholarly work, *The Icon and the Axe*, would make his reputation. I thought he wore his religion rather too visibly on his sleeve, presenting the fourth and fifth centuries not as the decline and fall of a great empire but as the triumphant victory of Christianity.

Jim was followed by Arno Mayer, whose lectures covered the barbarian invasions and the Middle Ages. Arno was an odd choice for this segment, since his specialty was twentieth century diplomatic history. He was writing a book on the interaction between domestic politics and international policy in the major nations that participated in the Versailles Conference. It was from Arno that I learned my first lesson about what *real* historians do. I came across him one day in the stacks of Widener sitting at his carrel reading. On the desk in front of him was a row of enormous volumes stretching the entire width of the desk. "Hi, Arno," I said, "what are you doing?" "I am reading the *proces verbal* of the Versailles Conference," he replied. "All of it?" I blurted out, astonished. "Of course," he said, looking at me rather quizzically. I said a silent prayer of thanks that I was in philosophy, and moved on.

It was also Arno who unintentionally taught me a pedagogical lesson that has stood me in good stead for forty-five years. His first lecture dealt with the waves of invasions by Germanic tribes that brought the Roman Empire to its knees. Arno had the brilliant idea of relating these invasions to the major battles that had been fought by Germany and the Allies in World War II.

The terrain was of course the same, and inasmuch as the rivers and valleys had not moved in the intervening fifteen hundred years, the two made a lovely fit. The five of us sat in the last row of the lecture hall and marveled at the brilliance of Arno's presentation. But when we next met our individual classes, we discovered to our dismay that the students had been massively underwhelmed. The problem was simple. It was nineteen fifty-eight, and our students were eighteen years old, which meant that they had been four when most of those battles were fought. The Second World War was ancient history to them, something their parents did. They had never heard of the Battle of the Bulge.

Sad to say, this experience has been repeated endlessly over the decades. The Freshmen I now encounter [in 2003] were born during the Clinton Administration and probably came to some degree of awareness of the larger world during George W. Bush's second term. Anything before that might as well be ancient Rome. For many years, I compensated for this absence of historical memory by extracting my philosophical examples from *Star Trek*, but even that draws blank stares now, and as I do not get HBO, I cannot substitute *The Sopranos*. There is nothing that makes you feel older faster than teaching undergraduates.

My own lectures were something less than masterful, although considering my lack of background, I consider it very creditable that I got through them at all. In the lecture on the scientific revolution of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, I thought it would be nifty to do a dramatic demonstration I had heard about, but never seen. A very big, heavy metal ball would be suspended from the ceiling of the lecture hall by a cable, and I would pull it all the way back until it was touching my forehead. I would then release it, allowing it to swing way out over the

class. As it swung back, seemingly on course to crush my head, I would stand immobile until, obeying the laws of the conservation of momentum, it would stop just as it reached me. I fielded this idea at lunch one day, and a distinguished philosopher of science, Gerald Holton, told me in no uncertain terms not to try it. No matter how firm your belief in the laws of motion, he said, you will find it psychologically impossible to remain steadfast. He told the story of one young Physics Instructor who stood with his back up against a rack full of empty soda bottles, to prove that he was not moving. When the ball got close to him, he flinched and sent broken coke bottles all over the classroom. I settled for throwing nerf balls at the class to illustrate the arced trajectory predicted by Newton's Laws.

At lunch that day, I sat down with a young man who had been at the lecture. He was shy and diffident, but very brilliant and painfully honest. I had a special place for him in my heart because his father was one of the Communist teachers who had been fired from the New York City school system during a red scare in the forties. I asked him what he thought of the lecture. Very tentatively, looking down at his tray, he said, "Well, uh, you know, it wasn't very good." He was right, of course.

Several times each semester, the six of us would get together to make up suggested essay topics, to each of which would be appended several suggestions for additional reading. This was an occasion for these young prodigies to show off, by off-handedly mentioning the most recent and most recherché bits of scholarship. As each one pulled out another plum, the others nodded sagely and made some comment designed to show that they had just read it. I sat there with my game face on, frantically making surreptitious notes in an effort to remember some of the titles.

My biggest academic problem that first year, far more pressing than covering two thousand years of European history, was deciding what to call my new colleagues, who had for the past eight years been my professors. I couldn't see myself addressing Quine as "Van" and Aiken as "Henry." The department secretary, Ruth Allen, who had been with the department longer than all but the oldest senior professors, was casually familiar with the faculty, but her situation was the inverse of mine. She had met them when they were graduate students, and was not about to become deferentially formal just because they had been jumped up to professor status. I solved the problem for a long while by simply not addressing them directly at all, which made for some rather abrupt conversational openers. Finally, during a year when White was at the Princeton Institute for Advanced Study, he asked me in a letter to call him "Morty." I never did call Demos "Raphael." He was by that time unimaginably old - indeed, he must have been ten years younger than I am now.

Even though I was now earning an actual salary, complete with medical coverage and payments into the TIAA/CREF pension plan, I still could use some extra money, so I signed up to serve as a Freshman Advisor. One of my very first advisees was a pleasant young man who had attended the same mid-western high school as the logic phenom Saul Kripke. My advisee was no trouble at all, but Saul was a handful. He was, as we would say today, socially challenged, taking up a good deal of the time of the committee of House Senior Tutors who met regularly to deal with student problems. Marshall Cohen ran into one of the Senior Tutors who told of a long meeting they had just suffered through trying to sort out Saul's difficulties with a roommate. Marshall asked whether the Senior Tutors didn't resent having to spend so much time

dealing with a Freshman, but his friend replied that he had been a member of the ground crew of a B-17 during the war. Each day, he said, as the B-17 limped back to base from a bombing mission, all shot up, his crew would run out onto the field and do whatever spot repairs they could, so that the bomber could go up the next day on another raid. "That is what we are doing," he said. "Our job is to get Saul back up in the air so that he can continue flying." That remark has stayed with me through the years as the epitome of dedicated teaching.

The next summer, my advisee invited me to dinner at his apartment, where he had taken up light housekeeping with a lovely Radcliffe girl. Saul was there as well. Saul's father was a Conservative Rabbi, and Saul had had a serious Jewish upbringing. As he talked, he *davanted*, which is to say he rocked back and forth vigorously. As he talked and *davanted* he ate, gesturing spastically, and as he talked and *davanted* and ate and gestured, his food scattered all over the table, as if to illustrate the law of entropy. With gentle understanding, the young Radcliffe student patiently swept the peas up from the table top and put them back on Saul's plate, where they stayed for a bit before being restrewn.

I have often wondered whether Saul, brilliant though he undoubtedly is, ever understood how much slack everyone was cutting him, from Quine on down. Somehow, I think not.

For the most part, I went my own way in the department. Harvard professors don't really advance much beyond what is called in child development books "parallel play." No one attends anyone else's lectures, of course, and there is precious little socializing. When they encounter one another on campus, they resemble the dukes and counts at the medieval court of Burgundy, glorious and richly appointed and very formal. Each full professor proceeds in stately fashion,

preceded like Cyrano's nose by his *vita*, and trailing in his wake several Assistant Professors who exhibit the appropriate submissive body language.

But every so often, when things had so piled up that it was unavoidable, we had department meetings. I attended these with great anticipation, seized by what can only be described as a sublimated academic form of primal scene scopophilia, which is the term psychoanalysts use for the obsessive desire to see one's parents making love.

At almost the first meeting I attended, a dispute broke out between Quine and Aiken. The year before, apparently, one of Quine's doctoral students working jointly in Mathematics and Philosophy had been permitted to substitute one of the Mathematics qualifying examinations for the Preliminary Exam on Ethics. Now one of Aiken's students, working jointly in Philosophy and Art History, wanted to substitute an Art History exam for the Logic Prelim. Quine said flatly that it was out of the question. Aiken protested that by parity of reason [ordinarily a winning move in philosophical arguments] he should be allowed to make the substitution. Quine was adamant. Finally Aiken turned to Quine and said, "All right, Ledge, why not? What is the difference between Ethics and Logic." "The answer is simple," Quine replied. "Ethics is easy and Logic is hard." Aiken was apoplectic but the substitution was disallowed.

Quite the most bizarre event that I have ever witnessed during *any* department meeting in fifty years also occurred in that first year. Since this story is both an almost unbelievable tale and also a testament to the complexity of memory, it is worth spending some time on it.

It began simply enough when Donald Williams, one of the most senior members of the department, reported that he had heard from a man teaching Philosophy at a small school in Canada who had, some years earlier, been a doctoral candidate in the department. This man, who had served in the Canadian Air Force during World War II, had never finished his degree, but nevertheless had been teaching for some years. He had a wife and family, Williams said, and was now faced with a crisis. The little college at which he taught had decided to transform itself into a university [something that was also happening on many campuses in the United States], and it had announced that in keeping with its newly elevated status, it would require all faculty to have doctorates, *including those already on the faculty*. In short, if this man did not finish his degree forthwith, he would be fired. The poor man had sent some materials to Williams on ethical theory, in the hope that they would constitute a dissertation. [Ethics was not Williams' field, although he had actually published an article on "The Meaning of 'Good'" in a major American journal, but the man had been away so long that he did not know the members of the department who did teach ethics.] The material was really just not acceptable, Williams said sadly.

"Well," we all replied, "surely he can revise it with some suggestions from you."  
"Not a bit of it," Williams replied, "it simply does not have the potential to be an acceptable dissertation."

What to do? We all scratched our heads, and looked glum, until a young Assistant Professor, Burton Dreben, spoke up. Dreben was Quine's protégé, a logician who had been a Junior Fellow and had himself never earned a Ph. D. "Here is what we should do," Dreben said.

“I will move that this man be awarded the Ph. D. on condition that he never set foot in Cambridge, Massachusetts again. We will all close our eyes except Rod, and Rod will count the votes.” [This was Roderick Firth, Chair of the department – an upright Quaker of impeccable character]

We were all stunned, and looked at one another incredulously, but no one had an alternative suggestion, so in the end, Dreben made his motion, we closed our eyes and voted, and apparently enough people raised their hands, because Firth announced that the motion had passed.

This is the story as I have been telling it for fifty years, more or less as a corrective to the exaggerated respect that my Harvard Ph. D. in Philosophy sometimes evokes from people I meet. But having finished Part One of this memoir, I gave some thought to trying to have it published, and it occurred to me that even though all the participants save myself were, almost certainly, dead, nevertheless I really ought to try to confirm that my memory was accurate.

So one fine Spring day, Susie and I drove in to Cambridge from Western Massachusetts, and spent some time at the elegant underground library extension between Lamont and Houghton that serves as the storage for archives relating to Harvard itself. I had long since forgotten the man’s name, but after some searching through old lists of doctorates awarded, I found someone who seemed a likely candidate. He had graduated from a Canadian university in ’41, just before the war, and had been a student in residence in the Harvard Philosophy Department in the late 40’s and early 50’s.



Some web surfing located the school he had been teaching at, and some more probing revealed that this school had indeed transformed itself from a college into a university exactly when I recalled Williams coming before the department with his problem. So it seemed that I had indeed found my man.

It remained only to take a look at the dissertation itself. On a second trip into Cambridge, I called for and was presented with the dissertation, which I read from cover to cover. Now, if the truth be told, it wasn't all that bad. It was totally without actual original philosophical content, but it was very smoothly written, and had the requisite number of footnotes. There is no question at all that it would have been considered acceptable, though not distinguished, in the Columbia University Philosophy Department in which I served as a senior professor from 1964 to 1971, or in the University of Massachusetts Department of Philosophy in which I served from 1971 until my transfer to Afro-American Studies in 1992. But the Harvard department, at least in the fifties, held itself to a pretty high standard, and I could see why Williams despaired of guiding its author to a more acceptable product.

It remained only to check to see that Williams had indeed directed the dissertation. This required asking for the cover sheet, signed by the three members of the committee, which, although preserved in the archives, was separate from the dissertation itself. I submitted a call slip, and in time a librarian brought me the document. Sure enough, the Dissertation Director was Donald C. Williams, and his signature was there. The second reader was John Ladd, a young Assistant Professor visiting that year from Brown University who became a quite well

known ethical theorist. The third reader was ... me! There was my signature, "Robert Paul Wolff."

I had not the slightest glimmer of a memory of ever having been in any way associated with the entire affair, save as a young, silent, passive observer. How on earth could I recall so many verifiable details of the matter, and yet completely forget that I was one of the readers of the dissertation? Had I even read the thing before affixing my name? I have no idea. Nevertheless, I think I can continue to say, when I meet someone with an unhealthy respect for a Harvard doctorate, that it is not as hard as one might think to get one.

Who knows, maybe Sgt. McVicker had the right idea about Harvard Ph. D's

The Harvard Department was struggling with a problem that seemed to grow worse with each passing year. Their very best students were simply not finishing the degree. Some of them, like Marshall Cohen and Burt Dreben, took the appointment to the Society of Fellows as an excuse for not actually writing a doctoral dissertation, much as Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. and McGeorge Bundy had done in earlier years. But this didn't always work out for others as it had for them. Stanley Cavell had gone off after his Junior Fellowship to teach at the University of California, and out there, state law *required* the Ph. D. for anyone promoted to a tenured position. Thompson Clark was in the same boat, and there were a number of other top students who just seemed unable to finish up. This, I realized, was what had prompted Firth's little chalk talk about rising abilities and soaring expectations. The problem was becoming an embarrassment to Quine and White, who were the dissertation directors of these non-performers, and a source of growing irritation to Williams, Aiken, and others whose best students were

passed over for the coveted Junior Fellowships as well as for junior positions in the department, despite getting their degrees. Steve Barker was one case in point. He had done his work with Williams, who was not amused to see Steve passed over when Cavell and Cohen and Dreben were given the juiciest plums Harvard had to offer.

The whole matter came to a head in my second year as an Instructor - 1959-60. At long last, Tom Clark sent in a dissertation. Tom was considered by some to be one of the best students the department had ever enrolled, and the dissertation had been awaited eagerly for years. Morty White had directed it, but he was away at the Princeton Institute, so Quine and Williams were constituted as the committee. The dissertation was on perception. This is a standard topic in the empiricist theory of knowledge, but in a rather odd fashion, Tom had drawn into the text little circles colored orange with crayon as examples of the surface of an orange. Philosophy dissertations were not known by and large for full-color illustrations.

At the next meeting, Quine and Williams gave their opinions. Williams thought it had some good points, but also some problems. Quine said it was flatly unacceptable and should be rejected. We were all stunned. Everyone had simply assumed that a dissertation by Tom Clark would be an occasion for celebration. Williams remonstrated, but Quine stood firm. What to do?

It was finally decided that the entire department would read the dissertation, and sit as a committee of the whole. There were only two people let off the hook. I was excused because I was only an Instructor, and not senior enough to bear so heavy a burden. Jack Rawls was also

out, because he was only visiting from M. I. T., and would not actually join the department as a professor until two years later.

By the time we met next to decide the matter, White had weighed in with a letter strongly supporting the dissertation, but he wasn't there to take part in the discussion, a fact that had the effect of side-lining him. Quine and Williams had not changed their minds, but everyone else had an opinion and wanted to express it. Clark's principal defender, in White's absence, was his good friend Marshall Cohen, now an Assistant Professor of General Education and Philosophy. As the debate proceeded, things started to look bad for Clark. Quine was very persuasive, and since he was in the position of defending the most rigorous possible standards, he had the high ground.

Finally, in a moment of inspiration born of desperation, Cohen won over the waverers by arguing that Tom's dissertation ought to be accepted out of fairness because it was not as bad as the worst dissertation the department had ever approved. This was certainly true, and enough votes were swung to give Clark the doctorate.

Stanley Cavell also finally finished up with an impressive Wittgensteinian thesis. Stanley had been a Junior Fellow also, having come to Harvard via Juilliard and UCLA, if I remember correctly. He was very much a presence during the years I knew him in Cambridge, a burly, balding man with blond hair whose aura seemed to fill a good deal more space than his mere body. All of us looked forward with a slightly malicious anticipation to the moment when he and Rogers Albritton would first meet. [What follows is my memory and impression of Cavell and Albritton. Charles Parsons, who was their colleague for many years, thinks I do not have

this quite right, and he is certainly in a better position than I to form an opinion. I will leave in my own recollections, and allow him to give us his own, when he writes his memoirs, as I very much hope he will.]

They were equally brilliant, equally tortured and complicated, equally incapable of adopting or stating a philosophical position straight out, without doubling back on it, viewing it from an ironic distance, undercutting it, and then reaffirming it. But it was as though Rogers was Stanley turned inside out. The more Stanley expanded to fill all the available ego space, the more Rogers shrank into himself. It was a little as though Walt Whitman were to encounter Emily Dickinson.

The actual meeting was a bit of a letdown. I think they instantaneously recognized that neither would get a superior handhold on the other, and much in the manner of two chess grandmasters who find themselves in an opening that offers little opportunity for a win, they settled quickly for a draw.

Stanley and I got along, I guess, but I didn't like him. I was very young, very enthusiastic, desperately earnest. Stanley was, or at least affected to be, world-weary, ironical, and disillusioned. Once during my first graduate year, I stayed up all Saturday night thinking about the distinction between analytic and synthetic judgments, which had first been articulated in that fashion by Kant and had recently been called into question by Quine. By dawn, I thought I had achieved a breakthrough, and ran down to Adams House, where Stanley was having a languid Sunday breakfast with John Hollander. I burst into the dining hall, rushed up to their

table, and with barely a "hello" started laying out my ideas. Stanley put up his hand, and drawled, "Please. Not before breakfast."

My sole duties in the Department were to handle the surge of tutorials mandated by Harvard's redefinition of its undergraduates. I taught Sophomore group tutorial and Junior group tutorial, and directed senior honors theses. Although some of the students were very, very bright, and I have actually stayed in touch with a few up to the present day, I did not find the tutorial mode of teaching to my liking. Even then, I was something of a performer, and preferred standing in front of a full classroom.

It is worth mentioning, for the sake of the historical record, that in the academic year 1959-60, I had a slender, retiring young man in my Junior tutorial class who has gone on to achieve some prominence. David Souter was very smart, and my notes indicate that he did a quite commendable paper on C. I. Lewis' *Mind and the World Order*. The next year, I wrote a letter for David in support of his candidacy for a Rhodes Scholarship, which I believe he won. Since we were for a long time dependent on him to stand in the way of the egregious excesses of the Bush Administration and its appalling Attorney-General, I like to imagine that I had some small part in preparing him for that challenge.

Many years later, when Souter was elevated to the high court, he gave a speech in which he said, rather unexpectedly, that he would rather be lecturing on Proust. I was at that time the Director of a small humanities institute at the University of Massachusetts, so I wrote to him as his old tutor and invited him to give a lecture for us. I told him I hadn't any idea what the going honorarium was for a Supreme Court Justice, but I thought we could certainly send a cord of

firewood to his Vermont home. He declined, and said mildly that a cobbler should stick to his last. Somehow, the forty years didn't seem to have changed him.

I wanted to teach a course in Philosophy before my Instructorship ran out, so in the late Fall of 1959, I called Donald Williams, who was acting as Chair in Rod Firth's absence, and asked him rather tentatively whether there was any chance of my offering a course in the department, next year perhaps. He thought not, but said he would get back to me. After a few days, he called and said that the department needed someone to teach the Kant course *the next semester*.

I was staggered. After I had stammered my agreement, I sat down to contemplate what this meant. I was to teach Philosophy 130, the famous Kant course, in the same room and from the same platform where Lewis had sat for all those years, guiding generations of philosophy students through the most important work of Philosophy ever written. Could I possibly teach a course that would in any way do justice to so great a tradition?

Naturally, I would use the Kant summary system. I wrote a note to Lewis, who was living in Menlo Park, California, telling him that I intended to use the system he had created. He wrote back a very nice reply, telling me that in fact he had learned the system of Kant Summaries from his professor, which, according to my calculation, meant that it had been devised by Josiah Royce or George Santayana. I went into what can only be described as panic overdrive, and started to prepare my lectures.

I was living then in Winthrop House, where I had secured a Resident Tutorship. This meant essentially that in return for a beautiful Harvard suite and free meals, I was to be available for Winthrop House students who wanted to talk to a professor. But at that moment the delights of House living were lost on me. My mind was totally absorbed by the need to prepare for teaching the Kant course.

When I am trying to understand a great work of philosophy, I do not work as most scholars do. Indeed, what I do cannot really be called scholarship at all. The usual procedure is to go through a series of stages -- first one reads the work itself. Then one reads secondary and peripheral writings by the same author. In the case of Kant, this would mean reading all of his other published works, then his letters, and then the unpublished manuscripts and scraps of paper that he left at his death - the so-called *Nachlass*. Thanks to the labors of generations of German scholars, all of this is beautifully collected into a multi-volume edition published by the Prussian Academy. Finally, one surveys the secondary literature, focusing especially on the most recent journal articles, where the latest scholarship tends to appear. Oh yes, and of course one reads Kant's works in the original German.

Since I am writing my memoirs, I think it is time to come clean and confess certain things that will shock any Kant scholars who happen upon these words. When I wrote the book that established my reputation as a Kant scholar, I took none of the steps I have just laid out. Indeed, to this day, I have never read many of Kant's minor published works. I read none of the letters, save the famous letter to Marcus Herz, most of which is reprinted in Norman Kemp-Smith's magisterial commentary. I glanced briefly at the *Nachlass*, not even reading the *opus postumum*



which serious Kant scholars think so important. And as for secondary literature, I was, to put it delicately, selective.

What is more, I worked in English, using Kemp-Smith's translation, as Lewis had, and going to the German only for selected passages in which the precise wording made some major philosophical difference. Indeed -- and this is perhaps more difficult to confess than any of my various venial and mortal sins -- I cannot actually read German very well at all, certainly not well enough to read the entire *Critique of Pure Reason*. God knows, I have tried, but I am seriously challenged when it comes to learning languages, and despite the flipping of countless word cards, I have never succeeded in making German a usable tool of research.

My approach is completely different. Since I had worked through the *Critique* in Lewis' course, and had then studied it carefully while writing my dissertation, I did not feel the need to read it straight through again, although by the time I was finished teaching the course and writing the book, I knew some portions of it virtually by heart.

Instead, I began by trying to figure out what Kant's core philosophical problem is, and what central thesis he advances to deal with it. A great work of philosophy always grows out of some core problem, although sometimes the author himself cannot identify it or state it clearly. And every great work of philosophy has a central powerful thesis driving the argument. There will then be an elaborate fretwork of definitions, distinctions, criticisms of predecessors, and the like, sometimes quite clever and often difficult to master. But none of that surface argumentation is very important, and it *never* matters if there are contradictions in it.

My job as commentator is twofold -- first, to find that core problem and central thesis, and second, to discover an argument that can sustain the thesis, *even if the author never actually succeeds in articulating it in the text*. In effect, what I try to do is to make the great philosopher more perfect, more successful, than he actually was, by reconstructing, and if necessary even inventing, the argument as he *should* have stated it. Most great philosophers, I believe, have brilliant intuitions that they are only partially successful in bringing to the level of explicit expression. They *see* more than they can *say*. If my commentary is successful, it will *say* clearly what they have had the genius to *see*, and I will then be able to hold this idea up to readers and show it to them in all of its conceptual beauty.

This rather unorthodox method of textual commentary can succeed, needless to say, only on truly powerful texts. Secondary philosophical works, of the sort that most of us write, are all surface elaboration, and cannot stand up to the pressure of the sort of inquiry I am describing. Examined in this way, they will merely reveal, in the lovely words of Gertrude Stein, that there is no there there.

What makes the *Critique of Pure Reason* unique in the exclusive company of immortal works of philosophy is the fact that in it Kant seizes on *two or three* great ideas, not just one, and advances a beautifully interlocked complex of three or four great arguments. In the entire history of Western philosophy, there is not another work of which that can be said. The book is, of course, filled with endless definitions, distinctions, arguments, objections, and the like, any of which I and most other philosophers would be proud to have thought up. To understand the *Critique*, one must master all of them, so that they pose no obstacles to real understanding. But

they do not in the end matter one bit. All that matters, all that justifies spending the enormous energy that the book demands, are those core ideas and driving arguments.

In preparing to stand on Lewis' platform and teach his course, the greatest philosophy course ever given anywhere, I set myself a task that no one before me had ever successfully accomplished. I sought to wrestle with the central passage of the book, the *Deduction of the Pure Concepts of Understanding*, and finally to extract from it in clear, simple, coherent fashion its central argument, which I would then be able to show actually did succeed in demonstrating his fundamental thesis.

I did not know any of this when I started preparing my lectures. It has taken me forty years of reflection and introspection to arrive at some understanding of the way my mind works. In the late Fall of 1959, all I knew was that come February, I was going to stand up in Emerson Hall, room F, and begin to lecture on Kant.

Twenty-six students turned out that Spring, including five graduate students and nine undergraduates who were or would be in my tutorial groups. The lectures were scheduled for Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays at nine in the morning, but it had been a long time at Harvard since anyone had dared actually to meet on Saturdays. Tall, red-haired Tom Cathcart was there, and Owen de Long, and Carol Wolman. Tom and I have stayed in touch, and a few years ago, he had a paper accepted by a philosophical journal, even though he is not a professional philosopher. Tom's greatest claim to authorial fame is a simply wonderful little book of jokes about philosophy, nicely organized like an introductory text by branch of philosophy, called *Plato and a Platypus Walked into a Bar*. When I came to revise a philosophy

text book I wrote for the tenth edition [more of that much later in these memoirs], I put one of Tom's jokes at the head of each chapter, with suitable acknowledgements and permission fees. Last year, I had the great pleasure of seeing a French translation of Tom's book in a Paris bookstore. Tom, by the way, was part of the same tutorial group that included David Souter, Carol Wolman, and Owen de Long. I have vivid memories of Tom, a tall young man with a great shock of red hair, but no visual memories at all of Justice Souter.

Owen was going steady then with Jane Mansbridge, the daughter of the head of the American office of Cambridge University Press. Jane, or Jenny, as she now calls herself, has become an important feminist political theorist, teaching at the Kennedy School at Harvard. Carol Wolman will always stay in my mind because she was a tremendously gifted young woman living under the weight of an ambitious domineering mother who could not stand to share the limelight with her talented daughter. If Google is to be believed, Carol became a psychiatrist and has written a brilliant essay entitled "Is the President Nuts? Diagnosing Dubya."

By the time I met the class that first day, I had already prepared several weeks of lectures, but I knew that they would all too rapidly be used up. Lewis's method called for reading anywhere from 40 to 60 pages of the *Critique* each week. Unfortunately for me, the most challenging portions of the book turn up quite near the front. By the beginning of the fifth week of the semester, I would be lecturing on the *Deduction of the Pure Concepts of Understanding*. All the while, I was grading twenty-six papers each week, teaching my tutorial groups, and racing through the history of Europe for the second time.

As the day approached for me to unfold the mysteries of the *Deduction*, I turned more and more into myself, running over the argument in my mind, telling to an imaginary audience the story of Kant's great discovery, doggedly refusing to rest so long as even a single step in the argument was unclear or incomplete. I can recall one evening walking for hours around the block on which Cindy's apartment was located, half speaking out loud to myself as though giving a lecture.

The assignment for that week was the shortest of the semester - only twenty-five pages in the Kemp-Smith translation - but it might as well have been a thousand pages, for in that passage Kant undertook to establish with *a priori* rigor the foundations of all human knowledge. By the time I finished my Thursday lecture, I still had a ways to go, so I told the students to show up at 9 a.m. that Saturday for an extra lecture. To my delighted astonishment, they did. Without any preliminaries, I launched into the last stages of my explication of Kant's argument, speaking without stop for an hour and a half. When I wrote the last line of my reconstruction on the blackboard, appending with a flourish *Q. E. D.*, the students burst into a spontaneous round of applause. That moment, coming so soon after I had begun to teach, was the high point of my entire career. I am glad to say that I realized it at the time.

The very next semester, I taught the course again. Another twenty-six students enrolled, including thirteen graduate students, among whom were several destined to become philosophical stars. Margaret Dauler became a very distinguished scholar of early modern philosophy, publishing under her married name, Margaret Wilson. Thomas Nagel is one of the best-known moral and political philosophers in the world. For a time he taught at Princeton, but

he now teaches both philosophy and law at NYU. Both of them earned A's, heading up an outstanding group of students. Tom's summaries were a tad better, but Margaret wrote the best final exam in the class.

While I was plumbing the depths of Kant's philosophy and taking my Freshmen on a frantic dash through European history, I was also becoming involved in a quite different educational undertaking that had a far-reaching impact on my life and career. A number of very senior faculty at Harvard, with the enthusiastic encouragement of McGeorge Bundy, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, had been meeting for some time to plan a new interdisciplinary undergraduate major in Social Studies. It was to have a strong theoretical emphasis, grounded in the great tradition of European social thought in which Smith, Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Freud, and Tocqueville were leading figures. Alexander Gerschenkron was representing Economics, Stanley Hoffmann Government, H. Stuart Hughes History, Lawrence Wylie Sociology, J. C. Pelzel Anthropology, Barrington Moore, Jr. The Russian Research Center, and Morton White had joined them from Philosophy. In 1959-60, when White went off to Princeton, he asked me to sit in for him in his absence.

The Committee met a number of times to plan the launch of the new program, and as part of our efforts to nail down the approval of the Administration, we had a *pro forma* luncheon with the President of Harvard, Nathan Marsh Pusey. Pusey seemed utterly uninterested in the idea of a Social Studies concentration, with the result that the conversation at lunch for the most part was conducted past him, not to or with him. Unlike the rest of us, who even then followed a

rather relaxed academic dress code, Pusey appeared very formal both in dress and personal grooming. I recall thinking that he looked like a retouched photograph of himself.

During that year, the plans were completed, and with Bundy's help, the proposal secured the approval of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. The idea was to cobble together existing courses from all of those departments, knitting the curriculum together with an array of Sophomore, Junior, and Senior tutorials and honors theses. Social Studies would begin with fifteen Sophomores divided into three tutorial groups of five students, each group to be co-taught by two faculty drawn from different departments. The only thing lacking was someone to administer the program.

Like many universities, Harvard had a habit of shoving onerous administrative duties on the most junior faculty available. The panjandrums on the planning committee were not about to volunteer for the chore of actually recruiting students and scheduling tutorial sessions. As the only junior member of the committee, I was the natural choice. In late Spring, Bundy came to Winthrop House to have sherry and lunch with the Master and tutorial staff [even Winthrop, long known as the jock house, did what it could to keep up the English traditions.] When I walked into the Senior Common Room, where he was holding forth, Bundy looked up and said, "Ah, here is the new Head Tutor of Social Studies." As he anticipated, I was pleased and flustered. This little display of his ability to affect the fate of eager young Instructors was characteristic of Bundy, who hid a steely concentration on the exercise of power behind a genial façade of unpretentiousness and informality.

As soon as I had been tapped to run Social Studies, I began the effort to recruit the fifteen Freshmen who would enter the program in the Fall to fill the first three tutorial groups. I taught the first group jointly with Barrington Moore, Jr., a tall, thin, aristocratic political sociologist who had made his reputation with several books on Soviet politics and society. Barry came from an old, upper crust New York family - his distant ancestor was the Clement Clark Moore who wrote "'Twas the Night Before Christmas," and his grandfather had been the Commodore of the New York Yacht Club. Barry and his wife, Betty, spent the summers on their yacht off the New England coast, sailing and working. In the winter they went to Alta to ski. Barry was apparently a champion skier, and his proudest boast, ranked in his mind far above whatever academic honors he might have achieved, was that he had once been invited to join the Alta ski patrol.

Barry was a Fellow of the Harvard Russian Research Institute, not a member of a regular department. I gathered that he had on several occasions been offered a professorship in Sociology, but as the talk shows say these days, he had "issues" with the Department, and refused to accept the tenure that everyone else in Harvard Square lived and died for.

Our tutorial group met each Wednesday in my Winthrop House suite, F-25, from four to five in the afternoon. This was not tutorial for credit; each student was taking four regular courses. But Barry and I took no heed of such niceties. The reading for the first week was *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, by Adam Smith - all of it!

One young man in the group came to see me after we had distributed the reading list, rather troubled. "How do you want us to read the Smith?" he asked. "Well," I said, "that is up to you, but if I were you, I would read it starting at the beginning and continuing to the end." "No,



no," he went on, puzzled, "are we reading this for a test, or are we reading it for background?" "You are reading it because it is a brilliant and very influential book, and we think you will find it interesting." "But should I take notes?" "If you come across something interesting, and you think you might not remember it, you might make some notes. That is up to you." He went away very perturbed. I felt a certain sympathy for him. He had pretty obviously worked his head off to get into Harvard, making his parents very proud. He was prepared to do anything we asked, no matter how difficult. If I had told him to memorize the book while standing on his head, he would have had a go at it. The one thing his entire eighteen years of life had not prepared him for was a genuine educational experience of the sort that only a very rich school like Harvard could provide. In effect, the struggle to win admission to Harvard had ruined him for what it had to offer. The last time I looked, he was a defense intellectual, working at a think tank, which somehow seems appropriate.

Emmy Schröder was quite another story. Tall, beautiful, brilliant, and utterly unconventional, Emmy turned up a few years later toi-toing with Tom Mboya in Kenya. Eventually, she married a Jamaican and lived there for many years, doing fascinating work on the linguistics of Jamaican English. Now she has made herself an expert on the ancient civilizations of the Euphrates and Tigris valleys.

Barry and I fell into a teaching style that might be described as academic tag team wrestling. He would lead off, pressing the students with penetrating questions, probing to find out whether they actually understood the reading. When he tired a bit, I would jump in and pick up where he had left off, leading the discussion away from sociology and economics and into

philosophy and political theory. By the end of an hour, the students would be wiped out, but Barry and I would be all pumped up and ready to go another round.

The two of us went right through the year that way, moving on from Smith to Mill's *Political Economy*, a selection of Marx's writings, de Tocqueville's *Ancien Regime and the French Revolution*, Tyler's *Primitive Culture*, Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*, Freud's *Civilization and its Discontents* and *New Introductory Lectures*, Durkheim's *Suicide*, three hundred pages of Max Weber, Collingwood's *Idea of History*, and Whitehead's *Modes of Thought*. We were insane, of course. The syllabus would have taxed the talents and energies of a group of graduate students, and these five kids were barely eighteen or nineteen. It was, without a doubt, one of the greatest Sophomore courses ever offered anywhere.

Barry and I hit it off immediately, even though we were about as unlike as two people could be. I found Barry astonishingly erudite, with a breadth of learning that I knew would forever be beyond me. His theoretical understanding of the world was immensely strengthened by his Marxist conceptual framework, which was subtle, flexible, and completely undogmatic. I realized that my earlier offhand dismissal of Marx's economic theories was an expression of a shallow incomprehension, and although it would be almost twenty years before I came fully to understand the power, penetration, and scope of *Das Kapital*, I began that education by sitting in Winthrop F-25 and listening to Barry Moore question a little group of Sophomores.

One of Barry's closest friends was Herbert Marcuse, who was then teaching at Brandeis. Barry and Herbert had met during the war, when they both worked in Washington in Army intelligence. Barry was on the Russian desk and Herbert was on the German desk in Wild Bill

Donovan's operation. These wartime friendships went very deep, and there were people on the Harvard faculty with bitterly opposed political views who nonetheless maintained warm personal relationships because of them.

One evening, Barry and Betty invited me to dinner at their lovely Cambridge home to meet Marcuse. As soon as Herbie found out that I was writing a book on Kant, our friendship was assured. There is a long European tradition of respect for philosophy as a discipline - a tradition not shared by Americans, unfortunately - and in the left intellectual world from which Marcuse came, Kant took pride of place above all other philosophers, even Plato or Aristotle or Hegel. To be a Kant scholar, I discovered, was to be offered immediate entrée to any circle of European scholars or intellectuals. Years later, when I gave a lecture on Mill at Columbia, Hannah Arendt came up afterwards to say hello. She pretty obviously hadn't thought much of the lecture, but she asked politely what I was working on at the moment. When I said I was writing a commentary on Kant's *Grundlegung*, she beamed and said, "Ah yes, it is so much nicer to spend time with Kant."

Almost immediately, Herbie and I got into a wild argument about the *Critique*, citing passages and talking Kant jargon while Barry and Betty looked on with amusement. Somehow, the dispute came around to contemporary analytic philosophy, for which Marcuse had only contempt. He made a scathing reference to "the present king of France is bald," a little example Russell used to illustrate a point about truth and reference. The problem Russell was discussing by means of this example is actually an old and very important one, featured prominently in a number of medieval debates. I leapt to Russell's defense, and the two of us went at it pretty hot

and heavy. I argued that Russell was doing a brilliant job of making an obscure and difficult matter clear. Then Marcuse stunned me by saying, "In philosophy, unclarity is a virtue."

At least, that is what I thought he said. Marcuse had a thick German accent, and I could not be absolutely certain I had heard him correctly. "Did you say that in philosophy *unclarity* is a virtue?" I was afraid I had stumbled into *Alice in Wonderland*. "Yes," Marcuse replied, with that malicious smile that I came to know quite well in later years. "You are saying that in philosophy, *it is a good thing not to be clear?*" I asked incredulously. "Yes," he said with an air of self-satisfaction.

For those who are familiar with Marcuse's writings, I need to explain that the conversation took place while he was writing his greatest work, *One-Dimensional Man*. When it was finally published three years later, I realized what he had meant by this apparently quixotic statement. In a nutshell, Marcuse believed that the surface clarity of behavioral social science was a repressive maneuver designed to rob speech of its liberatory potential [like many German intellectuals, he confused operationalism in American sociology with logical analysis in American philosophy]. This is one of the deepest insights in a complex and powerful book, but that evening, all I knew was that this charming, charismatic old man was manifestly nuts.

Marcuse had one more joke to play on me. Four years later, when I was teaching at Columbia, I got a call from Barry. He and Herbert had gone to Beacon Press with a proposal for a little book consisting of an essay Barry had written on objectivity in social science and Herbert's chapter on "repressive tolerance" that had never made it into *One Dimensional Man*.

Arnold Tovell, the marvelously supportive editor at Beacon, told them that they would need at least three essays, so they wanted me to write something on tolerance to round out the book.

Needless to say, I was thrilled. What could possibly beat co-authoring a book with Barrington Moore, Jr. and Herbert Marcuse? They never bothered to send me their essays, and I actually had nothing to say about tolerance, but I set to work, hit on a way to tie my critique of liberalism to the concept of tolerance, and wrote an essay called "Beyond Tolerance." Then the three of us got together in Tovell's office to talk about a title for this rather slender volume. We kicked it around for a while until Marcuse, with a malicious grin, looked at me and said, "Let's call it *A Critique of Pure Tolerance*." I was horrified. "Herbert," I said, "we can't do that. I have just published a book on the *Critique of Pure Reason*. If I put my name on a book called *A Critique of Pure Tolerance*, I will be laughed out of the profession." But Marcuse won the day with an argument that none of us could refute. "Don't worry," he said. "Nobody will ever read it."

At first it looked as though Herbert was right. Beacon decided to try an experiment. In those days, reviewers only paid attention to hardcover books. Paperbacks were sold from racks in candy stores and at train stations. Tovell thought he could have the best of both worlds if he published the book as a paperback-sized hardcover. He figured that it would be reviewed like a hardcover but would be put in train station racks and sell like a paperback. Unfortunately, he got it backwards. Nobody reviewed it, because it wasn't a full sized book, and nobody put it in racks at train stations because it had a hard cover.

But that was not to be the end of the story. Student riots broke out in Germany and France, where Rudi Dutschke and Daniel Cohn-Bendit were bigger than the Beatles. The French and German students read translations of *One-Dimensional Man* and elevated Marcuse to the status of a hero of the revolution. Anything with his name on it was a sure winner. Our little volume went into translation, and immediately became a phenomenal seller in Europe. Meanwhile, students were beginning to make their moves in America, and they too fixed on Marcuse as a role model. They didn't actually *understand* him, but with unerring instinct, they recognized him as a soulmate. Seizing the day, Tovell brought out a new printing of *Critique of Pure Tolerance*, this time in a normal sized hardcover edition with a simultaneous paperback version. In the first three years of its existence, our book had sold slightly more than four thousand copies. In the first year of its new incarnation, it sold more than twenty-six thousand.

Barry, Betty, Cynthia, and I remained close friends for many years. In 1970, when our second son was born, Cynthia and I named him Tobias Barrington Wolff. Barry agreed to be little Toby's godfather, and gave him a toothmarked little silver cup that had been in the Moore family for generations. I was actually written into Barry's will at one point as his literary executor, but when my twenty-three year marriage to Cynthia ended in 1985, Betty and Barry interpreted the break as a call to choose sides, and I lost all contact with them.

Harvard Square was very different in those days from what it has become. The community of students and professors, with associated shops and eateries, extended very little beyond the Square itself. Brattle Square, a stone's throw from "the Square," was home to Cronin's, an old-fashioned bar with as many working class as academic customers. By the time

one had wandered even a few blocks east toward Central Square, or north toward Porter Square, one was in old Cambridge, a congeries of Irish and Italian Catholic enclaves. The commercial heart of the academic community consisted of a several block long stretch of shops across the street from the southern side of Harvard Yard, and a parallel stretch of Mt. Auburn Street. Many of these were longtime residents of the Square area, and had served the fathers of the students now hurrying by them with green bookbags on their shoulders. In the center of the actual Square itself was the Harvard Square station of the T, opening onto the little island around which traffic flowed in all directions. The two dominant establishments on the west side of the Square were the Coop -- the Harvard Cooperative Society -- and the University Theater, which in those days of course had only one screen. The UT, as it was known, showed a double feature from Sunday to Tuesday, and a different double feature from Thursday to Saturday. Wednesday was review day, when the UT revived two golden oldies. The Brattle Theater, in Brattle Square, showed art films. It was there that I first watched Ingmar Bergman's *the Seventh Seal*.

Then as now, Harvard was a claustrophobically insular place, aware only of itself and its most insignificant internal fluctuations. One vignette captures this character perfectly. My undergraduate friend, Mike Jorin, a tall, handsome, blond man with a deep bass voice, with whom I and Richard Eder had wandered the streets of Cambridge singing madrigals, won a Fulbright in 1954-5 to study documentary film making in Europe. When he returned to Cambridge after a year away, he ran into his undergraduate tutor as he was exiting the T into the Square. His tutor looked up briefly, and said, "Hi, Mike. Been out of town?"

Most of my social life, such as it was, centered on the Philosophy Department, of course, but I also got to know some of the other inhabitants of the Square. Robert McCloskey was a charming, friendly Canadian expert on constitutional law, a member of the Government Department and one of the few senior professors who actually consorted with Assistant Professors. He had gathered around him a little coterie of junior professors, from Government and related fields, who would meet from time to time in the University Luncheonette for coffee. I attached myself to the group, as a hanger-on. Among the members of the circle were two hotshot junior Soviet experts, both Polish -- Adam Ulam and Zbigniew Brzezinski. Ulam was a big, bluff man with a wide, open face, looking more like a pro linebacker than a professor. Brzezinski was thin and intense. Harvard then [and perhaps now] had the charming custom of hiring two junior professors in the same specialty, and telling them that one would go up and the other out. In the end, Ulam went up, and Brzezinski had to leave. He went to Columbia, and from there, of course, to an important role in American foreign affairs.

While Brzezinski was still at Harvard, Isaac Deutscher came to give a lecture. Deutscher had been a member of the Polish Communist Party, expelled for opposing the Russian pact with the Nazis. He was a brilliant historian, best known for his biographies of Trotsky and Stalin. During his visit, Deutscher was invited to lunch at Adams House, and Brzezinski was there, as was I. It was immediately obvious that the two men hated one another, and the conversation grew steadily icier between them, as the rest of us watched, fascinated. Finally, Deutscher fixed Brzezinski with a stare and snapped something at him in Polish, which of course none of us



could understand. Brzezinski went white, and said not a word thereafter. We all figured that Deutscher had uttered a mortal insult, but we were all too scared to ask Zbig what it had been.

I was, of course, still a member of the Massachusetts National Guard. My commitment was six years -- six months of active duty and five and a half years of weekly meetings combined with two weeks a year at summer camp. Since I had enlisted in the summer of '57, I was on the hook until the summer of '63. Each Tuesday, after dinner, I would put on my fatigues and my Army boots and go down to the Armory, where I and my fellow weekend warriors would waste a relaxed two hours. We did actually get called out once during a hurricane to direct traffic and pick up fallen tree limbs. Half a century later, when I retired from the University of Massachusetts, my service earned me an annual \$250 bump in my pension.

Although these memoirs are devoted primarily to professional rather than personal reminiscences, I simply cannot pass over what was the focus of my emotional life -- my attachment to Cynthia Griffin, who eventually became my first wife and the mother of our two children. Cindy had enrolled in Harvard Medical School after earning a *magna* for her honors thesis on Hardy, but she very quickly realized that her heart was with literature rather than medicine. Stubborn pride made her stick it out at med school until they had finished dissecting their corpse, but in the middle of the first year, she left to go back to graduate school. She was a bit late for application to the graduate program in English, and the misogynist W. Jackson Bate, who headed the department, had not the slightest interest in cutting her any slack. When she told him that she wanted to enter the English doctoral program, his response was, "Why don't you go over to Anthropology? I hear they are looking for women over there." Fortunately, her senior

tutor, Albert J. Guerard, was more sympathetic. He gave her some very good advice. "Apply for the degree of Master of Arts in Teaching, and during your first year, take nothing but graduate courses in English. Then apply in the regular way to our doctoral program. When you are admitted, you will get credit for those courses, and you won't have lost any time at all." That is what Cindy did, and it worked exactly as Guerard had predicted.

This was my first direct encounter with the prejudice against women in the Academy. Tip O'Neill liked to say that all politics are local. It is as true to say that all ideology is personal. My commitment to feminist ideals had its origin not in theoretical reflection but in my outrage at the indignities and career obstacles Cindy faced. Bate's off-hand dismissal was the first, but as later chapters of this Memoir will attest, scarcely the last. For what it is worth, Cindy ended up a more distinguished scholar than Bate, for all his bigoted pretensions.

I have said that there was no social life among the Philosophy Department faculty, but that is not quite accurate. Cindy and I were actually invited to dinner at the home of Henry David Aiken and his wife. This was, of course, the same Aiken with whom I had tangled first as a seventeen year old Sophomore and then during the writing of my doctoral dissertation, so I was, to put it mildly, apprehensive. The invitation was so casual that I was not actually certain it included dinner. To be on the safe side, Cindy and I ate before driving out to Harvard [a town forty miles west of Cambridge having nothing at all to do with the university]. As it turned out, the invitation *was* for dinner, so we choked down our second meal and made polite conversation.

Although my teaching absorbed a great deal of time and effort, it was not the primary focus of my emotional energies during my years as a Harvard Instructor. More and more, as

time passed, I became caught up in intense political debates and activities. The first issue that engaged me was the burgeoning campaign to put some sort of limitation on nuclear weapons. I had been concerned for some time about the dangers of nuclear proliferation and the threat of an accidental nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union. I even made reference to the subject in my letters home from Europe. Younger readers, who have lived their entire lives in the shadow of nuclear weapons, may find it hard to understand how urgent and overwhelming these threats appeared to those of us who were living through the first years of the nuclear standoff.

What frightened many of us was the danger of a miscalculation or misunderstanding leading to a full-scale exchange of nuclear weapons that would kill hundreds of millions of people and quite possibly end civilization as we knew it. A few words about the technical situation are needed to explain why we were so terrified. The weapons themselves, of course, were horrific. By the end of the fifties, both countries had large stockpiles of thermonuclear bombs, each of which had an explosive power equivalent to several millions of tons of TNT. By way of comparison, in the run-up to America's invasion of Iraq, the Army tested a huge bomb, dubbed "the mother of all bombs," carrying twenty thousand pounds of explosive, which is to say a mere ten tons. When it was dropped on an uninhabited portion of an island, it made the ground shake for miles around. That bomb, intended to frighten the Iraqi army into submission, had roughly one two-thousandth the explosive power of the atomic bombs dropped by the United States on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and one millionth the power of the bombs in the American

and Soviet arsenals. Nuclear weapons were more properly considered forces of nature than weapons of war. One of them could effectively obliterate a city the size of New York.

Initially, the thermonuclear warheads were loaded onto B-52 intercontinental bombers, which formed the backbone of the Strategic Air Command. Bombers are quite vulnerable when on the ground, which meant that if there were a crisis of some sort, Air Force protocol called for scrambling the crews and getting them up in the air as fast as possible, and then positioning them at forward points near the Russian border. But these planes could be kept aloft only for a limited number of hours before they had to be brought back for refueling, and even with mid-air refueling, the needs of the crews necessitated periodic landing. As soon as the bombers were down, they were vulnerable again. Should an international crisis, real or imagined, result in fleets of U. S. bombers circling near the Soviet border, and fleets of Soviet bombers circling near the U. S. Borders, it would take very little in the way of misunderstanding or miscalculation to trigger mutual attacks that would effectively destroy both nations. No one could even calculate the indirect effects of that much radioactive material being carried by jet streams across the face of the globe.

The experience with aerial bombing in World War II had made it clear that no anti-aircraft defense could possibly hope to achieve a kill rate of as much as fifty percent of an attacking force of airplanes. But even a ninety percent kill rate against a fleet of bombers armed with hydrogen bombs would be a catastrophe, for it would take only one bomber getting through to destroy an entire large city. Several years after the events I am now relating, in 1964, film director Stanley Kubrick captured the terrifying insanity of the situation with what is surely the

greatest anti-war movie ever made, *Dr. Strangelove, or How I Stopped Worrying and Learned to Love the Bomb*.

The next generation of weaponry - intercontinental ballistic missiles - made the situation even worse. The great attraction of missiles is that they are totally unstoppable and almost instantaneous by comparison with bombers. An IBM would take minutes to travel from the United States to Russia, and nothing could knock it down once it had been launched. But the first IBMs developed were fueled by chemically unstable liquid fuel. After the fuel had been pumped into the rockets, it had to be used quickly or pumped out again. Since it took hours for the pumping process to be carried out, if the fueled rockets were not launched, but were unfueled, there was a risk that they would be blown up on the ground. The only saving grace was that the missiles were not terribly accurate, which meant that they could not be counted on to hit enemy missile installations. So they were aimed at enemy cities, which the Air Force could be pretty confident of destroying. These facts triggered a secret race between Russia and America to develop more accurate missiles, hardened missile silos, and solid fuels that did not have to be pumped into the rockets and pumped out again.

For a while, both nations experimented with missiles mounted on railroad cars and kept in perpetual motion so as to make them impossible to target, but the eventual solution, on which the United States relies to this day, was nuclear tipped missiles on submarines powered by nuclear reactors and hence capable of remaining more or less permanently submerged. [For a schlock movie representation of this phenomenon, one can apply to NetFlix for a copy of *Ice Station Zebra* starring the always awful Rock Hudson.]

Nuclear weapons and intercontinental ballistic missiles posed a problem for the military entirely new in the history of warfare. No one had ever fought a war using them; indeed, no one had even test fired an IBM with a live nuclear warhead. What was more, the only rational national goal was to avoid a nuclear war, not to win one. Under these conditions, battlefield experience, which was the principal strength of the generals and admirals, was worthless.

Into the gap opened up by this unique situation stepped a horde of civilians who claimed to know better than the generals how to plan for nuclear war. Leading the pack were economists, who argued that their techniques for analyzing the competition between two firms in the marketplace was just what the Defense Department needed. They were followed by mathematicians, sociologists, physicists, anthropologists, philosophers, and psychologists. Among the most prominent of these new Defense Intellectuals, as they came to be called, were a brilliant economist in the Harvard Economics Department, Thomas Schelling, and a bloated gasbag of a pseudo-physicist named Herman Kahn, located at the Rand Corporation. In 1960, Kahn published a big, fat, pretentious book called *On Thermonuclear War* [a bow to von Clausewitz's famous work], in which he purported to show that a vigorous civil defense could enable the United States to "prevail" in a nuclear war with an "acceptable" level of dead Americans - somewhere in the neighborhood of twenty million or so, if the wind was blowing in a favorable direction that day.

The book was an intellectual fraud, filled with scenarios and impressive looking charts and figures "for illustration only" that proved nothing at all. Kahn became a major figure in American debates about military strategy, funded by government contracts and gathering about

him at the Rand Corporation an array of pseudo-intellectuals who had done well on the mathematics part of the Scholastic Aptitude Test.

The debates carried out by the new breed of defense intellectuals gave every appearance of being serious theoretical disputes, complete with footnotes, technical disquisitions, and mathematical calculations, but in fact they were thinly veiled turf battles among the three branches of the military establishment. The first generation of nuclear weapons were delivered by bombers, which meant that they were under the control of the Air Force, with all the defense appropriations and associated status that implied. For a while, the Strategic Air Command, or SAC, was the premier unit in the entire military establishment.

The Army and Navy fought back bitterly to seize their share of the annual defense budget. When the first intercontinental ballistic missiles became operational, the Army gained control of them. An enormous effort was then made to secure the missiles against a surprise first attack, which meant burying them deep in concrete hardened missile silos positioned in the empty plains of the Dakotas and surrounding territories. This left the Navy in a seriously disadvantaged position, stuck with battleships and aircraft carriers that were now distinctly second-class weapons systems. So nuclear submarines were developed, each capable of carrying sixteen or more intercontinental ballistic missiles. The nuclear warheads on these missiles were small by comparison with those loaded into the ICBMs or carried by the SAC bombers -- half a megaton or a megaton at the most. But since the missiles, when fired from underwater positions, were only accurate enough to destroy cities, not hardened missile silos, that was more than enough destructive power.

Each of the armed services had think tanks of defense intellectuals in tow whose job it was to develop theories demonstrating that the weapons controlled by their employers were the essential components of the proper nuclear deterrence strategy. Kahn was a bought and paid for Air Force intellectual, which meant he had somehow to show that the ICBMs under their control could plausibly and not insanely be used to launch a first strike against Russia. This in turn required defending two manifestly implausible theses: First, that the ICBMs could knock out almost all of Russia's nuclear tipped missiles; and Second, that with proper air raid shelters, multiple command and control centers, and other preparations, America could survive the inevitable retaliation from Russia's remaining armory with no worse than "acceptable" death and destruction.

The Navy, with its submarine based nuclear missiles, could not plausibly adopt a first strike policy because its weapons were not accurate enough to seriously degrade Russia's ICBM capacity. Its defense theorists, of whom Schelling and his co-author Morton Halperin were far and away the most intellectually impressive, therefore developed a second-strike deterrence strategy. The idea was to make the Navy's missile force impossible to attack, by endlessly moving it about under water in the nuclear submarines. A Russian first strike on America, even though it would completely obliterate the entire country, would then trigger a retaliation against Russian cities by the surviving fleet of nuclear submarines. To guard against Soviet nuclear submarines, underwater networks of sensing devices were laid down in the oceans and seas of the world. All of this, the Navy's defense intellectuals argued, would deter the Kremlin from doing anything self-destructively impulsive.



The more I learned about America's weaponry and its policies for dealing with them, the more convinced I became that the only sane response was some form of nuclear disarmament. I was hardly alone, needless to say. Many of the most distinguished physicists throughout the world, including some who had participated in the invention of the first nuclear weapons, began to speak publicly about the necessity of a negotiated reduction in the weapons, leading to a complete dismantling of the arsenals being created by Russia and the United States. In 1955, Bertrand Russell led an attempt to bring together physicists from both sides of the Iron Curtain to talk about steps toward nuclear disarmament. Eventually, in July 1957, the first of what became a series of yearly conferences took place in the town of Pugwash, Nova Scotia, underwritten by a wealthy businessman, Cyrus Eaton. The Pugwash Conferences, as they came to be called, were for some years the focus of the international Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. It was as a consequence of one of the Pugwash Conferences, albeit indirectly, that I learned a lesson that has stayed with me up to the present time.

I had become friendly with Richard Barnet, a young lawyer at the Russian Research Center who had made himself an expert on the legal aspects of disarmament. In 1960, I think it was, Walt W. Rostow, later Lyndon Johnson's National Security Advisor, returned from a Pugwash Conference and gave television interviews in which he parroted the standard propaganda line of the American government - that Russians did not really want disarmament, could not be trusted, and so forth. Barnet invited me to a closed briefing at the Center for Harvard's Russian scholars [the same Center in which Barry Moore was located], and I jumped at the chance to find out what experts *really* thought, what they said to one another behind closed

doors. Everyone was there - Alex Inkeles, Adam Ulam, Zbigniew Brzezinski, all the hotshots. I listened with dismay as Rostow used the same hackneyed jargon that had characterized his public appearances. Worse still, the responses from the experts were couched as well in the cold war boilerplate. It dawned on me that this was the way they actually thought. There was no *real* insider story that they shared only with fellow experts. They actually believed the boilerplate nonsense they shoveled out to the public. I was reminded of this experience as I listened to Donald Rumsfeld, Dick Cheney, Paul Wolfowitz, and Condaleeza Rice mouth manifest nonsense about their invasion of Iraq.

My first foray into the public debate was a letter to the *New York TIMES* on September 25, 1959. Nikita Khrushchev had come to the United Nations to propose General and Complete Disarmament in four years. The western press and the American Government hooted in derision at the very idea of complete disarmament, and dismissed his proposal without the slightest serious consideration. I was furious, and wrote a letter questioning whether America actually wanted disarmament, its public professions to the contrary notwithstanding. I suggested that whereas Marx had said that capitalism thrived on war, he would, if he were alive today, argue that capitalism now thrived on the preparation for war. The *TIMES* published the letter, probably because I was an Instructor at Harvard.

The response was extraordinary -- one more evidence of the enormous reach of the *TIMES* and the newsworthiness of the Harvard name.. I got lovely letters, painstakingly handwritten on lined paper, from old socialists in New York who came out of hiding to bless me for speaking out; several sober response to my letter were published in the next week; and the right

wing hater George Sokolsky devoted an entire column to denouncing me as unfit to teach the young. I was thrilled.

Over the next two years, I committed more and more of my time and energy to the struggle to arouse Americans to the dangers of nuclear war. I appeared on local television, spoke at churches and synagogues, debated Thomas Schelling on the Harvard campus, and in early 1961 wrote a long attack on Kahn's book that appeared as the cover story in *The New Republic*. I even debated Kahn in person before a large audience at Jordan Hall in Boston. I prepared myself for the appearance by studying the shielding properties of concrete and the prevailing wind patterns in North America. I can still see myself sitting in the bathtub in my Winthrop House suite, rehearsing my talking points before the big event.

Perhaps the oddest gig produced by my involvement in the campaign for nuclear disarmament was an invitation to make a presentation to Henry Kissinger's seminar on international relations and defense policy. The seminar was regularly attended by young men from wealthy and important families in the Third World, visiting at Harvard to complete their education. In later years, as these men rose to positions of importance in the governments of their home nations, Kissinger used his role as their former professor to expand and solidify his influence. [It is worth recalling that the obsequiously ambitious Marty Peretz played, and still plays, the same role to Al Gore. A Gore presidency would have been vastly better than the Bush disaster, but it would not have been without its problems.]

Kissinger was not a new-style defense intellectual. He was actually an old-fashioned diplomatic historian, whose early work had been on Bismarck. But he was very ambitious, and

had the wit to jump on a bandwagon as it was passing by. He had written a rather facile and superficial book called *The Necessity for Choice*, which stole liberally from *On Thermonuclear War* and was transparently designed to catch the attention of John Kennedy, then running hard for the presidency. In his ponderous Germanic manner, Kissinger dismissed pro-disarmament types like me as insufficiently aware of the enormous profundity of the issues, stating in a letter to the Harvard *Crimson* that this was all "a very serious and difficult subject."

Because of my background in logic and mathematics, I was able without too much trouble to master the formal materials derived from Game Theory and Bargaining Theory that Schelling, Morton Halperin, Albert Wohlstetter and others used to give some aura of scientific precision to their speculations. When I showed up at Kissinger's office on the day of the seminar, I asked whether there was a blackboard in the room. Kissinger wanted to know why I needed one, so I explained that I was going to put some Game Theory matrices on the board, as a focus of my critique of Kahn and Schelling. Kissinger reacted rather oddly. Needless to say, he understood not a word of Game Theory or Bargaining Theory, and he suggested nervously that there was no need to go into such things. Rather maliciously, I insisted, pointing out that this was a "very serious and difficult subject."

As I became more and more involved in the disarmament movement, I began to link up with the many other people in the Harvard community who shared my anxieties. In response to my *TIMES* letter, David Riesman, recently appointed the first Ford Professor of the Social Sciences, wrote me a congratulatory note and invited me to stop in to see him on the top floor of Emerson Hall, where Harvard's Social Relations Department was located. When I diffidently

poked my head into his office, asking whether I was disturbing him, he gestured broadly for me to come in. "That's the trouble with this place," he complained. "No one talks to anyone else. I am right down the hall from Mr. Sociology [he meant Talcott Parsons] and I have never had a conversation with him."

Riesman had the habit of taking up young people, more or less in the manner of the Boston Amorys, and I suddenly found myself receiving copies of every memorandum and letter that he wrote to anyone on the Harvard campus. He and a number of others, including the grand old pacifist A. J. Muste and the brilliant, eccentric psychoanalytic theorist Erik Erikson, were reviving the Revolutionary War tradition of Committees of Correspondence. I began attending their meetings, and published several essays in their Newsletter. Riesman was open and accessible, almost to a fault, but I found Erikson rather distant, and never established any sort of real relationship with him.

The liveliest circle of critics and activists, of which I became a charter member, was a small group of graduate students and young faculty that took to calling itself "The New Left Club of Cambridge," in ironic imitation of its English prototype. We weren't really a club, just some like-minded men and women who enjoyed hanging out together and talking politics. For the year that I ran Social Studies, we used to meet in my office for a bag lunch every week or so.

The group included Gabriel and Joyce Kolko, Steven and Abigail Thernstrom, Gordon Levin, Michael Walzer, Nadav Safran, and on occasion H. Stuart Hughes, although Hughes was rather older than the rest of us. Martin Peretz joined the group, as did Michael Maccoby.

Gaby and Joyce were wonderful old-fashioned radicals, already doing the first-rate research that eventually resulted in Gaby's fine 1962 book, *Wealth and Power in America*. I have taught the book many times over the years, until my copy is tattered and held together with scotch tape. What can I say about Steve and Abby? Steve was a graduate student in History, doing the research on the New England working class in the eighteenth century that made his reputation and won him tenure at Harvard. The two of them were tigers when it came to political issues, stepping out front on a number of progressive causes. I have no idea why they have turned sour, bitter, and reactionary, although I once heard a rumor that it was somehow connected with the fact that Steve became an object of student criticism during the Harvard troubles of the late sixties and early seventies. Abigail Thernstrom, in particular, has turned into a veritable Lynn Cheney. She reminds me of Jean Elshtain, who was a bright, lively young scholar when I knew her at UMass, and has since turned hard right. But that is a story for a later installment.

Marty Peretz was essentially a young wannabe, trying to latch onto what looked to him then to be a group of comers. Marty had been an undergraduate student of Max Lerner at Brandeis, who wrote a regular column for the New York *Post*. Marty actually traveled around the country after he graduated, arranging for the syndication of Lerner's column.

Mike Walzer was a sweet, soft-spoken lovely man, the fair-haired boy of Louis Hartz and the political theorists in the Government Department. His earliest work was on the political theories of English Puritans during the Revolution of 1640. He was awarded tenure at Harvard and eventually moved to a professorship at the Institute for Advanced Study, where he is today.

I liked Mike enormously, and thought that he and I were kindred spirits. He told me once that when his first child was a little baby and teething, he would walk up and down the apartment carrying her on his shoulder and patting her, trying to soothe her. To keep himself awake, he would open up a picture book of Marilyn Monroe and lay it on the dining room table, allowing himself one page turn for every complete tour of the apartment.

Many years later, in the aftermath of the Watergate scandal, I was called in Northampton by a young political scientist in New York who told me that a group of political scientists were trying to raise the money to take a full page ad in the *TIMES* calling for the impeachment of Nixon. The *TIMES*, rather hard-headedly, wanted the money for the ad up front, and this young man was calling to ask whether I could help him reach Barry Moore or Marty Peretz for contributions. I told him to forget about Barry -- like many upper class types with inherited money, Barry was quite stingy when it came to giving it away. But I was pretty sure I could reach Marty through Mike. I phoned Mike, exchanged pleasantries, and then explained why I was calling. There was a long pause at the other end of the line. Very softly, Mike said, "well... you see .... we are supporting Nixon." I was so astonished that I exploded, asking him what on earth he was talking about. There was an even longer pause. Then, in a sweet, sad voice, almost as though he were describing something being done to him, rather than something he was doing, he said, very hesitantly, "Well... you see ... Israel." Nixon, whatever his crimes, had adopted a strongly pro-Israel policy, and that, it seemed, trumped all other considerations.

I was so embarrassed for Walzer that I got off the phone as fast as I could, and have not talked to him again. Ever since that time, it has seemed to me that Mike's work, whatever its

ostensible subject, is really about Israel. Freud says somewhere, talking about the conduct of a psychoanalysis, that if there is any subject that it is not permitted to discuss freely in an analysis, sooner or later the entire analysis comes to be about that subject.

The wackiest episode of the New Left Club of Cambridge was our flirtation with Erich Fromm, the émigré fugitive from the Frankfurt School of Social Research. Fromm was living in Mexico, and Mickey Maccoby had been in touch with him. Somehow, Mickey had managed to give Fromm the impression that there was a large mass of budding socialists up north just waiting for a charismatic leader to transform them into a political powerhouse. Mickey arranged for Fromm to come to Cambridge, and our little handful dutifully turned out to hear him speak. Fromm was obviously dismayed by the size of his army, and lacking the staying power of a Stalin or a Lenin, turned tail and headed south again.

With the 1960 presidential campaign heating up, everyone at Harvard became very excited, needless to say. We were all fanatic Kennedy supporters. After all, he was a Harvard man, his wife spoke French, and he had won a Pulitzer Prize [even if the book that won it for him was, as it later became clear, written by Ted Sorensen.] I ran into Barry Moore on the campus one day and gushed a bit about the race. He looked at me from a height as much intellectual as physical and observed that there was not the slightest bit of difference between Kennedy and Nixon. It took me many years to realize that he was quite right.

I am not a terribly sociable person by nature, and making friends is, for me, rather difficult, but being a member of Winthrop House's Senior Common Room gave me a ready-made circle of acquaintances with whom I could pass the time. A number of them linger in my



memory. Richard Onorato was a literature student, whose dissertation studies eventually turned into a book on Wordsworth. Dick was of middling height and already going bald, but he had a body-builder's physique and was far and away in the best shape of any of us. He was a great tennis player, and used to play regularly with his friend, Murray Levin, then a young political scientist at Boston University. Dick would stroll out onto the court flawlessly dressed in blindingly white tennis shorts and shirt, his game a picture perfect mixture of big overhead serves and stinging volleys. Murray would shamle onto the court in jeans and a rumpled sweatshirt two sizes too large, the stub of a cigar clenched between his teeth. It looked to be no contest, but in fact the two were very evenly matched, and Murray was as likely to prevail as Dick.

In 1960, during the primary campaign that led to the nomination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy as the Democratic standard bearer for the presidency, Murray undertook some fieldwork around Boston for what eventually became his 1966 book *Kennedy Campaigning*. Jack Kennedy, Massachusetts' junior senator, was wildly popular, and this being a state in which "the name's the same" had been raised to a fine art, there were thirteen Kennedys up and down the ballot for local, state, and national office. Six of them were named "John," including the State Treasurer John Francis Kennedy, who had already parlayed his name into public office, and now sought the nomination for Governor. One day, as Murray was interviewing prospective voters in Southey, he knocked on the door of a little old Irish-American lady. This was the sort of home in which there would be three pictures reverentially displayed in the parlor -- of Jesus, the Pope, and JFK. Murray asked her who was her candidate for the Presidency. "John F.

Kennedy," she replied unhesitatingly. "And who is your candidate for Governor?" "John F. Kennedy." Something in the intonation of her voice told Murray that she thought they were the same person. "Do you think that the same man should run for both offices?" asked Murray. "Sure," she replied in a broad brogue, "if the dear boy wants to be President and Governor, I don't know why he shouldn't be."

Richard Taub [**not** to be called "Dick" under any circumstances] was a bright sociologist whose principal claim to fame in our Senior Common Room was his girlfriend, Doris, a tall, beautiful young woman with a spectacular figure. Richard eventually went to the University of Chicago, where he worked with William Julius Wilson on Wilson's famous studies of the South Side Black community. For his dissertation research, Richard went off with Doris to India, and he wrote back some marvelous letters about his time there. When he first arrived and settled in, he found that he needed a government license to buy fuel for his home. Having been well schooled in Max Weber's theoretical analysis of bureaucracy, Richard went along to the appropriate office to pick up the license. He found his way to the correct desk, and began to ask the man sitting behind it for a form to fill out. The man interrupted Richard to ask him when he had arrived in India. This was followed by questions about his parents, his wife, his upbringing, and whether he was enjoying his time in India. After a while, tea was served, and the interview came to an end. Richard was ushered out, still without his license. When he returned the next day, the man greeted him as an old friend, and said solicitously, "How may I help you?" Bureaucracy or no bureaucracy, in India every interaction was personal, and no business could be transacted until a suitable relationship had been established.

Robert Tracy was not actually a member of the Common Room, but I got to know him through Onorato and another literature student, Donald Friedman. Bob was a large, fleshy, friendly man who had chosen as his dissertation topic the performances of Chekhov's plays in England and America. His dissertation director was the famous Comparative Literature scholar Harry Levin, who apparently paid as little attention to Bob's progress as Henry Aiken and Rod Firth had paid to mine. Levin was self-conscious about being hard of hearing, which may have contributed to his air of reserve when students came to see him. Bob soldiered on, and eventually finished a draft of the first half of his thesis. He submitted it to Levin, and went around several days later to get Levin's reactions. As Levin began to make some comments about what Bob had written, it dawned on Bob that Levin had forgotten the original topic of the dissertation, and thought it was devoted solely to the performances of Chekhov in England. Bob wisely kept his mouth shut, typed up the first half of the dissertation, and got the degree.

The Master of Winthrop House was David Owen, a member of the History Department. Owen was a wonderful man, responsible for transforming Winthrop House from the jock house into a genuinely humane and scholarly place. There is too much to say about him for these memoirs, so I will simply urge my readers to Google "David Owen history Harvard" as I did and read the lovely Harvard *Crimson* story on the occasion of his stepping down from the position of Master. Owen presided over a dinner each Spring for the graduating seniors and their parents. One year, the son of one of the authors of the Ellery Queen novels was among the graduating class, and Owen invited him to speak [I cannot now recall whether it was Manfred Lee or Frederic Dannay]. He made an observation that has stayed with me all these years, because it

seemed to me absolutely true and oddly profound. "No one is ever a fan of detective stories and science fiction at the same time." When I was a boy, I was a fanatic sci fi reader, and in fact, as I observed in an earlier chapter of this Memoir, my first publication was a letter to the editor of *Astounding Science Fiction*. But once I went to Harvard, I started reading detective stories, and never read science fiction again. Eventually, I read my way through the collected *oeuvres* of Agatha Christie, Rex Stout, John Dickson Carr, Josephine Tey, Michael Innes, Dannay and Lee, and many other grand old figures of the classic mystery genre.

Since these memories of my Harvard years are fast coming to a close, I should perhaps say just a word about Susan Sontag, whom I knew during my graduate student days. Susan showed up as a first year graduate student in Philosophy as I was returning from my European *wanderjahre*. Her husband, Philip Rieff, was visiting in the Psychology Department [I think]. They had met when Susan was an undergraduate in one of his courses at the University of Chicago, and had married when Susan was quite young. Susan had an infallible nose for who was in and who was out in any academic or social situation. I had done quite well on the famously forbidding set of written doctoral examinations known familiarly as "The Prelims," so she decided to latch onto me as her guide to success in the department. Since she and Philip lived quite close to where Charlie Parsons and I were living, we fell into the habit of walking home from the Yard together. One day, she invited me into her home, and as the door was opened by their housekeeper and nanny, I met little David, then about two years old or so. [This is the same David Rieff who has since made a considerable name for himself in the world of letters]. Being basically a nice Jewish boy, I said, when I was introduced to him, "How nice.

Are you planning to have any more?" Susan fixed me with a basilisk eye and said, coldly, "I have paid my debt to society."

Susan and David actually invited me to dinner once -- up to that point in my young life, my first formal dinner invitation. I found the dinner table conversation utterly mysterious. There seemed to be only two topics of conversation: the wine, about which I knew absolutely nothing, and people who had been denied tenure because they were Jewish. Susan stayed on for two years, but after I got my doctorate and went off to the Army, she must have left, because by the time I returned from my martial interlude she was gone.

As election day in 1960 approached, the Winthrop House Senior Common Room chipped in to rent a television set, and we all gathered to watch the results. This was before the days of exit polls and projections, so we knew it might be a long night. Things were nip and tuck all night, until at two a.m. the Illinois figures, which had been frozen for hours, began to change. In a successful bid for influence in the new administration, Chicago mayor and Democratic boss Richard Daley was making his move. Precincts were discovered in Chicago that had mysteriously failed to report earlier, graveyards were voted, and Illinois swung to Kennedy. Finally, as the sun was coming up, we all went to Hayes-Bickford's for breakfast and then returned to watch Nixon's concession speech.

The long boring sleep of the Eisenhower era was over. There were moments when it seemed as though all of Cambridge was leaving for jobs in the new administration. I was not intimate with the really important people who were tapped for senior positions, but a number of my friends were leaving for junior slots. Dick Barnet went to the recently formed Disarmament

Agency. My colleague from the Senior Common Room, Barbara Bergmann, with whom I had spent some pleasant hours playing string quartets, snagged a job on the staff of the Council of Economic Advisors. Dick's friend, Marc Raskin [who actually knew Susie from Chicago, as I learned thirty years later] was appointed as aide to McGeorge Bundy, who became Kennedy's National Security Advisor. Poor Henry Kissinger never got the call, despite the fact that *The Necessity for Choice* could be seen on Kennedy's desk in a television documentary about the transition.

This is perhaps the point to interpolate a tidbit of information that I came by half a century after the events here being described. One of the happy consequences of writing and posting these recollections on line is hearing from old friends. One of my fellow Winthrop House Senior Common Room members was William Polk, a handsome blond foreign policy expert descended from President Polk, who heard about these postings from his daughter and sent me a message. He has, in the intervening half century, become a very distinguished progressive foreign policy expert. Bill told me the following story: In 1961, as McGeorge Bundy was beginning his tenure as Kennedy's National Security Advisor, he asked Bill for advice about ambassadorial appointments. During one of their conversations, Bill told Mac that he ought to have someone on his staff who would pull his coattail and tell him when he was making a mistake -- an in-house critic, as it were. Bundy seemed intrigued by the idea and asked him whom he would suggest. Bill said, "What about Bob Wolff?" Bundy thought for a moment and then said, "I already have Marc Raskin." [Marc went on, with Dick Barnet, to form and run the Institute for Policy Studies, a progressive think tank that still exists in Washington.]

And then, on Sunday, April 16, 1961, just three months after Kennedy took office, a group of Cuban exiles armed, trained, and funded by the C. I. A., mounted a disastrous effort to invade Cuba via the Bay of Pigs and depose Fidel Castro.

The abortive Cuban invasion hit the New Left Club of Cambridge very hard. We had all thought of ourselves as liberals. Well, Kennedy was a liberal, if anyone was, and he had invaded Cuba. That meant that we weren't liberals. What then were we? We took to calling ourselves radicals, but that was just a place holder, a way of indicating that whatever liberals were, we weren't *that*. The day after the invasion, Max Lerner published a column defending it. Marty Peretz, with his finely honed instinct for the main chance, stood by Lerner, and effectively broke with us. Eventually, of course, he married money and bought *The New Republic*, thus securing for himself a charter seat on the runaway train called Neo-Conservatism. He always was an egregious twerp.

We had had indications that something of this sort was planned under the Eisenhower administration. In fact, we had met with McGeorge Bundy the previous Fall, after he returned from a fact-finding tour of Latin America. On that occasion, he looked us straight in the eye and lied to us, assuring us that the reports in the *Nation* of C. I. A. training camps for anti-Castro Cubans were untrue. But by the time the invasion took place, he was settled into the Executive Office Building, serving as National Security Advisor. Years later, after Bundy had left the White House to assume the presidency of the Ford Foundation, he wrote to invite me to participate in some sort of panel discussion. I replied that since the last time I had seen him he

had lied to me, I did not feel that I could engage in an open intellectual exchange with him. I never heard from him again.

Within days of the abortive invasion, we had mobilized ourselves and were organizing to protest the attempts by the United States to overthrow the Castro government. On the evening of April 26, 1961, just ten days after the invasion, we held a protest rally at Harvard chaired by Stuart Hughes, Nadav Safran, and myself. Despite being somewhat upstaged by undergraduates protesting Harvard's decision to stop printing its diplomas in Latin, we managed to pull a big crowd, and because of the Harvard/Kennedy connection, we got considerable press coverage. At the meeting, we formed the Cuba Protest Committee, which then circulated a statement for signatures by faculty at Harvard and elsewhere. We collected two dozen signatures from senior Harvard faculty, including Barry Moore and Rod Firth.

The attempt to round up signatures was an instructive exercise. A number of very senior, supposedly savvy social scientists declined to sign, saying that they preferred to talk privately to Bundy. They suffered from the rather common misapprehension that their Harvard friendship would give them access to the inner circles of government. Some years later, during the Viet Nam War, the same notion led Harvard professors to think that their faculty friendship with Kissinger during his Harvard days would give them special access. Seymour Hirsch, in his splendid book *Kissinger*, skewers that delusion. The professors would come to see Kissinger and he would play them like mandolins, assuring them that he was the only person protecting the world from Nixon's craziness. As soon as they left, convinced they had whispered in the right ear of power, he would forget about them. What really worried Kissinger, Hirsch wrote, were



the clueless outsiders picketing in front of the White House. Since he couldn't control them, they constituted a threat.

Our protests had no visible effect on the Kennedy Administration, but they did produce yet another *contretemps* with Robert Lee Wolff. By now, Wolff was Chair of the History Department, and even more full of himself. He was so distressed by the similarity of our names that he wrote to the *Harvard Crimson* for a second time to disambiguate us. "I should like to state," he wrote, "not for the first time, but with all possible emphasis, that I am not, repeat not, Robert Paul Wolff, Instructor in Philosophy and General Education, and I do not share his opinions on disarmament, Cuba, or, as far as I can tell, anything else." Stuart Hughes told me that at a History Department faculty meeting that afternoon people were collapsed in laughter, to Wolff's histrionic dismay.

In the aftermath of the protest rally, a large number of young Cuban artists and poets sent me a telegram of congratulations. By mistake, it was delivered to Robert Lee Wolff, who was apoplectic at being taken for a left-wing anti-government protestor. He sent the telegram to me with a curt note that read, "Kindly tell your Cuban friends to take me off their mailing list." Wolff also called me to express his distress at the confusion. As luck would have it, the night before I had attended the annual dinner of the Winthrop House Senior Common Room, held in the dining room of the Society of Fellows. Bill Polk had just returned from a research trip overseas. Bill had used his entire duty free liquor allowance - in those days the equivalent of four fifths - to bring back an enormous Jereboam of brandy, which traveled up and down the

dinner table all evening on an elegant silver Sherry trolley. For one of only three times in my life, I got drunk.

The next morning, when Wolff called, I was in no condition for polite repartée. Wolff protested that this confusion between the two of us was becoming absolutely intolerable. I replied that it was caused by the fact that he was a famous professor while I was as yet quite unknown. I assured him that I was trying as fast as possible to rectify that. He let out a strangled sound and finally closed the conversation by saying, in an almost imploring voice, "Well, for God's sake, don't marry a woman named Mary!" I collapsed in helpless laughter, because of course Cindy's first name *was* Mary.

But Wolff had the last laugh. Several years later, when Cindy and I had returned to Cambridge so that I could spend a visiting year at Wellesley, Cindy won a doctoral fellowship from the American Association of University Women. Before leaving for Europe for a summer vacation, she asked them to deposit the first half of the fellowship in our Cambridge Trust Company bank account. Sure enough, Robert Lee Wolff also banked there, and the money was deposited to *his* account. It took us some while, when we returned, to sort things out. He claimed never to have noticed the sudden increase in his bank balance.

No sooner had I finished my doctoral dissertation than I was overtaken by the fear that I would never manage to write anything again. I do not know what recess of my mind this fear springs from, but I have experienced it each time I have finished writing a book. Once out of the Army, I made some attempts to place portions of the thesis as journal articles, and actually succeeded in two cases. The Appendix to my dissertation contains the only real scholarship I

have done in my entire life. It dealt with the interesting and important question what Immanuel Kant knew, if anything, about David Hume's philosophy, and how [and when] he knew it. The Appendix appeared in the *Journal of the History of Ideas* under the exciting title, "Kant's Knowledge of Hume via Beattie" [you could look it up.] I boiled down my lengthy and rather innovative interpretation of Book I of the *Treatise of Human Nature* to a mere forty pages or so, gave it the title, "Hume's Theory of Mental Activity," and sent it off to *The Philosophical Review*, the Cornell journal that was then, and I imagine still is, a premier place to publish. To my delight, they accepted it, with the proviso that I cut what I had submitted in half. Pride of authorship gave way to ambition, and I agreed. I can still see myself sitting on a plane, flying to California to visit my big sister, Barbara, slashing away at the text until I got it down to the appropriate size. When it was published in 1960, I ordered one hundred offprints. Forty-eight years later, when I retired and downsized my belongings to fit a condominium that Susie and I bought in Chapel Hill, I still had about ninety-six of them. I kept a few, and sadly threw the rest away.

But my father had instilled in me the deep-rooted belief that it was books that counted. I toyed with the idea of writing something on the philosophy of history, growing out of the thought I had had while teaching Soc Sci 5 that there was an interesting methodological or epistemological contrast to be drawn between the reasoning of a medievalist like Henri Pirenne, who had far too little data to work with, and a student of the French Revolution like Georges Lefebvre or Alfred Cobban, who had far too much. But nothing concrete came of it.

Then I taught the Kant course, accumulating three fat binders of lecture notes along the way. When the course finally ended in Late May, I decided to write a commentary on the Transcendental Analytic of the *Critique*. I was going to try to capture on paper my revolutionary reconstruction of Kant's central argument. As soon as my grades were in and my tutees had left, I sat down at my desk in Winthrop House and began to write. The mind represses the memory of pain, so that after a terrible trauma like childbirth, a mother can consider getting pregnant again. This no doubt has great survival value for the species. I think I have a similar psychic mechanism for the pain of writing. On Sept. 11, 1959 I wrote home to my parents, "God, how I hate to write, and love to publish." Yet once the pain of writing has faded from memory, and only the printed page remains, I go right back to it.

Once again, I wrote in longhand on sheets of unlined paper, counting the words at the end of each day and noting them obsessively in the text. Some of the writing went easily, as I transformed my lecture notes into fully formed sentences and paragraphs, but as I dug deeper into the underlying structure of Kant's argument, I encountered a problem. Even in my reconstruction, Kant's argument was so complex that I could not lay it out clearly and transparently in one unbroken line of exposition. There was just too much for the reader to grasp. I puzzled over this problem, and finally hit upon a solution. Instead of stating Kant's argument once, I presented it in five stages of evolution. At each stage, I would introduce a new element of the final argument. Then I would explain in what ways this version of the argument was unsatisfactory, and introduce yet another element to clear up the problem. This in turn would lead to another formal statement of the argument. Continuing in this fashion, I exhibited

the full argument as growing organically in a succession of five stages, each one more complex than the one before, until with the fifth stage, the full-scale argument in all its power and subtlety could be presented in a form that was immediately comprehensible to the reader. In the book as it was finally published by Harvard University Press in 1963, my explication of the twenty-five pages of Kant's "Deduction of the Pure Concepts of Understanding" fills one hundred four pages. Those pages cost me more labor and took me more deeply into the foundations of philosophy than anything else I have ever written.

When I had completed my handwritten draft of that section of the book, I showed it to Cindy with excitement and trepidation. Cindy was ferociously smart, but she had no head for philosophy. She had never read a word of Kant, or of any other philosopher, so far as I could tell, and she could not easily understand what I had written, a fact that made her intensely uncomfortable. When she put down the sheets of paper, she laughed nervously and said, "Nobody believes that." I put on my game face, but I was secretly very hurt. Readers of the book have for more than forty years remarked on the charm of the dedication, which reads, "For Cindy, who laughed." Until now, only I have known the pain behind those words.

By the end of the summer, I had written most of a draft of the book, but I set it aside to attend to Social Studies, tutorials, and all the other duties of a very junior Instructor. Firth had made it clear when I began the Instructorship that it was not renewable, so once again I was on the job market.

Nelson Goodman remembered me from the time ten years earlier when I had taken his course as a Freshman, and invited me to apply for a position at Penn. On a rainy Fall day, I took

the train to Philadelphia to read a paper on the Deduction and be interviewed. The paper went all right, I guess, though the energy level in the room would have been more appropriate for a wake. But at the little dinner beforehand, I blew the job without even realizing it. The conversation turned to General Education, and thinking that this was my chance to shine, I expatiated on the Harvard program and my great pleasure at being offered the opportunity to range so far afield from Philosophy. Alas, Goodman was a sworn enemy of General Education, so the job possibility was dead before I even gave my paper.

Bundy wanted me to be kept on at Harvard so that I could continue to run Social Studies. He even offered the Philosophy Department half of an Assistant Professorship to make up the portion of the job not absorbed by administrative duties, but despite the efforts of White, who was back from the Institute, the Department wasn't buying. They had seen first Wang, then Dreben, then Cohen, and finally Cavell get departmental appointments, and they didn't want yet another Quine or White protégé foisted on them. I told Rogers Albritton that I had most of a book written on Kant, and asked him whether he thought the members of the Department would like to look at it. He thought for a long minute, and then said simply, "No." Had he stayed in Cambridge, Bundy might have managed to arrange something, but by then he was in Washington approving the invasion of Cuba.

In the end, it was Demos who came through. Donald Meiklejohn at Chicago wrote to ask him whether he knew a young philosopher who could teach in the big Sophomore Social Sciences course in the college -- one of the last remaining fragments of the revolutionary educational program put in place by Robert Maynard Hutchins. Demos gave him my name, and

I got the job. I had never studied Anthropology or Sociology or Psychology, of course, although I *was* teaching all of those disciplines in our Social Studies tutorial. Following the practice that I now recommend to my job-seeking doctoral students, I told the folks at Chicago that teaching social sciences was what I had always most wanted to do, and that it was only the narrowness of the Harvard mindset that kept me trapped in Philosophy. I figured I could learn anything between April and September. When my students ask me about my career, I say that I started teaching at Harvard and then went on to teach at the University of Chicago. It all sounds very glamorous - the royal road to academic success. Little do they know that neither school hired me to teach what I actually knew something about.

I was fast approaching the end of my extraordinary eleven year Harvard adventure. In Winthrop House, we gathered for a farewell dinner for one of the resident tutors who was about to go a good deal farther than Chicago. Karl Heider was a tall, lanky Anthropology graduate student who had been offered a chance to join an expedition to uplands New Guinea to study a headhunting people called the Ndani. This was a Stone Age society in which the men wore nothing but what Karl tactfully referred to, in German, as *peniskochoer*. The expedition was being funded by Nelson Rockefeller's son, Michael. The local currency was cowrie shells, traded up from the coast, so the expedition was taking a hefty supply, figuring that American Express traveler's checks might not be readily negotiable. One old lady from Natick offered a monster cowrie shell from her shell collection that would be worth a king's ransom in uplands New Guinea at the current rate of exchange. As the drinks flowed at the dinner, we got a bit boisterous, and accused Karl of planning to inflate the currency, with dire consequences for the Ndani economy. Sure enough, Karl wrote back some time later that after they had been there a while, it ceased to be possible to buy a pig with just one shell. Karl's research was a success, but the expedition suffered a terrible disaster. Michael Rockefeller was lost on the coast in a canoeing accident, and was never found.

I spent that last summer finishing my manuscript and preparing to leave Cambridge. In late August, I wrapped up the book and decided to take a little vacation. Since I had never visited Washington D. C., and now knew several people in the new Kennedy Administration, I took the train down to spend a week there. I checked into a hotel near the train station and went round to various office buildings to visit my friends. They were tremendously excited by their new jobs, but as I spent time with them, I grew more and more uneasy. It was all a bit like the



court at Versailles under the *ancien régime*. There was a great deal of gossip, and a constant anxiety about the thoughts, the feelings, the preferences, the moods of one person, the President.

When I went over to the Capitol to take a look at Congress, my view of the government changed entirely. I spent several days in the visitors' gallery of the Senate, watching debates and votes. The fact that it was the one cool place I had found in a steamy town may have had something to do with my reaction. I watched with great amusement as Everett Dirksen protested his love of duck hunting and hunters, imitating to great effect a duck settling onto a pond at sunset. Apparently the government had imposed a tax on duck hunting in order to raise money for wetlands preservation, and then had used the money to drain swamps for development. The duck hunters of America wanted a five million dollar appropriation to make things right, and Dirksen, who was opposing all spending that week on grounds of fiscal responsibility, was trying to convince the duck hunters of Illinois that he felt their pain. I watched the great maverick, Wayne Morse, bellow to an empty chamber that he was not going to kowtow to the Catholic Church, with regard to what I can no longer recall. And I watched as all but two of the senators came to the floor to vote on the renewal of the Civil Rights Commission.

What attracted me so greatly was the fact that each of these men and women was an independent person, beholden only to his or her constituents, and not subservient to the President, regardless of how charismatic and powerful he might be. These were men and women with honor, not servile courtiers hoping to be given pride of place on a balcony or in a presidential jet. Exactly the same sentiments welled up in me as I watch octogenarian Robert Byrd deliver speech after speech calling George W. Bush to account for the damage he did to the U. S. Constitution.

It was fun visiting Marc Raskin in the Executive Office Building, and listening to the rumors about Kennedy and Marc's secretary, Diane DeVegh. It was interesting hearing Dick Barnet talk about the inside story at the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. But it was ennobling to watch the debates on the floor of the Senate. I think it was that week in a hot Washington summer, rather than any of the books I had read, that once for all time soured me on the Imperial Presidency.

The University of Chicago, which runs on the Quarter system, gave me permission to skip the Fall Quarter so that I could prepare the manuscript for submission to a press, and Morty White arranged a small grant from the Kendall Foundation to help pay the bills until I started my Chicago job. But there was to be one more bit of draft dodging before my Harvard days were over. When a crisis blew up in Berlin that summer, leading to the erection of the Berlin Wall, Kennedy pre-alerted four National Guard divisions, preparatory to calling up two of them to active duty. Alerting a Guard unit froze everyone into place, all transfers or resignations cancelled. But pre-alerting did not have that consequence. I did not want to return to latrine duty, however fond my memories of it, so I decided to transfer to the Illinois National Guard and move out to Chicago prematurely.

I rented a U-Haul trailer, hitched it to the ancient Plymouth that I had bought from Sam Todes for one hundred dollars, loaded up my books and bits and pieces of household goods, said goodbye to my friends and to Cindy, pointed myself to the West, and set out to discover whether there was a world beyond Harvard.

## Part Two

### A Marriage of True Minds

Let me not to the marriage of true minds  
Admit impediments. Love is not love  
Which alters when it alteration finds,  
Or bends with the remover to remove:  
O no! it is an ever-fixed mark  
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;  
It is the star to every wandering bark,  
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.  
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks  
Within his bending sickle's compass come:  
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,  
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.  
If this be error and upon me proved,  
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

## Chapter One Second City

When I arrived in Chicago, my first job was to find someplace to live. I settled on a ground floor apartment at 5723 South Dorchester, several blocks from the university. The University of Chicago is more or less a rectangle bordered by 55th street on the north, 61st on the south, Cottage Grove Avenue on the west and South Dorchester on the east. My building had, in a former life, been a telephone exchange, back in the days when there really were banks of women wearing headsets and completing calls by inserting jacks into plugs. [Think *Bells are Ringing* with Judy Holiday.] As a consequence, the walls were solid brick rather than lath and plaster or wallboard. This made hanging pictures or putting up brackets for book shelves very difficult. I discovered the dangers associated with such construction in the middle of one night, when, with a loud crash, the brackets pulled out of the walls from the weight of my books and everything tumbled down. The apartment was pretty bleak, but Toni Palter, wife of historian of science Robert Palter, graciously offered to make me some curtains, which I put up to soften the feel of the place.

Once settled, I reported to my new posting in the Eighth Illinois National Guard Regiment, located on South Giles near 35th street. The Illinois Eighth was an all-Black regiment with a distinguished history, having fought in France in the First World War. It played an important social role in Black Chicago, its officers commanding considerable respect in the community because of their status in the unit. I was one of perhaps half a dozen Whites in the entire regiment. I was assigned to Headquarters Company, and put under the command of Jewell Starks, a Master Sergeant who served as the Regimental photographer. This was decades before digital anything, and way before even Polaroid cameras, so Starks used a large amount of bulky

equipment. My job was to carry his gear as he went around the Armory photographing the doings of the men for posterity.

What I am going to say now is rather embarrassing, coming as it does from someone who even then had achieved some sophistication in social theory and ideological critique and was on his way to becoming the best known anarchist in academic American philosophy, but I decided when I began these Memoirs that I would record my memories without self-serving embellishment. To put the matter as baldly as I can, in the two years remaining to my six year National Guard commitment, during the weekday meetings and summer camps, it simply never occurred to me that there might be something even slightly significant about a White University of Chicago Assistant Professor fetching and toting for a Black man in Southside Chicago.

How could I have failed to notice this fact? Well, I had by then achieved the rank of E-4, which was the New Army's way of saying "Corporal." I had a tatty little insignia on my upper left sleeve, and one lonely gold colored stripe, or hash mark, near the cuff, indicating that I had completed a three year stint. Starks had a magnificent Master Sergeant's emblem on his sleeve, and so many hash marks that they marched all the way from his cuff to his elbow. He had been in the Army as long as I had been alive. If there was any toting to be done, of course I was going to be the one to do it.

I never made it above E-4. That first summer, I got married, and cut out of summer camp early to go on my honeymoon. I was busted back to E-2, and barely managed to regain the rank of E-4 before being Honorably Discharged in June of 1963. Just this past year, I stayed in a hotel in Poughkeepsie while giving several lectures at Marist College, and at the breakfast buffet, I fell into casual conversation with a younger man who was waiting for scrambled eggs while I took a cup of coffee. Somehow, the subject of the military came up, and I told a story about my Basic

Training days. When he got up to leave some time later, he came by my table and said, "Thank you for your service." That is something that supporters of the troops have taken to saying when they see someone in uniform -- a sort of acknowledgement that America's defense needs are being met by only a tiny segment of the population as a whole. It made me feel really scrimy, as though I had crashed a party where I didn't belong. There was nothing remotely honorable about my time in the military, and what with the jump into the Guard and the hurried transfer from Massachusetts to Illinois, I had done everything I possibly could to avoid actually *servng*.

My first serious task in Chicago was to complete the fine-tuning of my manuscript on the *Critique* so that it could be sent off to Harvard University Press. I had no particular reason to suppose that they would publish it, but it never occurred to me to consider another publisher. As part of my final preparations, I did something that I have never done since with any of my subsequent books: I gave it to two friends to read, and asked them for their comments. Most of the books I have written have gone straight from the typewriter or the word processor to the publisher without even significant revisions by me. Since this is, I gather, a trifle unusual, I ought to try to explain why I have adopted this practice. It is not overweening arrogance, although heaven knows I have more than enough of that. Rather, it has to do with what I imagine myself to be doing when I write a book.

I am not a scholar. I have never been interested in finding new documents, amassing data, or comparing different editions of the same text. I am also not an ideologue. I actually do not care very much whether the people who read my books agree with me. That may come as a surprise, inasmuch as my books are frequently argumentative, or at least about highly contentious subjects. Odd as it may seem, I care a great deal more that readers find my books well written and interesting than that they think my books are true. Judging from sales and

translations, my best known book is a little eighty page tract, *In Defense of Anarchism*. When it was published in 1970, it received a very gratifying amount of attention, which delighted me. The almost unanimous consensus of the reviewers was that it was dead wrong. I was completely unfazed. Not only did I think that their objections were misguided. I simply did not care whether readers agreed with me or not.

I am not a scholar or an ideologue. I am a story teller. In each of my books, I tell the story of an idea. In one, it is the story of the central ideas of one of Kant's great works. In another, it is the story of Marx's core critique of capitalism, in a third the story of the idea of a modern university, in a fourth the true story of America, as told to me by my colleagues in Afro-American Studies. But always, I am telling a story. That is why my books have few if any footnotes. Story tellers do not footnote their stories. When I become fascinated by an idea, I tell its story over and over in my head until I know it as well as I know the story of Jack and the Beanstalk. Should there be something missing from the story, a break in the narrative, the imaginary audience to whom I am telling the story can be counted on to call me to account, just as a child would if I were to describe Jack climbing the beanstalk without first explaining where the beanstalk came from.

I cannot begin to write until the story is clear and complete in my mind. That is why the writing process itself goes rather quickly. *Kant's Theory of Mental Activity* took two summers to write, and it was far and away the most demanding book I have ever written. My textbook, *About Philosophy*, now in its eleventh edition, took eight weeks. *Understanding Rawls* took three weeks, and *In Defense of Anarchism* was written in a few days. The only book that cost me years of effort was *The Autonomy of Reason*, my commentary on Kant's *Grundlegung*. The problem there was that I could not get the story right. I was unable to find an argument to

sustain Kant's claim that the Moral Law can be established with unconditional universality *a priori*.

I first showed the manuscript I had completed to Ingrid Stadler, a friend from Harvard and a student of the philosophy of Kant who spent her entire career at Wellesley College. I was so grateful for her comments that I gave her a copy of the third edition of the *Critique* that I had picked up in a second-hand book store. For anyone reading this memoir who is unfamiliar with the arcana of Kant-studies, I should explain that the important editions of the *Critique* are the first, of course, published in 1781, and the second, published in 1787, in which Kant made major and philosophically important revisions and additions. The third edition [1790] merely corrects some spellings and such. Grateful as I was to Ingrid, I do not think I could have parted with a first or second edition.

The other person to whom I sent the manuscript was Charlie Parsons. Charlie had gone to the Cornell Philosophy Department, where he was teaching a course on the *First Critique*. On January 8, 1962, he wrote me a long letter, part of which was devoted to the manuscript. Something he said in the letter hurt me very deeply, so much so that I simply put it away in my mind and tried not to think about it. While preparing to write these pages, I pulled the file of Charlie's letters from my file cabinet and reread them. With the passage of almost half a century and the wisdom of hindsight, I can see now that I rather overreacted. Charlie's letters were, of course, careful, thoughtful, intelligent, scholarly, and precise. How could they be otherwise, given who he is? I realize now that part of the problem stemmed from the fact that his central interest in Kant's philosophy of mathematics, to the understanding of which he has since made major contributions, led him to focus on parts of the text -- especially the Transcendental Aesthetic -- very different from those that had been the object of my interpretation.



Here are the lines that I found so hurtful, back when I was twenty-seven. "It is certainly one of the clearest writings on Kant and was very helpful to me in preparing my lectures. I have a lot of disagreements and think it has quite serious deficiencies. In principle, it seems to me rather rash that someone our age should publish a commentary on Kant's central argument. I am fairly sure that none of the great Kant scholars attempted such a thing." The words were a bucket of ice water poured over my head. I felt sure that I had cracked the central argument of the Critical Philosophy, the first commentator ever actually to do so. I thought then, and half a century still think, that that book was my greatest intellectual achievement.

One thing was perfectly clear to me: I had not the slightest intention of altering a word in the manuscript as a consequence of Charlie's criticisms. At the time, I just felt arrogant and angry. but I see now that there was really a deeper reason for my stubbornness. I was telling a story, and each bit of that story fit together with each other bit in an integral fashion. Would Mozart transcribe a quartet into a new key if Haydn expressed disapproval of his original choice? Would Picasso go back and add a bit more red to the upper right hand corner of a canvas at Matisse's suggestion? Would Edith Wharton rewrite the ending of *A House of Mirth* to please Henry James? I know, I know. I get above myself by putting the names of these master artists in the same paragraph with my own. But if I do not believe that I am creating a truly beautiful and finished story, why on earth bother to publish it at all?

Despite Charlie's doubts, the manuscript got a thumbs up from Lewis White Beck, the acknowledged Dean of American Kant scholars, and Harvard agreed to publish it.

Having spent the first sixteen years of my life in New York, and the next eleven pretty much in Cambridge, Mass, I was now a resident of yet another great American city -- the Second City, as Chicago has long been called. But cocooned in Hyde Park, I was isolated from the

larger urban scene. My principal focus was on getting to know my real new home, The University of Chicago.

First stop, of course, was the Philosophy Department. Strictly speaking, it is a mistake to speak of "the" Philosophy Department. There were no fewer than five administratively independent tenure granting bodies that had some claim to the title "Philosophy Department." There was the Graduate Philosophy Department, to which part of my time as an Assistant Professor was committed. There was the Undergraduate Philosophy Department, a quite separate entity that granted tenure to people who had no seat in the graduate department. In addition, there was The Committee on Social Thought, The Committee on Organization, Method, and Principles, and yet another Committee, on Ideas and Methods. The Committee on Social Thought has become quite notorious in American politics as the home of Leo Strauss and as the incubator of what later came to be called Neo-Conservatism. It has the distinction of having wreaked more havoc on the world than any other collection of supposed philosophers since the Inquisition.

The Committee on Organization, Methods, and Principles, or OMP, as locals referred to it, was a creation of Richard McKeon, who designed it along Aristotelian lines as a consummatory synthesis of the General Education courses that constituted the corps of the Hutchins college. People had tenure in OMP. Finally, The Committee on Ideas and Methods, or IM, was rumored to have been created by McKeon to give tenure to Herbert Lamm, who had somehow failed to get tenure in OMP. By the time I arrived in Chicago, OMP and IM were nothing more than little gatherings of bedraggled survivors from the great Hutchins era, rather like Grima Wormtongue and Saruman in *The Lord of the Rings* after they had been stripped of their powers and reduced to the status of wandering mountebanks.

*The* Philosophy Department, which is to say the Graduate Philosophy Department, was at that time going through a period of transition rather like what I had witnessed at Harvard ten years earlier. In addition to a few old-timers, most notably Richard McKeon [who was actually only 61 when I got there, but seemed a figure from an earlier age], the department consisted of a group of men in middle life -- Warner Wick, Donald Meiklejohn, Alan Gewirth, and Manley Thompson [who was Chair], and no fewer than six young Assistant Professors, several whom, like me, had just arrived. I knew three of the new hires from Harvard -- Dudley Shapere, Marshall Cohen, and Sylvain Bromberger. Vere Chappell was also there when I arrived, along with Robert Coburn. The junior ranks were rounded out by Roy Lawrence, an Instructor.

Almost immediately, I made a discovery that was quite startling to me, and taught me how insular my years at Harvard had been. Harvard, as I have explained, was an intensely inward-looking place, obsessively concerned with itself and blithely unaware of the rest of the intellectual world. When I got to Chicago, I assumed quite naturally that everyone would welcome me as a traveler from the center of the intellectual universe, and would be eager for every scrap of gossip about the Harvard Philosophy Department. Not a bit of it. They seemed not even to have heard of Rogers Albritton, and they were no more than casually aware of Morton White, Rod Firth, or Henry Aiken. *Their* greatest concern was what Dick McKeon said or thought. In the immortal words of George in *Hard Day's Night*, McKeon loomed large in their legend. Manley Thompson, who was, I assumed, someone important since he was, after all, the Chairman of the Department, spoke of McKeon in a hushed voice. At one point, when I was talking with him about some matter of departmental regulations, he said, as though quoting holy writ, "Well, before the war, McKeon said..." This was now 1962, and it took me a moment to

realize that Manley was referring to something that Dick had said before 1941, more than twenty years earlier.

I have already described my difficulty in bringing myself to call my former Harvard professors by their first names, once I had joined that Department as an Instructor. Manley and the others had a similar problem treating McKeon as a colleague. But since I was new to the scene, all of these folks, young and old, were simply new colleagues, and I felt no tingle of divinity when I was in their presence. Actually, the only one of the group whom I knew about before getting to Chicago was Alan Gewirth. As part of my six-month SSRC post-doc, I had read my way through the great and not so great texts of Western Political Theory, including the *Defensor Pacis* of Marsilius of Padua, an extremely important fourteenth century work that argued for the independence of the Emperor from the Pope and helped to lay the foundations of the modern theory of the secular state. Alan had edited the translation I read, and I was enormously impressed by the fact that he was going to be my colleague.

Nowadays, I am a laid back, soft spoken pussycat of an old man, as my recent students will attest, but in those days, I was something of a fire breather, and it didn't take long for me to tangle with McKeon. McKeon had participated in an Italian conference on aesthetics, and had delivered there a lecture on Kant's Third Critique, the famously difficult and immensely influential *Critique of Judgment*. When he returned, he agreed to repeat the lecture to the Department. The talk was held in an oddly configured room -- a seminar room with a raised platform running around the walls, so that the effect was of a mini-amphitheater. Senior members of the Department and important visitors from elsewhere in the University got to sit around the table, while the rest of us were consigned to the peanut gallery. The tone of the

meeting could properly be described as celebratory and reverential, rather than exploratory and intellectual. It was pretty obvious that we were there to admire, not to question.

As I listened to McKeon speak, I became more and more dismayed. Even though his subject was Kant's *Third Critique*, not his *First*, on which I considered myself an expert, I had worked through the *Third Critique* very intensely with Charlie, Sam, Steve, and Bert during that wonderful Wednesday evening seminar. I could tell that McKeon was talking nonsense. He hadn't a clue what the text really meant. When McKeon finished speaking, the meeting was thrown open for questions. McKeon fielded a few respectful softballs, and then I was called on. In no uncertain terms, I proceeded to explain why everything McKeon had said about Kant's aesthetic theory was dead wrong.

There was a stunned silence. Apparently, it had been several decades since anyone had talked to Richard McKeon like that. He had been Dean of the College, an architect of the Hutchins revolution in education, founding father of the Committee on Organization, Methods, and Principles, and pretty much the closest thing Hyde Park had seen to a living god. McKeon was outraged. He listened to me for a while and then snapped, with more heat than light, "You argue like Virginia Wolfe." I snapped right back, "And you argue like Thomas Wolfe." I have not the slightest idea what either of us meant, but the encounter was a *cause celebre* whose aftereffects resonated in the department.

All six of us junior members of the department felt the same irritation at McKeon's oppressive influence. We wanted to bring the department into the new era of analytic philosophy, and our older colleagues, thoroughly under McKeon's sway, clung to his antiquated notions of an Aristotelian organization of the academic disciplines, with all the dead weight that went with it. Our situation was made even more frustrating by the fact that our students revered

McKeon as, in their eyes, the most important figure in American philosophy. We protested that McKeon was a nobody, an old-timer whom no one in the *real* world of philosophy paid any attention to. They just thought we were rebellious young men, and though they loved us for it, they didn't believe us for a minute. For two years, we labored in our classes and personal conversations to convince them that when you got more than twenty miles away from Hyde Park [something that certain senior professors had in fact never yet done], McKeon was a nonentity. We were beginning to make some headway when disaster struck. The American Philosophical Association conferred upon McKeon its highest honor -- an invitation to deliver something called The Paul Carus Lectures. "There," our students said, "you see?" We gave up, defeated.

As the years passed, and I began to give talks at colleges around the country, I found that my Chicago experience was by no means unique. There are a great number of philosophical enclaves in America in which some local hero figures prominently, even though he [almost always he, by the way] never quite makes it big on the national stage. Each of these philosophers, if I may cannibalize a famous line from Mel Brooks' wonderful remake, *To Be Or Not To Be*, is world famous in Poland. America is, in this way, very different from France or England, in both of which countries there is, or at least used to be, a sharp academic distinction between the Metropolis and the Provinces. The complex structure of academic philosophy in America was nicely exemplified by the annual meetings. There never actually was a single annual meeting of the American Philosophical Association. Instead, there were regional meetings of the Eastern, Central, and Pacific Divisions, and though the meeting of the Eastern Division has long been treated as "the" meeting of the APA, the other divisions had their own notables and traditions.

But enough of philosophy. I had been hired to teach the Social Sciences - more specifically, a section of the large required Sophomore level survey course that formed a part of the College's distribution requirements. Since I had been given the Fall quarter off to finish the Kant book, I stepped into the course in the Winter quarter. The course I was entering had a long and distinguished pedigree. It was one of the few remnants of the truly revolutionary curriculum introduced by Chicago's most famous president, Robert Maynard Hutchins., who had come to Chicago in 1929 at the age of thirty, after a brief stint as Dean of the Yale Law School.

Hutchins was convinced that the last two years of high school were a waste of time, an overlap with what was customarily taught in the Freshman and Sophomore years of college. He carried through a sweeping transformation of Chicago's entire undergraduate program. Students were admitted to the college after the Sophomore year of high school, and put through two years of large, interdisciplinary survey courses, whereupon they were awarded the Bachelor's Degree. The two year sequence was capped by an integrative seminar [the original Organization, Methods, and Principles course], designed by McKeon and others along the lines of Aristotle's conception of the organization of the disciplines.

Students were required to complete each of the required courses by taking an examination, and they were actually permitted simply to sit for the examination, if they believed they were ready to pass it without taking the associated course. In theory, at any rate, a sixteen year old could earn a B.A. from Chicago after one semester of OMP, simply by passing all of the examinations. [When I was a high school student, back in the 40's, New York State administered a system of state-wide examinations called Regents Exams, whose purpose was to maintain common standards across the state. One could get credit for a subject by passing the Regents Exam without having sat in a classroom, something I took advantage of to get credit for

Trigonometry by teaching it to myself over the Christmas break one year and taking the Regents.] With the B. A. in hand, students were then encouraged to earn an M. A., which involved three years of focused study in a field of concentration.

The Hutchins University of Chicago was a genuinely revolutionary experiment, one of the very few that has been carried out in America. If I may borrow a distinction introduced into the intellectual world by the famous Chicago School of Sociology, the curriculum of the Hutchins college had both a *manifest* and a *latent* function. The manifest function was to offer a completely different model of undergraduate education, one that took seriously into account both the emotional and intellectual stage of development of the students and also the integrated, cross-disciplinary character of knowledge and intellectual inquiry. If the success of a model of education is to be measured by the mark it makes on those exposed to it, then the Hutchins revolution was a spectacular success.

Most higher education in America is a homogenized product that might as easily be bought at any of four thousand or more campuses, but for two generations, one could spot a product of the Hutchins college instantaneously. When I was at Harvard, there were a few people who stood out in my mind as truly distinctive, different from the general run of men and women one met. Barrington Moore was one, Susan Sontag another. A young sociologist, Leon Bramson, was a third. When I first met them, I simply supposed that they were unusual, marching to a different drummer. But all of them had been involved in the Hutchins era at Chicago, either as students or as teachers, and once I got to Chicago, I realized the significance of that common bond. All were intensely intellectual, fascinated by books and ideas, unusually widely read in fields other than the one they had chosen for career purposes.



This quality of mind still characterized the Hyde Park world in the 60's, when I was there. People at the University of Chicago gossiped about ideas in the way that the rest of us gossip about people, as though we and the ideas were both residents of a Realm of Ideas. The statement, "that is really not in my field," simply did not exist in their lexicon. One personal story will perhaps convey the distinctive tonality of the community better than a series of impersonal generalizations. Chicago had the peculiar habit of appointing a member of the faculty as "Dean's Representative" to a doctoral dissertation defense. The Representative was not given a copy of the dissertation, and was certainly not expected to take part in the discussion. He or she was there, I suppose, just to make sure a defense really took place. One day in my second year at Chicago, I received a letter appointing me Dean's Representative to a defense in the Music Department. The topic was "St. Thomas Aquinas' Philosophy of Music." This was a quintessential U of C topic. Never mind that Aquinas, so far as I knew, had no philosophy of music. Anyway, I went along to the Music Department, and knocked on the door of the office of the Chairman. He looked up, greeted me, and said, "I have just been reading your new book on Kant." I think I can say, without hesitation or fear of contradiction, that Chicago was the only university in America at which the Chair of the Music Department would be reading a newly published book on the *Critique of Pure Reason*!

The latent function of the Hutchins plan was quite different. In the first part of the twentieth century, the East Coast and what is now called the Ivy League dominated higher education considerably more than is now the case. Higher education was to a greater extent than now a privilege of the monied classes and those from the upper reaches of society. The old joke about English country manors ["How do you get such beautiful lawns?" "Just toss some grass seed on the ground and roll it for six hundred years"] found its echo in the presumption that

a liberal education was reserved for a select few, into whose ranks it was forbiddingly difficult to penetrate. The Hutchins conception of an education of Great Books offered an alternative route to enlightenment for those from common origins in a part of the country barely old enough to have a concept of ancestry. The list of books one needed to master for a Chicago degree was long, and each one of them was an intellectual challenge, but the list was *finite*, and once you had read them all, you were *educated*, as thoroughly and beneficially as though you were the seventh generation to attend Harvard.

In Hutchins' revolutionary college, Western Civilization was conceived as a perpetual debate about a number of timeless questions, conducted by the great minds of the Judeo-Christian, Graeco-Roman tradition, with its medieval Arabic variants, through the medium of a small, but continuously growing, library of great works of philosophy, tragedy, poetry, fiction, history, political theory - and, more recently, sociology, anthropology, economics, and anthropology. Homer and the nameless authors of the Old Testament, Sophocles and Euripides, Plato and Aristotle, Herodotus, Thucydides, Cicero, Caesar, Paul and the Evangelists, Ovid, Sappho, Philo, Tertullian, Aquinas, Maimonides, Averroes, Avicenna, Erasmus, Luther, Chaucer, Calvin, John of Salisbury, Marsilius of Padua, Jean Bodin, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Bacon, Montaigne, Descartes, Spinoza, Shakespeare, Donne, Herbert, Locke, Galileo, Newton, Berkeley, Hume, Leibniz, Kant, Rousseau, Hegel, Fichte, Schelling, Herder, Marx, Smith, Bentham, Mill - on and on they came, quibbling, quarreling, drawing distinctions, splitting hairs, proving the existence of God, refuting the proofs for the existence of God, reading one another, referring to one another - a grand faculty seminar, captured for all time in no more than several hundred immortal books.

A liberal education - so this story has it - was a ticket of admission to the Conversation. At first, one was a mere auditor, much as I was when, as a boy of ten, I sat on the steps of the staircase leading from our living room and listened to my parents, my uncles and aunts, and the neighbors debating politics, literature, and the bureaucratic insanities of the New York City School System in which they worked, longing for the day when I too would be permitted to enter the discussion and make my voice be heard with the others. Eventually, an inspired few actually entered the Conversation, and made to it contributions that would be taken up into the immortal lists of Great Books. But for the rest of us, it was enough that we had been initiated into its rituals and shibboleths. Throughout our lives, that eternal debate would be the intellectual accompaniment of our quotidian lives. In the evening, after dinner, we could sit quietly before the fire and turn once again the pages of THE REPUBLIC, THE CITY OF GOD, MACBETH, THE CRITIQUE OF PURE REASON [well, perhaps not THE CRITIQUE OF PURE REASON], THE PRINCE, THE RED AND THE BLACK, or JANE EYRE.

The Sophomore Social Sciences survey course was a hoot to teach. It was called "Culture and Freedom," which was broad enough to include just about anything we wanted to assign. To give you some idea, the semester I started teaching it, the students read both portions of Plato's *Republic* and the classic study of the Trobriand Islanders, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, by the great Polish anthropologist, Bronislaw Malinowski. The course was organized into sections, with no common lectures, and taught by a staff of faculty drawn from many different departments. None of us was even remotely qualified to teach so broad a range of materials, of course, although each of us could find at least one text in the syllabus that looked familiar, so we did the best we could.

One of my favorite colleagues was David Bakan, a short, plump Psychologist with a serious limp, the product of childhood polio. David was an extremely unusual figure in academic Psychology because he was both a master of the Freudian tradition and also an adept of the statistical methods used by the adherents of Behaviorism in Psychology. Several years before I met him, he had published *Freud and the Jewish Mystical Tradition*, which challenged the standard view of Freud as a rationalist enemy of religious faith. Even more fascinating was Bakan's study of the roots of Behaviorism in American Psychology. He discovered that the men who developed and shaped the Behaviorist school had all come from Protestant families in small mid-Western towns and had then moved to big cities [typically, Chicago], where the culture shock of the extremely heterogeneous population mix drove them to maintain some sort of control over their shattered moral framework by seizing on Behaviorism. Bakan did a careful analysis of the experimental reports published in the leading Behaviorist journals, and also of the papers that were turned down on the grounds that the authors had not done enough experiments to make their results statistically significant. He reanalyzed the data to show that the editors and reviewers routinely overestimated the number of experiments required for statistical significance, in effect treating experiments as a place holder for Protestant good works.

Bakan did his best with the readings as they followed one another week by week, but when we came to Malinowski, he ran out of ideas. Knowing less than nothing about cultural anthropology, he hit on a brilliant pedagogical dodge. "Let's not talk about the Trobriand Islanders," he said to his class. "Instead, let us ask ourselves, What does it say about European society that so many of its finest minds took themselves off to godforsaken corners of the globe to spend years studying primitive peoples?"

The course, like all the old Hutchins era courses, did not merely have a common final examination, a relic of the bygone days when one could get credit for the course without sitting in class. It had a *multiple choice* final examination. I was appalled. How on earth could one examine students on Plato, Weber, Maliniowski, and Freud using multiple choice questions? The course examiner - which is to say the member of the staff responsible for assigning portions of the exam to each of us and collating the questions we came up with - was Gerhard Meyer, a dear, sweet, lovely man who had been a minor member of the famed Frankfort School of Social Research, before fleeing Naziism. As the resident philosopher, I was told to write five multiple choice questions on Plato's *Republic*. "I can't do that, Gerhard," I said. "Try," he said. Well, I was the new boy on the block, so I tried. I finally wrote five multiple choice questions, and handed them to Gerhard. The next week, we all received a draft of the exam to look at and comment on, containing all of the questions that we had written. Gerhard had supplied a key, and I noticed that in one case, he had identified as the *correct* answer something that I thought of as one of the attractive but wrong alternatives.

I steamed into Gerhard's office, full of righteous indignation. "You see?" I yelled. "You have marked as right one of the answers I meant to be wrong! That proves we shouldn't be using multiple choice questions on the exam." Gerhard was unfazed by my outburst, and engaged me in a quiet discussion of the disputed question. After forty-five minutes, we came to an agreement on the correct answer. "Well," Gerhard said, "so we agree." "Gerhard," I expostulated, "it took us forty-five minutes to agree on the right answer, and the students have forty-five seconds to pick one." "But that is all right," Gerhard explained. "If a student thinks his or her answer is not the one we intended, there is a blank page at the end to justify the answer. If we think the rationale is good, we can give full credit." I was flabbergasted. "That means a student must first

figure out what answer we want, then figure out that it is not the answer he or she would give, and then provide a rationale. That is even worse." [I think I would actually have said "the answer he would give." I was not adequately sensitized to gender neutrality until a good deal later, but that is a story for my University of Massachusetts years. Gerhard, on the other hand, almost certainly would have said "he or she."]

The upshot of this encounter taught me an important lesson about what really lay at the heart of the Chicago ethos. The staff decided that since I was so opposed to the use of multiple choice questions, I could write my own exam. So it was that in my section, but in none of the others, the final examination consisted of a group of essay questions, with choice. I have always thought that was a real touch of class on Chicago's part.

The undergraduates were required to take a Freshman Humanities survey in addition to our Sophomore Social Sciences survey, and the folks teaching that course had offices along the same hallway as we putative Social Scientists. One of them was a tall Literature type named Eugene Goodheart. Gene had crafted a question for one of his quizzes with which he was especially pleased, and he passed it around for our admiration. The question consisted of a series of lines arranged as though constituting a poem. The student was first to say whether they really were or were not a poem, and then to justify the answer. I read the lines and unhesitatingly pronounced them nonsense. The first two lines were "Margaret, are you grieving./Over goldengrove unleaving?" Cindy had not yet completed my literary education.

One of the side-effects of the gossip about ideas was a certain genial insider-dopesterism that seemed to infect the students. Two examples will suffice. The University of Chicago, unlike Harvard, awarded honors to very few graduating seniors. There were apparently many years in which not a single senior majoring in Philosophy earned a degree *cum laude, magna*

*cum laude*, or *summa cum laude*. But my first year, as it happened, two Philosophy students earned honors degrees. I was chatting with an extremely bright Junior major one day after the announcement had been made, and he said to me, "I understand there is a rule in the department that just two students are to receive honors each year." "No, no," I assured him, "there is no rule like that. It is just chance that two students got honors." He gave me a knowing look and wandered off. The next year, he himself was awarded departmental honors. I passed him on the campus and shouted "Congratulations." Without missing a beat, he replied, "Who is the other one?"

The other story was a bit scarier. By the time the Spring semester of the second year rolled around, I had made something of a name for myself because of my political activities on and off the campus [of which more in a moment]. When school reconvened after the Christmas break, a young man came into my office. "I have just got back from seeing my parents in New York," he said, "and I heard a rumor that you are going to be fired because of your politics." "Nonsense," I replied. "There is no truth to it at all!" Several days later, another student came to see me. "While I was on the West Coast over Christmas, I heard that you are going to be fired. Is that true?" I got the impression he was all set to organize a protest on my behalf, but I insisted there was nothing to it.

Still and all, I was a bit nonplussed, so I went to see Manley Thompson. "Manley," I said, "there is a rumor sweeping the country from coast to coast that I am about to be fired. Is there any truth to it?" Manley laughed and assured me that I was in perfectly good standing. I left, reassured. Later that Spring, I was invited to visit at Wellesley for a year, to replace Ingrid Stadler, who was going on leave. Cindy and I were eager to get out of Chicago because we found her parents, who lived there, oppressive, so I jumped at the chance. When the students

heard that I wouldn't be at Chicago the next year, they all nodded sagely, and as much as said, "You see? We knew they were firing you." I protested repeatedly that I would be back the following year. But the next Spring, Columbia offered me tenure, and I took it. I fear that some of the students to this day are convinced that my politics got me axed.

Although I had been hired to teach the Social Science survey course, I was also a member of the Graduate Philosophy faculty, and it was there that I made my real intellectual home. My interactions with the more senior members of the department were quite cordial, but not really intimate. My most vivid memory of Gewirth, for example, is a conversation I had with him on the street. I ran into him on my way to campus, and he stopped to tell me that he had been reading my Kant book [which would date this in the Spring of '63]. He paused with one foot on the sidewalk and one foot in the curb while he gave me his take on my various claims about Kant's philosophy. With regard to each one, he would either say "That rings a bell, Bob," or "That doesn't ring a bell, Bob." Try as I could, I was unable to hear the tintinnabulation that served him as a guide to philosophical truth.

Warner Wick, who was at the time Dean of Students, also read the book the year after it came out, by which time I was visiting at Wellesley. [I shall pass over the contrast between this collegial behavior and that of the Harvard department. I never took it personally, however. It was my impression that they did not read each other's works either.] Warner wrote me a letter that started with two really odd sentences. Here they are. "Dear Bob, In the course of teaching 'your' course on the Critique of Pure Reason last quarter, I got fairly well acquainted with your book. I'm sure you will understand my saying that although I think I could have written a better one, I haven't and I probably won't, and that in the meantime yours is by far the best there is." That's a compliment, right?



The people I spent most time with, of course, were the other junior faculty. Sylvain and I knew one another from Harvard, although we had not been especially close. Sylvain is nine years older than I and actually served in the U. S. Army during World War II, fighting in the Battle of the Bulge. [It was always fun at meetings of the APA to listen to Sylvain and Jack Rawls swap war stories. Jack served in the South Pacific, I think.] Sylvain had a wonderful, guttural, infectious laugh, and a perpetual smile on his face. The two of us collaborated one quarter on a graduate course in the Philosophy of History, a subject that had interested me ever since I had served as Morty White's grader in his course on analytic philosophy of history at Harvard. I thought we taught a pretty good course, but only two students signed up. The four of us used to meet in a seminar room and huddle at one end of the long table for warmth.

My relationship with Marshall Cohen actually went back a very long way. In the summer of 1948, when I had just completed my Sophomore year in high school, my big sister, Barbara, went to something called The Encampment for Citizenship, a camp for teenagers that had been founded two years earlier by Al Black and the Ethical Culture Society. Barbara, who was a terrific dancer, came back raving about a young man named "Mish" who was, she said, a really good social dancer. By the time I met S. Marshall Cohen, he was a balding philosopher, an intimate acolyte of Morty White with an eagle eye for social status. It was a little hard to put these two images together in my mind, but Marshall [as he was known by the time I met him] was very bright and lots of fun to have around. At one point after Cindy and I had married, we ran into Marshall in the elevator of our building. He gushed excitedly about the woman he had become involved with, telling us proudly of the famous people with whom she had had affairs. That struck both of us as really weird, even in the liberated Sixties, but social status seemed to mean more to Marshall than fidelity.

Dudley Shapere, of course, was a good friend. Joe Ullian and I had stood up for him at his wedding to Alfreda Bingham, the year that the three of us got our Ph. D.'s. Dudley was a thin saturnine man with a long death's head of a face and a puckish manner. To the collective astonishment of the department, it turned out that he had known Hugh Hefner in the Army, who gave him a member's Key to the first Playboy Club when it opened in Chicago in 1960. Dudley was a man of parts, being a terrific ping pong player in addition to doing the Philosophy of Science. I was meeting Vere Chappell and Bob Coburn for the first time. Little did I then know that Vere and I would be colleagues at the University of Massachusetts from 1971 until I left Philosophy to join Afro-American Studies in 1992.

The most junior member of the department was Roy Lawrence, a slender, enormously cheerful and ebullient man whose wife, Ann, was a brilliant doctor at the University of Chicago Hospital. After Cindy and I married, we became very friendly with Roy and Ann. When Roy found out that I knew Jack Rawls from Harvard, he hauled out of his file cabinet what he said was Jack's first published work, a review Jack had written for *The Princeton Review* of a translation of the works of the Church Fathers. Jack had actually considered entering an Episcopalian Seminary, and obviously knew a good deal about Catholic theology. The review was remarkable in its tone. Jack had written a judicious, balanced, considered evaluation of this multi-volume work, managing to sound as though he were an eighty year old monk who, after meditating on the Church Fathers for a lifetime, was now breaking his silence to offer his reflections on these immortal texts. Needless to say, I was very impressed. It gave me an insight into Jack that was absent from his later, famous writings.

Although I was not a member of the College Philosophy Department, I was a member of the College Faculty because of my involvement with the "Culture and Freedom" course, so I was

invited to the periodic meetings of that body. I am not much of a fan of faculty meetings, although I have always, somewhat perversely, enjoyed department meetings, but the University of Chicago College Faculty was a fascinating collection of people, and attending one of their meetings was a bit like taking a time machine back several decades. These were the less distinguished survivors of the grand old Hutchins experiment, still hanging on long after the famous intellectuals who had made it so exciting had moved on to other pursuits. There is a curious episode of the original *Star Trek* in which Kirk, Spock, and the rest come upon a planet populated by folks who are engaged in religious rituals that involve chanting what at first sound like nonsense syllables to the Enterprise crew. After a bit, they realize that the chants are actually fragments of the Declaration of Independence and other documents of the Founding fathers which, being repeated ritually century after century, had slowly been linguistically corrupted until they lost all coherent meaning, retaining only the capacity to inspire awe.

That was roughly the relation of the College faculty to the principles of the original Hutchins vision. They could no longer actually remember the rationale for that experiment, but they were determined to cling to its fragments for as long as they could. This was a source of constant frustration to the new young faculty, whose desire for innovation constantly ran up against the complaint that that was not the way things used to be done. At one point, one of us proposed requiring the undergraduates to study some history, which would have constituted an innovation. One of the old-timers actually got up and argued against the idea, on the grounds that Aristotle in the *Poetics* had judged history to be inferior to poetry because it dealt with particulars rather than with universals. He wasn't being witty, or *faux* erudite. He was serious. There was a certain pathos to the mindset of the old guard. Their world was changing, and they didn't like it, even though they couldn't really stop it. After one unresolved argument about

curriculum, a newcomer suggested that each of us be allowed to make his or her own decision how to proceed. This struck me as self-evidently reasonable, but it was met with a cry of dismay. They did not want to be free! I felt embarrassed for them.

My commitment to nuclear disarmament did not wane as I pulled away from Cambridge on my way to Chicago. My old associations with Riesman, Erickson, Muste, and the Cambridge crowd atrophied, but I established new links in Chicago with what was really a world-wide struggle against the dangers of nuclear weapons. The University of Chicago was home to the oldest and most important disarmament voice, the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, founded by the distinguished scientist Eugene Rabinowich in 1945, shortly after the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings. In '47, the editors of the *Bulletin* came up with the dramatic idea of the Doomsday Clock, a stark image of a clock face with the hands pointing to seven minutes to midnight. Over the years, as the danger of nuclear war waxed and waned, the *Bulletin* moved the hands closer to or farther from the fateful twelve midnight. I had lunch with Rabinowich, and on May 23, 1962, he wrote to invite me to join the Board of Editors of the journal. Needless to say, I jumped at the chance to be associated with so distinguished a group of Sponsors as Hans Bethe, Detlev Bronk, J. Robert Oppenheimer, Leo Szilard, Harold Urey, and the son of my old violin teacher, Jerrold Zacharias. For the next several years, even after I had left Chicago, I continued to review manuscripts for them, write reviews, and publish the occasional article.

Political *engagement* led me into some odd psychoanalytical thickets. A fellow renter in my building was a psychiatrist with the Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis. He invited me to give a talk on psychiatry, nuclear weapons, and world peace to a seminar in which he was a participant, presided over by Roy Grinker, one of the grand old men of the Chicago psychoanalytic scene. I had no idea what to say, but I cobbled together something on rationality

and the danger of accidental nuclear war, and went along to their headquarters. When I walked into the seminar room, my first thought was that the event was an elaborate charade staged by Groucho Marx. Seated at the head of the table was Grinker, a stoop-shouldered old man smoking the largest cigar I had ever seen. Ranged around the table on both sides were younger men smoking smaller cigars. I was aware that Freud had once said, "Sometimes a cigar is just a cigar," but I did not think this was one of those times. I soldiered through my little talk, at the end of which there was a dead silence, while all eyes were turned to Grinker. After a pause, he asked a question that was not transparently hostile, and with a collective exhalation of relief, the rest plunged in for what became a lively discussion.

Cindy and I were married on June 2, 1962, and the marriage was almost immediately in trouble. I spent part of the '62-'63 academic year in therapy with Dr. Frances Hannett, a psychoanalyst who was married to Maxwell Gittelson, then the President of the Chicago Psychoanalytic Institute. In my once a week sessions with her, she advised me that I ought to consider a full-scale psychoanalysis, and in an effort to get a second opinion, I made an appointment with Dr. Jules Masserman, a big deal analyst who later served as the President of the American Psychiatric Association. After I had talked for a while about my problems and concerns, he said with a brutally dismissive condescension, "Well, I think you are going to go from doctor to doctor, complaining about your life, but you will never actually go into analysis." I walked out of his office stunned and feeling rather crushed [although I must acknowledge that feelings of that sort don't last very long in me.] Some while later, I was invited to participate in a panel discussion of psychiatry and nuclear disarmament, and who should turn up on the panel but Masserman! He spoke first and said some really stupid things, revealing that he knew absolutely nothing about the subject. But he was politically on the same side of the issue as I was. I knew

that I could make him look like a horse's ass if I wanted to, but after a bit of soul-searching, I decided that the cause was more important than my bruised feelings, so I went easy on him. Forty-eight years later, in preparation for writing this paragraph, I googled Masserman, and discovered that in 1984 he was forced to pay damages and terminate his practice for sexually abusing three female patients. I blush to admit I was thrilled.

There were political things to worry about on as well as off the campus. Hyde Park, for those who are unfamiliar with Chicago, is an almost all-white enclave in the middle of a large and very famous Black community. This is the community that was the object of the groundbreaking urban study, *Black Metropolis*, by Horace Cayton and St. Clair Drake, published in 1945. In an effort to preserve the whiteness of Hyde Park, the University of Chicago had bought up a good deal of real estate around the university, which it then rented out in a deliberately discriminatory manner to control the influx of Blacks. Some students got wind of this practice at just about the time I arrived, and carried out a classic test, sending first Black applicants and then White applicants into the rental office to ask about available apartments. They demonstrated not merely that the University was discriminating against Black Chicagoans, but that *it was actually discriminating against Black U. of C. students!* A whole lot of us howled with outrage. The President of the University, a Nobel Prize winning geneticist named George Beadle, admitted the truth of our charges and defended the practice, on the familiar grounds that it was necessary to protect against White Flight. I was flabbergasted. But then, I was young, and still filled with a roseate view of the Academy.

I actually thought the fears of White Flight were, in this case, a trifle exaggerated. The University was filled with faculty who had been born in Hyde Park, had attended the famous Laboratory School as children, had remained to do their undergraduate and graduate work at the

University of Chicago, had then secured untenured teaching positions, gained tenure, and had every intention of becoming professors emeriti there in the fullness of time. The danger was not that they would leave Hyde Park if a few Black families moved in, but that they would never make it all the way from Hyde Park to downtown Chicago.

Because of my interest in the connections between military strategy and foreign policy, I applied to the Political Science Department for permission to offer an undergraduate course on military strategy and foreign policy. A young Assistant Professor name Morton Kaplan, a neo-*avant la lettre*, protested the idea, but fortunately for me I had Hans Morgenthau in my corner. Morgenthau was then a very senior, very distinguished old style political realist who had made major contributions to our understanding of the complex international politics of the Eurasian land mass. He backed my request to teach the course, and it was approved. Kaplan was an acolyte of Leo Strauss, whose paranoid interpretation of political theory has had a malign effect not only within the Academy but also on America's foreign and military policy, thanks to the determine efforts of his disciples. For many years, Strauss held a private seminar in his home, at which, little by little, he would reveal the esoteric truth that only he was privy to. Since there was no logical connection between one element of that truth and any other, there never came a point at which the disciples could deduce the remainder of the message for themselves, so they kept coming back. [Lest the uninformed reader think I am being a trifle harsh with Strauss, suffice it to say that according to him, the *real* meaning of Machiavelli's *The Prince* is to be found not in the text of that famous work, but instead in the middle chapter of Machiavelli's *Discourses on the First Ten Chapters of Titus Livius*, more particularly in the numerically middle sentence of that chapter -- I am not making this stuff up.]

My studies of the new deterrence debates had led me deeper into the Game Theory literature, and although I was still more than ten years away from the time when I would master the formal mathematics of John von Neumann's brilliant work, I had learned enough to become convinced that the impressive looking matrices that decorated the writings of Kahn and others were nothing more than an attempt to lend their partisan arguments an air of scientific impartiality. This core idea, that the appeal to formal methods in political debates, and also in political philosophy, too often conceals an unacknowledged ideological agenda, became a theme of much of my teaching and writing. It led later on to my offering graduate courses on "The Use and Abuse of Formal Models in Political Philosophy," and undergirded my critique of books by Nozick and Elster, as well as my book on Rawls. My first effort along those lines was a short book that I wrote in the summer of '62, called *the Rhetoric of Deterrence*. I tried without success to get it published. Harvard thought it was too polemical, and the next publisher I tried said it was too technical. I put the manuscript aside and moved on to other things. Several years later, I sent it to Noam Chomsky, whom I had known during his days as a Harvard Junior Fellow. Noam made some useful comments and encouraged me to try to publish it, but I never acted on his suggestion, and the typescript sits to this day on my shelf, next to several other books for which I have never found publishers. Thanks to the wonders of the internet, it is also available on box.net, accessible via a link on my blog.

In the Fall of '62, I repeated the course at the downtown adult education operation run by the U. of C. Those were tense times, because Khrushchev had agreed with Castro to install short-range missiles in Cuba in response to America's installation of missiles in Turkey, across the border from the Soviet Union. America responded in turn with a naval blockade of Cuba to prevent the missiles from being off-loaded, and the so-called Cuban Missile Crisis was on. I was



terrified. My studies had made me hyper-sensitive to the mortal danger of a nuclear exchange triggered either by miscalculation or by the mutual intransigence of Kennedy and Khrushchev. My little VW bug was loaded with dried food and a Geiger counter, and I had plane reservations to both Canada and Mexico, depending on the prevailing winds when things got too hot. I can still recall teaching the theory of all this downtown to a group of adult students, while listening to the radio reports of the Russian ships approaching the picket of American ships on station around Cuba.

As we all waited, intensely apprehensive, I had a call from Marc Raskin in the Executive Office Building. Marc asked me what I was doing to try to stop the impending Armageddon. I told him about my contingency plans and he was scathing in his scorn at my pusillanimity. "What are you doing?" I asked. Leaning into the phone, he said in a hushed voice, "We are trying to reach the Pope." My heart sank. I knew we were doomed.

The event that separated my first year at Chicago decisively from my second was my marriage to Cindy in June of 1962. We had been seeing each other steadily for almost five years, but the year apart brought things to a head. We both felt that we ought either to get married or end our relationship. We decided on marriage. Cindy's parents were not thrilled, to put it as gently as I can. Her father, James Griffin, was by this time the Vice-President for Public Relations of Sears Roebuck, and the Griffins were living in an elegant apartment in downtown Chicago. They were serious Catholics, and our marriage would apparently be a "scandal to the faithful," which pretty much precluded our being married in Shaker Heights, where Cindy had grown up while Griffin was in charge of the Cleveland Group of Sears stores. Nor could we be married in a Catholic Church. At this point, Cindy had decisively left the Church, but she very much wanted her family to be involved in the affair, so we hit upon a geographical and

ecclesiastical compromise. We would be married in Appleton Chapel in Harvard Yard by an Episcopalian Minister.

I had taught with Hanna Holborn Gray in Soc Sci 5 at Harvard, as I have already mentioned. Hanna, the daughter of the distinguished Yale historian Hajo Holborn, was the fair-haired girl of the Harvard History Department, Myron Gilmore's almost certain successor as the Ren and Ref expert [Renaissance and Reformation, for those not in the know.] But her husband, Charles Gray, a former Junior Fellow teaching at MIT, got a good job at the University of Chicago, and she followed him out. At first, she could only get a position in the College, but eventually, she became Acting President of Yale University, President of the University of Chicago, and then a member of the Harvard Corporation. When Cindy and I got engaged, Hanna and Charles organized a cocktail party in our honor to celebrate. We were madly rushing around making arrangements and simply forgot about the party. When I came to my senses and realized what we had done, I was so totally mortified that I could not even call to apologize. I simply slunk away and never talked to her again. Even now, forty-eight years later, I cringe when I think about it. Hanna, if by some chance you have found your way to this memoir, will you at long last accept my most humble apologies?

When Cindy and I settled upon our engagement, I called my parents to tell them the good news. Appleton Chapel is not a large church, so it would have to be a small wedding. Cindy had a brother and an uncle and aunt in addition to her parents, and of course none of her father's Catholic business associates could consider attending, so the bride's party would be pretty small. On my side were my mother and father and sister, but I wanted as well to invite my favorite aunt and uncle, as well as my grandmother, if she could make it at her then advanced age. I told my mother that I wanted to invite only the absolutely inner circle of family. She thought for a long

minute and said, "Well, there are thirty-five." "No, no, Ma, " I said, "You don't understand. There isn't room for everybody. I just want the irreducible minimum." "*You* don't understand," she replied. "You don't have to live with them after the wedding."

In the end, only my parents and my sister came to the wedding. The remainder of the guests were all our friends from our Harvard days. The Winthrop House Senior Common Room attended, led by David Owen. The Moores were there, along with David Riesman and a host of other Harvard Square types. At the appropriate moment in the ceremony, i intoned the ritual words, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Since I was a confirmed atheist, I adopted a cultural anthropological rather than a doctrinal attitude toward this element of the ceremony, but I was the first person in my extended family ever to utter those words, and when they crossed my lips, there was a collective inrushing of breath from the groom's side of the aisle.

Cindy and I set up light housekeeping in an apartment at 5550 South Dorchester, two blocks from my old apartment. The wedding presents flowed in from both sides of the marriage. From Cindy's side came a good deal of silver plate and Steuban crystal, courtesy of her father's business associates, along with a little gaudily painted china figurine of The Infant of Prague. From my side came a scroll stating that ten trees had been planted in Israel in our name. We had more than enough good china and crystal, but we were short on money, so we decided to return a collection of expensive but unwanted wedding gifts to the stores in Cleveland from which they had come. We loaded up the VW bug and drove to Ohio. A number of the items had come from the same place, Halle's Department Store in downtown Cleveland. When we got there, Cindy said she would stay in the car while I went up to do the returns. Things went pretty well until I got to the Steuben Room. When I handed in the pair of Steuben sugar and cream servers,

explaining lamely that they were a duplicate, the saleslady looked at me askance and asked whether I really wanted to return them. "Oh, yes," I assured her brightly. She opened the little file card holder in which each patron's purchases were carefully recorded on a separate card. She paged through the file until she came to a thick group of cards clipped together. It seemed the gift was from Mr. Halle himself, the owner of the store. I beat a hasty retreat and had a few words with Cindy in the car.

Cindy had completed her coursework for the doctorate in English Literature, and was studying for her oral examinations. Let me take just a moment to explain what this involved. Cindy was going to spend two hours being quizzed by three members of the Harvard English Department on English Literature -- all of it. Everything was fair game, from *Beowulf* to *Finnegan's Wake*. Poetry, drama, fiction, non-fiction prose, all of it. Night after night, Cindy plowed her way through everything she had not already mastered, preparing herself for the examination. That ordeal gave her a grounding for her career that no selection of "special fields" could have matched.

Meanwhile, since we needed the money, Cindy got herself a job at Illinois Institute of Technology teaching a required Humanities course to budding engineers. Three times a week she would get in the VW and drive north to 33rd street, where she would face a class of students who really did not want to be there. By the time the second semester had rolled around, she had worked her way to the poetry section. One day, she went into class to discuss a sonnet by Robert Frost. She labored hard to show the students how much thought Frost had put into his poem, even holding up a xeroxed copy of the original hand-written text, with Frost's emendations. The students weren't having any of it. They refused to believe there could be that much in a poem.

Finally, in exasperation, she asked them, "How long do you imagine it took Frost to write this poem?"

Well, this was a time and motion problem that a group of engineers could get their teeth into, and a lively argument broke out in the class, with the students even ignoring Cindy in their excitement. At one point, a student looked up and asked, "Is this an early poem or a late poem?" Cindy told him it was a late poem. More deliberation. Finally, as engineers will, they came to a group consensus. Since it was a late poem, they said, and he must have been quite practiced at poetry by the time he came to write it, they agreed that it would have taken him a minute a line. Fourteen lines, fourteen minutes. That night, Cindy was in such despair that she seriously considered quitting her job. I protested that we needed the money, and pushed her out the door the next morning to go to class.

Once my manuscript had been accepted by Harvard, there was a great deal of work to be done before it actually became a book. First came a host of small revisions in response to Beck's four pages of comments. This was followed by the copy-edited manuscript, the galleys, and the page proofs. I always find this process rather fun. It requires no intelligence whatsoever, and still gives you the sense that you are doing something productive. And it is always enjoyable to spend time with your own words, a holdover, I suppose, from our infantile fascination with our own feces. But then came the business of preparing an index. This being my first book, I had never done an index before. Those of you reading these words who are entirely creatures of the digital age probably do not appreciate what an excruciating task it was to produce an index for a book. For you, it is just a matter of going to the right drop-down menu and clicking on the appropriate item. In the old days [back when we all walked seven miles to school in our bare feet through the snow -- those old days], things were different. You bought an enormous stack

of file cards, sat down with a set of page proofs [you had to know the page on which a word appeared in order to index it, of course], and went through the text, flagging each item you thought ought to be in the index. After a while, a blizzard of cards would pile up on the floor, and you would spend most of your time clawing through it frantically trying to find the card on which you knew you had already written "*a priori* synthesis." When I was done, I swore Never Again. Whatever it cost, I would pay to have it done. And so I have. That was my first and last engagement with indexing.

Cindy aced her orals. They scarcely touched on most of what she had crammed into her head, of course -- they were only two hours long, after all -- but the preparation for them left her with a command of the entire sweep of English Literature that has stood her in good stead to the present day. Having become what we all in the Academy now refer to as ABD, she decided to write her doctoral dissertation on the relationship between the epistolary novels of the eighteenth century English writer Samuel Richardson and the literature of Puritan self-examination out of which they had emerged.

This is perhaps as good a time as any to say something about the effect of my relationship with Cindy on my knowledge of literature and the techniques of its interpretation. I have never been an avid reader of classy fiction. As I have already noted, I began as a boy with an interest in Sherlock Holmes, moved on to science fiction, switched to detective fiction in college, and on occasion still read the odd schlock spy novel. While fulfilling my undergraduate Humanities requirement with a single year long survey course, I had in fact read *The Brothers Karamazov*, and that had prompted me, unbidden, to plow through *Crime and Punishment* and *The Idiot* as well. I had read *War and Peace* as a graduate student, although I needed the encouragement of the Henry Fonda, Audrey Hepburn, Mel Ferrar, Anita Ekberg movie to make it all the way

through, and I must admit, with considerable embarrassment, that in my first graduate year, during a rather dark night of the soul, I read *The Fountainhead*. But literature was not, by any stretch of the imagination, my constant companion.

Nevertheless, when Cindy started working on some author, I routinely plunged in and read a bunch of the books she was dealing with. Partly this was simply out of curiosity, of course, but much more was going on. I found Cindy's mind fascinating -- powerful, intuitive, original. Though I did not know much about literature, I knew a good deal about intelligence, and Cindy was the genuine article. In some ways, Cindy's intellectual relation to her field resembled my relation to mine. Neither of us was a typical academic scholar. Cindy had an uncanny ability to get inside the head of an author on whom she was working, in order to divine the complex of feelings that drove the work. I puzzled over this ability a good deal, because it was so different from the way my mind worked. I was constantly struggling to find the core idea in a text and then to reconstruct it into a rigorous argument. Cindy seemed to be able to let down the psychic barrier between herself and the author and somehow allow the author to live in her mind, so that she could, in effect, know what the author was thinking not by examining texts but rather by merely introspecting. This ability, which I finally came to understand was the cause of a good deal of the trouble in our marriage, was a source of enormous strength in Cindy's work. It is perhaps not so obvious in her first book, on Samuel Richardson, but it is clearly at the heart of the brilliance of her books on Edith Wharton and Emily Dickenson.

During our twenty-three year marriage, I discussed Cindy's reading with her, listened to her textual explications and interpretations, read every word she wrote, commented on it, edited it, and slowly, by what I have on occasion referred to only half-jokingly as pillow talk, acquired a fairly sophisticated understanding of great fiction. Although I learned almost everything I

know about literature from Cindy, I was never able to incorporate an author into myself in the way she did. I would not say I was an autodidact, because I did not teach myself. I suppose I might be called an uxor-didact, if such a word could exist. Those twenty-three years contained too much pain and strife to be called happy, but the intellectual bond between us never weakened. Even near the end, when we were struggling unsuccessfully to hold the marriage together, we continued to talk about her work, which by then focused on Emily Dickenson.

Although I have not thus far said much about my own writing, save for the books on Kant and deterrence theory, I was fairly regularly writing about political issues and also the occasional philosophical piece. While still at Harvard, I wrote a piece for the *Nation* on "Moral Standards in Foreign Policy," and also published an attack on Herman Kahn in *The New Republic* [back before Marty Peretz got his hands on it] called "The Game of War." Osborne produced a splendid cover cartoon for the piece, which led off the February, 1960 issue. Stanley Hoffman, the wry, mordant political scientist who was the first Director of Social Studies at Harvard, put me in touch with a French journal called *Les Cahiers de la République*, in which I published two articles. I also wrote a number of pieces for the *Committees of Correspondence Newsletter*. I wrote some reviews for *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* and I contributed pieces to *New University Thought* and *Dissent*. I never thought of any of this as a contribution to scholarship, of course, and in my *vita*, I actually separate it out from my philosophical work. The books on Kant and deterrence pretty much constituted my serious writing in this period, although I did publish, in the Chicago based journal *Ethics*, the first of what would be many essays on the relationship between formal models and normative theory, under the title "Reflections on Game Theory and the Nature of Value." I even found time to review *Laws of Freedom* by the excellent and always under-appreciated Kant scholar, Mary Gregor.



As our first year of marriage was nearing an end, Ingrid Stadler wrote to say that she was going on leave from her position at Wellesley, and asked whether I would be interested in spending a year as a visitor replacing her. Cindy and I were not happy to be living in Chicago, and I jumped at the opportunity to move back East. Since Bert Dreyfus was teaching in the Humanities Department at MIT, I thought I might be able to wangle a professorship there so that we could stay in Cambridge. Cindy got a job teaching Freshman Composition at B. U. for the year [always a back-breaking assignment], and we prepared to move East.

At about that time, my Kant book actually appeared. I held the first copy reverentially, smelled the pages, and ran my hand over the slightly nubby cover. Then I opened it to the page of Acknowledgements, and my heart stopped. I had written an effusive encomium to C. I. Lewis, who had been my model of what a philosopher should be, explaining that I had been privileged to attend his lectures on Kant. At least that is what I thought I had written. There on the page, it said "attend his lectures at Kant." I may very well be the only person who ever saw that error -- it was corrected in the next printing. But then, when the architect of a beautiful formal garden casts her eye over the ranks of exquisitely organized plants, she probably only sees the single petunia whose head is drooping.

## Chapter Two A Cambridge Interlude

Cindy and I found an apartment up Concord Avenue in Cambridge, and moved in to get ready for the new academic year. In a frenzy of activity that I now realize was a therapeutic effort to repair our marriage, we stripped the wallpaper off the walls, painted the entire apartment, and settled in to what would probably only be a single year's occupancy. Cindy very much wanted to go to England the next summer to do archival research on Puritan Diaries, Saints' Lives, and Autobiographies, and even with our combined salaries, that was going to be something of a reach, so I hunted about for some moonlighting to supplement my Wellesley pay. [By then I was making \$8500 a year at Chicago, and Wellesley was not paying me any more than that.] I hustled around and managed to get a part-time gig at B. U. teaching political theory both at the undergraduate and graduate level. I also bagged a course at Northeastern University in an adult education division. In the end, I spent the year teaching full time at Wellesley, half time at B. U., and quarter time at Northeastern.

Once it had appeared, my Kant book didn't do too badly, as these things are judged in the Academy. The Excel spreadsheet on which I record the sales of all of my books shows that over a nine year period, from its publication in 1963 until Harvard allowed it to go out of print in 1972, it sold a total of 2226 copies, earning \$4,264. That is a tiny fraction of the sales of some of my more successful books, but it may well have been a decent share of all the people in the United States seriously interested in studying Kant's First Critique. In '72, a new editor took over Harvard University Press and, in an effort to improve its bottom line, summarily consigned a long backlist of books to the trash heap. On December 12, 1972, Nanine Hutchinson wrote to me that my book was "placed with several hundred others in a mail sale, where the remaining copies found appreciative homes." In my rather irked reply, I wrote "I must say I found the tone

of your letter a trifle disconcerting. I thought we were talking about a scholarly work, not a litter of kittens."

I very much wanted to find some way to keep the book in print, especially since I myself hoped periodically to teach a Kant course in which I would want to assign it. Someone told me about a reprint house called Peter B. Smith Publishers that might be interested in re-issuing it. I found the name in the phone book and called a North Shore number. Peter Smith himself answered. When I explained what I wanted, he said, rather hesitantly, "Well, we have a big backlog. It might be several years before we could get to it." Suddenly, I had one of those flashes of insight that come all too infrequently. "I don't really care about the royalties," I said. "I am willing to forego them so long as the book is available." "Oh well," he said, "in that case I think we can bring it out in three months." Harvard had destroyed the plates for the book, thereby violating clause 24 of our contract [inasmuch as they had not in fact informed me in writing of their intention to allow the book to go out of print], but Smith carefully disassembled a copy I sent him, made plates from the pages, and then reassembled and rebound my copy. The reprint, when it appeared, was identical with the original in every way save two. The hard cover was a mustardy yellow rather than a powdery blue, and the price had been substantially reduced. I just checked on Amazon.com and it is no longer available, but for decades after Harvard let it lapse, Peter B. Smith kept it in print, enabling generations of Kant students to read it.

Wellesley was as different from Chicago as a convent is from a schul. The Chicago students were an argumentative, rebellious lot, perfect for keeping a Philosophy class afloat. If a student walked into class late, like as not she would raise her hand as she entered and say, "I don't agree." The problem at Chicago was not getting a discussion started in class. It was getting out of the room alive once the discussion had erupted. At Wellesley, quite another ethos

prevailed. The students were very smart, but they were demurely respectful. And they took notes. Everything I said that sounded even remotely important was immediately transcribed into their notebooks. They behaved a bit like a school of dolphins. On cue, they would all rise up with their pens, dive into their notebooks, and start writing. There were class periods during which I would scarcely see the whites of their eyes. I tried telling them to put their pens down and listen, but they wrote that down too. Then I tried forbidding them to take notes, but that produced a level of anxiety so high that it interfered with normal brain function, so at last I gave up and lectured to the tops of their heads. I recall one extremely quiet young woman who each day sat in the very last row of one course and never ever said a word. When I graded the midterm examinations, I was startled to discover that she was far and away the best student in the class.

There was one rule that I enforced with unbending rigor. I had heard from an old hand that Wellesley students had a tendency to come to one's office and cry. I told my classes that if anyone came to my office and cried, I would jump out of the window.

Wellesley was, and still is, a breathtakingly beautiful campus, set in a picture postcard town outside of Boston. The grounds were exquisitely laid out, and perfectly manicured. Shortly before I got there, a gorgeous new Faculty Club had been opened on the shores of a little lake. One sat on the second floor eating lunch and looking out over the lake, much as though one were at an exclusive country club. But though the physical plant was gorgeous, and the students were bright, albeit timid, the faculty was not welcoming to an outsider. No one asked me out to lunch. No one sought me out in my office for a chat. When I wandered into the faculty lounge for afternoon tea, I drank it alone, because the little clutches of old timers sitting together circled the wagons as I approached.

While I was teaching at Wellesley, Dave Dushkin contacted me from Random House and proposed that I edit a book for them. Pretty quickly, I came up with an idea for an interdisciplinary collection of readings on politics drawn from Philosophy, Sociology, Political Science, and Psychology. I called it *Political Man and Social Man*. At least, that is what I think the book is about. I am sitting in Chapel Hill writing this, and one copy of each of the various editions and translations of my books -- some sixty volumes or more -- is in our Paris apartment, where I took them so as to have something to fill up the book shelves. My only copy of *Political Man and Social Man* is there, and I shan't be back in Paris until June. It is now so long since I have looked at the book that I may be misremembering what it is about. [There is something a little odd about the fact that I can recall the details of even very minor events in my earlier life more easily than I can recall what is in some of the books I have written. When I first got in contact with Brian Leiter, to compliment him on a paper of his that my son, Tobias, had forwarded to me, he told me that he regularly had his students read a lengthy critique I had published in the *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* of Jon Elster's book on Karl Marx. I had totally forgotten that I had written it. When I pulled it out of a box at the top of my closet and re-read it, I was very pleasantly surprised.] According to my spreadsheet, *Political Man and Social Man* sold about 4300 copies during its ten year life. It actually made enough to pay for more than a year's psychoanalysis, at the rates then being charged.

Since we were living in Cambridge, my life was there rather than in Wellesley. For part of the year, I carpooled with Dave Ferry, a tall, lanky English Professor whose wife, Ann, taught in the Harvard English Department and had at one point been Cindy's teacher. Both Dave and Ann became quite eminent, Ann having the distinction of being the first woman to hold a full-time tenured position in the Harvard English Department. They had two children, and Wikipedia

tells me that their son, Stephen, is now a photojournalist, but forty-eight years ago, when I was driving out to Wellesley with Dave, he was a little boy. The Ferrys wanted very much to get him into the Shady Hill School, a toney private school to which many Harvard Square types sent their kids. The school required an interview with tots applying for admission to their Kindergarten, and Dave was anxious about how little Stephen would do. The great day arrived, and Ann and Dave took him along to the interview. Afterward, Dave was beside himself with worry. Apparently the interview consisted of a series of questions, to each of which Stephen gave exactly the same answer. "Why do we carry an umbrella when it is raining?" "Because we like to." "Why do we put milk in the refrigerator?" "Because we like to." I think Stephen was admitted, and apparently, he turned out all right.

When Christmas rolled around, Cindy and I decided to throw a party, but our apartment was small, and between us, we had accumulated a large number of friends during our Harvard years, so we hit upon the plan of dividing them up into three more or less compatible groups and inviting them for three successive nights. For each party, we would make a large bowl of eggnog, lay out cups and all, conjure up some eats, and welcome in that night's cohort. My Wellesley connections were part of the group invited for the third night, but Ellen Haring, the Philosophy Department Chair, got her wires crossed and showed up on the second night instead. I was surprised when she rang the doorbell, but I just greeted her and invited her in. I have often thought that when she got home, she might have consulted her date book, realized her mistake, and then wondered whether we gave a party every night.

I was still convinced that I needed to enter a full-scale psychoanalysis, but I could not do that until I knew where I was going to be for an extended period of years, so I compromised by again seeking once-a-week therapy. My first therapist was Dr. Max Day, who rather startled me

by turning out to have read my big cover story article on Herman Kahn in *The New Republic* two years earlier. Day was a very sympathetic character, and helped me in an on-going way to deal with the marital problems I was having. When he had to leave town, he handed me on to a Dr. Limentani, a perfectly decent man who had the misfortune to be hard of hearing. It was really weird trying to free associate in the presence of someone who had to cup a hand behind his ear and ask me to repeat myself.

I had continued my efforts in the campaign for nuclear disarmament, and the stress of arguing with people day after day about the threat of an accidental nuclear war was beginning to take its toll on me. I talked to Limentani about my fears, and he made a valiant effort to separate what was rational about them from what might be a neurotic element. By that time I really knew what I was talking about, and I was very sensitive, as you can imagine, to the slightest suggestion that it was all in my head.

One day, I found myself in the upstairs lounge of the Harvard Freshman Union, trying to persuade a skeptical member of the Harvard faculty of the seriousness of the dangers of an accidental nuclear exchange [it may have been Brzezinski, but my memory fails me on this point]. I must have simply wiggled out, because the next thing I knew, I was running down Massachusetts Avenue as fast as I could, hyperventilating. When I got home, I took a long look at myself and decided that this could not be good for me. I had been more or less permanently in a state of controlled panic about nuclear weapons for three years, with no end in sight. I decided to pull back from the stress of public speaking and endless arguing, and instead ascend into what I later learned to think of as the ideological superstructure. I turned to political theory.

I began to think really hard about the foundations of democratic theory -- about the arguments that had been advanced by one or another of the great political theorists to justify the

authority claims of the democratic state. Fairly quickly, it became clear to me that I needed something very like what Kant would have called a *deduction of the democratic state*, which is to say an argument designed to demonstrate *a priori* that a legitimate democratic state is theoretically possible. Couching the problem in Kantian terms, as seemed natural to me for obvious reasons, I set out to discover the *conditions of the possibility in general of a de jure legitimate democratic state*.

I wrote a paper called "The Fundamental Problem of Political Theory," which I interpreted to be the task of demonstrating the legitimacy of the democratic form of government. At first, I thought such a justification could be found, so at the beginning of my paper, I announced my intention of producing the justification, only to have to admit at the end of the paper that I had thus far failed. I delivered the paper in various places, always with this letdown as a conclusion. After a while, it dawned on me that I was not really looking for and failing to find a justification for democracy. I was really demonstrating the impossibility of such a justification. I had, almost without realizing it, become an anarchist.

Needless to say,, the rest of the world did not put itself on hold while I made up my mind about democracy. On Friday, November 22nd, 1963 I was in the Widener card catalogue room looking something up. Widener has been somewhat reconfigured in recent years. In those days, when you reached the top of the broad staircase leading to the second floor, if you turned right, you entered a narrow room crammed with brown wooden file cabinets containing hundreds of card drawers, in which, arrayed alphabetically, were cards for Widener's enormous collection. Having found what you were looking for, you could either fill out a call slip with one of the stubby yellow pencils the library provided, or flash your Harvard I. D. and walk into the stacks themselves via a narrow door located to the left of the large desk area reserved for the librarians.



As I was filtering through the cards in a drawer, I noticed a stir up at the desk, which was usually a model of librarial silence. Several people were gathered around a small portable radio, listening intently. I wandered over to find out what was up, and heard the news that Kennedy had just been shot while visiting Dallas. At that point it was not known whether he had survived.

I rushed home to tell Cindy, who did not have either radio or television set on and therefore had not heard the news. In those days we had a little ugly tabletop black and white tv set with enormous rabbit ears that one could rotate this way and that to catch the signal. For the entire weekend, I remained glued to the set, along with most of the rest of America. I was actually watching when the Dallas police led Lee Harvey Oswald out of the station to transfer him to another location. Jack Ruby walked up, pulled out a gun, and shot him dead, though in fact you could not actually see any of this in the crush of police and spectators.

As luck would have it, Cindy's parents were scheduled to come to town a few days later, and although it was a business trip, we would be seeing them for dinner. Once again, a little back story is called for. Jim Griffin was a self-made man. He had never finished high school, and had entered the Sears Roebuck ranks before the war, when it was still possible to do that without educational credentials. Sears, which in those days was one of America's great corporations, was organized along regional lines. Griffin rose first to be the manager of a store in Louisville, and then to be head of the Cleveland group of Sears stores, one of the largest and most important groups in the country. His progress was guided by the President of the company, who had taken Griffin under his wing. The natural next step would have been a regional vice-presidency, a position which by then called for at the very least a college degree. Griffin was passed over, but the Sears President created a new slot for him in the Chicago home office: Vice President for Public Relations.

Now Sears wanted to build a new store in Boston at a location not zoned for so large a commercial enterprise, and a zoning waiver was needed. In the Boston of that time, the way to accomplish this was for money to change hands. The go-between was a shady character referred to simply as "the Egyptian," and Jim Griffin was the bagman. The Griffins had become friendly with two brothers of Greek extraction, Tom and John Pappas, who played an important role in Boston political life, and were facilitating the payoff. The Pappas family owed its money to the importation of Greek olives and other delicacies, with the result that for several years Cindy and I received large bags of pistachio nuts each Christmas. We were invited to join the Griffins for a dinner in a fabled North End Italian restaurant, along with John and Katherine Pappas, their daughter, and an impecunious young man of impeccable Greek aristocratic extraction to whom the Pappas were trying to marry off the daughter.

Boston Democrats were divided into two camps, those allied with the Kennedys and those allied with the McCormacks. The McCormack faction had been riding high because its leader, John McCormack, had ascended to the position of Speaker of the House of Representatives, but the election of Jack Kennedy had totally tilted the balance in the other direction. The Pappas brothers were part of the McCormack faction, and at dinner, there was ill-concealed glee at the assassination. That night, for the first time, I had Fettuccini Alfredo.

Cindy and I really wanted to stay in Cambridge when my visiting year at Wellesley was over, and we did everything we could think of to make that happen. Bert Dreyfus was then teaching at MIT in the Humanities Department, so I asked him to see whether he could wangle a position there for me, but it was no go. B. U. was willing to give Cindy more Freshman Comp, but that was pretty much it. I had one other possible entrée to MIT. Franklin Fisher and I knew one another from undergraduate days, and Frank was then teaching in the Economics

Department at MIT after a stint in the Society of Fellows. Cindy and I had fallen into the habit of playing bridge with Frank and Ellen one night a week. Frank offered to arrange for me to give a talk, and I decided to present some of the material from my unpublished manuscript on the rhetoric of deterrence. I thought I would be speaking to philosophers, but when I got to the room, I found that the audience consisted of the smartest young economists at MIT, which is to say the smartest young economists in the world. The talk was an unmitigated disaster. At that time, I did not know any of the technical jargon associated with Game Theory [lexicographic preference orders and the like], and the audience carved me up like a Christmas turkey. Some time afterward, Frank said they had been talking it over and decided that I was actually right, even though I did not know how to put my ideas in the appropriate way. So much for MIT.

During the late winter of '63-64, I was invited to give a talk to the Columbia Philosophy Department. I proposed to give my paper on the Fundamental Problem of Political Theory, which seemed fine with them, so I went down to New York and took a cab from Grand Central to Morningside Heights. It was my first time back on the campus since that summer evening in 1955. The Philosophy Department at Columbia is located in Philosophy Hall, appropriately enough, behind a reproduction of Rodin's *The Thinker*. The layout of the building is rather odd, with the department offices on the seventh floor, even though that is only the fifth floor up from ground level. My talk was delivered not to a general audience but to the members of the department, who had gathered in the seminar room down the hall from the office, under a watchful photograph of former department member John Dewey. I thought things went well, although Jimmy Gutman asked some rather skeptical questions about my argument. Afterward, I took the train back to Boston.

The time has come for me to tell the story of how I was hired by Columbia University. I am going to tell it as I recall it, even though certain elements, concerning Columbia's simultaneous recruitment of Charles Parsons, are apparently not true. I invited Charles to write a guest post for my blog with the true story, which he did. It appeared on May 7, 2010, and can be found there by going to the blog and working back to that date. Since this is a memoir, not a work of scholarship, I am going to tell my story, even though it seems my memory is faulty.

This is all going to sound very odd to younger readers, so some words of preparation and background are called for. Back when I was a student and then a young untenured professor, there were really only ten universities in America at which one could usefully study Philosophy at the doctoral level: Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Columbia, Penn, Chicago, Michigan, Stanford, Berkeley, and UCLA [several people have suggested, cofrrectly, that I should include Cornell]. When one of those departments had an opening, someone would pick up the phone or drop a line to a friend at one or another of the ten schools and ask whether they had a promising young philosopher ready to start teaching. That, you will recall, is how I got the Chicago job. There were, of course, huge numbers of colleges and universities around the country even then, and most of them, especially the less prestigious among them, would actually advertise openings and invite applications. But no one at one of the top schools would have considered trying to fill a position in that manner.

In '61, after the Harvard department declined Bundy's request that they keep me on, I had done a quick survey of the top ten schools to get some idea of the lay of the land. At that time, leaving to one side a few people who had done doctoral studies overseas, every one of the tenured professors at those ten schools had a doctorate from one of the ten schools. It was a totally closed loop. What is more, there were several binary linkages. Everyone at Columbia

and Chicago had a doctorate from Chicago or Columbia. Everyone at Michigan came either from Harvard or from Michigan itself. No school on the East Coast had a tenured member who had done his work on the West Coast [they were all men, by the way].

In 1964, Lyndon Johnson pressured the Congress into passing the Civil Rights Act, Title VII of which mandated the appointment of an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, or, as it quickly came to be known, E. E. O. C. Over time, hiring in the Academy was totally transformed. All schools, even Harvard, began to publish announcements of open positions, and job descriptions routinely described the hiring university or college as an EEOC institution. The annual meeting of the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association ceased to be a clubby gathering of old boys and young wannabes chatting, back-slapping, and idly listening to talks, and became a job market flooded with anxious young job seekers waiting to be called up to hotel rooms for preliminary interviews. In the old days, when a philosophy student reached the job stage, he or she [there were even then a few women, although of course virtually no one of color] would be taken in tow by the dissertation director at the Convention smoker. Circulating around the room, the professor would grab a colleague from another school by the elbow and introduce him to the student, who would then be left to make as good an impression as possible while shifting from foot to foot.

I didn't think anything of the Columbia talk -- just another speaking gig -- until suddenly one day, I was called by the Chairman, Justus Buchler, who told me he would like me to come down to discuss becoming a senior member of the department. So there it was! All the stories were true. Write a book, get it published, and land a top job. I was beside myself with delight. I was, as they say in professional baseball, moving up to the Show. As I have said, Cindy and I wanted to stay in Boston, but neither of us had had any success in generating job offers there,

and we *really* did not want to go back to Chicago, so I told Justus that I would be right there, and took the train down again. When I got to Justus' office in Philosophy Hall, he told me that the department would like me to join them so that I could "cover ethics." Ethics? I had never taught ethics in my life. I had just published a book on Kant's First Critique. "Cover ethics?" There is in *Animal Husbandry* a usage for the verb "to cover," meaning roughly what a stallion does when it mounts a mare. I did not know whether Columbia wanted me to teach ethics, keep it out of sight, or impregnate it. But my employment experiences to this point had taught me that no matter what someone wanted me to teach, my only response must be, "Oh, yes sir. Thank you sir. I have always wanted to teach that, sir, but thus far no one has given me the opportunity." I did the proper thing and said I would have to think about the offer and discuss it with my wife, but I had not the slightest doubt that I was going to accept.

Once it was settled that I had been offered a senior professorship in the Columbia Philosophy Department, starting on 1 July, 1964, I delicately broached the subject of my teaching duties. "Would it be all right," I asked, "if I were to teach a course on the *Critique of Pure Reason*?" "Well," Justus replied, "We have hired Charles Parsons, who will be teaching Kant, but you can discuss it with him." I knew then that I had stumbled onto a funny farm. Columbia had given a senior position to a philosopher of mathematics to teach Kant, and they now had offered a senior position to a Kant scholar to teach Ethics. It took me a while to find out what was really going on.

It seems that some years earlier, there had been a terrible fight in the department over who would get a name chair that had come open. Things got so bad that the Provost stepped in and put the department in receivership, appointing the great literary scholar Marjorie Nicholson as Chair until people had simmered down. Everyone was so mortified by this that an agreement

was struck among the senior members of the department. If as many as four people opposed an appointment, it would not go through. The department had been looking for an ethicist for some time, and had settled on Joel Feinberg -- hardly surprising, since Joel was one of the leading young ethicists in the country. But four people said no, and that left them without a candidate. Apparently, after my talk, at the next department meeting, Sidney Morgenbesser looked around the room and asked, in his broad, nasal New York accent, "Why don't we hire Bob?" Nobody could think of a good reason why they shouldn't hire me, so they told Justus to make the call.

O.k., that explained me. But why hire Charlie to teach Kant? [This is the part of the story that is wrong. I think maybe Sidney Morgenbesser was just having some fun with me when I intimated that this was how things had gone down.] That turns out to have been a consequence of the fact that Arnold Koslow got married. He and Charlie were friends, so Charlie came down from Cornell for the wedding. As I heard the story, after the ceremony, Charlie, Sidney, and Arthur Danto were standing around, when Sidney asked Charlie, "Charlie, how come you never came to teach for us?" Charlie, who had a nice appreciation of the proprieties in such matters, answered, "You never asked me." Sidney then turned to Arthur and said, "Arthur, why didn't we ever ask Charlie to teach at Columbia?" Arthur, whose wall eye made him seem somewhat North by Northwest, gazed off into the distance and said, "I don't know." Sure enough, at the next department meeting, Sidney asked his assembled colleagues, "How come we never asked Charlie to teach at Columbia?" Nobody could remember why they hadn't, or indeed whether they had ever thought about it, so they decided maybe they should. Justus made the call. Since Charlie was at that time teaching Kant, they apparently figured he might as well do that at Columbia.

All of this is, to put it mildly, outrageous, and we can be glad that Lyndon Johnson put an end to it. Still and all, Charlie was probably the smartest young philosopher in America at that time, Saul Kripke notwithstanding, so if they had had a race blind gender neutral open competition for the job, Charlie would probably have gotten it. If he thought to apply, of course.

When I left Justus Buchler's office I caught a cab to Grand Central Station for the trip back to Boston. There was still snow on the ground as the cab drove south through Central Park. I leaned back against the seat, looked out, and thought to myself, "This is it. This is where I am going to live for the rest of my life. My career is now a success. I am an Ivy League Philosophy professor." It was fourteen years since I had taken that same train from Grand Central Station to begin my college education as a sixteen year old Freshman. I was pretty pleased with myself.

Chicago's response to the Columbia offer was extremely generous, the suspicions of the undergraduates notwithstanding. On the spot, they agreed to match the promotion and tenure and top Columbia's salary offer of \$11,000 by a thousand dollars. I was genuinely flattered, but we decided to make the move to New York.

Cindy had applied for and won a fellowship from the American Association of University Women for the academic year '64-65 so that she could complete the writing of her dissertation. We put the money in our bank account [or thought we did -- see Chapter Six of Part One], for use when we started living in New York. Meanwhile, we prepared to leave for Europe. Since Cindy was phobic about flying, we went by ocean liner -- the United States out, the France back. Our first stop was in France, where we spent a week or so. We actually had a meal at Tour D'Argent, then a three star restaurant but now demoted to one star. I ordered the quennelles and their signature dish, the pressed duck. It was quite good. We also bought some Limoges china to take with us to our New York apartment. Then it was on to London, where Cindy would



spend time doing research for her doctoral dissertation. The principal venue for her research was Dr. Williams' Library, a private library located in Gordon Square containing a splendid collection of Nonconformist Protestant literature.

Gordon Square is, or was in those days, a picture book little lozenge shaped square around a tiny park, ringed by buildings on both sides. It could have served as a movie set for *Peter Pan* or *My Fair Lady*, and for all I know actually did. The librarians at Dr. Williams' were enormously helpful. If you filled out a card asking for some manuscript or volume, like as not the person who went into the bowels of the stacks to retrieve it would bring back three or four other items as well, saying "I thought you might find these useful, considering what you are looking for." One day, Cindy took out a collection of pamphlets bound together in a single volume. On the tube going home, she was leafing through it idly when suddenly she froze. "Do you know what this is?," she said urgently, pointing to one of the pamphlets. "This is a first edition of *Death's Duell*," which, she explained to me, was a very famous sermon preached by John Donne. "We must go back to the library and return it immediately." Back we went, so that she could hand it in. "I do not think you realize what you have just done," Cindy said portentously. "This is a first edition of a Donne sermon." "Oh yes," the librarian replied gaily, "that's all right. Until the first world war, our circulating copy of Shakespeare was a First Folio."

While Cindy did research, I amused myself by reading *Pamela*, Richardson's first novel, and having a go at *Clarissa*. I should explain that these novels are monstrously long. They make *War and Peace* look like a penny dreadful. I never made it all the way through *Clarissa*, and I did not even attempt *Sir Charles Grandison*. One day, I took myself to the British Museum, and talked my way into the famous Reading Room [not then knowing that it was there that Karl Marx plotted the downfall of the capitalist order.] I filled out a slip, and forty-five minutes later

a runner delivered to my desk *David Hume's own copy of A Treatise of Human Nature*. As I have many times made clear, I am not a religious person, but when I held that book in my hand, I did feel as though an Angel of the Lord had brushed his wings against me.

Probably the most memorable moment of our London stay, at least for me, was an outing to Trafalgar Square, where we saw *A Hard Day's Night* in a first run theater. I am a devout lover of baroque music, and as I have already written, I listened to Bach's B Minor Mass with Susie when I was courting her as a teenager. But I fell in love with the music in that movie, and retain to this day a special place for it in my heart.

We even had time for some antique hunting. In the town of Alresford, fifty miles southwest of London, we found what can only be described as an antiques warehouse. After spending a shaky couple of hours on a bicycle built for two, my only experience with this antique contraption, we bought a magnificent Georgian chest on chest with the original finish for fifty two pounds ten, a pittance even then. It was one of the few pieces of antique furniture that were included in my portion of the household furnishings when Cindy and I separated twenty-two years later, and it sits today in the living room of the condominium that Susie and I bought in Chapel Hill. I also had a tailor in the North End make me a suit from some tweedy woolen fabric we had found, but alas it is some decades since I have been able to fit into it.

With Cindy's research completed, it was time for us to sail home to the United States and begin our life in New York.

## **Chapter Three Columbia University in the City of New York**

Columbia gave us one of its rent controlled apartments, and we moved in when we got back from Europe. Five rooms, kitchen and bath for \$108.50 a month, although after we had them install a new fridge, they upped that to \$111.50. Even in 1964, that was a fabulous bargain. The apartment was a slum, but I was about to go into full-scale analysis, which would cost a sizeable portion of my annual salary, so I grabbed it. [I only realized the apartment was a slum some years later, when I was idly watching a public television special about efforts to renovate a block in Harlem. They did a before-and-after sequence on an apartment being upgraded, and during the before segment, as the camera panned around the ratty looking apartment, I suddenly had an epiphany. "My God," I thought, "that looks just like our apartment. We live in a slum!"]

There are striking similarities between the physical locations of the University of Chicago and Columbia, but also major differences. Like Chicago, Columbia is situated cheek-by-jowl with a large Black community -- the most famous Black community in America. Like Chicago, Columbia bought up real estate and managed it in an attempt to preserve a White enclave. But whereas Chicago is insular, inward-looking, isolated from downtown, Columbia bleeds into Manhattan so that it is sometimes difficult to feel where the university stops and the rest of the city begins. Not for nothing does Columbia call itself "Columbia University in the City of New York."

The bulk of the university consisted then of a rectangle oriented north-south, with Broadway on its west flank, Amsterdam Avenue to its east, 114th street to the south and 120th street to the north. The cross streets from 115th to 119th were blocked off, creating something of

a campus, although it did not feel like either Harvard Yard or the Quadrangle. The heart of the university is a large grassy open area crisscrossed by walks, with the administration building, Low Library, at the north end and the real library, Butler, at the south. If you have seen *Ghostbusters* or the Barbra Streisand Jeff Bridges movie *The Mirror Has Two Faces* or countless other films, you have seen that space. It is one of the most recognizable places in Manhattan.

Columbia sits on the upper west side of Manhattan, in a community called Morningside Heights [think *Annie Hall*]. If you stand on either Broadway or Amsterdam and look south, you see a long straight avenue going downhill for quite a stretch. Columbia is perched almost on the highest part of the Heights. Our apartment was half a block from the university: 415 W. 115th st., apt. 51. That portion of 115th street is a single block between Amsterdam and Morningside Drive, so I was not even two blocks from my office in Philosophy Hall. Morningside Drive runs along the western edge of Morningside Park, a vertiginously steep bit of land that falls away from Morningside Heights to Harlem below. It quite effectively divides the university from the Black community. Little did I know, when I moved into our new home, what an important role that park would play in the most dramatic events of my Columbia stay.

My first priority was to get to know the group of department members who would, I confidently expected, be my colleagues for the rest of my life. Since the Academy, whatever its politics, is a deeply conservative institution, propriety dictates that I begin with the most senior of my new colleagues. When I arrived in 1964 as a bright-eyed, bushy-tailed young Associate Professor, there were four grand old men in the Department who collectively embodied the ethos of the Columbia that had once been. Pride of place must be given to John Herman Randall Jr., who was sixty-five. [As I write these memoirs, I am back in that time, seeing things in my mind as I experienced them. Randall and the others will always be, to me, ancient relics,

distinguished, hoary, survivors of a bygone age. The fact that I am now twelve years older than Randall was then makes no impression on my memories whatsoever.]

Randall had made his name, at the age of twenty-seven, with the publication of *The Making of the Modern Mind*, and had an enormous, and deserved, reputation in the Columbia community. He had been one of the architects of the famous Contemporary Civilization course required of all undergraduates, Columbia's answer to the Hutchins revolution and a forerunner of General Education at Harvard. Randall's principal focus was on the Greeks, so we did not really have much in common philosophically, but he and his wife, Mercedes, very graciously invited Cindy and me to dinner shortly after we arrived, as a welcome to the department. The Randalls lived in a big pre-war apartment on Claremont, a little street squeezed between Broadway and Riverside Drive that was home to some of Columbia's most sought after rentals. When we walked into the book-lined living room, the first thing I saw on the shelves was the complete multi-volume edition of the works of Immanuel Kant. The Prussian Academy edition is the holy grail for Kant scholars, and by the time I came along, a set was fabulously expensive. I thought, "This is what academic life is supposed to be!"

During dinner, Jack and Mercedes regaled us with stories of Columbia in the old days. Mercedes explained that when you were an Assistant Professor, you had a maid who came in before breakfast and left after washing up the dinner dishes. Once you got tenure, however, you hired a full-time servant who lived in a little room behind the kitchen that had its own bathroom. She cooked, cleaned, and baby-sat, and each summer, when you went to Europe, she came along to look after the children and handle the trunks. For a brief moment, I had a glimpse of an era that would not, I was sure, come again.

Two other senior professors, Horace Friess and James Gutman, were less academically distinguished than Randall, but both had played important roles in the Ethical Culture Society, a progressive, secular spinoff of Reformed Judaism founded by Felix Adler in the 1870's. The Society, readers of the earlier portions of this memoir will recall, had been responsible for the creation of the Child Study Association, where my mother worked until her first heart attack in 1950. It was through Child Study that my parents found Shaker Village Work Camp for me, as well as Dr. Bertram Schaffner, my first psychiatrist. Algernon Black of the Ethical Culture Society was also the founder of the Encampment for Citizenship, where my sister danced with Marshall Cohen. In coming to Columbia, I was entering a world that was complicatedly intertwined with my family.

The fourth grand old man was Ernest Nagel, a distinguished philosopher of science and the teacher or mentor of several of the younger men in the department. Nagel was really more like my adoptive uncle than a colleague. He was just nineteen days older than my father, and the two of them had known each other as undergraduates at City College, along with my uncle Bob, then a professor of Astronomy and Physics at CCNY, and Sidney Hook. I still have an old photograph of my father, my uncle, Nagel, and my grandmother gathered around a little telescope in the Catskills, where my grandmother took her children every summer.

Only slightly younger than Randall and the others was the great humanist scholar Paul Oskar Kristeller. I had encountered Paul's work on The Renaissance while preparing myself to teach Soc Sci 5 at Harvard, and, as with Alan Gewirth at Chicago, I was tremendously impressed that I was going to be able to call myself his colleague. Paul had been educated in Germany, and was then forced first to flee Germany and then Italy because of the rise of fascism, a fact that played a large role in his reaction to the events of '68.

Younger still by half a generation were Justus Buchler, Robert Cumming, Charles Frankel, Albert Hofstadter, and Richard Taylor, all of whom save Hofstadter were in their middle to late forties when I joined the department. Bob Cumming was tall, slender, and very waspy in appearance. He was a student of the history of political philosophy and I think regularly co-taught a very popular course on political theory with a quite well known political scientist, David Truman, who was Dean of the College when I joined the faculty, and was subsequently elevated to the Provostship, positioning him to be the next President of the University. [Charles Parsons thinks I am wrong about this, and as I have already noted, Charles tends to be right about such things, but I still retain some memory of this, so perhaps this is the very rare case in which I actually remember better than Charles.] Bob seemed very laid back in manner, and in my naive insular fashion, I was quite surprised to discover, several years later, that he took an active role in supporting undergraduate men who resisted being drafted into the Army to fight in Viet Nam. You didn't have to be loud-mouthed and Jewish like me to have good politics.

Charles Frankel, the same age as Bob Cumming, was a student of Ernest Nagel whose work centered on social philosophy and the philosophy of history. The Social Science Research Council decided to underwrite an international conference on democracy in the Developing World [as former European colonies were then called], and Charles agreed to organize it. He was half way through issuing the invitations and making the arrangements for a meeting to be held in a lavish Italian villa belonging to the Rockefeller Foundation when Lyndon Johnson tapped him to be Assistant Secretary for Cultural and Educational Affairs. On his way out the door to Washington, D. C., Charles turned the conference over to me, and I completed the planning for the affair. I flew off to Italy to spend a week sitting around a square table with

scholars and diplomats from all over the world. My job was to write up a report and turn it into the SSRC after the conference had ended. My most vivid memory of the week, which was for the most part rather tedious, was sitting at the table and looking idly at Lucien Pye, seated at the adjacent side, so that I had a sort of sideways view of him. Pye, in his mid-forties, was an MIT political scientist who even then had gained a considerable reputation in his field. He was very much a Democratic Party Cold Warrior, along the lines of Henry Jackson and Jack Kennedy. One day, when the conversation had moved to another part of the table, I looked over and caught him in an unguarded moment. His face revealed a deep depression that was completely at odds with his usual hail fellow well met manner. I did not know what it meant, but I was sure I had seen into his soul.

On the way home from the conference, I stopped off in London to do a little antique shopping at Liberty's of London. Liberty's is of course best known for its fabrics, especially a sheer weave called Liberty Lawn, but it also had a small, rather select collection of English antiques. I found a splendid eighteenth century Georgian bureau bookcase, which I bought on the spot for 1400 pounds or so. I arranged with Turner & Davies to have it shipped back to our apartment, and called Cindy to tell her the exciting news.

Frankel resigned from the State Department two years later to protest America's accelerating involvement in the Viet Nam war, and returned to Columbia. Tragically, he and his wife were murdered in their Westchester home by a burglar in 1979.

I have almost no memory of Hofstadter, possibly because he left in '67 to join the U. C. Santa Cruz department. Albert's field was aesthetics, and he and our colleague, Richard Kuhns, published some things together.



Richard Taylor was a newcomer to the department, having arrived only a year before I. He had transferred from Brown, where, rumor was, he had married John Ladd's former wife, and felt it better to get out of Providence. Dick was living in a large apartment that looked across 116th street to the Columbia Law School. He had a beehive installed in one of the windows [no kidding], and the bees would commute between his window and Morningside Park, half a block away. When I was offered the job, Dick wrote me quite the loveliest letter I have ever received from a colleague, welcoming me. He passed away seven years ago, but I think he would not have objected to my quoting part of it for this memoir.

"Dear Bob," he wrote, "I had very much hoped I would see you on your recent visit. Hylda and I wanted you and your wife to come across the street to have a drink with us... We've had some pretty long discussions in our departmental meetings about various possible people for teaching ethics and kindred subjects. Some very good men have been discussed, and rejected. When your name came up, the discussion took about six minutes and the result was unanimous and enthusiastic. You would be appreciated here, believe me." I was deeply touched, and though I had already decided to accept the offer, I felt genuinely welcomed by Dick's letter.

Richard, like Albert and myself, eventually left Columbia, in Richard's case for the University of Rochester. I have often observed that the best way to become well-known in philosophy is to write short books. Richard figured out that another surefire avenue to fame is to defend a proposition that everyone is quite sure is false. I did that, without quite realizing it, when I defended anarchism, and Dick did the trick with fatalism. Forever, it seems, philosophers have been fussing over the conflict between free will and determinism. Some people have taken a strong stand for free will. Some have defended determinism and rejected the claims of free will. And Kant famously argued that properly circumscribed and understood, the two could be

made compatible. But everybody agreed that, leaving aside theological dogmas about pre-destination, the one thing we know is that fatalism is wrong. The Greeks may have thought Oedipus was fated to marry his mother and kill his father, but no self-respecting analytic philosopher would be caught dead defending fatalism. So Dick wrote a book defending fatalism. Sure enough, everyone went ballistic, and his fame was made. I just offer this as a suggestion to ambitious young philosophers.

Joining these older men were a number of relatively recently tenured younger men who thought of themselves as the new generation of the department. Jim Walsh was a medievalist, a short, square light-haired man who had been stuck with the job of Graduate Program Director because he was manifestly sane. Although I do not think I ever got to know Jim well, I liked him enormously, and was delighted to have him as a colleague. The other sane younger member of the department was Richard Kuhns, whose work lay principally in Aesthetics. Dick never seemed to me to be a real philosopher, because he wasn't crazy, but he had a very distinguished career.

Art Danto was what I thought a philosopher ought to be -- quirky, quixotic, original, very bright, someone whose next remark could never be predicted. When I showed up, Arthur had a problem, and he turned to me to solve it for him. It seems that an editor at Harper Books named Fred Wieck had conceived the idea of bringing out a series of big, handsome books lavishly bound in half calf with the general title Harper Guides. There would be a Harper Guide to Art, a Harper Guide to History, a Harper Guide to Music, and so forth. Arthur had been recruited to edit the Harper Guide to Philosophy. I asked Wieck once who would ever read these books, since I could not imagine assigning one in a course. "Well," he said, giving me some insight into the deeper logic of the publishing world, "we are aiming more at the book buying than at the

book reading public." Apparently Harper's sales division had ascertained that there was a gap on the shelves of Middle American living rooms waiting to be filled.

The Harper Guide to Philosophy was to consist of ten extended essays, each laying out developments on the forefronts of one or another of the main fields of philosophy. Arthur had rounded up a truly impressive team of people to do the essays. Bernard Williams had agreed to do one on ethics, Norwood Hanson had said yes to the philosophy of science, Richard Wollheim would do aesthetics, and so on. But Isaiah Berlin had just turned down the political philosophy essay, and Arthur was a little desperate. When I showed up, he asked me whether I would do it. "What is the advance?" I asked him, thinking, as I always did in those days, about how I was going to pay for the analysis. "Five hundred dollars," he replied, "payable on signing." That would cover more than a month of sessions. "I'll do it," I said, "when do you want the essay?" "Is the end of next summer too soon?" he asked. "You'll have it" I promised.

Charlie Parsons was not showing up until the following year. I think he had a fellowship or a year off.

And then there was Sidney.

Sidney Morgenbesser, when I got to Columbia, was a forty-four year burly, handsome man with a broad face and an even broader New York accent. Sidney had studied at CCNY and then at Penn under Nelson Goodman. He had also been ordained as a Rabbi after completing his studies at Jewish Theological Seminary, though he did not actually believe in God. He was ferociously brilliant, polymathically learned, witty, charming, deeply moral, a man whom it was impossible not to love. Sidney published very little in his life, but he generated ten thousand wonderful stories that are part of the folklore of philosophy, of Columbia, and of New York City. He was probably the best unpublished philosopher since Socrates. These memoirs of my

Columbia days will contain many Morgenbesser stories, beyond those I have already told, although in deference to my readers, I will try not to repeat any that are already well known. The Wikipedia entry on Sidney has a lovely selection of them, which I commend to you.

This was not the first time I was meeting Sidney. In late 1949, I visited my big sister, Barbara, at Swarthmore College, where she was a student, as part of my very limited look at possible colleges for myself. Barbara took me along to a philosophy class being taught by a dynamic young Assistant Professor. It was Sidney.

Before I start with the Sidney stories, there is one thing I want to say that is deeply important, and has no punch line at all. Sidney was morally and politically engaged all his life, a fact that earned my total respect and admiration. But Sidney taught me something that I have carried with me ever since I learned it from him, though I suspect he never realized he was teaching it to me and to the rest of the world. Quite simply, it is that friendship is more important than ideology. Whether I agreed with Sidney or not, I felt loved by him, and that warmed me in a way that no encounter with any other philosopher has done. The very last time I saw Sidney was in the early '90s. I had been invited to speak at Columbia, and Sidney showed up. I chose to deliver a paper I had prepared a bit earlier for delivery at an academic retreat of the University of Durban-Westville, in a resort in the Drakensberg in South Africa. Sidney raised his hand after I was done and posed a series of very pointed questions that contained a major criticism of my thesis. Then he smiled and waved his hands as if to say, "Well, none of that really matters. I am just happy to see you." His mind could not allow a mistake to pass unchallenged, but his heart refused to let the matter lie there. Sidney died six years ago, and though I had not seen him in more than a decade, I felt a sharp pang of loss when I heard the news.

The relationship among the various members of the department was complex, resembling those of an extended family. The key figure, I very soon learned, was Nagel. Ernest had been the teacher or mentor of Frankel, Morgenbesser, and Danto, among others, as well as of my old protector, Morton White, each of whom he shaped in different ways. Nagel was a small, thin man whose principal published work was in logic and the philosophy of science. The younger members of the department all looked to him as an intellectual leader, but he was diffident about asserting that leadership overtly. Nagel seemed to me to fit perfectly the stereotype of the passive aggressive Jewish intellectual, and for reasons having to do with my relationship to my father, which during those years was being explored in my psychoanalysis, I had very ambivalent feelings about him. When I arrived, he welcomed me more or less as an adoptive nephew, because of his earlier friendship with my father and my uncle. Among the younger men who were his former students. Sidney clearly had the strongest intelligence and the greatest claim to his legacy, but over time, Sidney's failure to publish weakened that claim.

It wasn't that Sidney was short of ideas, heaven knows. If you stopped Sidney in the hallway and asked him a question about virtually anything in philosophy, he would, like as not, give you a beautifully crafted, completely coherent, well-organized answer that could, if transcribed, be published as a brilliant paper. But if you asked him to write it up, he froze. One year, Sidney agreed to speak at the Eastern Division meetings of the APA, and everyone wondered whether he would back out at the last moment. On the appointed day, Sidney showed up, strode to the microphone, put down a thick sheaf of papers on the lectern, and started delivering his paper. "Well," we all thought, "Sidney has come through. He has actually written a paper." Halfway through, as he was carefully setting the pages down on the desk one by one as he finished with them, a gust of wind blew one of the sheets on the floor. It was totally blank.

The relationship between Sidney and Art Danto was especially fascinating. There is an old schlock movie that I blush to admit I love, called *Sky High*, about a high school levitating in the clouds for teenagers who give evidence of superhero powers. One girl can turn herself into a guinea pig, another boy can hurl flames, a third kid can roar loud enough to knock down walls. At the beginning of Freshman year, Coach has each of them demonstrate his or her power. Since each superhero must have a sidekick [think Batman and Robin], Coach summarily classifies each new student as either a Superhero or a Sidekick, depending on the impressiveness of the power. When I got to Columbia, it was clear that Sidney was the superhero and Arthur was the sidekick. But over time, Arthur started to publish a series of articles and books that earned him a major reputation in the profession and in New York cultural circles. This did not diminish Sidney in any way, but it changed their relationship. It seemed that in life, if not in the movies, a sidekick could grow into a superhero.

Once I knew that I was going to be joining the Columbia Department, I had set about finding an analyst in New York. I had one-hour sessions with two Manhattan psychoanalysts, who consulted with one another and then decided that I ought to go into treatment with Dr. Terry Cloyd Rodgers, whose home and office were on the upper East Side. Rodgers was forty-seven when I went into analysis with him, a slight, sandy-haired dapper man who was quite unlike my stereotypical image of a New York analyst. Apparently the people with whom I consulted had decided that the last thing I needed was an intellectual Jewish analyst -- a *Portnoy's Complaint* analyst, as it were. I began in September, 1964, and for the next seven years, three or four times a week, I traveled down to West 88th street, just off Madison Avenue, for the sessions.

Rodgers was a native of Arkansas, where he had completed his medical education. His office was a part of his apartment, and I once even caught sight of his wife in the hall -- an event

that gave me a *frisson* of primal scene scopophilia. Considering how many hours I spent on the couch in his office -- a thousand or more, by quick calculation -- it is surprising how little I remember of those sessions. Four moments stand out in my mind. One day, I was going on at great length about what a remarkable difference there was between my life and the life my father had led. I was quite self-congratulatory about the distance I had come from the culturally and even geographically circumscribed world of my father, now that I was a senior Professor of Philosophy at Columbia University. Rodgers, a proper Freudian, did not often speak during the sessions, but as I was getting up to leave, he remarked quietly that he too had come some way. Walking to the bus stop, it suddenly struck me that whereas I had, by dint of heroic efforts and great brilliance, made it all the way from Queens to Manhattan, Rodgers had come from rural Arkansas to the Upper East Side. I think that is what is called transference. Another time I was complaining about the fact that I was paying Rodgers a king's ransom for my treatment, while he was too cheap even to decorate his office nicely, filling it with old and worn furniture. On my way out of the office, I noticed that it had recently been completely redecorated, and that everything in it was quite new.

The funniest moment in my analysis came when I was talking about my extended family, which, as I have already explained, meant my father's parents and brothers and sisters and their children, my cousins. I made mention of my Italian relatives, Ben and Fan and their kids Cora and Tony. Rodgers coughed gently and said, rather tentatively, "er, I thought you were of Eastern European Jewish extraction." "I am," I said. "Then how can they be Italian?" I was absolutely thunderstruck. I had always thought of them as Italian, but of course, if my father and my uncle Bob and my aunt Rosabelle were all Jews ultimately from somewhere in Poland or Russia, then their brother Ben must also be. Why on earth had I imagined that Ben and Fan and

Cora and Tony were Italian? Well, it was really quite simple. My parents and Bob and Rose and Rosabelle and her husband, Anoch, were all rather quiet and intellectual. Ben and Fan were big and fat and cheerful and played musical instruments, and Cora and Tony were the same. When they arrived at a family party, they sat down at the piano, played, sang, and made a lot of noise. I figured they were Italian. By the way, "intellectual" is a relative term. Both Ben and Fan were teachers in the New York City school system.

But the moment that really caused my heart to stop came some years into the analysis, when Cindy was also in analysis with a doctor whose office was two blocks north of Rodgers' office. These were the days before voicemail, call waiting, and such innovations, and though it was possible to pay for a telephone answering service [*Bells are Ringing*, with Judy Holliday], Rodgers did not have one. From time to time the phone would ring during one of our sessions. Rodgers would pick up the phone, say softly "I am busy now," and hang up. Over time, I developed the active fantasy that one day the phone call would be for me. One day, the phone rang, Rodgers picked it up, and after a moment he said, "It's for you." I had taken the bus to my appointment, but Cindy had taken the car, and it wouldn't start. I cut my session short and rushed out to rescue her, but for a brief and rather scary moment, the real world had penetrated the carefully protected space in which I could give voice to my fantasies without fear of their actualization. Who knows how much that set me back?

So, a thousand sessions and twenty-five thousand dollars, which was more than twice my before tax annual salary. What did I get for all of that? There are a lot of complicated answers I could give, and even though these *are* my memoirs, I cannot imagine that many people would be terribly interested in them. But there is one thing I need to say, because it bears so directly on the way in which I conducted the rest of my life. As a boy and as a young man, I was in a



perpetual rage of generational conflict. As far back as I can remember, I was engaged in challenges to male authority. At twelve, I challenged the people who ran the Boys Scout Camp over saying the Boy Scout oath. As a teenager, I challenged the authority of the couple who ran the Shaker Village Work Camp, even though I loved that camp more than anyplace else while I was in high school. I challenged Leo Ryan, the Acting Principal of Forest Hills High School, over whether I had to shave my incipient beard [since my father was a fellow high school principal, Ryan took me into the private bathroom in his office and made me shave]. No sooner had I got to Harvard than I published a letter in the *Crimson* calling for James Bryant Conant to step down as President. I challenged McGeorge Bundy on Cuba, George Beadle of Chicago on discriminatory housing, and just about any other male authority figure I could find.

Interestingly, I have never had any problem with female authority figures, which is why I found it so easy to work under a woman as Department Chair once I joined the Afro-American Studies Department at UMass.

One of the things my analysis clarified for me was my motivation in writing *Kant's Theory of Mental Activity*. It wasn't hard to figure out that I had fixed on Kant as a suitable father substitute. I had serious issues with my father, whom I viewed as weak and a failure. [This was unfair, but then I am not the first son to have a jaundiced view of his father]. Rodgers pointed out that my relationship to Kant was a bit more complicated than that. I represented him to the world as the greatest philosopher who had ever lived, and the *Deduction of the Pure Concepts of Understanding* as the central portion of his greatest book. But, as Rodgers observed, I also claimed that Kant needed me to make his central argument comprehensible and defensible. In effect, I was not willing to cede primacy of place even to Kant. It was an interesting insight.

Somehow, during the course of my analysis, I went from being an angry, rebellious son to being a generative, supportive father. The arrival first of Patrick in 1968, then of Tobias in 1970, obviously had something to do with it. But I really do believe that without the help of the analysis, I could not have moved smoothly and happily from the generation of the sons to the generation of the fathers. As a consequence of that transition, I became both a loving, supportive father and a generous, supportive teacher. I never lost my suspicion of bureaucratic or political authority, but that ceased to be the dominant modality of my personal relationships.

The teaching load at Columbia, as we say in the Academy, was "two and two" -- two courses in the Fall and two in the Spring. Since I had been appointed to the Graduate and Undergraduate faculties, that meant an undergraduate course and a graduate course each semester. But I was spending a very large portion of my monthly paycheck on analysis, so I took those numbers as minima rather than as maxima. In 1964-65, my records show, I taught seven courses: four at Columbia, two at Barnard, and one at City College. Thus began a career of moonlighting that would result in my teaching perhaps thirty or more extra courses beyond my mandated load.

I had a total of one hundred fifty three students in those seven courses, and, grading being what it was before the Viet Nam War induced grade inflation of the later sixties and early seventies, I gave out a total of only six grades of A or A+. My favorite student that year, and one of my very favorite graduates students from those years, was a slender, sandy-haired man named Dan Brock. Many readers who are professional philosophers will know Dan, or know of him, for he went on to an extremely distinguished career, first in the Brown University Philosophy Department and now as the head of Harvard Medical School's medical ethics program. I seem to recall that Dan had actually spent some time on Wall Street before coming to Columbia as a

Philosophy graduate student. Since I had been hired to cover ethics, I was covering ethics, and Dan was part of the seminar I taught on ethical theory my first semester at Columbia. His seminar paper was really two papers -- a short discussion of social statistics and their significance for ethics, and a longer discussion of moral responsibility, drawing on the writings of Hart and Nowell-Smith. My note to myself says "superb paper, best of the lot." Irena Winston did a bang-up job as official critic. There is a picture of Dan on the Harvard website. His mustache is bigger now.

I taught both an Introduction to Philosophy and a Metaphysics course at Barnard that year [Metaphysics? What on earth was I doing teaching metaphysics?] The best student in either class was a modest, unassuming young woman named Frances Kamm. Frances seems to have done pretty well for herself. She is now a Professor of Philosophy at Harvard. I recall her as a young undergraduate, but that was forty-five years ago, so she must be approaching retirement now. How strange is memory and the passage of time.

The third outstanding student from that year is a real mystery. I taught a graduate course on Political Philosophy, in which I unpacked my "Fundamental Problem of Political Philosophy" paper and set forth the argument of what became *In Defense of Anarchism*. There was a brilliant student in the class who is listed on my hand-written grade sheet simply as D. Hofstadter. He was far and away the best student in the class, and earned an A+. For thirty years, I have thought that student was Douglas Hofstadter, Pulitzer Prize winning author of *Gödel, Escher, Bach*. But when I Googled him to check, it turned out that he went to Stanford. What is more, I sent him an email, and he replied that it was definitely not he. So there were apparently two brilliant D. Hofstadters at the same time. Would the real D. Hofstadter please check in?

During that first year, as I have already said, Barrington Moore called me to ask that I write an essay on tolerance so that he, Herbie Marcuse, and I could make a book for Beacon Press. Since I have published twenty-one books during the course of my career, sometimes at the rate of three or four a year, perhaps I should explain to my younger readers, who are having trouble getting their fine scholarly work published, just why it was so easy for me. [I once gave a talk at a college where I was introduced by someone who said "Professor Wolff joined the Book of the Month Club, but he misread the promotional materials and thought he was supposed to publish a book a month, not read a book a month."]

It was really all because of Sputnik. As I have already explained, the Russians launched their history making orbital space vehicle on October 4, 1957, while I was doing my regular Army service at Fort Devens, MA. Sputnik wasn't much of a satellite. It was not even two feet in diameter. But the Russians had beaten us into space, and the reaction in America was explosive. If the Russians could launch even something as small as Sputnik into space, then surely they were not far from testing a usable intercontinental ballistic missile that could be armed with a nuclear warhead, way ahead of anything the Americans could build. John F. Kennedy made this so-called "missile gap" a central issue in the 1960 presidential campaign, despite the assurances by President Dwight D. Eisenhower that our intelligence indicated no such gap. Henry Kissinger, always ready to jump on any passing bandwagon, featured the missile gap in *The Necessity for Choice*. After Kennedy was elected, McGeorge Bundy quietly acknowledged that there was in fact no missile gap.

One almost immediate consequence of Sputnik was the National Defense Education Act of 1958, which funneled huge amounts of money into graduate education to fight the Red Menace. As will happen when enough money is poured into an institution, some of it slopped

over into the budgets of university presses around the country. This upped the number of library sales for a scholarly book that a publisher could pretty well count on, and the economics of publishing then being what they were, a publisher could be confident of breaking even on a scholarly book from sales to libraries plus the usual sales to the extended family of the author. If a book actually got some good reviews and did well, the publisher would make a profit.

Pretty soon, publishers were contacting authors to ask whether they had anything in the works that could be published. You could get a contract with a manuscript, part of a manuscript, or even an idea and a table of contents. Between 1963 and 1973, I published fifteen books. Needless to say, I thought my success, like that of Carl Sandburg's cockroach, was a consequence of brains and hard work. The truth is, I was just plumb lucky.

My first attempt at an essay on tolerance was a flop. I read what I had written to Cindy -- one of the few times I did that -- and she confirmed that it didn't seem to have much going on. So I threw that away. Then the thought struck me that I could construe tolerance as the characteristic virtue of a liberal democracy. Immediately, I realized that I could portray courage as the characteristic virtue of a military state, loyalty as the virtue of a monarchy, and so forth. I had my story line, and the rest wrote itself. The essay became a vehicle for criticisms of liberal democratic theory that had been percolating in my mind for several years. I sent the essay off to Beacon Press, and shortly afterward had the little roundtable meeting with Moore, Marcuse, and Tovell that I have already described.

When the book came out, it looked a bit like Mao's little red book, except that it was black. In its first three years, *A Critique of Pure Tolerance* sold all of 4346 copies. Not bad for a scholarly work, but no barn burner either. Then in '66 a German edition appeared [*Kritik der Reinen Toleranz*, which made it sound even more like an insider Kant joke], and Rudi Dutschke

seized on it. The book flew off the shelves in Germany, encouraging Tovell to reissue it in English in a normal format. In 1969, the new edition sold 26,100 copies. Over the next few years, that little book appeared in Swedish, Italian, French, Spanish, Catalan, Portuguese, Norwegian, and Japanese. Thanks to the dinner at Moore's house, at which I had first met Herbie, I was world famous in Poland. By the time it finally went out of print twenty-seven years later, the book had sold more than 70,000 copies in America, and I shall never know how many around the world.

Over the years, I had many other fine students, of course. Ann Davis, who has been a guest blogger on *The Philosopher's Stone*, was in one of my Barnard classes. Andrew Levine wrote his doctoral dissertation with me on political philosophy [one of the few over the decades who actually did], and went on to a brilliant career first at Madison, Wisconsin and now at College Park, Maryland. Andrew is weirdly famous in some circles for having the ability to repeat backwards what is said to him [not word for word backwards, but sound for sound backwards], and once actually appeared on television -- the *Tonight Show*, I think -- as Professor Backwards. But my favorite story about him concerns the first class he ever taught. It was during the exciting days of anti-Viet Nam War protests and Columbia building seizures, and Andrew was totally engaged. I ran into him as he was off to teach his first discussion section ever. He explained to me that he was eager to break down the authority structure of the classroom. He was going to ask students to call him by his first name [this is back when no one did that], and would have the students sit in a circle so that he would not be in a superior position standing in front of the class. "Andrew," I said, "these students are not stupid. They know that at the end of the semester, you are going to be the one giving them a grade. You can't pretend not to be an authority when you really are one." "No, no," he protested, "this is going to be

different." Several hours later, I saw him again, and he was quite crestfallen. "They treated me like The Professor," he said sadly. "But you *are* the professor," I said.

Frances Schrag took the Philosophy of the State course in '67, and is now Professor Emerita from Wisconsin-Madison. I guess I just cannot get used to the fact that my *students* are retired! Eric Steinberg is emeritus from Brooklyn College. Paul Valliere is a Professor of Religion at Butler University, and David Olan is a Professor of Music at CUNY. Hans Bynagle, who wrote a really fine paper on obedience and autonomy, is now a senior professor at Whitworth University, and Barbara Meyerson is the Ethical Humanist Chaplain at Columbia. My notes on her say "a very intelligent paper on my moral theory. Shows genuine talent." I do hope I was not influenced by the fact she wrote about my views. I don't ordinarily much like that.

Andrzej Rapaczynski also took my course on the philosophy of the state, and actually did something that no other student in my fifty years of teaching has done. He made me change my mind. I gave a lecture setting forth a part of my critique of the justification of democratic authority, and Andrzej raised an objection. I fumbled a bit for an answer and promised to give him a full reply in the next class. But when I got home and thought through his argument, I decided he was right and I was wrong, so I rewrote the lecture and at the next class gave the same lecture over again with the emended argument. Andrzej took a doctorate at Columbia, taught at Yale while simultaneously doing a law degree at Yale Law, and ended up as a Professor of Law at Columbia. The last I saw of him, he was teaching a course at Columbia Law on property that began with Locke's theory of property. I wonder what the law students thought of that.

When I retired and moved to Chapel Hill, NC, I discovered that two of my students from the Columbia days are senior professors at Duke. Alexander Rosenberg, now Chair of the Duke Philosophy Department, took my Kant course as an undergraduate at CCNY [one of the many extra courses I taught up the way there], and Allan Buchanan studied with me as an undergraduate at Columbia. Needless to say, they both did splendidly. I cannot get used to the fact that they are senior professors, but then Alex assures me that he also cannot get used to the fact that he is no longer an eager, aspiring Assistant Professor.

One of my oddest student encounters happened in '67-'68, when I was spending a visiting year at Rutgers, but also moonlighting both at Hunter College and at the CUNY Graduate Center. At CUNY I was teaching a political philosophy seminar to a small group of students, during the course of which I set forth my by then pretty settled anarchist views. One of the students, Sherryl Ann Block, brought into class a little nineteenth century pamphlet called *No Treason* by someone named Lysander Spooner, whom I had of course never heard of. She pressed it on me, so I took it home and read it. I was, I must confess, a trifle dismayed to find that Spooner, a lawyer with a deep suspicion of state authority, had anticipated virtually all of my arguments by a century. Anarchism has long been a subterranean counter-theme in Western political theory, and neither I nor Spooner was the first one to figure out that the state has no clothes on.

But surely the most dramatic student I encountered during my Columbia years was the radical feminist Ti-Grace Atkinson. Ti-Grace had studied philosophy at Penn, and had also done fashion modeling, in addition to spending time as curator of an art gallery, I believe. She came to Columbia at the suggestion of her Penn professors to do graduate study in Philosophy, arriving when I did or a year later. Ti-Grace was a tall, strikingly beautiful woman who was



always exquisitely dressed and made up. This was New York, after all, and sixty blocks further south she might have blended in quite well, although I think she would have been noticed in any milieu. But the dress code at Columbia in those days was pretty much academic grunge. We all looked as though we had been colored by the crayons that are left in the box after all the good ones are gone. Ti-Grace stood out as though she was the only one in technicolor. Her special thing was to dress provocatively -- short skirts, low-cut blouses -- and then, when one of the men in the Department responded however subtly to her self-presentation, turn on him and accuse him angrily of treating her differently because she was a woman. Shortly after she arrived, she made the mistake of trying that on Sidney. Sidney was teaching a summer graduate course on metaphysics and Ti-Grace signed up. She showed up to the first class in a very low-cut blouse. Sidney gave no indication that he had noticed. Now the thing you have to know about Sidney, if you never met him, is that he had inherited from his Lower East Side Jewish background a sense of personal space quite different from what was customary in American academic society at that time. When Sidney talked to you, he stood a good deal closer than was usual, or even comfortable. If you backed up, he advanced, until you were up against a wall with Sidney talking rather loudly in your face. Anyway, at the end of the class, Sidney, Ti-Grace, and several other students got into the tiny elevator in Philosophy Hall to ride down to the main floor. As the elevator started, Sidney said to Ti-Grace in a loud voice, standing virtually face to face with her, "So? You think I didn't notice them?" looking down at her cleavage. "What do you want me to do about them?" Ti-Grace was terrorized, and never tried that on Sidney again.

In the late Fall of '67, I ran into Ti-Grace in the basement of Hamilton Hall, where you could get a check cashed. She asked me how I was [a major concession and very great compliment, incidentally, since by then she had declared on ideological grounds that she would

not speak to men]. I said excitedly that my wife was pregnant with our first child, and I was very much looking forward becoming a father. Ti-Grace looked disapproving. Calling on Plato's distinction between good and bad pleasures, she said that the desire to be a parent was a debased desire, and ought not to be indulged. "Who should look after the children?" I asked. She said it should be done by professionals with no emotional attachment to the children. And if by chance they should enjoy their work? I asked. What then? They should be discouraged from becoming attached to the children, and should be rotated around before such attachments were engendered.

The last time I talked to Ti-Grace was late at night, when she called to say that she had been arrested and strip-searched and could I help her to find an attorney. I did what I could, but I think I did not run into her again.

What was it like to live in Morningside Heights in those days? The area right around Columbia had the sorts of little shops that you would expect in a academic neighborhood, and of course even then Riverside Drive was a pretty pricey place to live. But the transformation of the Upper West Side was in its early stages. The major Lincoln Center project had been started only a few years before I arrived at Columbia. Little by little, gentrification crept north from 59th street, south from 116th street, and east from Riverside drive to Central Park West, until it had all become Yuppie Heaven.

The street life even in Morningside Heights was a trifle exotic. Shortly after I arrived, I was walking with Sidney. On the corner of Broadway and 116th was a phone box long since disabled. The cord connecting the handset to the phone box had been cut, so that it just sat there useless. As Sidney and I approached the intersection, I saw a man in the phone booth. He had the handset to his mouth, and was yelling into it at the top of his lungs. Startled and a trifle

unsettled, I said to Sidney, "Look at that." He looked up and said casually, "Oh, yeah. He's a shouter." Apparently New Yorkers had categories of crazies.

The signature institution of the entire area, then as now, was Zabar's. Describing Zabar's as a deli is a bit like describing Angelina Jolie as cute. It would be more accurate to say that Zabar's was the concrete materialization of the lambent spirituality of an entire sub-population of the East Coast. For a number of years, every Sunday I would routinely and ritually drive down from 115th street to 80th street and Broadway for bagels, cream cheese, and smoked salmon, which I would then carry home, like a marauding Viking sailing north to his fjord. When Cindy and I moved to Western Massachusetts seven years later, I gave serious thought to making periodic forays to Manhattan to stock up.

The clientele was as much a part of the scene as the food. In those days, you stood in line at a counter along one wall, waiting to place your order with the aproned men standing there with their razor sharp knives. During one of my visits, I saw Richard Benjamin and George Segal come in to get their Sunday supplies. The men with the knives were capable of slicing the smoked salmon on the bias paper thin. One Sunday, while I was waiting my turn, a rather overdressed woman stepped up to the counter, and in an unsuccessful attempt at a refined accent, said "I would like a half pound of stomach lox, please." The deli man looked at her incredulously and, in a voice that could be heard on 82nd street, said, "Belly lox, lady, belly lox. It's belly lox." [The classic story, which I never myself witnessed, has it that an old guy came in and asked for some lox. "How much you want?" the counter man asked. "Just start slicing." So the counterman took a large side of smoked salmon and started slicing. After he had sliced about four pounds, the old man said, "O.K. A quarter pound from there."]

Little by little, we explored other parts of Manhattan, even venturing as far south as Chinatown. One day, in an epic run, I hit every traffic light right from Canal to 115th and ran the entire island without stopping. My analyst lived only two blocks from the Madison Delicatessen, which had potato latkes to die for, so on occasion we would drive down for a meal. New York of course is the center of America's music world, but Cindy and I had very different tastes in music, so we rarely went to a concert.

Over time, we made connections outside of the Columbia community. One of the most rewarding for me was a friendship with Robert Heilbroner, best known for his incredibly successful book, *The Worldly Philosophers*. Bob was a genial, round-faced man whose face wore a perpetual smile. He was a democratic socialist and a deeply decent man who managed to combine a commitment to progressive values with a complete absence of ideological fervor. Bob was heir to the Weber and Heilbroner clothing fortune, and he and his wife lived in a fabulous Park Avenue apartment. Cindy and I were invited to a *soirée* one evening for perhaps thirty people. After a lovely buffet dinner, we were ushered into their large living room, where seats were set up for a concert. Bob had hired a professional concert pianist for the occasion, and we were treated to what can genuinely be called a chamber music concert. It was my one peek at the way the upper crust lived in New York. Barry Moore had given me a view of what might be called Edith Wharton money, old money. Bob was, so to speak, semi-new money, one generation old. I saw what really new money looked like through our rather odd friendship with George and Nedra Robinson. I had known George and Nedra at Harvard during my undergraduate days. George was now making big bucks on Wall Street, and the two of them had set themselves up in one of those vast pre-war Central Park West apartment buildings that John Lennon got shot in front of. Their living room was so huge that Nedra had been forced to furnish

it with specially made couches and upholstered chairs that looked as though they had come out of a home on Brobdingnag. I never saw anyone actually sitting in them. George had lingering academic longings, which he indulged by taking up impecunious academics like me. Cindy and I saw *Amadeus* and *Marat/Sade* from orchestra seats as their guests.

But far and away the most interesting New York sub-culture of which I was given a glimpse was the Upper West Side intellectual *New York Review* crowd. Bob Heilbroner knew Bob Silvers, the editor of the *New York Review*. Silvers, in turn, knew the people who had organized a series of symposia called The Theater for Ideas, which met in a downtown loft used during the day as a dance studio. Attendance was by invitation only, and the guest list was an A-list of New York intellectuals. I was never a regular, but I did get invited to several of the symposia, most notably one devoted to "The Hidden Philosophy of Sigmund Freud." Sidney was actually on the panel, but for once he was eclipsed by others, including Bruno Bettelheim, the famous Chicago psychoanalyst, Holocaust survivor, and controversial therapist to autistic children. I was sitting in the front row, right in front of the stage. Next to me on the right was the composer William Schuman. Next to him was Sidney Hook. Behind me were Norman Mailer, Susan Sontag, and Sander Vanocur, among others. It was that kind of night.

Bettelheim gave a brilliant talk, one which I have referred to many times over the years in my own lectures on Freud. He said that Freud did not have a "hidden philosophy." Instead, Freud's life had been an endless "quest for the unconscious." The first person to pop up at question time was Hook, pugnacious and hostile as usual. "There is nothing new in what Freud did," Hook said. "Shakespeare could do that. Dostoyevsky could do that." And he sat down, satisfied that he had destroyed Bettelheim. "You are absolutely right," Bettelheim replied. "Shakespeare could do what Freud did. And Dostoyevsky could do what Freud did. But Freud

taught *us* how to do it." Hook grumbled that Bettelheim hadn't responded to his point, but I thought it was the most brilliant rejoinder I had ever heard at a lecture. Then Norman Mailer got up, dressed in a tight-fitting vest and holding himself like a bantam weight boxer, and unloaded a fifteen minute diatribe against his current analyst, who was not in attendance. Things went downhill after that.

Cindy made fast work of her doctoral dissertation, and finished it that first year, but she missed Harvard's deadline for a June degree, and had to be content with receiving her degree the following January. Her dissertation director was the same Harry Levin who had misconstrued Bob Tracy's project. When Cindy had a complete draft, she sent it to Levin, and several weeks later took the train up to Boston to see him. I waited anxiously at Grand Central for her return, to hear how things had gone. Levin had laboriously changed most of her "which's" to "that's" and "that's" to "which's," but he had virtually no substantive criticisms at all, so Cindy sailed through. Meanwhile, she went looking for a job. Queens College offered her an Instructorship, since she did not yet have her degree, and she accepted. Starting in the Fall, we would both be teaching full time. Fortunately, I lived so close to my office that I never needed the car, so she could take it to drive out to Queens.

That first summer, I signed up once again to teach summer school. In those days, Columbia ran two five-days-a-week sessions each summer, and I taught two courses in each session. Cindy had grown rather depressed when she finished her dissertation, and I was very concerned about her. My first thought was to get her out of the city for at least a little while. My uncle Anoch and aunt Rosabelle had a summer home in Brewster, New York, about an hour's drive north of Manhattan which they offered to us for a couple of weeks, so we moved up there with our little cairn terrier, Fergus, and I commuted into the city to teach each day. My classes

were scheduled so that I had several hours between the first and the second. I had not yet begun writing the essay I owed Art Danto by the end of the summer, the advance for which had long since been spent, so each day, I would walk over to our apartment, sit down at the old standard non-electric typewriter on which I had taken to doing my writing, and start banging away. The essay was supposed to deal with what was happening at the forefronts of the field, but I didn't actually know where the forefronts of the field were, and cared even less. Since I was pretty sure no one I knew would ever read what I was writing, I decided simply to write my own political philosophy. In several weeks, I had completed an essay of 80 pages or so, which I turned in to Arthur. Five years later, that essay saw the light of day as *In Defense of Anarchism*.

It seemed clear that Cindy needed psychiatric help as much as I did, so I asked Dr. Rodgers for a referral, and very quickly, it was decided that come September, Cindy would begin a full scale analysis. I was going to have to tap dance pretty fast to keep us from going deeply into debt.

When I accepted the Columbia job, I thought I would teach there until I retired. I had enough self-awareness to know that I had a tendency to shoot my mouth off, and I really did not want to make a bad impression, so I told Cindy that when I went to department meetings that first year, I was going to just sit and listen and get the lay of the land. There would be plenty of occasions later on for me to speak up. I imagine newly appointed Supreme Court Justices have a similar thought. When I went along to my first department meeting, I fully intended to be seen but not heard. As I walked into the seminar room where we met, Justus greeted me warmly. "Well, Bob, it is good to see you here," he said. "Since you are new, I imagine you won't want actually to take an active part in the deliberations for a while, but it is great that you are here to listen." Well, that settled it. I didn't shut up until I left in 1971.

Right away, the department was faced with the necessity of making some decision about the future of the junior members. There were three of them scheduled to come up for tenure in the next few years: Arthur Collins, Martin Golding, and David Sidorsky. I had not yet gotten to know them very well, of course, but the other senior members of the department had arrived individually or collectively at pretty clear opinions about each of them. Everyone agreed that Collins was the most promising philosopher of the three. Since Arthur was really an able man, Ernest Nagel felt himself free to judge him by the highest possible standards, and what Ernest thought would greatly influence many other votes. Ernest decided that Arthur did not quite come up to snuff for a tenured professorship at a great Ivy League university. That killed Arthur's chances, and the next year he managed to get a job at City College. Martin Golding's field was the philosophy of law, which was one of Ernest's minor sub-specialties. We all waited to hear what Ernest had to say, but was not willing actually to offer an opinion. It seemed to us pretty clear that if Ernest didn't think Arthur made the grade, then he wouldn't think that Martin did either, but Ernest was mum. So it was decided to send Martin's work out to three or four of the most eminent philosophers of law in the English speaking world. Well, you know what happened. Those distinguished gentlemen assumed that we had already decided to promote Martin and were simply going through the motions, so they wrote back puffs, and we were stuck. There was no way we could vote no if all the biggies in the field said he walked on water. Martin got tenure.

That left David. Now, about David there was complete agreement, at least among us young Turks. He was a disaster. The question was not even close for us. Nobody could argue that David was on his way to a distinguished career as a philosopher, but he was a nice Jewish boy [well, at least he was Jewish], and there was very serious doubt that he could get another job



if we dumped him. The more senior members were actually prepared to keep him around forever simply because they couldn't bring themselves to vote him out. Sidney, Arthur, Jim, and I had lunch, and we agreed that David had to go. There were four of us, and the four no's rule was still in effect. We agreed that we would all vote no when the secret ballots were handed around, and Sidorsky would be history. At the next meeting, we took a vote. When Justus counted the votes, there were three no's and one abstain. Arthur and Jim and I looked at each other and all shook our heads. We had stuck by our agreement. Then we looked at Sidney. He shrugged, with a sweet sad look on his face. That was forty-five years ago. The last I looked, Sidorsky was still a senior professor in the Columbia Philosophy Department.

The year after I joined the department, we faced a full-scale crisis. The Rockefeller Institute, a premier biological research institute founded by John D. in 1901 and situated the east side at York and 63rd, decided to become a University. The first thing it needed, of course, was a Philosophy Department. They didn't have any students or a campus to speak of, but they figured a Philosophy Department would show that they were serious. So they set out to buy themselves one. They called Ernest and offered him a professorship. Now, the year before, Columbia had created the exalted rank of University Professor, appointing the great physicist Isidor I. Rabi as the first holder of that title. The next year, the great art historian Meyer Schapiro was also elevated to University Professor. [The story is that Schapiro got a really fat offer from Harvard and went to see the Provost, Jacques Barzun, about it. Schapiro had been one of the first Jews to get tenure at Columbia, a fact Barzun was not above playing on. When Schapiro told Barzun the terms of the offer, Barzun said, "Oh, Meyer, I am ashamed of you. How can you think about money? You are a member of the Columbia family." Barzun bought Schapiro off with a University Professorship, and Schapiro went away embarrassed.]

Ernest was a good friend of both Rabi and Schapiro, and he dearly yearned for the status that attached to the sciences. So he went to Barzun and said he wanted a University Professorship like Izzie and Meyer. Barzun said no. Why did Barzun say no? I have always thought it was because he just wasn't willing to populate the ranks of the University Professors with Jews, but I am sure that is slanderous, so forget it. Anyway, Ernest left in a huff for the East Side.

The department was thunderstruck. Ernest had been at Columbia forever. Ernest *was* the Columbia Philosophy Department. What were we going to do? Obviously, the only solution was to recruit the biggest name we could find to take Nagel's place, and hope that the department was not summarily downgraded in everyone's private rankings. [What follows repeats and expands on a story I told at the very beginning of this extended Memoir. I apologize to my most faithful readers.] We met to discuss possibilities, and very quickly it became clear that Justus was not on board. Each time a name was mentioned -- Quine, Goodman, Chisholm, Sellars -- Justus objected that he was not good enough for us. After a while, I grew just a trifle exasperated. "Justus," I said, "is there anyone in American philosophy whom you would like to see us hire?" Justus thought about that seriously for a moment, and said, "No." "Okay," I said, "Is there anyone in the world you would like us to hire? Never mind whether he can speak English." "No," said Justus. Beside myself, I came back, "Never mind alive! What about Descartes?" "Too diminished a conception of experience." "Kant?" "Not adequately clear on the nature of being." "Is there anyone in the entire history of philosophy who would be good enough to join us?" Justus gave that some serious thought. Finally, he allowed, "Aristotle, and Whitehead."

But Justus was a good soldier, and if the department voted to make an offer, he was prepared as Chair to represent our collective will. We tried Quine. No soap. Chisholm, Also no. Goodman. No hope there. At one point we tried Kripke, who was then still a very young man. Justus made the call, but as it happened, it was the Sabbath, and Saul refused to come to the phone. Along about then, I began to feel real sympathy for Justus. This being before the big upheaval, there was no question of the graduate students playing any role in the proceedings, but of course they caught wind that something was up, and they came to Jim Walsh, demanding to know why we weren't hiring someone to replace Nagel. Jim called a formal meeting of the graduate students in the seminar room, and they all crowded in. "All right," Jim said, "we are going to play a game. You tell me whom you would like us to hire, and I will tell you what he said when we called him." The students looked a bit puzzled, but they gave it a go. Every time they came up with a name, Jim would simply repeat what that potential candidate had responded. We had tried them all.

The Rockefeller was in the process of hiring themselves a pretty classy bunch of philosophers. Over the next decade, they rounded up Donald Davidson, Saul Kripke, Harry Frankfurt, Margaret Wilson, and many others. But the experience of actually being at the Rockefeller was rather soul-numbing. Scientists work in groups in labs, so there is always some socializing that goes on. But when Nagel showed up, they gave him an office, measured him for a desk, and said, "All right. Welcome. Now think." It drove Ernest nuts. After only one year, he came crawling back, asking to be rehired at Columbia. And now, Columbia made him a University Professor!

From time to time, the Department would ask someone to give a talk, as they had asked me. One such event stands out in my mind after all these years. Jonathan Cohen was visiting

from England, and agreed to present a paper he had been working on. We all gathered in the seminar room one afternoon. As I recall, Cohen was sitting at the north end of the table, and I was slightly to his right, so that I had a pretty good view of the whole department. Sidney was at the south end, next to Tom Nagel, who by then was teaching at Princeton but was living in New York. Cohen's paper was on the justification of induction, an old and familiar topic. As he began to read his paper, Sidney started gossiping with Tom. Tom was clearly uncomfortable, especially as Sidney's whisper could be heard in the room as a sibilant background to Cohen's voice. Tom stared straight ahead at Cohen, but Sidney kept at it. Cohen finally came to the end of his paper, and when he stopped speaking, Sidney must have sensed a disturbance in the Force, because he looked up and realized it was question time. He proceeded to ask a question, even though it seemed to the rest of us that he could not have heard a word Cohen said. As soon as the words were out of Sidney's mouth, it was obvious to all of us that the question completely destroyed Cohen's argument beyond the possibility of repair. Sidney was mortally embarrassed. He reminded me of Lennie in *Of Mice and Men*, who, not realizing his own strength, breaks a rabbit's neck when he is petting it. "Well," Sidney said in his trademark nasal drawl, "that is such a stupid question you wouldn't even want to answer it," and he went back to whispering to Tom. The rest of us were left to cough up quasi-questions until the requisite half hour had passed and we could let Cohen go on his way.

In 1962, Peter Laslett and W. G. Runciman published the second of their collections of essays on social and political topics with the general title *Philosophy, Politics, and Society*. Over several decades, these volumes were the locus for some of the most provocative and important work in Anglo-American philosophy. The 1962 volume contains the famous essay, "Justice as Fairness," in which Jack Rawls announced the very first version of the theory that would be

given its most elaborate statement in his major book, *A Theory of Justice*. The essay grew out of Rawls' dissatisfaction with the endless and seemingly irresolvable debates between the proponents of formalist or deontological ethical theories on the one hand, and this or that version of utilitarianism on the other. The stalemate had very much the form of what Kant called an antinomy. Each side was skilled in demonstrating the inadequacies of the other, while neither side was successful in defending itself against those criticisms. Jack's brilliant idea was to try to break the logjam by combining an old tradition, that of the social contract, with some of the very modern work being done by economists and others in the branch of mathematics known as Game Theory, or more broadly, Bargaining Theory. After introducing his now famous two principles and announcing that he intended to exhibit them as the outcome of a process of bargaining among persons situated in something like what used to be called a state of nature, Rawls made an extraordinarily bold claim. "[T]he proposition I seek to establish is a necessary one, that is, it is intended as a theorem." I have always believed, though without direct evidence, that Rawls saw himself as undertaking something akin to what Kenneth Arrow achieved in his great monograph, *Social Choice and Individual Values*, published a decade earlier.

When I read Jack's essay, my mind was focused on Kant and other things, but from the very first, I was intrigued by the strength of this claim. If Jack could really make good on his claim, it would be a monumental achievement. As I turned the argument over in my mind, however, it became clear to me that the claim could not be sustained, and in fact was false as Jack had stated it. In 1966, I finally got around to writing all of this up in a paper entitled "A Refutation of Professor Rawls' Theorem on Justice," which I published that year in *The Journal of Philosophy* [then the in-house journal of the Columbia Philosophy Department.] The very next year, in the fourth Laslett and Runciman volume, Jack published a new statement of his

theory, *Distributive Justice*, that was dramatically different from his first attempt. The new version of the theory met all of the objections I had made, even though I thought then, and have always believed, that Jack saw the problems on his own, quite independently of my critique. I ran into him in the Smoker at the December Eastern Division APA meetings, and told him that I had recently published a refutation of his theory. His face fell. "But," I said, "your new paper on distributive justice meets all of my objections." "Oh," he said, brightening, "that's all right then."

I say that Anglo-American moral philosophy had arrived at a stalemate, but of course not everyone agreed with that estimation of the situation. Pretty much everyone did agree that old style utilitarianism -- what had come to be called act utilitarianism -- was a non-starter, for all manner of well known reasons. Everyone, that is to say, except Derek Parfitt. Derek showed up at Columbia for a year and asked whether he could sit in on my moral philosophy course. Of course, I said yes. He seemed an energetic and engaging young man. He even wanted to submit a final paper. That was a bit of a reach, but I agreed. The students actually taking the course were required to write a term paper of twenty pages or so, on pretty much any topic in moral philosophy they chose. On the last day, when the papers were due, Derek handed me a one hundred and ten page no holds barred defense of old fashioned act utilitarianism. I shrank back against the blackboard as he presented it to me, but a promise is a promise, so I read the entire thing and covered it with comments. It will come as no surprise to those who know Derek to learn that it was brilliant.

Of the four institutions at which I have spent extended periods of time in the course of my career, Columbia was the only one at which I worked exclusively in the Philosophy Department. At Harvard I had taught history and run Social Studies. At Chicago, I had taught the big Social Sciences survey course and even offered a course in the Political Science

Department. At the University of Massachusetts I would start an undergraduate interdisciplinary social theory program, teach economics, and eventually spend the last sixteen years of my career in Afro-American Studies. But at Columbia, all my teaching, including my many courses at Barnard, City College, Hunter, and City University, was in Philosophy. Nevertheless, Cindy and I did get to know a number of the people teaching elsewhere in the University.

Carl Hovde, a tall, ironic man in the English Department, was our neighbor, living down 115th street a few doors. He and his wife, Jane, became very good friends. Carl was very much a man of the College. He had come to the English Department in 1960, and took over the Deanship of the College after the events of '68 [of which, much more below]. Carl, who passed away in September of 2009, was a rock solid, decent man who earned the trust of students and faculty alike. He had a charming, puckish sense of humor, and was in every way exactly what I had been brought up to think a university professor ought to be. Through Carl, we met Edward Said, Steve Marcus, Walter Metzger, and many of the other bright lights of the Columbia faculty. I never got to know Ed Said well, although we had shared dinner at Carl and Jane's apartment. Steve Marcus was an odd duck. He was a rather slight man with an impressive Brunhilde of a wife. They had dinner at our home once, but I am afraid the dinner table conversation, which was no doubt scintillating, is not my principal memory of the occasion. Cindy and I were trying hard to put on the dog, with our fancy china and wedding gift silver, so I went down to an upper East Side butcher shop and got a suckling pig, which we roasted with an apple in its mouth. There were eight of us at table that evening, and it seems that one suckling pig does not actually have a great deal of meat on it, so I was forced to carve it with the greatest of care and serve it all up on the first go round. There were no seconds that night.

The Hovdes and the Metzgers had summer homes in the Berkshires -- the Hovdes in the town of Plainfield and the Metzgers a bit further south in Worthington. Both towns are in the Berkshire Hills west of the valley created by the Connecticut River as it flows south to Long Island Sound. The river is flanked by Amherst to the east and Northampton to the west, home of Amherst and Smith Colleges. Amherst is also the location of the main campus of the University of Massachusetts and an experimental college, Hampshire, which has become rather famous because of its alumnus, Ken Burns.

Walter sang the praises of Worthington, and both Cindy and I were powerfully attracted by the idea of a summer getaway from the heat of the city. He told us there was a small eighteenth century house on the market on Buffington Hill Road, a short distance from what passed for the center of Worthington. I had been teaching so many courses and publishing so many books that we had actually built up a little reserve, after paying our combined analysts' bills, so we decided to drive up and take a look. We were hooked, paid the \$25,000 asking price, took out a mortgage at Nonotuck Savings Bank, and found ourselves the owners of a summer home.

Ever since the appearance of the little collective volume by Marcuse, Moore, and myself, I had been growing more and more concerned about the fact that I did not have a book in the works. Even though my name was now on three volumes, with a fourth under contract, *Kant's Theory of Mental Activity* was the only **real** book I had written, leaving to one side *The Rhetoric of Deterrence*, for which I could not get a publisher. It was my old anxiety, that I would never write again. Arnold Tovell, at Beacon Press, was feeling pretty bullish on the *Critique of Pure Tolerance* team, what with the success of that book and Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man*, so I approached him with a proposal that I put together a group of essays on politics. He agreed, and



on March 31, 1967, we signed contracts for a book tentatively titled *Concepts of Politics*. My idea was to take my essay in the joint volume, and add to it new essays on Loyalty, Freedom, Power, and Community. The essay on loyalty would put on paper an analysis I had developed for an upper level General Education course at Harvard. The other essays would make convenient vehicles for ideas I had been thinking about for some time. Pretty quickly, I was able to finish the set of essays. But the title was a bummer. Then I recalled Marx's mordant critique of Proudhon's *The Philosophy of Poverty*, which he had published under the title *The Poverty of Philosophy*. Ever willing to steal from the masters, I called my little book *The Poverty of Liberalism*. Beacon brought the book out in hardcover in '68. The next year, a paperback version appeared, along with a German translation. A Japanese edition was contracted for, but never actually appeared. I was rather pleased with the book, even though it was just a collection of essays, because it staked out my claim to be a critic of liberalism from the left. During its lifetime, it sold about 30,000 copies, which, given its subject, seemed to me pretty good.

That summer of 1967 was noteworthy in another much more important way. Despite both being deep in psychoanalysis, Cindy and I decided to start a family. This was long before maternal leave, paternal leave, or anything remotely resembling them, and we knew that when the baby arrived, Cindy would have to stop teaching at least for a little while. We figured we could survive one semester of her lost salary, so we began to count months. If the baby arrived in February, Cindy could finish the Fall semester, have the baby, take the Spring semester off, and go back to teaching the following Fall. February, January, December, November, October, September, August, July, June. She would have to get pregnant in May. We told our analysts that we had decided to get Cindy pregnant in May. They both broke the analytic silence to express some doubt that we could plan things with that degree of precision, but it had never

occurred to us that Cindy would fail to get pregnant the first month we stopped using birth control, so we assured them it would all go as planned. And so it did. When we walked into our new summer home in June of 1967, Cindy was in her first trimester.

We very soon discovered that pregnancy posed certain problems. Cindy suffered from morning sickness, and it seemed that the only thing she could comfortably keep down was a MacDonald's Big Mac, fries, and a coke. Almost every day, we drove the forty-five minutes from Worthington to Northampton to get lunch at MacDonald's. I had grown up in a family with a long tradition of spending summers in the country, so I was enormously enthusiastic about our decision to buy a summer home. However, I neglected to notice that when I was a kid, it was not my responsibility to look after the summer home. I just got the pleasure of visiting. Now, it was I who had to mow the rather sizeable lawn, make, or at least arrange for, the inevitable repairs, and pay the mortgage and taxes and utility bills. What is more, I was really a city mouse, not a country mouse. There was not a great deal to do in Worthington if outdoor sports were not your thing. As a boy, I had spent six summers in summer camps no more than an hour's drive from our new house, but now there were no counselors to arrange activities. Cindy and I did a good deal of decorating, but that lasts only so long. By the end of the first summer, I was beginning to have doubts about Worthington.

In the Spring of '67, the Rutgers University Philosophy Department approached me about visiting at their main New Brunswick campus for a year. I did not really want to move to New Jersey, but they offered me \$20,000 a year, which at that point was about \$5,000 more than Columbia was paying me. Ever mindful of the analyst bills, I accepted. Rutgers in those days had a genuinely weird class schedule. I would be teaching on Mondays and Thursdays -- early in the morning on Mondays and in the afternoons on Thursdays. One of my courses met on

Mondays at 8 a.m. and on Thursdays at 4 p.m. The teaching load was three and three, but we needed the money. I also signed up to teach a course on Kant's ethics at CCNY and a seminar on political philosophy at CUNY that Fall, and another course on Kant -- this one on the *Critique* -- at CCNY in the Spring.

My Fall schedule was a bit manic. On Mondays, I would take a bus to the Port Authority bus terminal on Manhattan's west side, and another bus to New Brunswick, arriving just in time to make it for my 8 a.m. class. [Cindy had a Monday-Wednesday-Friday schedule and needed the car to get to Queens College]. After teaching three classes, I would catch a bus back to the Port Authority terminal and walk to the CUNY building opposite the New York Public Library, on 42nd street. I had been assigned a small, windowless, airless inner office, which I outfitted with a collapsible cot. I would grab some lunch and lie down for an hour before teaching the graduate seminar. On Thursdays, I took the car, and drove to New Brunswick with the windows tightly rolled up against the industrial stench of the New Jersey Turnpike. The two CCNY courses were squeezed into the schedule. What with my analyst appointments on the East Side, I was pretty constantly on the go. Fortunately, the Spring semester schedule was less hectic, with only one CCNY course in addition to my three Rutgers courses.

My time at Rutgers was little more than a chore, but several moments stand out in my mind. At the end of one meeting of a course that dealt with ethical theory, one of the students came up to my desk and earnestly pressed into my hand a tattered and dog-eared paperback book. If I would promise to read it, he said, he would give it to me. I felt badly taking a book from a student who obviously had a good deal less money than I, but it was obvious that he would be crushed by my refusal. It was *The Virtue of Selfishness* by Ayn Rand. I dutifully read it from cover to cover, discovering, as I anticipated, that it was terminally stupid. Rand claimed

to be able to derive all the fundamental principles of what is now called libertarianism from the premise  $A=A$ . Needless to say, the proofs did not stand up to scrutiny.

A good deal more important was a conversation with one of the students in my Monday at 8, Thursday at 4 Introduction to Philosophy. For the first time in my life, I had assigned a casebook, which is to say a collection of snippets from the great philosophers, instead of assigning entire works, such as Platonic Dialogues. I soldiered on, "covering" the material, until I got to a selection by Hume containing his classic critique of causal inference. This was relatively late in the semester, and I was bored out of my mind. I can say with absolute confidence that I was *not* doing a good job of teaching. At the end of the next class after we had done Hume, a young man came up to talk to me. He said he had been troubled by Hume. I was astonished. I had done everything in my power to drain the last vestige of power from Hume's words. I asked him how he had handled this distress. "I spoke to my priest," he said, "but he could not help me, so he told me to call the office of the Archdiocese." "What did they say?" I asked, expecting to be given some version of the party line. "A Monsignor answered. When I told him what Hume said, he answered, 'Well, some people say that, but we don't,' and he hung up the phone."

I was genuinely humbled. Despite my best efforts to guarantee that no student would walk away from my class with an original thought, David Hume had reached his hand across two centuries, grabbed that student by the scruff of the neck, and had given him a shaking that bid fair to shake him loose from a lifetime of unthinking obedience to received truth. It was the greatest testimony I have ever personally witnessed to the power of liberal education .

While I taught my courses and waited for the baby's arrival, I edited a collection of essays on Kant's philosophy for Anchor Books. This was part of a series of little books Anchor was

bringing out, all with the subtitle *A Collection of Critical Essays*. Editing the book was hardly what I would call scholarship, but I got an advance -- always needed -- and had a chance to anthologize three old friends. Charles Parsons, Ingrid Stadler, and Sam Todes all had essays in the volume. I hunted about for other likely essays, and found a pretty good essay on Kant's ethics by someone named John Silber. It would be another thirteen years before our paths would cross again, with a much less happy outcome.

That Fall, my attention and emotion were really focused on the imminent arrival of the baby, Ti-Grace to the contrary notwithstanding. Tests to determine the sex of the foetus were a good deal less sophisticated in those days, so we worked away at a name for a boy and a name for a girl. Pretty quickly, we came to an agreement that if we had a girl, she would be named Emily Ann, but the search for a boy's name took us longer. The new summer home in Worthington, and our MacDonald's runs to Northampton, led us to consider Jonathan Edward Wolff, since Jonathan Edwards had preached in Northampton during the First Great Awakening in the early 18th century. But that would have made the little boy's initials JEW, so we scotched that idea. Little by little, we narrowed it down to either Michael Gideon Wolff or Patrick Gideon Wolff. On the evening of February 17, 1948, Cindy went into labor, and we drove up to Washington Heights to Columbia Presbyterian Hospital. It was a long night -- at one point, a doctor told me it would be a while, and suggested that I go out and get some coffee and a bite to eat. Early the next morning, Cindy gave birth to a baby boy. When I was allowed in to see her [no husbands in the delivery room in those days], she looked up at me, our new son in her arms, and asked, "What is his name?" Without hesitation, I replied, "Patrick Gideon Wolff." I was a father.

We were about as prepared as two highly educated, sensitive, at least partially psychoanalyzed intellectuals could be for the arrival of a baby, which is to say not at all. The little room next to the kitchen had been outfitted as the baby's room, with crib, changing table, cloth diapers, diaper pins, talcum powder, baby oil, bunny suits, and handy wipes. We had read the first several chapters of Benjamin Spock's *Baby and Child Care*, which even then was two decades old. Dr. Spock said, right there in the first chapter, that "the newborn baby sleeps twenty hours a day." Unfortunately, that seemed to be a typographical error. Patrick was awake twenty hours a day. In less than a week, we were both totally exhausted.

Desperate for sleep, we hired a night nurse to come to the apartment and look after Patrick while we went to bed. I am sure she was a very nice woman, but she was a stranger in our little apartment, and we both lay in bed all night, rigid, listening for any sound that would suggest Patrick had a need she was failing to attend to. After three days, we thanked her and sent her on her way.

Up to that time, my knowledge of child development had all come from books. As a younger brother, I had not even had the benefit of watching a little brother or sister grow up in my parent's home, and Cindy was an only child. Piaget was interesting, but his observations related to a somewhat later stage of development. David Hume turned out to know more about the cognitive development of infants than even he might have imagined. Still, none of that told me what to do when a three week old baby would not go to sleep. Thus began my real education of the complex relationship between nature and nurture.

Looking back on it all now, from the perspective of four decades, I can see that very significant elements of the personalities of both of my sons were hard-wired, as it were. As a tiny baby, Patrick had enormous difficulty making transitions, from being awake to going to

sleep, or from being asleep to waking up. His nervous system, if I can put it this way, seemed extremely inward looking, whereas the nervous system of my second son, Tobias, was outward looking. When I put Patrick down for the night, he would cry inconsolably. At first, I tried patting him gently on the back, but that seemed to make no impression on him whatsoever. I tried patting a bit harder. Eventually, I discovered, with great trepidation, that if I virtually pounded on his back rhythmically, I would break into his nervous system, and he would stop crying. Then I had to very gradually reduce the forcefulness of the patting until, at last, I would stand with my hand simply resting on his back. Very delicately, I would lift my hand away, and he would be asleep. Once asleep, he was out for hours. You could throw a party in his room and he wouldn't wake up.

By the time we were ready to take Patrick out and about, it was almost Spring. The nearest bit of grass and open space was the Columbia campus, so on days when I wasn't in New Brunswick, I would put him in his baby carriage and take him on a turn around Columbia. Everything was peaceful and serene until the beginning of April. Then all hell broke loose.

The story of the Columbia student uprising has been told many times. There is even a documentary of it now, for which I and many others were interviewed [although I have not seen the finished product, and do not know whether I survived the editing process.] For those who do not remember the events, the following link will take them to a site that gives a detailed, chronological account not only of the events themselves but also of what led up to them and what followed. <http://beatl.barnard.columbia.edu/columbia68/time1.htm>

Because I was teaching at Rutgers and moonlighting at CUNY and CCNY, and even more because I was a new father, I played a relatively minor role in the events unfolding half a block from our apartment. Borrowing a felicitous phrase from Gilbert and Sullivan's *The*

*Mikado*, you might say that I was "disguised as a second trombone in a wandering band."

Nevertheless, I do have some personal stories to tell. More important, the events taught me a very great deal about the inner dynamics of such political upheavals. With the benefit of more than four decades of hindsight, I should like to try to articulate what I learned.

The initial focus of the student actions was Columbia's involvement with the Defense Department during the expansion of America's involvement in Viet Nam. The Students for a Democratic Society, or SDS, had begun its protests a year earlier, in February of 1967, over Columbia's involvement with the C. I. A. Eighteen SDS members held a sit-in in Dodge Hall, located at the Broadway and 116th st. entrance to the campus. A number of students were brought up on disciplinary charges and threatened with expulsion. I appeared at the proceedings in support of one of the students, Richard Fiorevanti -- in effect, as his Defense Attorney. I still have my handwritten arguments, carefully laid out in three headings and numerous subheadings. After calling attention to the fact that Fiorevanti had actually wandered into the demonstration by accident, had joined it after it was under way, and though completely in sympathy with its political purposes, had joined it on the spur of the moment, I turned to the larger issues at stake. Here is the final portion of the notes I prepared for the hearing, reproduced without emendation or alteration:

**"III. Disciplinary Procedures in Cases of Politically-Motivated Infractions of University Regulations**

A. The Traditional Role of the University

1. The university stands *in locus parentis*.
2. It views students as growing late adolescents, as it were.
3. The parental disciplinary procedures -- which combine firmness with compassion and a concern for the welfare of the students -- are appropriate for dealing with cheating, plagiarism, panty raids, liquor in the dorms, and general youthful hi jinks.

B. Politics in the University



1. We all feel uneasy about treating cases of political protest as though they were no different from panty-raids. The existence of this precedent-breaking panel vividly illustrates that uneasiness.
2. So long as students engage in panty-raids, they deserve to be treated by the university as children -- and it is appropriate for the university to act like a stern, but benevolent parent.  
But: When students engage in serious, deliberate, adult political activities, whether legal or illegal, whether in support of the existing political consensus or in opposition to it, then they earn the right to be treated as adults, and the university loses the right to behave as a parent. New standards, new procedures, are required.

C. Present Disciplinary Procedures.

1. Consider the present situation: the university announces a specification of actions which are violations of university regulations. The university also announces a spectrum of punishments for those violations, ranging from reprimand to dismissal (p. 76 of Columbia College Handbook). Quote p. 76, §5 complete
2. But there is no schedule relating punishments to violations. To this day, there is no way for a student to discover what precisely he risks by embarking, for reasons of conscience, on actions in violation of university regulations. Even now, neither I nor Mr. Fiorevanti has any concrete indication of the maximum severity of punishment which attaches to his admitted commission of what are surely rather less serious violations of university regulations. We have no way of knowing whether the university considers the sit-in more serious, or less serious, than plagiarism, or theft, or the throwing of water bags from windows.
2. [sic] By analogy: Imagine that the State of New York listed a series of acts as crimes, and announced a diversity of punishments from a fine to the death penalty, but did nothing to associate specific ranges of punishment with specific crimes. Someone who chose to engage in civil disobedience would have no way at all to discover what he risked by such action. Suppose further that the records of previous court actions were not available, so that a citizen could not even make an estimate of his risk on the basis of past practice. Such a situation would clearly be outrageously unjust.
3. But that is exactly the situation Mr. Fiorevanti finds himself in.
4. I suggest that the panel, as part of its report to President Kirk, should recommend that there be a regularization of disciplinary procedures designed to remove the manifest injustice of the present system."

As it happens, Columbia dropped the charges against these students, but the issue on which I chose to focus lies, I believe, at the heart of the tectonic changes then taking place in colleges and universities across the country. The traditional conception of the relation of a university [and a university faculty] to its students was based on the premise that the

undergraduate years were a protected time, between childhood and adulthood, during which young men and women were allowed to develop their intellectual capacities more or less in isolation from the larger society. It was for this reason, for example, that in Cambridge, MA, the Cambridge Police Department would routinely treat student misbehavior that took place in Harvard Yard, or in the extended area usually referred to as "The Square," as within the purview of the campus police. But the Viet Nam War, combined with the threat of the Draft, thrust young men into the larger political world willy-nilly. They had not suddenly become wiser or more mature, but the war was confronting them with life and death choices that they could not evade. This had long been true of Black students, and now White students found themselves confronted by analogous choices. It was simply no longer appropriate either for the university or for its faculty to construe themselves as acting *in loco parentis*.

The same rapid changes explain the confusion and even bitterness that a number of faculty experienced. In '68, when the full-scale building seizures occurred, members of the faculty were presented with a challenge to their traditional role, as well as to their identification with the institution in which they had made their lives. At Columbia, there were professors long identified as politically liberal and wildly popular with the students who instinctively stood with the university administration. Overnight, they found themselves reviled by the same students who had idolized them a week earlier. Peter Gay, one of the great European historians of the twentieth century, was so embittered by the hostility of the students that he left Columbia soon after and spent the remainder of his career at Yale. Richard Hofstadter, a radical historian justly famous for his anatomization of "the paranoid style in American politics," chose to deliver the Commencement Address that Grayson Kirk was too frightened to give, while the students with whom he should have been aligned held a counter-commencement on the steps of Low Library.

Paul Kristeller, like many of his emigré colleagues, was so deeply alienated by what he perceived as Brown Shirts on the campus that he took to carrying a cane that he did not really need. When he and I happened to step into the tiny Philosophy Hall elevator together, Paul would turn his back to me and refuse to say Hello. Old faculty friendships were shattered. Bob Cumming and David Truman, despite years of co-teaching, ended up on opposite sides of the fight, and they and their wives stopped speaking to one another. Truman lost what was an almost certain appointment as the next Columbia President, and ended his career as the President of Mt. Holyoke College, in South Hadley, Massachusetts.

The six days of the occupation of Low Library were quite the most dramatic moments I had seen in the cloistered environs of the Academy, but there were amusing moments as well. After the White students were kicked out of Hamilton Hall by the Black students, whose focus was on the proposed gymnasium in Morningside Park rather than the university's involvement with the Institute for Defense Analyses, they seized the office of the President in Low Library. A group of students supporting the administration was formed, and marched on Low. The Ad Hoc Faculty Group, which had been meeting periodically in Philosophy Hall in an attempt to negotiate a peaceful resolution, hastily threw up a picket line around Low to separate the two groups of students and prevent violence. I was standing on the line one day as anti-occupation students yelled taunts at the occupiers, who were hanging out of the second story windows. The students had been in Low for a while and were getting hungry. Supporters brought bags of sandwiches, which they would throw from outside the two lines to the students inside. Someone threw a bag of food which missed the window and fell at my feet. I stooped down, picked it up, and tossed it to a student hanging out of the window above. Dankwart Rustow, a tall Ichabod Crane of a figure who was in charge of the Ad Hoc faculty Group line rushed up to me, furious

at this breach of neutrality, and summarily ordered me off the line. Exposed for the partisan I was, I slunk off.

Not funny at all was the behavior of the Tactical Police Force when they were given the go-ahead to roust the students from the buildings. I was down in New Brunswick when that happened, but I heard a good deal about it from my friends. The TPF had the rather nasty habit of carrying blackjacks with which, with a flick of the wrist, they would crack people on the top of the head. The Faculty Group was on the line when the TPF charged, and the next morning, a number of senior members of the faculty, including Sidney, wore bandages on their heads as badges of honor. The Provost and former Dean David Truman called a special meeting of the College faculty several days later to discuss the events. Before he could call the meeting officially to order, I stood up and told him that since there were a number of colleagues sitting in the room who had been beaten by the police and were still wearing their bandages, I thought we could not begin the meeting until the university issued a formal apology to those who had been injured. Truman looked around the room with dead eyes and said, in a flat voice, "Are there any other comments?" I am ashamed to say that no one in the room supported me.

On a lighter note, the beatings were the backdrop for one of Sidney's most famous remarks. I am not the first person to tell this story, but I cannot talk about the events of '68 without repeating it. Some months after the Spring of '68, Sidney was called for jury duty, and as luck would have it, he was tapped for a case involving alleged police brutality. During the *voir dire*, the Assistant District Attorney assigned to try the case asked Sidney whether he had ever been treated brutally or unfairly by the police. Sidney thought for a moment and said, "Brutally, yes. Unfairly, no." The ADA asked him to explain, and Sidney told the story of the

attack by the TPF. "And you didn't think they were acting unfairly?" "No," Sidney said, "they were hitting everybody." Sidney was a genuinely great man.

While I am telling Sidney stories, let me tell one more that may not have made its way into the blogosphere. A few words of explanation are required. One of Columbia's best known professors at that time was the literary scholar Lionel Trilling. Trilling was a New York Jewish boy who, before spending his entire career at Columbia, actually went to the high school [De Witt Clinton] at which my father taught for a while. Despite his origins, he affected a cultivated WASP manner that, I imagine, he thought would be appropriate in an Oxford Senior Common Room. Trilling was one of a number of Columbia professors who chose to focus their energies in the College rather than the Graduate School. [That was an old rivalry for which I do not have time or space in these memoirs.] One day, Sidney went to a cocktail party, at which he spotted Trilling holding forth in his best Oxonian style. Sidney walked up and said, in a loud voice, "Ah, Lionel. Incognito ergo sum, eh?"

Now, this was pretty clearly a prepared *bon mot*. Sidney, like Samuel Johnson, was not above lying in bed at night crafting a witticism that he would carry about with him until an occasion arose for delivering it. As an author who does most of his writing in his head, I do not deprecate the practice. Indeed, my favorite Oscar Wilde line is one that he never actually published, and that has come down to us only because someone present on the occasion had the good sense to record it. I am referring, of course, to Wilde's immortal judgment on Dickens' *Old Curiosity Shop* -- "One must have a heart of stone to read the death of Little Nell without laughing."

Once the students had been evicted from the buildings, a struggle broke out over whether they should be expelled, Both their supporters, like myself, and cool heads who sought to restore

calm and repair the damage to the university, like Carl Hovde, argued for amnesty. The hardliners stood with the administration in demanding expulsion. A debate was organized on the question, at which Peter Gay took the side of the administration and I defended the students. An enormous number of students and faculty gathered to hear us [my memory says one thousand, but I cannot imagine where that would have been, and perhaps, like all political partisans, I am engaging in creative crowd enhancement.] I took my stand on the proposition that we, the faculty, and not the President and his cloud of Vice Presidents, were the university, and that we, not they, had the intellectual authority to decide who should receive a Columbia degree. "Let us issue a document to each student," I cried, "signed by the members of the faculty, stating that in our collective judgment that student has earned the degree of Bachelor of Arts. Then let Mr. Kirk issue a statement claiming that the student has been denied the degree. We shall see which document graduate schools and law schools and medical schools accept as legitimate." As you might expect, I was cheered to the echo, but I am rather glad Kirk did not take me up on my challenge. I am not as confident as I sounded that the world would have chosen academic authority over bureaucratic endorsement.

The final act of the Spring was the University Commencement. Customarily, this celebratory ritual was staged on the steps of Low Library, with the large green expanse covered with chairs for parents and friends. It is a splendid site, fully as lovely in its way as Harvard Yard, where the Harvard commencements are held. But Grayson Kirk was frightened that we would stage a demonstration in a space that was virtually impossible to close off, so he moved the proceedings to the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, on Amsterdam Avenue at 111th st. Even there, he was too apprehensive to deliver his customary presidential address, and his place was taken by Richard Hofstadter, who should have been with the students. The rest of us took

possession of the space Kirk had abandoned, and held a counter-commencement on Low Plaza. Ours was much more fun.

While Columbia was exploding, Cindy was being fired. The semester she had taken off to bear and care for Patrick was the last semester of a three year Instructorship. The enlightened Chair of the Queens College English Department decided that a woman with a new baby could not give adequate attention to her teaching duties, and Cindy was once again on the job market. NYU had an opening, so I drove Cindy down to Washington Square and waited in the car while she went upstairs for an interview. When she came back down, she told me that the Chair of the Department had said, "Well, with your credentials, we would really have to offer you an Assistant Professorship if you were a man, but since you have to stay in the city anyway because of your husband's job, we will give you an Instructorship." Cindy was furious and turned him down on the spot. Fortunately, there was a tenure track Assistant Professorship at Manhattanville College, a Catholic women's college in Westchester, just north of the city. The nuns were delighted by the idea of a new mother on the faculty, and Cindy got the job.

This was not the first time that Cindy had encountered the prejudice against women rampant in the Academy, nor would it be the last. The Women's Movement had adopted as its slogan, "The personal is the political," and in my case this was exactly correct. I did not come to the issue of women's rights from a theoretical analysis of race, class, and gender in a capitalist society. I came to it out of anger at the way the world was treating a woman whom I loved and knew to be a brilliant scholar. I stewed about this for some time, before acting. There was nothing much I could do about the prejudice in English Departments, but I could at least try to do something about my corner of the academic world.

On September 17, 1969 I sent a letter to eleven senior members of the philosophy profession, asking them to serve as co-signers with me on a motion to be presented to the annual meeting of the Eastern Division of the APA, calling for the establishment of a Standing Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession. Alice Ambrose and Morris Lazerowitz [who were husband and wife] came on board, as did Justus Buchler [whose wife taught philosophy], and Sue Larson and Mary Mothersill, both of Barnard. Maurice Mandelbaum, who along with Lewis White Beck had read my Kant manuscript for Harvard, was sympathetic, but pointed out that as the incoming APA president, if he signed he would be in the position of petitioning himself. A good point. The great Classicist Gregory Vlastos also said yes, as did Ruth Marcus, whom I knew from my Chicago days, when she was at Northwestern. Morty White was supportive, but declined to sign for fear that if the motion passed, he would be expected to serve on the committee, something he said he could not do because of writing obligations. That left Jack Rawls, who declined to sign. In retrospect, this does not surprise me. Although Jack was on his way to becoming the world's leading expert on justice, he never seemed to be there when action was needed. I was reminded of the great story [possibly apocryphal] about Karl Marx. whose mother is reputed to have said, "I wish Karl would write less about capital and make some." The motion passed, and my old student, Margaret Wilson, was elected the first Chair of the new Standing Committee.

One brief story about Margaret, to show how widespread the discrimination was. Columbia hired Margaret after she finished her degree at Harvard. I greeted her at the big reception that the department threw each Fall for its faculty, students, and all the other people in New York who considered themselves part of the Columbia philosophy family. Margaret told me that Rod Firth had offered her a terminal three year Instructorship in the Harvard Department,



saying, "Of course, if you weren't a woman, we would be able to offer you an Assistant Professorship." I responded with outrage, but Margaret said, "It's all right. I didn't want to stay in Cambridge any way."

The last echo of the Columbia uprising in my life occurred the following Fall. I decided to offer an undergraduate course on the philosophy of education, and many of the students who had been active in SDS signed up. Also in the class was a Barnard student who babysat for Cindy and me from time to time. Cindy was now driving out to Manhattanville three times a week, and her teaching schedule overlapped with mine. We had hired a wonderful woman, Viola Lemley, as our fulltime caregiver, but one day, when Cindy was due to go out to Westchester, Vi called in sick. Since we lived only half a block from the campus, I decided to bring Patrick to class. He was now eight months old, and was fussy from teething. I walked into class with Patrick on my shoulder and a pocket full of teething biscuits, and proceeded to lecture for fifty minutes while walking up and down, patting Patrick to soothe him. A week later, the Barnard student came to babysit, and told me that I had caused a major disruption within SDS by showing up with Patrick that day. Apparently, the students in the class had decided that I was not sufficiently radical [the left always eats its own], and planned to seize my class that day in a show of revolutionary force. But confronted by Patrick, they froze, and the plan fizzled. Despite Paul Kristeller's conviction that the students were Brown Shirts, they were really just nice middle class Jewish boys who knew that you did not make trouble for a man with a baby on his shoulder.

The Margaret Wilson story reminds me that I ought to say something about the larger community of which the Columbia Philosophy Department was the center. In a way quite different from either the Harvard or Chicago departments, the Columbia department had a

number of friends who thought of us as their intellectual home, even though they had no official connection either with our department or even with Columbia University. Some were former students who had remained in New York; some were members of the Ethical Culture Society; some were simply New Yorkers with a serious and continuing interest in philosophy. They would all show up at the Fall reception, and would be greeted as old friends by those professors who had been in the department for a long time. The weirdest member of this penumbra was a tall, dark haired rather disturbed man somewhat older than I then was, who was reputed to receive a supporting subvention from his family each quarter. When he was in funds, he would show up, always wearing a long dark overcoat, and attend public philosophy talks. One day, as I was entering Philosophy Hall, he accosted me and told me excitedly that he had discovered a new and revolutionary proof for the existence of God based on the precise distances between the several planets of the Solar System. Ordinarily, when I saw him, we would talk for a bit while he told me his latest mad theories, but that morning I simply did not have time to stop. Not wanting to be rude, I said, "You are right. I was so convinced by the last proof you gave me that I have started going to school regularly," and I rushed off upstairs. Half an hour later, I received an excited call from a student reporter for the *Columbia Spectator*. "A man just came into our office," he said, "and told us that he had proved the existence of God to you, and that you have accepted his proof and were now an observant Jew. Is that correct?" I was tempted, I really was, but I thought better of it and told him the truth.

One of my loveliest memories dates from the brief semester when I served as Graduate Program Director in Jim Walsh's absence. I was holding office hours one day when a vision of oriental loveliness floated into my office and introduced herself as a member of the Burmese delegation to the United Nations. She had studied philosophy in Burma, she said, and was

interested to know how our program might differ from the one she had gone through. I started telling her about our requirements -- logic, ethics, epistemology, the history of philosophy. She asked at one point whether we had meditation. I allowed as how some of our students, I was sure, meditated [this was the 60's, after all], but that it was not a requirement. When I had concluded my rundown of our program, she rose to leave, pausing at the door to summarize what she had learned. "Philosophy in the United States is very like philosophy in Burma." she said. But then she added, rather sadly, "Except, of course, that you do not require meditation."

When the Philosophy Department of the University of Wisconsin Madison invited me to give the Matchette Lectures, I decided to use the occasion to lay out in some systematic order the thoughts that had been provoked in me by the Columbia uprising. Arnold Tovell agreed to publish them, and once again stealing a great author's title, I called the lectures *The Ideal of the University* [*pace* John Cardinal Newman's famous book, *The Idea of a University*.] The book, when completed, summarized and anatomized my experiences as a university professor over more than a decade. I did not realize when I wrote the book that it revealed the extraordinarily constrained and privileged circumstances in which I had pursued my career to that point. Harvard, Chicago, and Columbia were hardly representative of the academic scene in America as a whole. Only after moving to the University of Massachusetts was I able to get some perspective on my early career.

While in Madison, one member of the department told me a story that I feel I must repeat, even though it is secondhand, on the off chance that it is not widely known. The lecture hall in which I delivered the Matchette Lectures was a rather striking space. The architect had designed it with a parapet running around the wall just below the ceiling, cleverly rigged with indirect lighting to create the illusion that sunlight was pouring in through windows from

outside. The legendary Cambridge philosopher of common sense G. E. Moore came to give a lecture one day, and as luck would have it was scheduled for that same room. Now, Moore had famously offered a "proof" of the existence of the external world [a hot topic in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries] that consisted of holding up first his right hand, then his left, and saying, "Here is one human hand, and here is another. That is two physical objects, which proves the existence of objects in space." This time, he decided somewhat unwisely to change the example, so, pointing to the space below the ceiling, he said, "Obviously there is sunlight shining in from outside, which proves ..." He was startled when the audience burst out laughing.

Analysis or no analysis, I was still a very angry young man. I focused my fund of resentment on the fact that I had not yet been promoted to the rank of full professor. Mind you, I was barely thirty-five, but I would sit in our kitchen tied up in knots at the vast injustice of it all. When the Hunter College Philosophy Department contacted me about the possibility of joining them, I said I would do so if they gave me a promotion and a big raise. They agreed, and I was all set to jump ship, but the President of the college got wind of my activities during the Columbia building seizures and vetoed the appointment because of my politics. This was the first of three occasions on which my politics cost me a job offer, and in all three cases, I was better off for not having secured the offer. Anyway, Columbia promoted me, so as of July 1, 1969, I would be Professor of Philosophy.

That same Spring I helped to organize the first annual meeting of the Socialist Scholars Conference. For this important occasion, we had secured, as our keynote speaker, Isaac Deutscher, whom readers of this memoir have already encountered when he tangled with Zbigniew Brzezinski at lunch in Adams House, Harvard. Deutscher offered to give a talk on

"Socialist Man," and for so eminent a speaker, nothing less than four commentators would do. I penciled myself into the program. When the evening arrived on which Deutscher was to launch the Society, the ballroom in a downtown New York hotel was crammed with a thousand people. Another thousand had been accommodated in a nearby space, where they could not see the great man, but could hear the proceedings. Deutscher rose and delivered a fiery peroration that could best be described as a bold theoretical step forward from 1932 to 1933. Dated though his remarks were, he was cheered to the echo. Then it was time the commentators. First to speak was Shane Mage of Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute. Mage was a natural choice, having written his doctoral dissertation at Columbia several years earlier on that hoariest of all marxist chestnuts, the tendency of the rate of profit to fall. After a few introductory complimentary remarks, Mage started talking about the importance of "turning on, tuning in, and dropping out," the signature line of Harvard LSD guru Timothy Leary. The audience at first looked stunned, then angry, and finally anxious, for Deutscher was becoming visibly distressed. He probably thought that he had stumbled into some petty bourgeois left deviationist sect. I had prepared some pretty standard comments on Deutscher's paper, which we had been able to read in advance, but I felt that I needed to do something to salvage the situation, so I took out my pen and hastily wrote some sentences excoriating Mage for the utter frivolity and irrelevance of his response to Deutscher. When my turn came and I read out those sentences, the hall erupted in cheers, and Deutscher breathed a sigh of relief.

After the talk, people rushed up to congratulate me. My body was pumping adrenaline and the haze of cigarette smoke in the room was stifling. As I stepped out of the hotel, the cold air hit me, triggering a violent anxiety attack. I grabbed a cab, gave him my address, and was halfway back to Morningside Heights before I remembered that I had driven to the hotel and

parked my car nearby. I told the cabbie to turn around, retrieved my car, and made it home, where I collapsed in a sweat. Cindy melted three Valium tablets in some water and sugar and got me to swallow them., I lay on the bed rigid until the pills took effect and I could relax.

Patrick was now almost a year and a half old, and Cindy and I decided to have a second child. Once again we made careful calculations, and once again Cindy got pregnant as soon as we began to try, so Patrick would have a little brother or sister whose birthday was very close to his own. In anticipation of an expanded family, we began looking about for larger and somewhat less slum-like living quarters, but even though we drove north with real estate agents into Westchester so far that we thought we were on vacation, we could find nothing that was even remotely affordable.

At the same time, I was going through a rather profound change in my conception of myself, a change that would fundamentally alter the entire remainder of my career. Over the years, a number of people have asked me why I chose to leave a tenured professorship at an Ivy League university in a great city like New York for a position on a state university campus in the rural part of Massachusetts. For the most part, I have simply said that I did not want to raise my children in a New York apartment, and there is much truth to that. But something deeper was going on, and I think the time has come for me to try to put it into words.

As should be obvious from these memoirs, I was professionally extremely ambitious from the time I was an undergraduate. I published a great deal, went to meetings, accepted speaking engagements whenever they were offered, and in all the usual ways tried to advance myself in the profession. But in one way, my behavior was actually professionally unusual. From the start, I chose the objects of my philosophical investigations for reasons rooted deeply within my psyche, and not at all dictated by considerations of what was popular at the moment. I

rather fiercely demanded that the world accept my work as it was, regardless of fashion. Readers of this memoir may find it difficult to imagine, all these years later, but my decision to turn my back on mathematical logic and instead write my first book on the *Critique of Pure Reason* would have been viewed back in the early sixties as a very poor career choice. Indeed, I have been told that I would have been tapped for the Society of Fellows had I stuck with logic. There were several important books on the First Critique by English scholars [Kemp Smith, Weldon, Paton, Ewing], but my book was the first full scale treatment of the First Critique by an American in the twentieth century. The history of philosophy was not then the royal road to professional success. Those facts quite literally never crossed my mind.

Having chosen to launch myself as a Kant scholar, I immediately turned to political philosophy, and rather provocative political philosophy at that. In the seven years after *Kant's Theory of Mental Activity*, leaving aside all the books I edited, I published *A Critique of Pure Tolerance*, *The Poverty of Liberalism*, *The Ideal of the University*, and *In Defense of Anarchism*. It was not until 1973 that I returned to Kant scholarship with *The Autonomy of Reason*.

As a consequence of my political writings, I rapidly acquired a reputation as a brash voice on the left, and since I was living in New York, this led to opportunities to become a typical New York leftwing public intellectual. I appeared on the David Suskind Show, wrote reviews for the *New York TIMES* Sunday Book Review Section, lectured both in the city and around the country, and might even, had I stuck with it, earned myself a standing invitation to The Theater for Ideas. Although this is getting ahead of my story, the year after I published *In Defense of Anarchism*, I received over a hundred invitations to speak on campuses around the country. And the truth is, I did not enjoy it. When it paid, I did it for the money, to pay the analyst bills, but even then, I did not find the role of a public bloviator attractive.

I did not like being away from my family. If I did accept a speaking engagement, I arranged it so that I was away for one night at most. I recall that at some point or other, Jacob Javits and several other progressive senators arranged a trip to Cuba to explore the possibility of a *rapprochement* with Castro. The newspapers were full of the story, speculating on its chances for success. When I read about the junket, my first reaction was, "Well, that is another three days they will not be home for dinner."

I was becoming disenchanted with my role as a Columbia professor. In certain circles in New York, then and probably now as well, it was a big deal to be on the Columbia faculty. There was a perceptible *frisson* of respect whenever one was introduced as a Columbia professor. I found myself thinking, "Now, people say, Oh, Bob Wolff must be pretty good, if he is a professor at Columbia. Maybe it would be better to be someplace where people say, Oh, that must be a pretty good place if Bob Wolff is there!" This is an expression of genuine arrogance, of course. It is not for nothing that I chose the Emily Dickinson poem that graces the title page of these memoirs.

In addition, I was growing more and more uneasy about the privilege and social isolation of the elite sector of American higher education. The events of the Spring of '68 only heightened this feeling, and the assassination of King, combined with the intensification of the Viet Nam War, made me uncomfortable about the feather bed I had landed in.

These disparate feelings -- the desire to find a proper community in which to raise my children, my disillusionment with the role of Public Intellectual, my dismay at the privileges of the Ivy League -- came together in a most unexpected way on a warm August Saturday in 1969. Cindy and I had gone back to our new summer home in Worthington with little Patrick at the beginning of July for a two month stay. Once again, Cindy was morning sick, so we resumed



our daily treks to Northampton for Big Macs and fries. This time, however, we had Patrick with us. At eighteen months, Patrick had a tendency to get fussy, and it turned out that quite the most soothing thing we could do was to strap him in his car seat and take him for a ride. One Sunday, in fact, I set out from Morningside Heights with Patrick and drove completely around Manhattan Island. Patrick did not let out a peep until we pulled up in front of our apartment building, at which point he began to bawl.

Cindy and I enjoyed looking at streets and imagining what it would be like to live on them, so we frequently combined our MacDonalds run with some casual cruising up and down Northampton's residential streets, Patrick along for the ride. Our favorite streets were in Ward Two, the Smith College area of town -- rows of colonial homes, unpretentious, graceful, inviting. One day, we stumbled on a dead end street with a bend in it called Barrett Place. There were no more than eight homes on the little street, and it was lovely. "This is where I would like to live," Cindy said. "No doubt," I replied a trifle sardonically, "but we work in New York, and the commute is wicked."

We drove back to the Berkshire Hills and continued our lazy summer vacation, watching Neil Armstrong take his first step on the moon, chatting with Julie and Connie Sharon next door, who had seven girls and were still hoping for a boy. Then, one Saturday, I got up early to give Patrick his breakfast, and opened up the weekend edition of the *Northampton Gazette*. Idly paging through it, I came on a picture of a beautiful three story brick Federal home on Barrett Place. The real estate agent was Al Lumley, and the house was due to go on the market Monday.

As soon as I showed the ad to Cindy, she said, "Let's look at it!" I pointed out that it wasn't due to go on the market until Monday, and besides we still didn't have jobs in Western Massachusetts, but she was adamant, so I called the number listed for Lumley. It turned out that

he was in Amherst, seven miles or so from Northampton, and didn't really want to drive over, but I pleaded, and he finally agreed to meet us. As soon as we entered the house, we fell in love with it. It was the home of Mrs. Ethel Webb Faulkner and her late husband Harold U. Faulkner, who had been an economic historian of some note and a professor for many years at Smith,. They had had the house built in 1933, in the depths of the depression, when it was in fact the only house built in Northampton that year. Now, Mrs. Faulkner was getting on and felt that it was time to sell. The house had a large living room, formal dining room, den, and large kitchen on the first floor, four good sized bedrooms on the second floor, and a spare bedroom and gorgeous pine paneled study on the third floor. There were three bathrooms, a garage, and a double lot with a large side yard, including the remains of a grove of quince trees in which, it was said, Jonathan Edwards had played as a boy. It was perfect.

We grew enraptured by the idea of living on Barrett Place with our growing family. Moving there from Morningside Heights would be like jumping from *Modern Times* into *Andy Hardy Grows Up*. We were already beginning to think about the renovations we would undertake. I had made a contact in the Philosophy Department of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, through Gerald and Annette Barnes, a couple teaching philosophy at Amherst College whom I had met at a party in New York. UMass was in an expansion phase, so there was at least a hope that I could bag a job there.

On the way back to Worthington, we talked, and as we talked, each of us reinforced the other's desire. By the time we had turned off route 9 onto route 112, we had convinced ourselves that we were meant to live in that beautiful house at 26 Barrett Place. The asking price was \$47,500. I made a low offer that was summarily rejected by Lumley, and I came right back with a full price offer, which was accepted. The next day, Sunday, I called a local Worthington real

estate agent to put our summer home on the market, asking just enough to cover the original cost of \$25,000 plus what we had spent renovating it. On Monday, our summer home sold, and I arranged with Al Lumley to meet with Mrs. Faulkner to execute a written agreement.

It turned out that Mrs. Faulkner really was not eager to move out of her home, even though she knew in her heart that it was time. As we sat in the offices of Alvertus J. Morse [later Judge Morse], the lawyer we had found to handle the closing, it became clear that Mrs. Faulkner really would prefer to settle the matter of the sale of her house but not to move out just yet. Since we didn't have jobs within a hundred and fifty miles of Barrett Place, I was in no hurry to start paying the mortgage. I asked, "How would it be if we sign a buy sell agreement now, put down a nice binder, and agree to conclude the sale a year from now -- say June 30, 1970?" Well, Mrs. Faulkner thought that was just fine, and hard as it may be now to believe, Nonotuck Savings Bank was prepared to make a loan commitment for a fixed rate 6% twenty-five year 80% mortgage ten months in advance of closing. So it was settled. Now all we needed to do was find a pair of jobs.

The next academic year was full of excitement and activity. The big news, of course, was the arrival of our second child on February 18, 1970, just three days more than two years after the birth of Patrick. Once again we were prepared with Emily Ann if it was a girl, but it was a boy, and we settled on Tobias Barrington Wolff. The "Barrington" was for Barrington Moore, who had agreed to be the child's godfather. In due course, Toby, as we immediately began calling the little baby, received a battered silver teething cup that had been in Barry's family for generations. Our family was now complete: Bob and Cindy, Patrick and Toby. The nuns were totally supportive of Cindy's pregnancy, and assured her that her job would be waiting

for her when she was ready to return, but we secretly hoped that by the time she was prepared to resume teaching, we would be living on Barrett Place.

The Harper Guide to Philosophy had still not appeared, even though the ten essays had long since been written and submitted. Indeed, the entire Harper Guide project had fallen into disfavor. Fred Wieck had handed it off to Al Prettyman at Harper, and Prettyman in turn had turned it over to Hugh van Dusen, who headed up the Harper Torchbook division. I was getting rather eager to have my contribution appear. In 1969, I published an article "On Violence" in *The Journal of Philosophy* that drew heavily on the arguments of my Harper Guide essay, even referring to that essay in the footnotes as "forthcoming." But of course there was no sign that it was coming forth. Finally, in early 1970, I decided to call van Dusen. Sitting in my office, which overlooked the elevated walkway between the campus and the Columbia Law School, I placed the call. Could I at least use sections of the essay in other things I wanted to write? Van Dusen was very apologetic about the long delay, and said of course I could do so. Then I had a brainstorm. "Why don't you publish the essay as a short book?" Van Dusen was very taken with that idea -- the Harper Guide project was an albatross, and no one at Harper really wanted to go through with it. He got rather excited. "We could publish a whole series of short books." Then he said, "But 'Political Philosophy' -- that is a really dull title. Can you come up with something better?"

When I was a boy, in the attic of the little row house in which we lived on 76th avenue in Kew Gardens Hills, I had found a complete set of the writings of Mark Twain. My favorite volume was "Literary Essays," which included such perennial favorites as "James Fennimore Cooper's Literary Errors" and "The Awful German Language." One of the lesser noted essays was an attack on Shelley and his buddies called "In Defense of Harriet Shelley." When Hugh

van Dusen asked me for a better title, that essay popped into my mind, and without thinking, I said, "How about *In Defense of Anarchism*?" "Great," van Dusen said, and several months later the 82 page book appeared. Had it been published in the Harper Guide, no one would ever have noticed it. Had it appeared in 1965, when it was written, it might have garnered a few snarky notices. But in 1970, the world was exploding, and my little book caught fire. In three years, it sold 40,000 copies, and started appearing in foreign language translations. Thanks to a University of California re-issue, it is still in print. When last I looked, it had appeared in Swedish, Italian, German, French, Italian yet again, Korean, Croatian, and Indonesian. At one point, it was required reading for the Cambridge University Moral Philosophy Tripos, and even provoked a wonderful book-length response by Jeffrey Reiman, *In Defense of Political Philosophy*. While all of this was going on, I continued to edit books -- two in '69, one in '70, another in '71.

At roughly the time that I was talking to Hugh van Dusen about my essay, I also made an appearance at a symposium organized to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York. At issue was the question whether citizens have an obligation to obey the law in a democracy, regardless of their individual judgment of the morality of that law. This may seem a trifle abstract now, but in 1970, with men being ordered daily to report for induction into the Armed Forces to fight a war in South East Asia that was widely considered unjust and immoral, this was a question of the very greatest immediacy. Drawing on the arguments in *In Defense of Anarchism*, I argued the negative. Defending the positive, and using exactly the line of argument that I had demonstrated to be fallacious in my as yet unpublished book, was Eugene Rostow. Rostow was a former Dean of Yale Law School, and had served in the State Department under Johnson. He was the brother of Walt Rostow,

Johnson's National Security Advisor. Rostow regularly went by the name Eugene V. Rostow, but his full name, given to him by socialist parents on the Lower East Side of New York, was Eugene Victor Debs Rostow. His parents and my grandfather might have been comrades in the Socialist Party.

Meanwhile, of course, I was desperately trying to conjure up a job offer from the University of Massachusetts. It was not totally insane to think that I might succeed. UMass was in the midst of an extraordinary growth spurt. Located among the farms of Western Massachusetts north of the center of Amherst, the university had started life as an agricultural college in 1863. In 1931 Mass Aggie became Mass State College, and in 1947, the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Spurred by the growing demand for college admissions in the '60s, the university had launched an expansion campaign designed to take it from 10,000 students to 25,000 undergraduate and graduate students by the mid '70s. In '69, when Cindy and I were looking for jobs, the university was adding one hundred new faculty and fifteen hundred new students each year.

As the expansion took off, strains developed in nearly every department between the oldtimers, who in some cases had been at UMass for decades, and the flood of new, young academics, many of whom were academically more able and more ambitious than their senior colleagues. Because of its agriculture college past, UMass's science departments, especially in the biological sciences, were the strongest academically. The Chancellor, Oswald Tippo, himself a biologist, had gathered a kitchen cabinet of senior science professors who passed around the administrative positions among themselves.

One problem faced by Tippo was the opposition from the old line faculty to the wave of new hires. To undermine their opposition, Tippo created the position of Department Head,

distinguished from Department Chair. A Head was appointed by the Dean and had the power to recruit without the approval of a majority of the senior members of the department. Things were being shaken up dramatically at UMass.

Prior to the expansion phase, the Philosophy Department had been a tiny operation with four or five members. Leonard Ehrlich, a Jaspers scholar who had studied at Yale, was the oldest. Among the others were Ann Ferguson, a young, ebullient Swarthmore graduate who had done her work at Brown, and John Brentlinger, a tall, politically radical man whose specialty was Greek philosophy. John and Ann were married. Bruce Aune had been recruited by Tippo as Head to build the department, rapidly bringing in a number of young men, some of whom were students or disciples of Rod Chisholm. At the time when I went looking for a job at UMass, the new wave in the department included Gareth Matthews, Ed Gettier, Herb Heidelberger, Bob Sleight, John Robison, Bob Ackermann, and a young Assistant Professor, Fred Feldman.

I had met Gerry and Annette Barnes, who were teaching Philosophy at Amherst College, and Gerry arranged for me to have lunch with Herb Heidelberger. I told him quite openly that I was interested in moving to UMass, and he said he would see what he could do. Sure enough, an interview was arranged, and I drove up to Amherst to give a talk and meet the department.

Much of the remainder of this Part of these memoirs will be devoted to my experiences in the UMass Philosophy Department. It is a sad tale, at least in its early chapters, full of anger, bitterness, and eventually all out war. Because those events made so deep an impression on me, I must force myself to set aside my current feelings so that I can recapture my frame of mind when I entered the department. On the day that I came to the campus of the University of Massachusetts for my meeting with the members of the department, I was a full professor at Columbia University. I had published nine books, and was widely recognized in the profession

both as a serious Kant scholar and as a provocative political philosopher. Quite unthinkingly, I assumed that the department would be delighted to recruit me as their colleague. The interview took place early in the winter. I stood at a window of the faculty restaurant on the eleventh floor of the Campus Center, looking south across a charming lake to the newly constructed rather dramatically designed Fine Arts Center. Fresh snow covered the ground and decorated the trees. Accustomed to the grungy urban cityscapes of Morningside Heights, I was charmed.

The talk and interview seemed to go well, although I picked up vibrations of a somewhat disturbing sort from several members of the department, most notably young Fred Feldman. Nevertheless, it seemed self-evident to me that I was a great catch, so I hoped for the best. As part of my visit, I was wheeled in to see the Dean of Arts and Sciences, Seymour Shapiro, one of the Tippe circle of scientists. I explained to him that in order for me to be able to join the faculty, a position would have to be found for my wife as well. He assured me that something could be arranged. In due course, my offer came through, and Cindy and I began planning the renovations to our dream house.

When Toby joined our family, Cindy and I still expected to be able to move into our new house during the summer months of 1970. I spoke to Bruce Aune about one problem that had me a little worried. Columbia, like many private colleges and universities, began its year for salary purposes on July 1, which meant that my June pay check would be my last. But UMass, in common with Rutgers and other state institutions, paid its faculty beginning on September first. There were going to be two payless summer months, which with our tight finances was going to be hard to handle. "That is not a problem," Bruce said. "When you retire you will receive two additional months of salary." "But Bruce," I objected, "that is going to be some time around the millennium. What do I do now?" "Well," Bruce allowed, "you can always teach



summer school the summer before you start." So it appeared I would once again be moonlighting.

There were much bigger problems. After a bit, the UMass English Department offered Cindy several sections of Freshman Comp. That was a complete non-starter. Cindy had taught Freshman Comp as a graduate student. She was now an Assistant Professor, on a track leading to tenure. She was not about to go backwards. We were committed to buying the house in less than six months, but there was no compromising. I called Seymour Shapiro to tell him the deal was off. I could not accept their offer. He was astonished. Apparently, throwing a few sections to the wife was their standard procedure. I patiently explained that Cindy was an accomplished academic with a good tenure track teaching job already. She would accept nothing less.

Shapiro said it was too late in the year to consider Cindy for a regular English Department teaching job for the Fall, so I suggested we postpone the entire matter a year to allow them time to see what they could do. He agreed.

All of this sounds rather insouciant on our part, a *jeu d'esprit* by a couple of young academics taking a risky chance on pulling off a complicated parlay involving two jobs and a house, but it is worth recalling that Cindy was in the very last stages of pregnancy, and we were about to welcome a new baby into our home. In retrospect, our behavior was sheer madness. We were in love with the house on Barrett Place, and with the life we imagined our family would lead there, but we were taking an enormous gamble.

Not surprisingly, when I was contacted by a Prentice Hall editor about writing a different kind of philosophy textbook keyed to the tenor of those times, I jumped at the chance to make some more money. We would be carrying a big mortgage starting July 1, 1970, and we were going to need all the money I could earn. Lest anyone reading this be misled by the seemingly

modest price of the house we were committed to buying, I will simply note that the \$47,500 purchase price, adjusted for inflation, was the equivalent of \$266,500 today.

I went to work on the textbook, which presented some interesting challenges. We agreed that it would be a collection of readings from the great philosophers, with introductions and commentary by me. Each of the eight chapters would begin with a contemporary controversy in which was nestled a classic philosophical debate. For example, the old arguments about appearance and reality were introduced by a debate between Timothy Leary and Jerry Lettvin about LSD. The insanity defense in murder trials led naturally to selections on the free will versus determinism debate. And so forth. I called the book *Philosophy: A Modern Encounter*. I finished the book while I was still in New York, but it did not appear until 1972, with a 1973 publication date. [Publishers of textbooks always fudge the pub date that way, to make the text appear current for a slightly longer time.] The only difficulty with Prentice Hall's manufacture of the book was the cover. When it came time to design the book, the editor at Prentice Hall's offices in Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey gathered together some young editors and staff people and put them in front of a tree in the garden area out back, with an in-house lawyer leaning against a tree, all intended to look like a college class. For years, I kept running into people who thought the picture was of me and wanted to know why I had shaved off my mustache.

Since we were going to have to postpone for a year moving into our new house, Cindy and I decided to double down on our gamble and launch extensive renovations. There was plenty of time to complete them, Lord knows, and with my publishing and teaching, we had the money to pay for them, but would a buyer for the house like them, should it come to that? My recollection is that we never even gave that a thought. Like some New Age couple fresh from an Ashram, we were simply convinced that the planets were aligned and the spirits were with us.

A second benefit of the postponement was that it meant I was going to be at Columbia long enough actually to qualify for a sabbatical semester. The Fall of 1970, I had no classes at all, one of only three sabbaticals during my fifty years of teaching. Since I also never applied for a foundation grant to take time off from teaching, those three semesters were my only break from full time academic work. I did not do anything special during the semester. I worked on the Prentice Hall text, edited a few books, and gave talks here and there. One of those talks is worth mentioning, not because of what I said but because it was the longest distance I ever traveled to speak. I received an invitation from the University of Lethbridge to speak to the Philosophy Department and also to give a less technical talk to a general university audience. If you will take a look at a Google map, you will discover that Lethbridge is about a hundred miles west of Medicine Hat and three hundred and fifty miles west of Moose Jaw. Somewhat more to the point, it is maybe 150 miles south and a bit east of Calgary. All of this in Canada, of course.

I opened the letter of invitation while I was standing in the Philosophy Department office. After the secretary and I looked at a map, I said that I really did not want to go that far just to give a couple of lectures, but I also didn't want to seem ungrateful for the invitation. She suggested that I ask so much money they would have to withdraw the invitation. That seemed like a pretty good solution, so I asked for an exorbitant fee. [My recollection is that I asked for a thousand dollars, which in those days was a lot of dough]. Well, they said ok, and I was committed. I did not want to be away for days from Cindy and the boys, but it was going to be a bit of a trick to get there and back overnight. In the end, I flew out of LaGuardia to Toronto, then took Air Canada non-stop to Calgary, and flew the rest of the way in a tiny ten seater that did not even have a divider between the pilot and the passengers. I was crammed into a window seat next to an enormous American cattleman who had been to Calgary to sell some steers and

was on his way home to Montana. He spent the entire flight fulminating against damned Eastern commie lovers while I cringed next to the window and hoped he would not throw me out of the plane. I flew in to Lethbridge, gave my two talks, flew out the next day, and was home in time to kiss my sons goodnight and go to bed with Cindy.

At long last, our gamble paid off. UMass offered Cindy a tenure track Assistant Professorship and we accepted the pair of offers. The renovations on our new house were complete, my summer school teaching scheduled. We packed up our apartment, and with very few regrets and no second thoughts, I prepared to start the next chapter of my life. On May 27, 1971, at 11:20 a.m., I had my last analytic session with Dr. Rodgers. The next morning, at 8 a.m., Gleason Movers came and loaded up our belongings for the trip to 26 Barrett Place, Northampton. It seemed I was not going to spend my entire career as a Columbia professor.

## **VOLUME TWO CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RUSTICATION**

Our Northampton home was everything that our New York apartment had not been. It was elegantly designed, large, airy, comfortable, and beautifully decorated. As part of our renovations, we had turned the small family room and one car garage into a large, pine paneled family room with a wood-burning fire place. The kitchen was now a big country kitchen with an eating area graced by a beehive fireplace. We had fenced in the large side lot to create an area equally for our two Cairn Terriers and our children. Because the street was a dead end with only one house beyond ours, there was virtually no traffic.

There is a lovely expression that has its origins in Oxford and Cambridge. When a student is asked to leave the university, usually for disciplinary reasons, it is said that he has been rusticated. By leaving Columbia and moving to UMass and Northampton, I had in effect voluntarily been rusticated. For some years I continued to receive speaking invitations and the like, but little by little I withdrew from the public world of the larger Academy. My life came to be centered entirely on my family and the University of Massachusetts. I set myself up in the lovely third floor study, and spent as much time as I could at home, only going in to the campus for my classes or obligatory meetings. As the years passed, I felt myself dying away from the profession, and though I continued to write books which, if the publishers were right, were being read, I no longer had a powerful sense of being part of the larger conversation of American letters. Oddly enough, I did not miss it at all. My boys were now three and one, and daily becoming more delightful to spend time with. Once again, we hired a full-time housekeeper, a lovely lady named Mary McEwan who was the wife of a Protestant minister in the hill town of Plainfield. If one or another of my sons had a doctor's appointment or a dentist's appointment, I

took them. In time, as they went to school, if there were teacher's conferences to attend, I was the one who showed up. I felt then, and have felt ever since, that the decision to eschew the role of New York public intellectual and instead become a teacher and father was one of the wisest decisions I have ever made.

But first things first. I had summer school to teach. I had been assigned Introduction to Philosophy with 30 students and an undergraduate/graduate course on Ethical Theory. The UMass grade sheet printout listed each student's name, class, and major. As I ran my eye down the Intro list, I saw one student listed as majoring in "Men Pe." I thought, "Hmm. Some Chinese dialect. Very *recherché*." At the first meeting of class, I discovered the notation meant "Men's Physical Education." I had never taught at a school where one could major in Physical education. It was clear that the State University world was not the Ivy League.

Since *Philosophy, A Modern Encounter* had just appeared, I decided, for the first and last time in my career, to assign my own textbook. But it seemed to me somehow a bit scrimy to assign the book and then pocket the royalties from the sale, so I came into class with a stack of dollar bills and a roll of dimes. I said, "I make \$1.10 in royalties from the sale of each copy of my text, so I am going to give each of you \$1.10 back." Then I proceeded to hand out the money. No one cracked a smile. I knew this was going to be a tough room, as the stand-up comics say.

The students weren't dumb, and they did the reading. But they came from lower middle class Massachusetts families, mostly Catholic, and they had been raised not to talk back. They didn't talk back to their parents, they didn't talk back to their priest, they didn't talk back to the policeman, and they didn't talk back to the teacher. But talking back is the mother's milk of philosophy. I struggled mightily to get a discussion started, without success. One day, we had

got to the chapter on the philosophy of religion, and I thought I would try something a bit different. "Look," I said, "I could prove the existence of God to you four ways, but that would really not be very interesting, so instead I would like to talk about the nature of religious experience. Has any of you ever had something you would call a religious experience?" Dead silence. "How many of you are Catholic?" Most of the hands went up. Turning to one young man, I asked, "The first time you receive Holy Communion is an important religious experience. What was it like for you?" He shrugged. "It was all right," he said. Finally, one young woman raised her hand. "I have had a religious experience," she offered. I fell on her as a man dying of thirst falls on an oasis. "Tell us about it," I begged, "Well," she said, "I am engaged to an Israeli boy." "Yes?" I prodded. "That is it," she said, "That is the religious experience." I gave up. "There is not enough religious experience in this room to sustain a conversation," I said. "Let us move on to the philosophy of art." The next year, as I was walking across the campus, I saw a young man who had been in the class. "Hey, Professor Wolff," he called as we passed one another. "Great class last summer." I wanted to grab him by the scruff of the neck, and yell, "Why didn't you say something at the time?"

When the Fall semester began, I found that I was not the only new member of the department. Vere Chappell, my former colleague from Chicago, had been recruited as the new Head, replacing Bruce Aune. Vere got a raw deal, through no one's fault. He had been promised that he would be able to hire three or four new people, and I think it was that, more than anything else, that determined him to come. But no sooner had he arrived than Massachusetts went through the first of what would be a seemingly endless series of budget crises, and the plan to continue the expansion of the Amherst campus came to a screeching halt. Vere had to make do with the people he had, at least for several years.

While I was settling into my department, Cindy was doing the same, but for her, the experience was dramatically different. She had come to UMass as an adjunct, the wife of a senior professor being brought in at a good salary and the highest possible rank. Her teaching responsibilities were no different from those of any other Assistant Professor, but she felt very keenly the effect of the circumstances under which she had been hired. She was a gifted critic who began immediately to make a name for herself in the profession, but she was convinced that no accomplishments could overcome the perception that she was there merely as a courtesy to me. She once said, speaking of her situation, that how you enter a department determines forever what they think of you. I have repeated that observation to many young academics just beginning their first jobs, because I think it contains a profound truth. Cindy was forced to earn, against considerable odds, a respect that was automatically accorded to other young academics who had been recruited in the customary manner. That very first year, she published a revised version of her dissertation as a book entitled *Samuel Richardson and the 18th Century Puritan Character*. She also began publishing beautifully crafted essays on Jane Austen and other English and American novelists [causing me to do some hasty reading of Austen's corpus of novels so that I could talk with her about her essay as it was being written.] Eventually, her accomplishments compelled the department to promote her with tenure, but in the immortal words of Henny Youngman, she never got no respect.

The entire campus was undergoing an enormous growth spurt, with new academics flooding in. The English Department Cindy joined had well over one hundred members by the time we showed up, and I think peaked at one hundred and thirty before it began a long decline, hastened by repeated budget crises, to its present size of perhaps thirty-five. Since so many people were new, and were reaching out to establish social as well as professional connections,



there were a great many dinner parties and evening gatherings, and also an uncommon amount of sleeping around and breaking up and reforming of couples [although I may simply be judging English departments by the rather stodgy manners of Philosophy departments.] I do not think my social calendar has ever been as full as it was in those early UMass years.

Our house was very well situated to facilitate our introduction into the social world of the university. Living next door to us in a large house were Bob and Sally Bagg and their five children, Teddy, Chrissy, Jonathan, Melissa, and Hazzie. Bob was a senior member of Cindy's department, and Sally was a cellist whose father had been a Professor of Music at Smith. Her mother had given the house to Bob and Sally when they married. Behind our house, on a little dead end street, lived Charles and Maurianne Adams, both literary scholars whose specialty was folklore. Bob, Sally, Charles, and Maurianne were already good friends, and they simply broadened their circle a bit to include us.

It was from Sally that we learned the true and rather wonderful back story of the purchase of our house. It seems that on Barrett Place were three members of a string quartet in which Sally played cello. They were all eager for the fourth member to join them, and they had had their eye on Mrs. Faulkner's house for some time. When the notice appeared that Saturday that the house would be going on the market on Monday, they cabled their quartet mate, who was vacationing in Europe. By the time he could cable a bid back, we had bought the house. But then nothing happened. Mrs. Faulkner went right on living there as she had since 1933. Finally, the next June, she moved out and workmen showed up to renovate the house, but still no owners appeared. By the time we did move in, everyone on the street had walked through the house to see what we had done with it. I would meet someone for the very first time who would say, "I like what you have done with the kitchen."

That first year, I taught a large lecture course on Ethics each semester, a combined undergraduate/graduate course on social philosophy, and a graduate seminar on political philosophy. This was the first time in my career that I had Teaching Assistants to meet discussion sections and grade the exams and papers. Readers of this memoir might like to know what I assigned in the way of reading in the introductory course. There were five required texts: Gabriel Kolko's *Wealth and Power in America*, Ayn Rand's *The Virtue of Selfishness* [the little book the Rutgers student had pressed upon me], Lewis Feuer's collection of the *The Basic Writings* of Marx and Engels, Betty and Theodore Roszak's *Masculine/Feminine*, and Robin Morgan's *Sisterhood is Powerful*. I thought it would be an interesting experiment to set Marx and Rand in opposition to one another, but still under the influence of my Columbia days, I worried that Marx would annihilate Rand, so I labored mightily to make her bizarre and manifestly indefensible views as plausible as possible. To my very great chagrin, when I sampled the mid-term exams, I discovered that my students were almost all natural Randites who found Marx hard to credit.

In the seminar, I encountered for the first time the phenomenon of the Five College system. The Pioneer Valley, as the section of the Connecticut Valley is called in which Northampton and Amherst are located, is home to an extraordinary array of top of the line private liberal arts colleges. In addition to Smith in Northampton and Amherst College in Amherst, there is Mt. Holyoke College in South Hadley [where, you will recall, David Truman found a soft landing after the Columbia uprising]. The year before I arrived, these schools had banded together with UMass to create a small educational experiment in South Amherst called Hampshire College. The resulting five schools were combined in the Five College Consortium, the centerpiece of which was a rule that a student at anyone of the five schools could take one or

more of his or her courses at any of the other schools. The five institutions coordinated their academic schedules so that semesters began and ended together and vacations occurred in the same weeks. That first year, a young man named Peter Rachleff came over from Amherst to enroll in my political philosophy seminar. He wrote an outstanding paper analyzing Marx and Berger and Luckman [*The Social Construction of Reality*] on reification, and earned the only A+ in the class. Peter is now a professor of History at Macalester, in St. Paul, and I was delighted to see that he teaches, among other things, African-American History.

The Five College Consortium continues to the present day, and from a distance, it is easy to suppose that the principal beneficiary is UMass, which gets to puff itself by its association with several of the premier private colleges in the country. Seen up close, the reality is quite different. As the seventies matured, the bright young things who had flooded into UMass grew in productivity and distinction. By the end of the decade, I could flabbergast my UMass students with a little thought experiment. "Imagine," I would say to them, "that all four of the other institutions of the Five College Consortium were somehow scrunched together into one big private college. How would each department of that super college compare with the corresponding department of UMass?" Their eyes would widen when I went down the list of Humanities, Social Science, and Natural Science departments and showed them that in each case, the faculty of the UMass department were more academically or professionally distinguished than the faculty of the assembled four colleges. The students themselves sensed this imbalance. Even though the free Five Colleges bus service was quite as capable of taking UMass students to Amherst or Smith or Mt. Holyoke as it was of bringing students from those colleges to UMass, the fact was that the traffic was heavily tilted toward UMass.

From the day that I sat down in my new office, I sensed that there was something odd about my situation in the philosophy department. We were located then on the seventh floor of a tall building called Thompson Tower. The offices are arranged in a hollow square around a core containing the elevators and stairs. My office was on the southwest corner of the floor, catty-corner from the office of young Fred Feldman. I assumed that he would be at least superficially friendly, both because I was a new member of the department and, frankly, because I was now one of the people who would eventually be voting on his tenure. But his manner was distant and off-putting. He seemed to have a permanent smirk on his face, rather like the look I have come to expect on the face of the right-wing pundit William Kristol. I am somewhat embarrassed to admit that it took me more than a year to realize that not everyone in the department was pleased to see me.

I learned the true back story about my offer from the man who became my closest friend in the department and eventually my ally in an internecine war that consumed all my energies, Robert J. Ackerman. [These words were written in the Spring of 2010. In 2011, Bob died suddenly of a very fast-moving cancer, before I even had time to share with him what I had written about our adventures and struggles. he is sadly missed.]

Bob was a tall, broad faced man of many talents and accomplishments. He was a pianist who, for many years, entertained customers with ragtime and jazz at a number of Pioneer Valley restaurants and clubs. He started his career specializing in Greek philosophy, then turned his attention to logic and the philosophy of science, on which subjects he wrote a number of books, and eventually reinvented himself as an expert on Continental philosophy. He and I were both so prolific that each of us alone had published more books than all of our other colleagues combined.

The story was that in 1969, when I first approached Herb Heidelberger about joining the department, a group of senior members who dominated the department -- Gettier, Sleight, Robison and Matthews, among others -- wanted to bring in two of their friends who did the same sort of narrow Chisholmite epistemology -- Cartwright and Sosa, I think. A rump group, including Bob Ackerman, Ann and John Brentlinger, and Leonard Ehrlich, were eager to hire me. Bruce Aune went to the Dean to ask his advice, and -- these being the glory days -- the Dean said, "Why not hire all three?" Out went three offers.

It turned out that the two people whom the inner circle in the department really wanted did not accept the offers. But I accepted, and a year later joined the department. Of course they weren't glad to see me. I was the product of a busted parlay. They did manage to hire Michael Jubien, a new Assistant Professor who arrived the same year I did. Mike fit right in, and eventually became Department Head.

But still, even if I wasn't their first choice, why didn't they want me in their department? There were two reasons, I finally discovered. The first was political -- department politics, not real politics. Ehrlich and the Brentlingers were the old timers, people whom Sleight, Gettier, Robison, Feldman, Chappell, Matthews, and Jubien really wished would just go away and let them create a world class department of people all of whom devoted their lives to teasing out the inner meaning of "S knows that p." Bob Ackerman had sided with the old timers in the push to bring me in, so he was classed as one of the enemies. Since I was their candidate, it was obvious which side I would be on.

The second reason was far more serious, going as it did to the very heart of sectarian orthodoxy. For those reading this memoir who have not spent their professional lives as American philosophers, let me explain that there is a phrase that, when uttered about someone, is

considered the ultimate death sentence, equivalent in condemnatory power to the language with which the Jewish community of Amsterdam expelled Baruch Spinoza. Philosophers are accustomed to saying that someone's work is "wrong," or "derivative" or even "confused." or -- in the case of logic -- "trivial," After all, philosophy began with the arguments between Socrates and the Sophists, and a healthy taste for verbal warfare has persisted to the present day. But if philosophers want to make it absolutely clear that someone is beyond the pale, to be shunned and reviled and ignored, they will say that what he [or she] does **is not philosophy**. There is no appeal from that verdict. Well, the boys [as Bob Ackerman and I took to calling the majority faction] thought that what Ackerman and the Brentlingers and Ehrlich and I did was **not philosophy**.

I confess that I found the behavior of my new colleagues rather puzzling. These people apparently thought of themselves as **analytic philosophers**. Well and good. Before I turned eighteen, I had studied with Willard van Orman Quine, Nelson Goodman, and Hao Wang. I knew more logic than they did, and in my own work, I used mathematics a good deal more sophisticated than anything they knew or ever used. What on earth were they so uptight about? It took me a very long time to develop some sense of who they thought they were and what they thought they were doing. The short of it seems to have been this: Having taken over what they thought of as a somnolent department, they were intent on turning it into a world-class outpost of whatever it was that Roderick Chisholm did at Brown. John, Ann, Leonard, Bob, and I were so much dead wood, in their view, taking up places that could be better filled with real philosophers.

Something else was going on that I had never encountered before, although I understand that it is rather common in Philosophy departments around the country. These men had formed

themselves into a clique, around which they gathered a favored group of the students in the graduate program. Once Fred Feldman got his hands on the administrative position of Graduate Program Director -- usually a chore shoved on some poor unsuspecting junior member of a department -- he used that position to advance an agenda. The favored in-group of students were given such Teaching Assistantships as the department had available. Feldman counseled students against taking my courses or those of the other outsiders. He formed dissertation committees so that we would be excluded from them, especially if the committees were for the in-group of students. There was a good deal of snide, smarmy, snickering smirking about our unphilosophical work.

At one point, I served on a committee with Gettier and Robison whose task it was to divide up the available merit money for raises. [Because this was a State university, this task was handed to the department, rather than being reserved for the Dean]. Leonard Ehrlich had just published a book on Jaspers, so I proposed that he receive a merit raise. Neither Robison nor Gettier had ever published a book, of course, but that did not stop Robison from rejecting the proposal, saying that it would have been better if Leonard had not published the book.

I found this behavior appalling, mystifying, and simply *infra dignitatem*. In every one of the departments of which I had previously been a member, there were of course some professors whom the students thought of as the stars and others who were regarded as of lesser distinction or even intelligence. Everyone at Harvard knew that Quine was just plain smarter than Donald Williams or John Wild [or anyone else, for that matter], but every member of the department was treated with courtesy and accorded at least *pro forma* respect. At Chicago, we youngsters had waged a battle against the oppressive reputation of Richard McKeon, to be sure. Still, no one was kept off dissertation committees. At Columbia, as well, those of us gathered around Ernest

Nagel thought of ourselves as the new wave, but we had great respect for Justus Buchler, for Jack Randall, for Jimmy Gutmann, and the rest of the old timers. It would never have occurred to any of us at those places to say, or even think, that what they did was "not philosophy." I am afraid I reveal my elitist upbringing when I say that I thought of my colleagues as just never having learned how a gentleman or gentle lady behaves in the Academy.

As the years went by, Bob and I grew more frustrated with the party-line, lockstep behavior of the members of the majority. When we attended a department meeting to discuss a candidate for the department or a proposed change in the rules of the graduate program, there would be a lively discussion that gave every appearance of being a genuine exchange of views, but the votes were always the same. After a while, Bob took to playing a little game. At the beginning of each discussion, he would quite visibly lay a folded piece of paper on the desk. After the vote was taken, he would unfold the paper. There on it would be written the vote count. He was never wrong.

Oh, there were moments when it appeared that one or another of the boys was going to side with us on some issue, large or small. The Olympia Snowe of the department was Gareth Matthews. He sighed, he meditated, he hesitated, he weighed the pros and cons, he acknowledged the merits of our side of the debate, he confessed that he was seriously tempted to endorse our view. But always, in the end, our arguments were just not quite strong enough to win him over. In the twenty-one years that I sat in those meetings, not once did Matthews ever break from the party line. Mitch McConnell would have been impressed.

At one point, after years of frustration, Bob, Ann, John, Leonard, and I went to the then chair, Mike Jubien, to propose that we be permitted to design a Master's Program in Political Philosophy and Continental Philosophy, in order to give us some role, however secondary, in the



graduate program. Mike's response was to suggest that it might be better if we left the department.

All of this gets me way ahead of my story, for at the end of that very first year on Barrett Place, something happened that had a far greater impact on my life, and the life of our family, than the small mindedness of my colleagues in philosophy. On July 11, 1972, the American chess prodigy Bobby Fischer squared off against the world chess champion Boris Spassky in Reykjavik, Iceland for the championship of the chess world. There were no live television feeds in those days, but public television committed itself to a series of programs in real time reporting on the match. PBS recruited Shelby Lyman to host a program in which, as each game was played, he would receive telephoned reports of the moves and put them on a chess board hanging on a wall with slots for the pieces. Lyman himself was not a very strong chess player, although he had done yeoman work for the United States Chess Federation [USCF] in promoting the game. With him in the studio, however, were some of the strongest players in America, and as each move was announced, they would analyze it, try to divine the strategy behind it, look for traps and loopholes, all the while pretty much rooting for Fischer.

I had learned chess from my father, and though it was not my favorite game -- I preferred the game of Go -- I took out my lovely wooden chess set, set up the pieces on a board in the family room, and followed along as Lyman announced the moves and the experts analyzed them. Little Patrick was four and a half then, still improving his talking [he was a late talker], but he watched me as I stared at the television set. Something clicked inside him. The next year, when he was attending the Smith College Campus Day School, he asked me to come to an Open House of the school, which was just down the hill from our house. I went along and followed him as he showed me his school. In one room, the teachers had set up a variety of board games on the

floor -- Monopoly, checkers, Chinese checkers, and chess, among others. Patrick pulled me to the chess board and said, "Teach me that." "Well," I said, "that is a rather complicated game. How about this one?," pointing to checkers.

Patrick was adamant, so when we got home, I took out the chess board and taught him the moves. Immediately, he wanted to play a game against me. I took him through a game, which in the end I won. Patrick was very upset by that, and wanted to play again. Pretty soon, we were playing every day. At first I won all the games. Then I let him win some. Then he won some on his own, and it became a genuine contest. Several years later, I bought Patrick a copy of Bobby Fischer's book, *My Sixty Favorite Games*. He taught himself to read chess notation more or less at the same time that he learned to read words. In the morning, when I woke up, I would hear him in his room, playing chess, the pieces clicking as he put them down on the board.

So began a long, complex journey that ended, many years later, with Patrick becoming one of the strongest chess players in America, an International Grandmaster known throughout the entire chess world, twice the United States Champion, a second to Anand in his world championship match against Kasparov, a widely read chess journalist, and for some years in his twenties, a chess professional who supported himself over the board. That is a very long story, to which I shall return many times. One of the most fascinating and challenging conundrums I faced as a father was how to raise Patrick as a healthy, happy, normal boy, while at the same time acknowledging, supporting, and endorsing his emergence as a force in the world of international adult chess.

I have spoken about the inwardness of Patrick's nervous system as a baby. That quality manifested itself in many ways as he grew older. While still a little boy, he exhibited extraordinary powers of concentration. As a three year old, he loved those wooden PlaySkool

puzzles consisting of six or eight big pieces that fit into a wooden frame to make an elephant or a flower or a dog. He would sit on the floor fitting the pieces into the frame, so absorbed that if his back was turned when I walked into the room, he would not hear me say, "Hello, Peege." [Peege was my nickname for him, derived from his initials, P. G.] Alarmed, we had his hearing tested at the world-famous Clarke School for the Deaf, which was several blocks from Barrett Place, but there was nothing wrong with his hearing. He was just concentrating.

I thought of that some years later when I took Patrick, now a boy of twelve or thirteen, to a big deal tournament in New York City featuring some of the strongest players in America. Patrick sat down to play his first game, which like all serious chess games was played under time constraints. Each player in the tournament had two hours to make the first forty moves [a time control known in the chess world as "forty and two."] Patrick had the black pieces, so his opponent made the first move and pressed the plunger, starting Patrick's clock. It was an opening move that Patrick had not seen before. He stared at the board, put his chin on his hands, and thought. And thought. And thought. An hour and a half went by, while Patrick did not move a muscle, his two hours ticking away. Finally, Patrick lifted his hand, made his first move, and went on to win the game.

What did chess mean to Patrick, to absorb so completely his attention and youthful energies? I got a clue several years later. I had taken Patrick to school with me, "to see where Daddy works," and on the way home I took the back way on Rocky Hill Road to avoid the traffic on Route 9. When we drove past the cemetery, Patrick pointed to a small mausoleum and asked what it was. "That is a place where someone is buried," I said, "and his family have put up that structure to remember him by. It is called a mausoleum. Sometimes people put statues on top of them." Patrick thought about that for several miles, and then said, in a quiet voice, "I know what

would be a good mausoleum for you, Daddy." "Oh yes," I said in the calmest voice I could muster, clutching the steering wheel firmly with both hands, "and what would that be?" "Well," he said, getting rather excited, "it would be laid out like a chess board, and the white king would be turned over on its side, showing that it had been mated." After that, I ceased wondering why Patrick was playing chess.

Since I will be returning to Patrick's chess career a number of times in these memoirs, perhaps this is as good a time as any to explain a little inside baseball to those readers who are not familiar with the world of competitive chess. Chess in the United States is overseen by the U. S. Chess Federation, or USCF. The USCF organizes and authorizes tournaments and keeps careful records of how everyone does in them so that it can apply its complicated formula to the results and calculate everyone's USCF chess rating. The ratings run from a low of about 200 for absolute novices just learning the game, to as high as 2700 or even higher, for world famous players. A rating of 2000 earns you the title of "expert." [Below that, you are an A, B, C, D, etc player]. At 2200, you are awarded the title of Master, and at 2400 the title of Senior Master. Whenever two players play a game, the USCF uses a formula to calculate the probability that the winner will beat the loser, based on their ratings before the game. The bigger the gap between the two players, the more rating points the weaker player gets if he wins, but the fewer points the stronger player gets if she wins [the theory is that the stronger player figured to win anyway.] After each tournament, each player's rating is updated to reflect his or her record against the players he or she beat or lost to in the tournament. Over time and many games, a player's rating comes to reflect pretty accurately his or her strength over the board.

This is all just in America. In the world at large, chess is overseen by the *Fédération Internationale des Eschecs*, or FIDE. The same formula is used for calculating FIDE ratings, but

in general your FIDE rating is somewhat lower than your USCF rating. You can only earn FIDE rating points by playing in FIDE sponsored tournaments against other players with FIDE ratings. The really strong players are the ones who have earned the title of International Master or International Grandmaster, this latter being the highest title one can earn. You cannot become either an IM or GM simply by accumulating points. You must play in a very strong tournament entered by a number of players already holding those titles, and your performance must be at a level judged [by a formula] to be of IM or GM quality. Each time you do that you "earn a norm," and after earning three IM norms or GM norms you become an IM or a GM. Once awarded by FIDE, that title is yours for life.

All of this lay far ahead of Patrick when we played our little games, and neither of us at that point knew anything about the USCF, FIDE, ratings, norms, or the rest of the arcana of the chess world.

What of little Toby, Patrick's brother? I must now confront a problem that bedevils all memoirists. In my mind, I am back in the early 1970's, when both Patrick and Toby were little boys. But I am writing these words in 2010, when I know, of course, what both of them have become. That darling tow-headed little one and a half year old boy is now forty years old. He is a brilliant law professor, the leading young civil proceduralist in the American legal profession. He is also a handsome, proud gay man who served as the Co-Chair of the Advisory Committee on LGBT issues to the Obama campaign, and is the leading voice in the country on LGBT legal issues. He has long ceased -- and here I write with just a tinge of parental regret -- to be "Toby" either to the world or to his family. He is now "Tobias," Professor Tobias Barrington Wolff of the University of Pennsylvania Law Faculty.

There is an old story about Mrs. Shapiro, who takes her two little baby boys out in the stroller for a walk. On the street in front of her apartment she runs into Mrs. Finkelstein, who coos and says, "Who have we here?" Mrs. Shapiro replies, "The one on the left is the doctor. The one on the right is the professor." I hope I am not simply channeling my inner Mrs. Shapiro when I say that I have two trophy sons.

It was not difficult to see, very early on, that Patrick was headed for distinction, but what of little Toby? He was not a precocious child, in the way that Patrick was. To be sure, since Toby learned to talk early and Patrick learned to talk late, it seemed as though they began to speak at roughly the same time. And the difference I perceived in their nervous systems in those very first weeks continued to unfold. Toby was as outgoing as Patrick was inward-looking. This was difficult for Toby, who wanted to play with his big brother but was repeatedly rebuffed. "It's not fair," Toby would protest. "Patrick won't play with me." "Sure it is, Toby," Patrick would respond. "I don't want to play with you either." [There was just a hint of Sidney Morgenbesser in Patrick, I am afraid.] Patrick could spend an entire semester in school without really getting to know the children in his class. Toby would come home the first day knowing not only the names of his classmates but the names of their brothers and sisters as well. Almost immediately, Toby formed a close friendship with little Nicky Clausen, who lived at the bottom of Barrett Place. They became inseparable, so much so that people seeing them together thought they were brother and sister.

And yet, despite the absence of any stereotypically precocious behavior, very early on, I could tell that Toby was fiercely intelligent. I used to talk a great deal to my boys, but I also listened to them. Perhaps because of my experience listening to students and reading their papers, I have become extremely sensitive to nuances of language -- to grammar, phrasing,

syntax. Even as a little boy, Toby used language with a precision of word choice and syntax that I found remarkable. It was not so much what he was saying -- that was pretty much what you would expect from a three or four or five or six year old -- but just how he was saying it. Toby also exhibited, even then, a quality that now defines his adult character. It is something that the ancient Romans called *gravitas*. The adult Tobias has a wisdom, a balance, a sensitivity of moral sensibility that is remarkable even in a forty-year old, and was clearly apparent, at least to me, in the little boy he then was.

It was not easy being Toby in that family, what with two professorial parents and a big brother becoming a force in the chess world. Toby came up to me one day in the kitchen, looking rather crestfallen. He must have been nine or so. "What's the matter, Toby?" I asked, rather concerned by the manifest sadness on a face almost always wreathed in smiles. "Daddy," he replied, "I am the only one in the family without a national reputation."

There were moments, however. When Toby was four, we decided to visit the Moores so that Barry could meet his godson. We all piled into the big green Chevy station wagon and drove in to Cambridge. When we arrived, we discovered that Marcuse was there. Herbert's wife, Inge, had passed away shortly before, and Herbert had come East to spend time with an old friend. Barry was delighted to meet little Toby. The Moores had no children of their own. But he had not the foggiest idea how to play with a four year old. The best he could come up with was to talk German to Toby. Marcuse, on the other hand, was an absolute natural with kids. With his shock of white hair, rosy cheeks, and piercing eyes, Herbert looked like one of those big blow-up rubber figures that pop back up each time you tip them over. He got down on the floor with Toby, picked up a desk globe that Moore had on a table, and started spinning it, telling Toby wild stories about all the places in the world. Toby was enchanted. Eventually, it came

time for us to leave, and the Moores and Marcuse accompanied us out to the curb. As we were loading the kids into the back seat for the drive home, Toby suddenly looked up at Marcuse, waved his hand, and said "Bye Herbie." I told that story to Tobias' UPenn law colleagues when I visited them to present a paper. I think it gained him some considerable hit points in the competitive world of academic law.

One day when we were having lunch, Herbert told me a lovely story about himself and his son, Peter, that has stayed in my memory because it so perfectly captures the way I feel about Patrick and Tobias [I must school myself not to write "Toby" when I am referring to his adult years.] After Marcuse left Brandeis, he taught for a time at UC San Diego. It is there that he taught Angela Davis. His son, Peter, was working in the area as a city planner. One day, Marcuse said, he was walking on the beach when a young man approached him, hesitantly and obviously nervous about disturbing him. Finally, the young man got his courage up and said, "Excuse me, but aren't you Peter Marcuse's father?" Herbert roared with laughter when he told the story, obviously delighted to take a back seat to his son. I am always tickled to be acknowledged as Patrick or Tobias' father.

Although both Patrick and Toby were preternaturally smart, they were, after all, little boys. Very early on, they acquired a taste for comic books, which accumulated at such a rate that we finally bought two big plastic laundry baskets for their rooms, to maintain some semblance of order. Both boys had the uncanny ability to plunge a hand into a basket filled with comics in order to pluck out just the one they wanted to read. After a bit, I grew curious about what was in them. Comics in my day had been rather benign affairs -- *Richie Rich* and *Looney Tunes* -- but these seemed to be a good deal more violent than that. So I sat down one day and read a couple of dozen chosen at random from the two baskets. I made two discoveries that



reassured me. First of all, the vocabulary in the comics was actually rather sophisticated. You could learn more from reading them than you could from the readers the boys were given in school. The second discovery was even more surprising. The underlying moral sensibility of the comics was unswervingly liberal. The villains, to a man or woman, were basically good people who had become angry and bitter because of some terrible experience, such as falling into a vat of hot oil or being dropped from an airplane without a parachute. They weren't evil, they were just misunderstood. [Rather like Anakin Skywalker.] "Well", I thought, "that's all right then," and left the boys to their comic books. Now that both Patrick and Tobias are astonishingly successful men, people sometimes ask me what I did when they were little to produce this result. I just say, "I let them read comic books and watch television, and I spent a lot of time talking to them."

As I have observed, my years at Columbia were anomalous in one respect: while there, I had no involvement with other departments or programs. I had enjoyed my brief time as Head Tutor of Social Studies at Harvard, as well as my engagement with the last remnants of the Hutchins curriculum at Chicago, and I wanted to continue that sort of broadened intellectual activity. During my job interviews with Dean Seymour Shapiro, I had asked whether there would be an opportunity for me to create an undergraduate interdisciplinary program at UMass. "Sure," he said, "if you want to." Once I was settled into my new department, I cast about for some way to proceed. What I had in mind was a left-wing version of Social Studies. That may sound odd to any Harvard types reading this, because in the hermetic world of Harvard Square, Social Studies is considered a way-out radical program. I have no doubt that it attracts to itself the most progressive students at Harvard, but the program itself lies squarely in what I think of as

the intellectual mainstream. Smith, Marx, Tyler, Weber, and Freud are the bread and butter of social theory. I had in mind something a bit edgier.

Vere Chappell suggested I talk to Jim Shaw, a young man who headed up The College of Arts and Sciences Information and Advising Center, or CASIAC. Jim warned me that folks at UMass did not like "empire builders," and he thought that I might do better to fly under the radar at first by creating my new program within something he called BDIC. [I was beginning to discover the State University penchant for acronyms]. This stood for "Bachelor's Degree in Individual Concentration," and was actually a rather intelligent way for students to create their own fields of concentration if none of the existing departmental majors got their scholarly juices flowing. All a student had to do to be a BDIC major was to find a faculty member willing to serve as advisor, work up a plan of courses drawn from a variety of departmental offerings, and run it past a reasonably complaisant committee. Shaw pointed out that there was nothing to stop me from crafting an interdisciplinary major and then inviting a group of students to sign on. Technically, each of them would be doing an individually designed major. It would simply be a coincidence that all the individual plans were the same.

My first move was to call a meeting of forty or more people from all five colleges whose interests would, I thought, incline them to join with me in this venture. I went out of my way to invite several of the Pioneer Valley's best known right-wing intellectuals. I was still under the influence of the Ivy League mindset, and simply assumed that it would be people from the four private colleges in the area who would be my best resource. Almost immediately, I learned some hard lessons that shaped the program from then on. UMass was growing so rapidly that people's teaching duties were rather fluid. A goodly number of the UMass people at the meeting assured me that they could get sprung loose from their departmental teaching obligations to participate in

a new program. But the representatives of Amherst, Smith, and Mt. Holyoke were unanimous in expressing grave doubts that they could contribute as little as one course every two or three years. In the end, I gave up on the idea of a Five College program, and laid plans for an exclusively UMass structure.

My idea was simple enough. Students would cobble together courses from four or five different departments -- History, Economics, Philosophy, Political Science, principally -- and then take a two semester senior seminar designed just for them and taught by a brace of professors drawn from two different departments. I would handle all the administrative work, such as it was, so the only cost would be some freed up time of two professors each semester. The UMass Sociology Department was such a disaster that I had no expectation of being able to draw anyone from that quarter. Indeed, there is a sense in which the program was a substitute for a vibrant Sociology major. I called the new program Social Thought and Political Economy, which pretty well said, to anyone in the know, where I was coming from. The faceless gnomes who made up the course catalogue shortened this to STPEC, and this in turn came to be pronounced "Stepick." It sounded distressingly like an oil additive advertised by auto parts stores, but Stepick it was, and Stepick it has remained for more than thirty-five years.

As one would expect, things got off to a slow start. The first few students who drifted into my office were attracted principally by the fact that there weren't any requirements. I did have one fascinating glimpse into how the other half of the university lives when an Engineering major walked in to ask about joining the new program. Since I had never met an Engineering major before, I quizzed him a bit on what sorts of things he was learning. At one point I asked whether there was much class discussion in Engineering courses. He said, "Well, we have a

saying in Engineering. If you ask a question you have a problem." I allowed as how things were a bit different in Arts and Sciences.

When the program had been around long enough to have some seniors in it, I scheduled our very first senior seminar. It was taught by a member of the Political Science Department, William Connolly, and me. Bill and I taught a rather demanding seminar, and word of it filtered down to the Juniors, who grew terrified that they were not ready for so high-powered a theoretical exercise. They really did not feel that their course work was preparing them adequately. So I designed a Junior Seminar devoted to the classics of social theory that Bill and I had been presupposing. I cadged some money from the Provost to spring someone loose to teach it, and the Junior Seminar became a regular part of the program.

Several years later, I succeeded in recruiting a really high-powered Five College faculty member, Tracy Strong, to teach the Junior Seminar. Tracy, who had actually taught in Social Studies at Harvard, put together a demanding Junior Seminar, word of which filtered down to the Sophomores just entering STPEC. They didn't think they were ready to tackle a Junior Seminar like that, and wanted to know what they should take to prepare themselves. There really wasn't anything in the catalogue that fit the bill, so I invented a Philosophy Department course called Introduction to Social Philosophy, and taught it for several years.

This student-driven character of STPEC became the hallmark of the program, and remains so to the present day. To an extent that may be unique in American higher education, STPEC grew academically and intellectually in response to the expressed needs of the students. It was in that Introduction to Social Philosophy course, by the way, that my training in sensitivity to feminist concerns was brought to completion. I was lecturing one day to the ninety students who had signed up when a woman sitting near the back challenged me on my habit of saying

"he" or "him" or "his" when referring to some unnamed hypothetical person. I stopped, thought about that for a bit, and allowed as how she was right. On the spot I adopted the practice of rigorously alternating male and female pronouns in any sentence I was uttering in which one or the other was not required by the actual gender of the person being referred to. I have continued that practice to the present day. It requires a certain presence of mind, but then, actually listening to what you are saying when you are saying it is not a bad habit to cultivate.

STPEC grew rapidly, until I had to schedule several sections of the junior and senior seminars. Budget crises had tightened things up, and departments were demanding TA return for the release of a professor's time. That is to say, to compensate a department for the release, I had to give them enough soft money to hire one of their graduate students as a Teaching Assistant. Each time my enrolments increased, I would throw myself on the mercy of the Provost. It was an old and well-known bureaucratic game, and the Provost, who was a friend of mine, knew perfectly well what I was doing. Finally, he drew the line and limited STPEC to no more than 100 majors. That made it a small but really respectable Arts and Sciences concentration.

Beyond the internecine warfare, there is not really much to say about the Philosophy Department because my colleagues, with the exception of the rump group, were not a very interesting collection of people. They were smart, in a pinched kind of way, but in twenty-one years, I do not think I ever had an interesting conversation with any of them. They seemed utterly uninterested in politics, history, literature, art, religion, or even philosophy itself beyond the confined of their narrow conception of that field. Their recruiting efforts were devoted entirely to replicating themselves as closely as was possible, short of cloning. One story will suffice.

In 1989-90, after a number of budgetary crises, the Department was authorized by the Dean to recruit. We advertised for someone in the general area of the philosophy of science, and a rather impressive group of people applied, most notable among them Michael Dunn from Indiana. Dunn had by then published two books and a huge number of very technical articles in logic and related fields. He was a real heavyweight. Although I was not myself directly interested in his work, I thought he would be a tremendous addition to the department. The search committee consisted of several of the usual suspects, plus a young Assistant Professor, Linda Wetzel, whose field was Philosophy of Mathematics. She had been recruited with the support of the majority faction, and seemed to be on a fast track to tenure.

Among the many applicants was a young man teaching at Yale, Phil Bricker, who had, to that point, published roughly three articles, none of which, so far as I could tell, was especially exciting. A department meeting was called, and the chair of the search committee announced that the committee had with great enthusiasm decided to recommend ... Bricker. Wetzel, who was more honest than prudent, burst out, "What? You can't be serious!" I knew then that she had no chance of being promoted with tenure. Gettier and Feldman and the others had obviously passed over Dunn because the sheer weight of his accomplishments would have shown them up. But Bricker was just about their speed. Sure enough, Bricker accepted, and as soon as he arrived threw in with the majority. He became indistinguishable from Feldman, Gettier, Sleigh, Jubien, or Robison. He well understood the inadvisability of publishing. Linda Wetzel is now at Georgetown.

The rest of the university, however, was vibrant with debate, innovation, and exploration. The University of Massachusetts at Amherst became, during the 1970's and early 1980's, one of

the most interesting progressive campuses in America, despite the budget crises that crippled it periodically. How had this happened?

There are two facts that explain it, one relating to UMass's relation to the larger expansion of higher education in America, the other the consequence of one of the few acts of genuine administrative courage that I have witnessed during my half century in the Academy.

When World War II ended, American higher education was still dominated by the private sector, despite the existence of Land Grant institutions in every state. But the enormous demand for admission to college, sparked by the GI Bill, produced a huge and permanent shift to an enlarged public sector. State Universities proliferated campuses. State colleges became state universities. Community colleges were opened, and many of them made the transition to four year state institutions. The demand for faculty was so great that graduate students were being offered teaching positions before they had passed their qualifying exams. This expansion began to slow down in the middle and late sixties, but UMass came late to the process, and was still expanding rapidly when most State Universities were pausing to consolidate. The consequence was that in 1969, '70, '71, and '72, UMass was able to pick off some of the best young men and women emerging from top graduate schools.

Many of these new Assistant Professors came to North Amherst intending to stay for a few years and then move on to better schools, once they had published that first book or series of journal articles. But the Pioneer Valley is a seductive place, full of lovely houses in old communities at quite affordable prices. As they settled down, got married, and had children, moving seemed less and less important. Since they were bright and hard-working walking in the door, they soon became reasonably distinguished in their fields. The Sixties ended with America's withdrawal from Viet Nam and Nixon's resignation [the Sixties were always more in

the early Seventies], but the Pioneer Valley, like Brigadoon, did not change. It was still sandals and candles and far out bumper stickers. A strong women's movement was born in the Valley, and in unlikely corners of the university, like German and Legal Studies and the Labor Center and the Afro-American Studies Department, groups of bright, gifted, unrepentant lefties settled in.

All this took a giant leap forward in 1974. The Economics Department was in terrible shape. A group of neo-classicals were feuding with some Chicago Milton Friedman types who had been brought in to jump start things. Enrolment in the intro courses was down, hurting not only Arts and Sciences but also some huge departments like Business and Food and Natural Resources, whose majors were all required to take an Economics course. The Dean of Social and Behavioral Sciences at the time was a really decent man named Dean Alfange, who had ascended to the Deanship from the Chairmanship of Poli Sci. He tried bringing in an outside Chair, but that didn't work. He tried handing the Chairmanship to a young Associate Professor, but that flopped. He even thought of taking the department over himself. At that point, his friend and former colleague, Bill Connolly, came to him with an idea. Bill told him that there was a real hotshot young Harvard economist who had just been denied tenure at Harvard, despite having the support of Paul Samuelson, Wassily Leontiev, and John Kenneth Galbraith. His name, Bill said, was Sam Bowles, and he was spending a sabbatical semester right here in the Pioneer Valley. What about bringing in Bowles?

Sam Bowles was the real deal, arguably the smartest young economist in the country. At Harvard, he had been given the plum of teaching the graduate Micro course, the jewel in every Economics doctoral program. He had been denied tenure because he was a left-wing thinker who did not do the sort of cramped economics that the younger tenured Harvard professors



respected. Sam wanted to stay in the area, Bill said. Alfange met with Bowles and asked whether he would be interested in coming to UMass. Right away, Sam said that he had no intention of being the token Marxist in the Econ Department. He would only come if Alfange hired **five** radical economists, all with tenure walking in the door.

This is where courage comes into it. Instead of throwing Bowles out of his office, Alfange said he would do it, but on one condition: the five had to have gilt-edged Ivy League credentials that Alfange could get past an inattentive Board of Trustees. Bowles recruited Herb Gintis, Richard Wolff, Stephen Resnick, and Rick Edwards. The five met with Alfange, and arrived at an agreement. Overnight, UMass acquired the largest collection of American Marxist economists in captivity.

When the five showed up, some way had to be found for them to live with the people already in the department. Alfange appointed a five man committee to sort things out. Two were neo-classical from the department. Two were drawn from the five new professors. I was the fifth. The committee agreed that the neo-classicals would control the Chairmanship, which went to a really bright, nice mathematical economist named Don Katzner, whose most intense concern seemed to me to be boundary conditions on semi-closed sets. The Marxists would control the Executive Committee of the Department. Everyone agreed that there would be no ideological tests for applicants to the doctoral program. Graduate students would be chosen solely on objective criteria -- GPAs and GREs.

Almost immediately, the West Coast radical magazine *Ramparts* published a big article about the new radicals at UMass. When it came time for seniors to apply to graduate school, every super-bright hotshot radical econ major in the country applied. The existing neo-classical grad program was a decent second or third tier program, not at all in the league of Harvard or

MIT. So the very best neo-classical students applied to UMass only as a back up, having no intention of actually going there. The next Fall, an entire class of top of the line radical graduate students enrolled. Overnight, the program was transformed.

The new faculty were not only smart and left, they were also attractive, charismatic teachers. Enrolments soared, and Alfange was vindicated. But all was not entirely calm. The first problem was the intro courses. Business and Food and Natural Resources wanted the old time religion -- supply and demand curves, elasticities of demand -- Samuelson light, basically. But the graduate students wanted to teach them Marx, Rosa Luxemburg, Baran and Sweezy. Sam and Herb and Rick and Steve explained that these courses were the department's bread and butter. If the department did not teach what the big clients wanted, the TA-ships that supported the new graduate students would dry up. The students were not happy.

The second problem was inevitable, and could have been anticipated. Put five Marxists in a room, and the first thing they do is split into two factions. Sam and Herb were a team, joined at the hip, or so it seemed. Shortly after coming to UMass they published *Schooling in Capitalist America*, probably the most famous work of Marxist scholarship by Americans. They were fiercely smart [and still are, of course], and enormously popular teachers at every level from Intro Econ to the most advanced graduate seminar. Both Herb and Sam are very skilled mathematicians, and their published work shows the power of formal methods when wedded to an uncompromisingly progressive politics. Rick Wolff and Steve Resnick were totally different sorts of intellectual Marxists, much more in the European tradition. They were seriously enamored of the writings of the most refined and sophisticated of the French Marxists, Louis Althusser. Rick and Steve are movement builders, and over the years they have forged a school of Marxist analysis that has its own publications, annual scholarly conventions, and acolytes.

Like Herb and Sam, Rick and Steve were enormously popular lecturers. As the years went by, the Economics Department recruited more and more radical economists, becoming the largest and most intellectually powerful Marxist economics department in America.

There is a lovely story about Rick Wolff that I would like to tell. This is really Rick's story, not mine, but since I think Rick has more important things to do than write his memoirs, I hope he will not mind if I appropriate it. It seems that before the Second World War, Rick's father was a jurist in Europe who used his official position to help a number of Jews escape from the Nazis. Rick's family came to the United States, and eventually Rick went to Harvard. He was in his Harvard room one day when there was a knock on the door. It was a little man named Fritz Pappenheim. Pappenheim said that Rick's father had helped him to escape to the United States, and he was here now to repay that debt, by undertaking Rick's real education. For the next several years, as Rick took the standard Economics and Sociology and Government courses that Harvard offered in those days, Pappenheim conducted a private tutorial for Rick, taking him through the writings of Marx and the great sociologists, philosophers, economists, and political theorists of the European tradition. It was that informal tutorial, not what he learned in his classes, Rick said, that shaped his intellectual development. I have often thought that if Rick were a bit younger, he might have encountered at least some of that tradition in Social Studies.

All of this -- the Economics Department, the Legal Studies Department, the Afro-American Studies Department, the Labor Center, and smart, radical intellectuals scattered across the campus in English, German, Comparative Literature, and elsewhere -- made UMass in the 70's, 80's, and 90's one of the most exciting campuses in America. The buildings were in serious need of repair, the budgets were periodically slashed, the university suffered through a series of

less than stellar top administrators, but the place was **alive**. It turned out that my decision to walk away from Columbia was a brilliant career move.

The termination of my analysis and Cindy's lifted a great burden from my shoulders. No longer did I have to teach summer school or hunt up moonlighting opportunities. Between the Fall of 1971 and the Spring of 1980, I did not teach a single course above my mandated load. Edited books also stopped dropping from my sleeves like tribbles, [*Star Trek* episode, December 29, 1967] although there were three in the works that appeared in '71, '72, and '73. But I still had hanging over my head an unfinished book on Kant's ethics. I had begun the project while teaching Ethical Theory for the first time at Columbia in 1964-65. Fresh from what I felt was my successful engagement with the First Critique, I conceived the book as a critique and reinterpretation of Kant's ethical theory that would succeed at long last in producing the demonstration *a priori* of the Categorical Imperative that Kant claimed to have given us in the *Grundlegung*. Those of you reading this, if there are any, who are both knowledgeable about Kantian ethical theory and also conversant with my *In Defense of Anarchism* will recognize that I desperately needed such an argument to sustain the objectivist premise I had laid down in the latter work.

Ordinarily, as should by now be clear, I write quickly and finish a book without delays, but this project had been in the works for seven years. The problem was simple: I could not get the story right. Kant tries three times in the *Grundlegung* to demonstrate *a priori* the universal validity of the Fundamental Principle of Morality, and three times he fails. He first tries, as indeed he ought, to derive the conclusion from an analysis of the nature of willing as such. That attempt comes to grief with the famous, and famously unsatisfactory, Four Examples of the Categorical Imperative. His second attempt is the analysis of humanity as an end in itself, but

deeply moving though that passage is, it turns out not actually to mean anything coherent. His final attempt is the concept of a Realm of Ends, which in fact is far and away the most promising of the three. But although Kant has a pretty good argument for the claim that rational agents, *if they enter into a Kingdom of Ends*, are objectively obligated to abide by its laws [a line of argument he gets from Rousseau], he has in the *Grundlegung* no proof that rational agents as such are obligated to form a Kingdom of Ends. The dictates of the legislature in the Realm of Ends are therefore hypothetical, not categorical, in force.

It was this unsatisfactory state of affairs, this story without an ending, that kept me from finishing the book. Shortly after settling into the Barrett Place house, I returned to the project, and more by main force than by inspired storytelling, pushed through to a conclusion. *In Defense of Anarchism* had been such a marked success that Harper and Row agreed to publish the book, and in 1973 it finally appeared under the title *The Autonomy of Reason*. I have never been happy with that book, even though I do think it contains valuable explications of some of Kant's most impenetrable texts. Some years later, I was paging through Kant's *Rechtslehre*, for reasons I cannot now recall, and I came upon a discussion of property that I realized constituted the missing step in the argument for which I had been searching. When I was invited to contribute an essay to a *festschrift* for Barrington Moore, I sat down and wrote a paper that I called "The Completion of Kant's Moral Theory in the Tenets of the *Rechtslehre*." The editor of the *festschrift* rejected it because it did not "fit in" with the rest of the essays, and I put the essay in a file cabinet. Years later, I was invited to contribute to a volume of new essays on Kant's philosophy, and I sent it along. It finally appeared in 1998 in a volume called *Autonomy and Community: Readings in Contemporary Kantian Social Philosophy*. It is actually a rather

important essay, in my judgment, showing, among other things, exactly what the relationship is of Jack Rawls' "theory of justice" to Kant's moral philosophy.

The most successful book I have ever written, if we measure success by the size of the royalty checks, was really just an effort at uxorial support. After completing the preparation of her dissertation for publication, Cindy set right to work on a full-scale study of the novels of the American author Edith Wharton [resulting, of course, in my introduction to yet another body of wonderful literature with which I had until then been totally unfamiliar]. She won a National Endowment for the Humanities grant that permitted her to take off the academic year 1972-73. She worked feverishly, but at the end of the year still very much needed another semester of free time before going back to teaching. I should explain, parenthetically, that the members of the English Department had rejected suggestions that they reduce their teaching load to two-and-two by scheduling large lectures and discussion sections taught by graduate students. Rather nobly, they insisted that literature could only properly be taught in small classes, and took on themselves a three-three load that no one else in the faculties of Arts and Sciences bore. Cindy simply could not work as she needed to on her Wharton book while carrying that burden of teaching. But with Mrs. McEwan's salary, we did not think we could afford to have her take off a semester without pay.

As her fellowship year was coming to a close, I had a visitation from two Prentice Hall editors. My textbook for them, *Philosophy: A Modern Encounter*, had been extremely successful, albeit short-lived, and they thought I might be just the person for a new project they wanted to launch. Their formidable sales force of reps who visit Philosophy professors in community colleges and State University campuses across America were reporting that the students found the traditional casebooks too difficult to understand. Twenty pages of Descartes,

half a Platonic dialogue, or a section of the *Grundlegung* was just more than the students could handle. Would I be willing to write a readable textbook aimed at "the lower end of the market?"

I really was not attracted by the idea. After pouring out book after book to pay for the analytic bills, I wanted to spend time with my boys, do my teaching, and relax. But then it struck me that this might be the solution to Cindy's problem. "I will do it," I said, "if you give me an advance big enough to allow my wife to take a semester off without pay so that she can finish her scholarly book." How much would that be?, they wanted to know. Given Cindy's salary as an Assistant Professor, I figured we could manage it for \$6,000. [Lest anyone think I was nickel and diming it, I will point out that in 2010 constant dollars, that is just shy of \$30,000.] They agreed, and on July 12, 1973, I signed the contract, committing myself to turn in the finished manuscript one year later, at the end of the summer of 1974. Cindy took the semester off, she broke the back of her Wharton project, and in 1977, *A Feast of Words* was published to universal acclaim, establishing her as a major critic of American fiction.

That was all well and good, but I still had not written the textbook. Since I really did not want to, I kept putting it off. Finally, the summer of '74 arrived, and I realized I was going to have to take steps. There was no question of paying the money back! It had been spent long since. Clearly, I would have to turn in *something*. It did not have to be great. It just had to look like a book. If they decided not to publish it, that was their lookout. How long did an Intro Philosophy text have to be? I figured eight chapters: What is Philosophy?, Ethics, Social Philosophy, Political Philosophy [I thought I could get away with dividing those two, making it easier on me], Epistemology, Metaphysics, Philosophy of Religion, Philosophy of Art. It was the beginning of July, and the book was due on Labor Day. Eight chapters, eight weeks. A chapter a week. I decided to start each chapter with a brief biography of one of the great

philosophers, and then introduce the subject matter of the chapter by talking about his contribution to that branch of philosophy. I would include little snippets from the great philosophers in the body of the text, as a way of giving the students at least the flavor of the subject as I knew it. Since there was not going to be much time for library research -- never my long suit anyway -- I hired a really bright and energetic graduate student, Karen Soderlind, to be my legs.

And away I went, sitting in my lovely third floor office, hunting and pecking on the old standard typewriter. By the end of the summer I had a book. I sent the manuscript in, and breathed a sigh of relief. No one would be dunning me for the six thousand dollars. I went down to Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, just across the George Washington Bridge, for a production meeting with the editorial staff. They had just published an elementary Math textbook called *About Mathematics*, so we decided to call my book *About Philosophy*. The cover would be an array of little portraits of the eight beginning-of-the-chapter figures.

To my delight and astonishment, the book was a success. Apparently, I had managed just the right tone and level of difficulty. After a while, Prentice Hall wanted a new edition. It was not as though anything new had happened in the field. Philosophy grows slowly, after all. Sometimes five hundred years go by without much change. But students were beginning to buy used copies, and Prentice Hall, like all textbook publishers, wished to discourage such outrageous behavior by bringing out new editions of its texts periodically. The years have passed, and editors at Prentice Hall have come and gone. *About Philosophy* is now in its eleventh edition and its sixteenth Philosophy Editor. It has been a steady money maker, but the truth is that to me it is something more than a cash cow. Liberated from all constraints by the circumstances in which I wrote it, *About Philosophy* became a statement from my heart of what I



conceive philosophy to be. Like *In Defense of Anarchism*, it is a personal statement, not a contribution to scholarship. If students can still find their way into philosophy through its pages, I am content.

In 1971, Jack Rawls published *A Theory of Justice*, which soon came to be recognized as the most important contribution to political philosophy by an American in the twentieth century. Some time after it appeared, the publisher sent me a complimentary copy of the big book with the dark purplish cover. I had already published an article about the early version of Jack's theory, and I knew pretty well what I thought about the enterprise, but I said to myself, "You consider yourself a political philosopher. Pretty clearly, you need to read the whole thing." I put the volume by my side of the bed and started reading a little bit each evening before going to sleep. There seemed to be a thousand words on every page, and there were a great many pages, each one of which had the power to send me off to dreamland. I managed to get through about 130 pages and gave up. Some while later, I sucked it up and started again. This time I made it through maybe 160 pages, but I just could not keep myself going.

Finally, in the fall of 1975, I decided to offer a graduate course called "The Use and Abuse of Formal Models in Political Philosophy," a subject that had engaged me since my abortive attempt to publish my book on deterrence theory and military strategy. By this time, Bob Nozick had published his sprightly, engaging, utterly mad book, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, which was as easy to read as Jack's was difficult. I put together a dauntingly challenging course, in which I proposed to take my students first through Kenneth Arrow's masterful monograph, *Social Choice and Individual Values*, and then through much of the standard mathematical treatment of Game Theory, *Games and Decisions* by Duncan Luce and Howard Raiffa. Once the students had that material under their belts, I would lecture on Rawls and

Nozick, showing how each of them had **misused** the formal materials in his book. I had a covert motive in teaching the course. I figured that if I assigned Rawls' book, I would **have** to read it all the way through.

I knew from long experience that if I was going to lecture on formal materials, with proofs and all, I needed to prepare elaborate formal lecture notes. No off the cuff winging it. That way lay serious classroom embarrassment. I prepared lecture notes that, by the end of the semester, filled three spring binders. I tried to keep ahead of myself, so that while I was lecturing on ordinal and cardinal preference orders, I was preparing my notes on Arrow's General Possibility Theorem, and while I was lecturing on Game Theory, I would be preparing my notes on Rawls. The plan worked, at least at first. Confronted by the knowledge that I would be walking into a classroom and lecturing on *A Theory of Justice*, I actually managed to read the whole thing straight through. After the opening 150 pages or so, I found it stultifyingly boring, but I persevered.

Then, on October 19th, the phone rang. I answered it, my father's voice, so soft that I could barely hear it. "Rob, it is very bad." My parents had been getting ready to go out for the evening. When my father went upstairs to get my mother, he found her lying on her bed. She had died instantly of a heart attack. It was not her first heart attack. That had been in 1950, during my Freshman year at Harvard. Born with the century in 1900, she was seventy-five.

I hurried down to Queens to be with my father, who was devastated. They had been childhood sweethearts, married for fifty-four years. I do not think he had ever even considered what he would do without her, were she to go first. I had brought my work with me, in part as a protection against the grief I was feeling. Late that night, after my father finally went to bed in that little row house he and my mother had bought thirty-five years earlier, I went up to the

unfinished attic, which was lit only by a raw, uncovered light bulb. I sat on a box of old books for more than a hour, trying to master the details of the proof of L. E. J. Brouwer's Fixed Point Theorem, the essential step in von Neuman's proof of the Fundamental Theorem of Game Theory.

The funeral was held at the same funeral parlor on Queens Boulevard from which my grandmother and other family members had been buried. My sister, Barbara, came in from California. A strange thing happened at the memorial service that preceded the drive to the cemetery. It was pretty clear that everyone expected my mother to be remembered as a good wife and mother and faithful companion of my father, the intellectual, the high school principal, the brains in the couple. But I had always thought of my mother as smarter, sharper, more genuinely intellectual than my father, for all that she had never finished high school. Her skill at Scrabble was legendary; my father would not play with her, for fear of losing. Apparently, my sister had the same perception, for independently of one another, we prepared remarks remembering our mother as a genuinely smart and interesting woman in her own right, not merely as the adjunct to the Brain. Although he said nothing, I am convinced that my father's nose was seriously out of joint. My sister and I had not been at all close for years, in part because Cindy was so unwelcoming to her in our home, but on that October day in New York, we began to re-establish a warm and open connection that has persisted and strengthened to this day.

By the time I returned from the funeral, I was deep into the Game Theory lectures in my course, with the Rawls segment looming. My lecture notes were carefully organized in pen and ink, with headings and sub-headings and sub-sub-headings and important phrases, diagrams, and formulae all worked out on the page. I was taking no chances. When I started to make up my

lecture notes on Rawls, I encountered a curious problem. Every time I tried to write a phrase or a key word, it came out on the page as a complete sentence. I would crumple up the sheet of paper and start again, but once again I found myself writing sentences. Finally, I panicked. "Look," I told myself, "you have to make up these lectures. If your brain wants to write sentences, then just write formal lectures and read them to the students. They won't like it, but you will get through."

On November 5, two weeks after the funeral, I began to write. I finished writing my lectures on November 29, just three weeks later. I read each lecture to my students as though I were presenting a paper at a conference. Sure enough, they were not too thrilled with being read at class after class. Then I moved on to Nozick's book, which I had no trouble reducing to carefully laid out lecture notes. Looking back on those months now, I am sure that my manic writing of the Rawls lectures was, more than anything else, a way of denying my pain at my mother's death.

The next semester, after I had settled down and come to terms with the death of my mother, I took out my spring binders of notes from the course and looked again at the Rawls lectures. It seemed to me that they constituted a short book. I had actually typed them out on the same old standard typewriter that was now my preferred tool for writing books. I found a secretarial service in downtown Northampton that would, for a fee, retype the pages on an IBM Selectric, state of the art in those days before computers. At Columbia, I had had a very good graduate student, Sandy Thatcher, who had left the program before finishing his degree and was now the Philosophy Editor at Princeton University Press. I sent him the manuscript and asked whether he thought it was a book. He said he did, and offered me a contract. On May 12, 1976, I signed the contract. After a bit of telephone brainstorming, we came up with the title

*Understanding Rawls*. The book appeared the next year in both hard cover and paperback editions. I never read *A Theory of Justice* again.

Those were good years in Northampton. Our lives took on somewhat the feel of one of those old television family friendly sitcoms. I taught the boys how to ride bikes, running down Barrett Place holding on to the seat as one or the other of them pedaled madly and tried to stay upright. Once they mastered the bicycle, they would go on "explores," biking to parts of the city they have never seen. I had not the slightest fear for their safety. I recall one day walking downtown on Main Street with Cindy when around a corner came Patrick, on his bike. There he was, free, on his own, liberated from home and parents by the bicycle. Later on, as he grew a bit older, he even had a paper route.

My book lined pine paneled third floor study was an academic's heaven. It ran the length of the house from front to back, looking out both on Barrett Place and on a little patio between the family room and the new garage we had built during the renovations. To this day, I can recall the cool, sunlit Fall day, October 10, 1973, when I sat at my pedestal desk, with a tiny portable television set before me, watching the Mets beat the Reds in the fifth and final game of the playoffs for the National League Championship and listening to the spot announcements of Spiro Agnew's resignation. I knew that life had very little to offer that could be any better.

One day, I had a truly odd visitation. A member of the SUNY Buffalo Philosophy Department had called to ask whether I would be willing to meet with an exchange student visiting them from the Soviet Union. A Miss Tanya Snegirova, he said, was interested in anarchism, and wished to interview me. Of course I said I would be delighted, and in due course she found her way to my home office. She was writing her doctoral dissertation, she said, under the direction of Yuri Melville, who apparently specialized in American thought and letters. She

had been assigned to study my philosophy. [I had this bizarre fantasy that Melville told five students to study Rawls, three to study Nozick, and poor Tanya was left with the gray and brown crayons.]

So we talked. She claimed to be interested in anarchism, but as she talked, I realized that "anarchism" to her was something that medieval Russian Orthodox monks had written about. Ms. Snegirova's English was quite good. Her father, she explained, was an army colonel who had arranged for her to study at a school that taught everything in English. Shades of the KGB. My books were in the library at Moscow State, it seemed, but they were under lock and key, and students needed special permission to get at them, so I pulled extra copies of a number of my books off my shelves and gave them to her to take home to Russia.

It was when I asked her about her husband that I hit pay dirt. She said that he was a sports reporter for *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, the Communist youth newspaper, and as a part of his job, he had actually interviewed Anatoly Karpov, the World Chess Champion. When seven year old Patrick learned that I had met the wife of a man who had interviewed Karpov, his eyes widened, and I could see that I had gained real status in the family.

In 1976, Patrick was old enough to join the Cub Scouts, and with a little urging from me, he agreed to sign up. I took him to the Jackson Street School on the day listed in the *Daily Hampshire Gazette*, and walked up to a desk, behind which sat a lady signing kids in. When we approached, she said to me, with a meaningful look, "We really need a father to serve as Cub Master." Well, I didn't want to look bad in Patrick's eyes, so I said I would do it. For the next four years, I was the Cub Master of the Northampton Cub Scout Pack. The experience was fascinating, even though in a way I hated it. The Pack met each month in the basement of the Blessed Sacrament Church next to the high school. The real work was done by the Den Mothers,

all of whom were serious Catholics. I think some of them had never actually met someone Jewish before. The planning meetings were held in our lovely Barrett Place home, where those ladies clearly felt religiously out of place.

My job as Cub Master might best be compared to that of Master of Ceremonies at a monthly party. I came on cheerful and upbeat, chivvying the boys to take part in model car races or cake bake auctions. The auctions, which were designed to raised money, presented a real challenge for me. Each year we would ask the boys to bake cakes, supposedly on their own, but of course really with major help from their parents. We would have a competition, the major goal of which was to have enough categories [biggest, smallest, tallest, shortest, ugliest, most beautiful] so that most of the boys could be declared winners. Then I would auction off the cakes.

I understood that the real goal of the auction was to make sure that each boy managed to win his own cake back, but not everyone was totally on board with that. One year, the priest from the church decided to come to the auction. He got more excited as I auctioned off the cakes, until things came to a head with one particular cake. I started the bidding at ten cents, and he threw in a bid of a quarter. The boy who had baked the cake said forty cents, and the priest came right back with fifty cents. Things went on that way, very spiritedly, until the boy bid two fifty. As the priest said two sixty in a soft voice, I saw the boy's mother shake her head at the boy. "I hear two fifty," I shouted in my best auctioneer's voice. "Two sixty" the priest said, a little louder. "I still have two fifty," I shouted. "Two sixty" the priest almost screamed. "Sold to the highest bidder for two dollars and fifty cents," I chanted, bringing down my gavel with a bang that brooked no disagreement.

My favorite moment of the entire four years occurred during the so-called "Moving Up Ceremony," when the older boys who were ready for Boy Scouts "moved up" from Cub Scouting. The physical embodiment of this rite of passage was a pin that I presented to each boy who was moving up. As luck would have it, the Moving Up meeting occurred the same night that one of the Cub Scouts, Eddie Scagel, was due to get an award for Catholic Scouting. The award was memorialized by a Mass celebrated in the church upstairs. While the boys and the Den Mothers were attending Mass, I was downstairs setting up for the ceremony. I had conceived the idea of borrowing an archery butt from Look Park, and taping each pin to an arrow. My plan was that as each boy's name was read out, I would fire the arrow into the target with a Robin Hood flourish, after which the boy would pull the arrow from the butt and secure his pin.

I got everything ready a bit ahead of time, and went upstairs to watch the Mass. When I got there, I saw two lines of boys slowly making their way to the altar to receive the Body and the Blood of Christ. There at the end of one of the lines were Patrick and Toby. My first impulse was to rush down the aisle and grab them off the line, but then my atheist self kicked in, and I thought, "What's the difference? There is no God."

When we returned home that night, Cindy asked me how the meeting had gone. Cindy, you will recall, was a lapsed Catholic from a very seriously religious family. "It was great," I said. "Patrick and Toby received Holy Communion." The blood drained from Cindy's face, she went as white as a sheet, and I thought she was going to faint.

In the late Spring of '77, I was driving home from campus one day listening to the local public radio station [WFCR or Five College Radio], when I heard a report that there were two at-large seats open on the Northampton School Committee for which there were no candidates in



the upcoming election. Northampton has six Wards, and the School Committee has eight members -- one for each Ward and two at-large members who represent the entire city of 30,000 plus. I thought to myself, "Two seats and no candidates. I might be able to win an election like that." I announced for School Committee At-Large, but before too long, two other people stepped forward as candidates, and I was in a real race. One of the two was an old Northampton type who had been active in local politics for a long time, John Lawler. The other was a Smith College undergraduate who was a townie, a native of the city.

By this time, Charles and Maurianne Adams had sold their house to one of Cindy's young colleagues, David Paroissien, and his wife. They volunteered to be my campaign managers, and we launched a high powered campaign to win one of the two open seats. My campaign literature announced me as a veteran of the Yankee Division of the Army National Guard, Massachusetts' own, as the Cub Master of the Northampton Cub Scout Pack, as a father of two children in the public schools, and as a Professor at the State University. I thought it was probably better not to mention the anarchism, the atheism, and the incipient Marxism. We had bumper stickers, we had a radio spot that aired once, but my ace in the hole was Patrick. Since the seat was at-large, I had to campaign in every part of Northampton, which meant venturing into neighborhoods I had never visited. I took Patrick along with me as I rang doorbells and knocked on doors. I would always introduce "my son, Patrick," hoping that despite my New York Jewish accent, the voters might take me as Irish Catholic.

I think I was doing pretty well, until I got blindsided one morning by a *Gazette* reporter. He called me at seven a.m to ask whether I thought Smith College was doing enough for public education in the city. The question had never crossed my mind, but I thought the safe thing to say was that Smith College needed to do more. Several days later, I heard through the grapevine

that a rumor was sweeping the Smith faculty that if elected, I was going to try to impose a special surtax, over and above the sizable real estate tax, on all members of the Smith College faculty. On election day, I came in third, thirty six votes behind the Smithie. I lost Ward Two, the locus of Smith College. We organized a recount that brought me within twelve votes, but it was not enough. My one venture into electoral politics was a failure. But it was not a total loss. From then on, when I walked down the street, people I had never met would say hello to me. One of them told me that I had run a good race, and maybe after I lived in town for another twenty or thirty years, I should try again.

As Patrick got better at chess, our games became rather tense. It was extremely important to Patrick to win, and he was good enough to tell when I deliberately threw a game. I tried first to limit us to one game a day, but that did not seem to drain any of the intensity out of the competition. By the time he was seven or eight, he was certainly my equal, and growing stronger daily. Luckily, I found a chess club for children run by a local tournament player named Dwayne Catania. Catania was not at all a strong player -- I think his USCF rating was about 1625 -- but he knew all about tournaments and ratings and the world of competitive chess. And he was not me. I stopped playing chess with Patrick and became his rooster, his support staff, his biggest fan, and his Daddy.

There is nothing glamorous about competitive chess, at least until you climb to the very highest level of international competition. It takes place on weekends in Holiday Inns and Best Western Motels. The tournaments at the level Patrick competed in for many years are organized on something called the Swiss System. All the entrants are listed according to their USCF ratings. Then the list is divided in half, and in the first round, the top player plays the player at the top of the second half, the second highest player plays the second player in the second half,

and so forth. After the first round, there are three groups of players: those who won their first game, those who drew, and those who lost. Each group is divided and paired in the same way. In a five round Swiss, this process is repeated five times. In the last round, the two players who have won all of their previous games, if there are any, play for the tournament championship and the money prize, usually no more than a few hundred dollars. Then the USCF adjusts everyone's rating, and they all wait for the next tournament.

Patrick started out playing in scholastic tournaments -- kids in grades 1 to 6, and so forth, but he started winning those without much trouble and quickly graduated to adult tournaments in which he played as an equal against grownups. He did not like me to hover as he played, so I would drop him off and go home to wait until it was time to pick him up. If he won, he was happy, and it never occurred to him to call old Dad and tell him about the game, but if he lost, he would call, tears in his voice, and I would rush down to the motel to be with him. Very quickly, I discovered that what he needed at those moments was carbohydrates, specifically french fries. so we would make a MacDonald's run and I would drop him off back at the motel for his next game.

I have a thousand memories of those early days in Patrick's career, but one stands out. When he was ten or eleven, Patrick played a one day tournament in the little mill town of Athol, MA, on route 2 east of Amherst. It was a pretty marginal affair, but there really weren't that many tournaments in Western Mass, and Patrick was eager for any chance to raise his rating. The tournament was held in the recreation hall of the Union Twist Drill Co., a large brick structure sitting across a bridge from the center of town. There was no place to wait and nothing to do, so I found my way to a convenience store across the bridge and hung out until it was time to take Patrick home. He won at least one of his games. Years later, when he was all grown up,

I reminisced about his early chess days, and reminded him of the Union Twist Drill Co. Without missing a beat, he said, "Yes, I pushed my queen's rook pawn to the eighth rank and queened it. After that it was easy to win." Like all great players, Patrick seems to have total recall of the games he has played, even in mill towns like Athol.

My alienation from the Philosophy Department led me more and more to seek teaching satisfactions elsewhere. STPEC flourished, and absorbed some of my energies, to be sure, but I really wanted to do some serious classroom teaching. In the Fall of 1976, I decided to offer a graduate course called "Classics of Critical Social Theory." I assigned *Capital, Volume I, Theories of Value and Distribution Since Adam Smith*, by Maurice Dobb, Freud's *New Introductory Lectures* and *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Richard Wollheim's splendid book, *Sigmund Freud*, Philip Rieff's collection, *Therapy and Technique*, and Karl Mannheim's *Ideology and Utopia*. Eighteen students signed up for the seminar, not one of whom was a doctoral student in philosophy.

I had read Volume I of *Capital* in preparation for the Social Studies tutorial I had taught with Barry Moore in '60-'61, but at that time I was quite unprepared to appreciate its power and subtlety, and my knowledge of economics, consisting almost entirely of a reading of Samuelson's text while on my *wanderjahr* [1954-55], did nothing to help me understand the theoretical issues with which Marx was grappling so brilliantly. I had, of course, taught Marx many times, but always the early Marx, the alienation shtick, "On the Jewish Question" and the *Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, the *Manifesto*.

As I re-read *Capital* to teach it in the seminar, I had what I can, somewhat pretentiously, describe as an epiphany. I thought I could see how Marx was weaving together philosophical ideas from the Germany of his youth with the economics of the classical political economic

tradition of Smith and Ricardo. I thought, too, that I could see the deeper theoretical reasons behind his choice of the extraordinary metaphorical language in which the opening chapters of Volume I are couched. On the spot, I decided that I wanted to undertake a full scale interpretation of Marx's *hauptwerk* that would bring into fruitful conjunction and interpenetration philosophy, history, ideology, mathematics, economics, and literary criticism. I was pretty sure that it would take me several volumes and a number of years to work it all out, but by then I had written or edited eighteen books and I was prepared to let a few years go by without another.

I did publish a handful of essays in those years, in addition to *Understanding Rawls* and *About Philosophy*. In '74, the *Philosophical Forum* carried "There's Nobody Here But Us Persons: The Denial of the Human Condition in the Liberal Tradition," which struck a blow for women's lib, among other things. I also wrote up my critique of Bob Nozick in an essay that appeared, of all places, in the *Arizona Law Review*. But the most curious thing to come from my typewriter in those years was yet another essay for the *Journal of Philosophy*, this one called "On Strasnick's 'Derivation' of Rawls' 'Difference' Principle." A young man named Steven Strasnick had written a doctoral dissertation in the Harvard Philosophy Department in which he claimed to be able to prove Rawls' Difference Principle by applying the methodology of Kenneth Arrow's great monograph, *Social Choice and Individual Values*. His dissertation committee consisted of Jack Rawls as Director and Bob Nozick and Kenneth Arrow as second readers! Strasnick got a job at Stanford on the strength of this impressive line-up, and published the heart of his proof in *JPhil*.

I had gone to Athens, Ohio to give a talk, and on the flight home, we got hung up over Hartford-Bradley because of weather. While we circled, I pulled out my copy of *JPhil* and read Strasnick's article. Something did not seem right to me about it, and by the time we finally

landed, I had figured out where things had gone wrong. Essentially, the problem was that Arrow's proof assumes only **ordinal** preference orderings, whereas Rawls' argument presupposes **cardinal** utility functions. The attempt to mix these incompatible approaches produced arguments that, despite the off-putting formalism, could be seen to reduce to trivialities that proved nothing.

At first, I was mystified. I could see how Jack might have missed this. Despite all of his impressive talk about "proofs," he didn't actually know much about formal Game Theory or Collective Choice Theory, as he acknowledged in a letter to me. But Bob surely did, and Arrow had invented the stuff, for God's sake. After a while, I knew what must have happened, and in my experience, it wasn't all that unusual. The only one of the three who had read the dissertation carefully, I was willing to bet, was Rawls, and he really wasn't qualified to judge its formal validity. Bob signed off on it after skimming it because Jack said it was all right, and Arrow, an external reader, approved it after a cursory glance as a professional courtesy to a famous senior colleague.

It took me only a short time to write up my intuition in a form sufficiently rigorous to demonstrate formally that Strasnick's "derivation" was invalid. I sent it to *JPhil*, which published it in their December, 1976 issue. At the same time, I wrote to Rawls to tell him what I had found. He replied somewhat diffidently that there were "a four or five proofs of the Difference Principle floating around," and that was the last I heard from him on the matter.

In Fall, 1977 I again offered my seminar on Classics of Critical Social Theory. Early in that semester, I was standing outside Thompson Hall when I overheard a conversation between two Economics graduate students. By now, the location of departments had been sorted out and rearranged. All of the Humanities departments, including Philosophy, were reassigned to

Bartlett Hall and South College, the latter an old building that also was the site of the offices of the three deans of Arts and Sciences. The Social Science Departments had taken over Thompson and Machmer Halls. Economics was in Thompson. The students were talking about a book by someone named Sraffa.

Now, this is going to sound strange, but it is the way I have worked all my life. I do not actually read very much, and I am incapable of skimming. When I read a serious academic book, I read it from cover to cover with very great intensity, and like as not, the reading of the book fundamentally changes the way I think about a subject. I find that experience unsettling, which is one of the reasons that I do not read a great deal. But I seem to have very sensitive antennae that tell me when I *need* to read a book. The reason I have never bothered to read many of Kant's minor works, for example, is that I knew, somehow, that they could not contain anything that would help me to plumb the depths of the First Critique. That is also why I had such difficulty reading all of *A Theory of Justice*. My instincts told me that after the opening chapters, it would all be useless elaboration and filler, and I was right. Simply by overhearing that snatch of conversation, I knew that Sraffa was someone I needed to read.

Sraffa, it turned out, was Piero Sraffa, and he had only written one book, a monograph barely one hundred pages long, called *Production of Commodities By Means of Commodities*. I bought a copy. I should say here that it was an evidence of my criminal ignorance that I did not already know who Sraffa was. Piero Sraffa was born in Italy in 1893, where in time he became a friend and comrade of Antonio Gramsci. Indeed, it was Sraffa who brought to Gramsci in jail the pen and ink and paper with which Gramsci wrote the *Prison Notebooks*. Sraffa moved to the Cambridge University in England, where he edited the beautiful and

indispensable ten volume set of the works of David Ricardo. Parenthetically, it is a scandal to Economics that Sraffa never won the Nobel Prize in Economics before his death in 1983.

When I sat down to read Sraffa's book, I discovered that it was formidably difficult. Fortunately for me, it uses nothing more advanced mathematically than elementary algebra -- the solution of simultaneous linear equations -- but it is written with a spare abstraction that gives it somewhat the tonality of Gregorian Plainsong. Sraffa frequently omits intermediate or transitional steps in his proofs, leaving it to the reader to supply them. Since I am incapable, when I am reading, of moving from one line to the next unless I understand how the second line is derived from the first, I would sometimes spend hours on a single page. When I finished the book, my entire mental framework had been transformed.

Immediately, and somewhat foolishly, I offered to teach the book to a reading group of Economics graduate students, several of whom were in my Classics of Critical Social Theory seminar. After several meetings, one of the students walked in and said, "Herb says you can prove the whole thing in a couple of lines of linear algebra." [Herb was of course Herb Gintis.] It was clear that I was going to have to learn linear algebra.

I was now in my seventh year at UMass, and I had qualified for a sabbatical. I can recall lying in bed that Fall, before getting up in the morning, thinking to myself, "I am going to be forty-five. I have published lots of books, and I guess I can go on doing that for the rest of my life, but what's the point? I have had my say. I always describe myself as a socialist, because my grandfather was a socialist, but I really don't know what that means. Maybe it is time to learn some economics."

When my Fall courses ended in mid-December, I bought myself a college linear algebra textbook and spent the intersession working through it. I got all the way through eigenvectors



and eigenvalues and Perron Frobenius theorems and the like by the time the second semester started in late January. I talked to Don Katzner about sitting in on his graduate Microeconomics course, which used Henderson and Quant, a rigorous mathematical approach to the subject. I attended every class, did all the exercises, and sweated through the whole nine yards of Bordered Hessians and the rest. At the same time, I sat in on Bob Costrell's graduate Macro course, although I could never develop any real fondness for the subject. It seemed to me too much like a bunch of economists chained to the floor of Plato's Cave, developing sophisticated methods for predicting the sequence of shadows on the wall of the cave. By an extraordinarily happy accident, a brilliant young Cambridge England economist named John Eatwell was visiting the UMass Economics Department that semester, and I also sat in on his advanced graduate course on Value Theory. By the end of the semester, I had begun to master the materials I needed truly to understand and appreciate Marx's achievement in *Capital*.

The '70s and early '80s saw a dramatic worldwide reinterpretation of Marx's economic theories by some of the most gifted mathematical economists in the international profession. Sraffa had started the process with his 1960 monograph, but Wassily Leontieff's linear programming theories played an equally central role. There is a wonderful story about Leontieff that may well be apocryphal. It seems that when the young Russian economist invented linear programming, he went to the Soviet economic planners to show them this new analytic methodology, perfectly suited to the central planning of a large and complex economy. The officials rebuffed him, saying that Stalin had laid down an edict that since Marx had only used addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and the taking of averages in *Kapital*, the Soviet Union would use nothing more in planning its economy.

The first major work of reinterpretation to appear was Michio Morishima's 1973 book, *Marx's Economics*. This was followed by the Hungarian economist András Bródy's *Proportions, Prices, and Planning* and the Italian Luigi Pasinetti's *Growth and Income Distribution*. In 1976, the French economists Gilbert Abraham-Frois and Edmond Berrebi published their *Theory of Value, Prices, and Accumulation*. The next year, Pasinetti brought out a collection of his essays under the title *Lectures on the Theory of Production*. That same year, a young English Marxist published an extraordinary little polemic entitled *Marx after Sraffa*. It is the only book I have ever read that manages to be simultaneously mathematically sophisticated and furiously angry. In 1980, Pasinetti was again in print with *Essays on the Theory of Joint Production*, which was joined by *Classical and Neo-Classical Theories of General Equilibrium* by the Americans Vivian Walsh and Harvey Gram. A year later, yet another Pasinetti book appeared, this one called *Structural Change and Economic Growth*, and Steedman joined a number of colleagues in a collective volume of essays under the title *The Value Controversy*.

To read each one of these books was a formidable undertaking for me. The mathematics in them pushed me to the limits of my understanding, and much of the economic theory was new to me. I persevered, however, and over a number of years mastered all of them. As with my work on Kant, I constantly struggled to make the story of the argument clear and simple enough that I could narrate it to students who had not plunged into these books and probably never would.

As my marriage with Cindy struggled, pushing us for the last three years of the 70s into couples therapy, I worked over Adam Smith, David Ricardo, and Karl Marx, using the new mathematical reinterpretations to illuminate the core arguments of *Capital*. For once, I did what I suppose might pass as research, purchasing a thirty volume translation of the collected works

and letters of Marx and Engels and reading volume after volume, in preparation for the time when I would attempt to turn my vision of Marx's project into a coherent story.

Fairly early on, my close reading of the mathematics alerted me to a problem in Marx's theoretical explanation of exploitation and the origin of profit. I began to work through an argument in my head, using only the techniques of analysis that Sraffa had employed, not yet daring to try my hand at original arguments in the language of linear algebra. By now, I was driving Patrick to Springfield one evening a week so that he could play chess at the Springfield Chess Club. The drive took about half an hour from Barrett Place, and since Patrick did not want me hanging about while he played, I would make the run down and back twice in the evening. During the return from the first run and the trip down to pick him up at the end of the evening, I would entertain myself by running over the mathematical argument in my head. Pretty soon, I had it sorted out and translated into a narrative that I could unfold in a clear, simple fashion.

This is a good place to relate a story about one of those runs, and its aftermath. As I was driving Patrick to the chess club, he started boasting about how well he could play, saying that none of the men in the club were as strong as he had become. I chided him for the braggadocio. That night, when Cindy and I were sitting in bed reading, Patrick came into our room. In those days, when something was upsetting him, his little face would get puffy, as though the tears he was not shedding had swollen his eyes and his cheeks. I asked him what was the matter, and very hesitantly, he explained that he knew he shouldn't talk in that bragging way in front of people, but thought I trusted him to know that, and that he could say things to me that he wouldn't say at the chess club. I thought about that after he went back to bed, and decided that he was right and I had been wrong. I went into his room and apologized, assuring him that I did

trust him to know when and where to say things. I told him that from now on I would trust him. It was a chastening moment for me, but a deeply moving one too.

Eventually, when I had worked out my proof properly, along with some more advanced things for which I really did need the linear algebra, I put them all together in an essay called "A Critique and Reinterpretation of Marx's Labor Theory of Value," which I published in a relatively new journal, *Philosophy and Public Affairs* [Spring, 1981]. In that paper, I actually proved a very important theorem that demonstrated a fundamental failing of Marx's explanation of the origins of profit. I was pretty pleased with myself until John Roemer, the most mathematically sophisticated Marxist in America, pointed out in a comment to the Journal that Josep Vegara, a Professor of Economics at Barcelona, had published essentially the same theorem in 1979 in a book entitled *economía política y modelos multisectoriales*. I was heartbroken. Such things do not happen in Philosophy [because we so rarely prove anything]. Still and all, the theoretical elaboration that followed the statement and proof of the theorem is quite original, but I doubt that anyone has ever taken note of it. A word of advice to my readers; If you prove an exciting theorem in theoretical economics, do not publish it in a Philosophy journal.

Over the years that I taught at UMass, the school changed markedly in ways that I suspect parallel changes taking place on other state university campuses. When I arrived, UMass was not at all a prestigious place to study. Massachusetts has top of the line elite institutions, of course, like Harvard, MIT, Amherst, and Williams, but it also has a number of very strong second tier schools -- Boston University, Boston College, Northeastern University, among others. The student body of UMass when I arrived in '71 was drawn primarily from Catholic families without long traditions of higher education. Many of the students were the first

members of their families to attend a four year higher educational institution, and they pretty obviously thought of what they were doing as an extension of high school. They spoke of "tests," not "exams," of "teachers," not "professors." Every Friday afternoon, students lined up in the oval in front of the Administration building to take buses back to their home towns. For many of them, UMass was the biggest town they had ever lived in. They were bright, and serious about their studies, but they were very unsophisticated. It was not uncommon for students to bring their dogs to class, something I had never seen before.

Little by little, the inflation of the cost of higher education put pressure on middle class families to consider the state university as an option, something they would not have done earlier. My first hint of this was a very funny incident in the Spring of '74. I was teaching a big Intro class in the lecture hall in Thompson, which is entered by doors at the rear. After one lecture, a student came up to the podium to ask a question. I talked with him for a bit and then excused myself, explaining that I had to get to my next class in another building. I rushed up the aisle into the large hall outside the room -- and ran into the student again! As I hurried away, I thought to myself, "How on earth did he get out of the room before me?" Eventually I discovered the answer. There was a pair of identical twins in my class, Michael and Mitchell King. They were both extremely good students, easily capable of winning admission to Amherst College, but their parents could not afford to send both of them to a pricey private school at the same time, so they ended up at UMass.

You could see the change just by looking at the students as they walked across the campus. The women started wearing expensive looking clothing, the undergraduates began to drive more expensive cars than the faculty. They stopped going home on the weekends and started their weekend drinking on Thursday nights. All of this was crystallized for me by one

brief moment in an undergraduate course I taught some years later, in 1988. Patrick had gone off to Australia to play in the World Junior Chess Tournament, representing the United States as its strongest player. I decided on a lark to fly out to watch him play a game. I flew Continental, which unbeknownst to me was offering a special triple frequent flyer miles promotion. I flew to LA, and changed planes for a flight to Hawaii. As I was waiting for the connecting flight, I paused at a bar to look at the television set. It was October 5th, and Lloyd Bentsen, the Democratic Vice-Presidential candidate, was debating Dan Quayle, his Republican opponent. I walked up to the bar just in time to hear Bentsen deliver what is arguably the most famous line from any televised debate: "Mr. Quayle, I knew Jack Kennedy. Jack Kennedy was a friend of mine. You are no Jack Kennedy." Then I was off to Honolulu, and Sidney, and the tournament. When I got home, I discovered that that one trip had given me enough frequent flier miles for a pair of tickets to Europe, but the restrictions on their use was so severe I could not figure out when we could use them. I finally said to Susie [to whom I was by then married -- more of that anon], "Look. I can't let these go to waste. Let's go to Paris for the weekend." She was down with that, so I walked into my Tuesday-Thursday class on Thursday and said, "I am going to Paris for the weekend. I will see you on Tuesday." After class, a young woman came up to my desk, opened her purse, and took out a half used carnet of Metro tickets. "Here," she said, "you may need these." UMass had changed.

I have joked in these memoirs about the fact that I kept being hired either to teach something I knew very little about or to teach something that I had never made the focus of my scholarly work. First Harvard hired me fresh out of the Army to teach European history. Then Chicago hired me to teach Social Sciences. Then Columbia hired me to teach Ethics, And finally UMass didn't really want to hire me at all and was stuck with me when the real targets of

their desire left them in the lurch. But of course that is not the way the world looked at things, and it was not really how I looked at things either. By the late 1970s, my career path had been a rare success story. Harvard, Chicago, tenure at Columbia, and then a voluntary move to UMass for personal reasons that were to me, if not in the eyes of the world, more than sufficient.

Cindy's career to that point had been an entirely different matter. Fired from Queens for having a baby, made a lowball offer by NYU because she was a woman and married to me, lucky to secure a position at Manhattanville where, although well treated, she had no opportunity for graduate teaching or research, and then foisted on UMass in a risky power play that could have left us owning a house for which we had no use. Cindy was fully as ambitious as I, and more than well qualified to be treated as a star in her own right, but her wry observation had proven correct: the way they view you when you walk in the door is the way they think of you ever after. Even though she now had tenure, and was secure in her professional position, she wanted just once to be sought after professionally for herself alone. In '77-'78, that opportunity seemed finally to have arrived.

As a consequence of the publication of *A Feast of Words*, Cindy was approached by the English Department of Syracuse University, which wanted her to join them as a senior professor. Our entire family was very happy in our Barrett Place home, and neither of us, I think it is fair to say, at that point had even thought about a move to upstate New York, but the opportunity was one that Cindy could not pass up. One might ask, as some people at the time did, why she was unwilling to stay at UMass if I was content to do so. The answer is simple, but I think important, so let me try to explain.

I had earned tenure at an Ivy League University at the age of thirty. The high point of that career move was the taxi cab ride through Central Park after Justus Buchler made me the

offer. It never really got any better than that. It was perfectly pleasant teaching at Columbia, and it left me with some great stories for my memoirs forty years later, but the actual experience wasn't that different from the experience of teaching at UMass. Nevertheless ever since I walked away from Ivy League tenure thirty-nine years ago, I have been able to say to myself with not the least suggestion of sour grapes, "I had it." Not, "I could have had it," or "It isn't worth having," but simply, "I had it." That really is enough to satisfy one's ambition. Cindy had to that point never been able to say to herself, "I have had the experience of being really wanted for myself alone." The time had come.

I was prepared to commute, if that was what it took, but I thought it worth trying to generate an offer from the Syracuse Philosophy Department. At first, our parallel negotiations proceeded in a very promising fashion, and, the two of us being the house proud types that we were, we even spent a day with a real estate agent in Syracuse to see what we could find. But then things turned bitterly sour. In the end, I wrote a long, pained letter to the Chair of the Philosophy Department, Stewart Thau, explaining our decision to decline the offers. Rather than try to summarize an affair that is now hazy in my memory, I am going to reproduce here the entire letter, as I wrote it on 1 August, 1978. I apologize if this tries the patience of my readers, but I think what this letter says is important not just for the fidelity of my memoirs but also for any readers who may be facing similar career and family choices. As will be obvious from the letter, I had nothing but gratitude and good wishes for the Syracuse folks. Here is what I wrote:

"Dear Stewart, I have had a chance to consider the response of the University of Massachusetts to your offer, and after weighing all the factors, both professional and private, I have decided to decline the offer. I do so with a very great sense of disappointment, and with the feeling that an exciting -- perhaps a unique -- opportunity has been missed. Rather than fill up a few paragraphs with polite phrases and perfunctory thanks, I should like to take some time to lay before you, as precisely as I can, the succession of events that determined my decision. In doing so, I am moved by the hope that your continuing efforts to build a nationally visible Department of the first quality will be aided by my frankness. Although this letter is addressed to you alone,



I hope you will feel free to share all or part of it with any other persons to whom you wish to show it.

"When I received your first letter many months ago, I reacted very much as Maury Mandelbaum did. That is, I doubted that you could recruit philosophers of the first rank, and advised you, therefore, you will recall, to look for first-rate younger people. Subsequently, the English Department approached my wife with regard to their senior position. We had a long talk, and finally decided that in order to further her career, we would, under the right conditions, be prepared to move to Syracuse. I knew that I could always arrange for a two-day teaching schedule, and although the commute appeared difficult, it was certainly possible. As I am sure you know, much more strenuous arrangements have become common in the academic world in recent years. Despite this decision, I wrote to you to explore the question of a position for me in the Philosophy Department, doubtful though I was at that point that such a position would be attractive enough to woo me away from the University of Massachusetts.

"My wife returned from her visit to Syracuse University with glowing reports. It seemed to her that the English Department was prepared to treat her -- absolutely on her own merits -- with every bit of the honor that she has earned by her brilliant writings in English and American Literature. When Arthur Hoffman called to make a verbal offer of the position, he told her flatly and unequivocally that the initial offer would be "too low," that every portion of it was negotiable, and that he and the Department wished to demonstrate their enthusiasm for her candidacy by supporting her efforts to bargain that offer up to an appropriate level. My wife, enormously flattered and encouraged by the warmth and openness of Hoffman's statements, replied immediately, making perfectly reasonable proposals for a higher salary and a somewhat lower teaching load.

"I will tell you flatly that if Syracuse had responded in a week or ten days with a significant improvement in that offer, my wife would now be committed to join the Syracuse English Department! Instead, your Administration -- which can only mean John Prucha [ed. The Academic Vice-Chancellor] -- delayed for fully six weeks, thereby putting my wife in a position of the most intense personal and professional embarrassment. At the end of that time, Syracuse responded with a new offer that was virtually an insult, coming as it did after Hoffman's initial remarks. The timing of the new offer, about which I shall have a good deal more to say below, was so clearly keyed to my offer as to make it perfectly obvious how John Prucha and Gershon Vincow [ed. Dean and later himself Academic Vice-Chancellor] viewed my wife -- namely, as an appendage to me, rather than as a scholar in her own right.

"Meanwhile, I made my trip to Syracuse. When I set out, I thought it extremely unlikely that I would accept an offer. When I returned, I thought it almost certain that I would! My visit was an unalloyed delight (despite the inadequacies of the motel!). For the first time, it dawned on me that I had an opportunity, perhaps never again to be presented, to join in the creation of the national center for Kant studies! Your success in recruiting [Jonathan] Bennett totally changed the picture. With the retirement of Beck, Syracuse could be the one place in the United States to which students would come who wished to study the philosophy of Kant! In addition, my new interest in the philosophical foundations of Economics could be joined with Alex's [ed. Rosenberg] interests to make a strong sub-field in that specialty. My meetings with people from the Maxwell School were especially gratifying. I have on my desk now a warm letter from Manfred Stanley and Barry Glassner, indicating the sort of reception that side of my interests would get.

"This was, I think the high water mark of my enthusiasm, and my wife's, for a move to Syracuse. We expected a reply momentarily to her letter. And after my frank conversations with you, I thought it was clear and unambiguous what sort of offer would be required to recruit me. Although we did not speak that evening in the motel lobby, in precise figures, I made it clear that I simply could not even consider joining the Syracuse faculty at a salary lower than that which had been offered to Bennett. It seemed to me that you understood why that was a necessary condition for any successful venture involving the two of us and the Department, and at that point you seemed to be confident that the matter could be arranged.

Things began to go very sour when Gershon Vincow made that appalling phone call to me shortly before the actual offer was due to go out. Now, I have been in this profession for a good long time -- some twenty-one years since being awarded the doctorate -- I tell you, flat out, that never in my entire career have I been treated by any administrator in the way that Dean Vincow treated me during that call. He began by telling me that Syracuse was going to make me an offer, and then refused to tell me what the offer would be! He told me that the offer (unspecified) was final, that it could not be negotiated, that it was absolutely the best Syracuse could do. I cannot imagine what he expected me to reply to these assertions. I indicated that since he and Dr. Prucha had chosen to adopt that position, it was incumbent upon them to take fully into account the things I had said to you about the sort of offer that would attract me. In short, to be blunt, I was telling him that if the offer was to be Syracuse's final offer, then it had better be for as much money as Bennett was to make. When Prucha and Vincow chose to offer me four thousand dollars a year less than that sum, in part on the basis of erroneous information that they had gathered through some indirect means (instead of simply asking me directly!), they made it impossible for me to join the faculty of Syracuse University.

"But that part of the telephone call was less appalling than what followed. Dean Vincow now undertook to extract from me some assurance that I would reply to the offer immediately. When I explained that I would have to have time to take the offer to my Department (an offer, recall, which he was not yet ready to reveal to me), he actually asked me why I wished to do such a thing. Does the man have no knowledge or understanding of the elemental courtesies of the academic world? If he does not know how scholars behave in the big leagues, then he ought not to try to play ball anywhere but in a sandlot!

"Then, having engaged in the most egregious behavior imaginable, Dean Vincow took a step further, and pressured me to assure him that I would make my decision entirely independently from my wife. Now, reflect: from the very first, my wife and I had conducted our negotiations entirely separately. Indeed, the willingness of Syracuse to treat us as independent scholars had been one of the most attractive features of the move. At the very moment when he was insisting that I make my decision rapidly and in complete independence of my wife's decision (and this, I keep repeating, in response to an offer not yet made, whose terms he would not reveal), Dean Vincow and Provost Prucha were deliberately holding up my wife's final offer in order to "coordinate" it with mine! This last, incidentally, we have directly from Arthur Hoffman. To put the matter as bluntly as possible, Prucha and Vincow were buying a package, in their way of thinking, and they wanted to know the price of the total package before they made any offers. Well, I don't want to be treated that way, my wife doesn't want to be treated that way, and we certainly do not want to join a faculty of a university whose administration treats its professors that way.

"Meanwhile, Syracuse delayed so long that our local faculty union arrived at an agreement with the administration on a pay increase package. The University has agreed to raise

my salary to the top of the scale. When the new contract is added to that, my salary as of September 1, 1979 (the starting date of the contract offered by Syracuse) will be somewhere in the neighborhood of \$40,000 or a trifle more. So even if I were not offended by the behavior of the administration at Syracuse, it would require an offer equal to Bennett's to move me!

"The bitterest irony of all is that on our recent trip to Syracuse, my wife and I found a house that we immediately fell in love with. It is the only house I have seen in the past ten years that is genuinely lovelier than the house in which we live. Had John Prucha and Gerson Vincow been willing to make my wife the offer they made to a scholar at the University of Connecticut; had they been prepared, in their dealings with us, to preserve the same high standards of professional courtesy that were at every stage maintained by the members of the two Departments, I, my wife, and our two children would almost certainly be living in that house next summer.

"It should go without saying that I retain the warmest feelings for the members of your Department, and for the other Syracuse faculty whom I had the great pleasure of meetings. I am honored that your Department invited me to join their ranks, and I am sure that in years to come I shall see more of all of you. I very much hope, for the future well-being of your Department, that you are able to lead your Administration to adopt a more professional attitude toward the recruiting of senior faculty.

I hope you will convey my warmest thanks, and my regrets, to the members of the Search Committee and to the entire Department. My special thanks to you for the endless hours you put into what could, and should, have been a successful endeavour. With all best wishes,"

i

Shortly after this fiasco, the M. I. T. Literature Section of the Humanities Department contacted Cindy about the possibility of her joining them. It should come as no surprise that she jumped at the chance. The Humanities Department had gathered up some very distinguished people in a number of fields, Noam Chomsky being the best known. Ever since her medical school days, Cindy had had an inclination toward the sciences, though she had not pursued that inclination since leaving Harvard Medical School to return to Literature. The negotiations were protracted, but in the end produced an attractive offer that in time turned into the Class of 1922 Professorship of Literature. From then until her retirement a quarter of a century later, Cindy received the recognition and respect for which she had worked so hard and had so richly earned.

I knew that I could not continue to run STPEC from Boston, so I went in search of someone to take over its directorship. With extraordinary good fortune, I discovered a young scholar in the German Department, Sara Lennox, whose energy, politics, and commitment to

students made her the perfect fit for STPEC. She agreed to take the program over, and what had been, under my rather casual management a small but reasonably successful operation quickly became a flourishing enterprise, one of the very best such programs in the entire country. As I sit here at my desk, typing these words, I am wearing a STPEC T-shirt that features a Red Star. STPEC had taken a bold step to the left. I was thrilled, and for thirty years now I have shamelessly claimed some measure of credit for Sara's success.

Once it was certain that Cindy would be going to MIT, we decided to move to the Boston area. This meant selling our house in Northampton, and buying something there. We settled on Belmont, an upscale bedroom community just west of Cambridge that has long been a community favored by Harvard professors. Selling our house was going to be difficult, despite the fact that it was one of the loveliest homes in Northampton. America was in the grips of stagflation, with interest rates as high as 13 and 14 percent.

Before we knew that we were going to be moving, I had been approached by the Yale Political Science Department to teach a course for them in the Spring. I proposed a course on Marx's Political Economy, which they agreed to. They scheduled the combined undergraduate and graduate course one day a week, on Thursdays, so that I could also participate in a bag lunch meeting of faculty in Economics and Political Science. Each Thursday in the Spring, I would drive down Interstate 90 for an hour, find a parking place, and teach my class before going to the lunch. Apparently no one had taught a course on Marx at Yale in living memory, so more than seventy students signed up, including a young man named Tony Marx who later became President of Amherst College. More than twenty years later, I finally got to meet him.

The bag lunch was a rather high toned affair. Several of Yale's most notable figures were regulars, including the extremely distinguished Political Scientist Robert Dahl and the noted

Political Scientist and Economist Charles Lindblom. The general idea was that each week, one or another of the regulars would circulate in advance a paper for discussion. Also in attendance were several junior faculty, whose deferential demeanor toward Dahl and Lindblom, I am afraid, got on my nerves. I had been away from the Ivy League for almost a decade, and had become used the lack of pretence on State University campuses. One week, during our discussion, one of the junior chaps [they were all men, by the way] said to Charles Lindblom, "Well, sir, you may recall that you have written," and then proceeded to quote *verbatim* from memory an entire paragraph of one of Lindblom's books. I was appalled, and it seemed to me that Lindblom did not have the good grace to be embarrassed.

Among the junior acolytes was an eager young Assistant Professor of Political Science. When it came his turn to submit something for our consideration, he sent round a rather long paper. I read it through and thought that it was really rather vacuous, for all that it was smoothly written. At the lunch, he began our discussion by saying, "I have been thinking of expanding this into a book, and I would welcome your recommendations." There was a silence, and then I spoke up. "Well," I said, "I have always believed that every good book is really the unfolding of one powerful central idea. I have read your paper, and I confess that I am unable to find a strong central idea in it. So I think perhaps it would be better if you did not try to turn it into a book." There was what I can only describe as an appalled silence, after which Lindblom spoke up in a supportive way and the rest kept the discussion going.

Several weeks later, when the semester came to an end, my Teaching Assistants, who were graduate students in Poli Sci, told me that I had been under consideration for a professorship, but had lost the offer because of my performance at the Thursday lunch. I cannot say I was devastated by the news.

That same Spring, quite unexpectedly, I was invited to give a talk to the Harvard Graduate Philosophy Club, the same organization I had chaired almost a quarter of a century earlier. I suggested two topics, one quite technical, the other a good deal lighter. They opted for the less demanding talk, and I agreed to speak. On April 9, 1980, I drove in to Harvard Square. It was my first visit to the Harvard Yard in nineteen years. Fortunately, I knew what to expect. The only faculty member who showed up was Ronnie Dworkin, who was visiting that year, I imagine. After saying hello, he allowed as how he would have to leave in the middle of the talk, which he did. Harvard was just as warm and fuzzy as it had been when I left. After the talk, the students took me to dinner, and who should show up but Jack Rawls! I thought it was odd to pass up the talk and come to the dinner, but we chatted politely. At one point I remarked on the renovations that had been carried out in Philosophy Hall since my time there. The staircase had been redone, and the second floor was now a hollow square, with faculty offices along the outer walls. Martha Nussbaum was then an Assistant Professor in the Department -- the first woman in the history of the department, I believe. I noted that on my quick tour of the upstairs I had seen a men's toilet and a women's toilet for the students, and a faculty bathroom. What facilities, I wondered, did Martha use. The world's greatest expert on distributive justice explained benignly that since her office was right across the hall from the women's toilet, it was not a problem. I did not regret having failed to secure an Assistant Professorship all those years ago.

As I have made abundantly clear in these memoirs, I was very unhappy in the Philosophy Department, where I was marginalized by Feldman and the majority clique and bored as well by the narrow and stultifying sort of philosophy being carried on by them. Once it was clear that we were moving to Belmont, I started to put out feelers in the Boston area for a teaching position.

Late in the Spring I made contact with Fred Sommers, who was then Chair of the Brandeis Philosophy Department. We had lunch, and somewhat later I had lunch again, this time with several of the senior members. Things progressed in a very promising fashion, so much so that Fred arranged for me to moonlight a course there in the Fall. A bit later, he asked me to visit in the Spring of '81, and I agreed readily. I was prepared to commute back to Amherst, but with the situation in the Philosophy Department being as it was, I would have been quite happy to move on.

On August first, we closed on a house at 16 Garfield Road in Belmont Hill, the upscale section of Belmont. It was a large and perfectly serviceable home, to which, as usual we had many renovations made, but it could not hold a candle to the Barrett Place home we were leaving. On August 22nd, Gleason Movers packed us up, and the next day they loaded all of our belongings for the short trip to Boston.

**Part Two**  
**Chapter Five**  
**Changes**

The M. I. T. professorship was a major professional advancement for Cindy, of course, and she settled into her new department very quickly and happily. But the member of the family who took the most immediate advantage of our move to Belmont was Patrick. He had advanced so rapidly as a chess player that even the adult tournaments in Western Massachusetts offered no real challenge. The strongest player in the entire Pioneer Valley area was a man named David Lees, whose USCF rating of 2207 placed him just barely in the ranks of Masters. But Boston was home to a number of strong players, including a man named John Curdo, who had attained Senior Master status and regularly won local tournaments.

Garfield Road was at the top of Belmont Hill, a goodly walk from the center of town, where you could catch a bus that ran direct to Harvard Square. Many of the Belmont parents actually forbade their children to go to Harvard Square, convinced, I suppose, that they would be corrupted by the counterculture and end up drug addicts or bums, or, what was worse, Democrats. But Cindy and I were enchanted by the thought that our boys would have The Square at their disposal, and readily agreed that Patrick, at age twelve, was ready to launch out on his own. Patrick had run a paper route during his last year or so in Northampton, and since he was extremely careful with his money, he had a little nest egg that he could commit to the project of getting to know Boston.

In those days, kids could ride the T for a dime. Patrick conceived the plan of exploring Boston one stop at a time. The first day, he caught the bus to Harvard Square, paid his dime onto the T, and rode one stop to Central Square. Then he got out and walked around, seeing what Central Square had to offer. The next trip, he rode a second stop to Kendall, and did the same



thing. We told him which lines he was allowed to explore, and which we wanted him to stay away from, and little by little he learned the ins and outs of Boston. Right away, he found the Boylston Chess Club, one block from the Boston Common, which was the headquarters in Boston for serious chess. One of the attractive characteristics of the chess world is that it cares only about one thing: How well do you play? Patrick may have been a twelve year old kid, but he was a serious player, and it took very little time over the board for him to establish his *bona fides*. Reaching out in another direction, which involved changing at Park Street Under to a trackless trolley, he discovered Newbury Street, which offered an *Au Bon Pain* on the top of the Prudential Center where he could get his favorite buns, and a store devoted entirely to chess books and memorabilia. Patrick had hit the big time.

Many of you may be familiar with a book called *Searching for Bobby Fischer* that tells the story of another chess prodigy, Josh Waitzkin. It was made into a movie with Ben Kingsley playing Bruce Pandolfini, the famous chess teacher who took little Josh under his wing. As you can imagine, I watched the movie with a very personal interest. What struck me most powerfully was how different Patrick's chess development had been from Josh's. Josh's story, I think, was typical of that of many chess prodigies. Living in New York City, the home of big time American chess, he was spotted as a little boy and taken up into a serious program of chess development at a point when Patrick was still going to the Thursday evening meetings with Dwayne Catania, or playing in weekend Swiss tournaments the strongest player in which, on a special day, was David Lees. Patrick never so much as saw a real International Master or Grandmaster until he moved to Boston, and even then, they were as scarce as white rhinos. I have always believed, contrary to what one might imagine, that his relative isolation in the early

years was both emotionally healthy and also quite possibly beneficial for the evolution of his talent.

It was not until he was fourteen that Patrick became a Master, but playing in Boston and New York, his USCF rating soared. Pretty soon he was a Senior Master, and by the time he was in high school, he was regularly winning State and National Junior Championships. I think he earned his first International Master Norms while still in high school. Once he passed the milestone of Master, the USCF started to take notice of him. He was awarded a scholarship that paid for a grandmaster, Edmar Mednis, to spend some sessions with him, coaching him and promoting his development. I recall quite vividly the first meeting with Mednis, which was conducted in our guest bedroom. Mednis did not set up a chess board or talk openings and moves. Instead, he talked to Patrick about the central idea of chess, which, he said, was to search for the truth. I sat in on that first session, and I am afraid I was extremely sceptical of Mednis' New Age sounding patter. That just showed how little I understood competitive chess.

Here is what Mednis was trying to get Patrick to understand. In a Swiss style tournament of the sort Patrick was accustomed to, draws are death, because the structure of the tournament almost guarantees that *someone* will rack up a string of wins, if only by luck. Draws pretty much consign you to fifth or sixth place. So even very strong players competing for the prize money take chances, making a risky or unsound move in hopes of tricking an opponent into a blunder in time pressure. This, Mednis was saying, is not the way to learn to play chess at the highest level. It is not "looking for the truth." Heavyweight tournaments, in which Grandmasters compete against one another, are almost never Swisses. They are invitational round robin tournaments in which each player plays each other player once. In tournaments of that sort, draws are perfectly acceptable. They are a kind of marking time. The real no no is a loss. Many times, in a high

powered round robin, the player who wins has a good many draws plus several wins, but no losses. If you want to play competitively at that level, you must develop the ability to recognize when a position does not offer winning chances, and patiently play completely solid chess to guarantee a draw. If you do that -- if you look for the truth -- the winning chances will present themselves, and you will then take advantage of them to notch up a win. This was a completely new way of thinking about chess for Patrick, and it was his success in mastering it that enabled him to move steadily to the forefronts first of American chess and then of world chess.

Even though I was teaching at UMass, Cindy was teaching at MIT, and we were living in Belmont, we really thought of ourselves in those early days as returning to the Harvard Square community in which both of us had spent so many years. Shortly after the new semester started, we decided to have an elegant little dinner party for some of the people we knew at Harvard. We invited Barry and Betty Moore, Bob and Barbara Nozick, and Jack and Marnie Rawls. During my marriage to Cindy, I pretty much followed her tastes in furnishings, which had in turn been shaped by those of her parents. This meant that our home ran to English and American antiques, fine china, and silver dinner service. Before dinner that evening, we gathered in our elegantly appointed living room for drinks and conversation. Very quickly, all of the men gathered at the north end of the room, where they stood talking seriously, and all of the women sat at the south end chatting cheerfully. I was appalled. We had just come from the Pioneer Valley, where nothing like this ever happened at a party. Somewhat belligerently, I walked to the south end and sat down with the ladies, but by every trick of body language available to them, they managed to communicate that they were not amused and that my place was with the menfolk. Since I was the host, and did not want to cast a pall over the evening, I drifted back to the men. I

have a pretty good memory for conversations, but I cannot recall a single thing that was said that evening.

When the Fall semester started, I settled into a routine of commuting out to Amherst. My teaching schedule was easily arranged for two or three days, so I could work at home and spend time with my boys. From Belmont Hill, I could get directly out onto Route 2, which, after a series of traffic lights, turned into a fast drive to Rte 202 and another twenty minutes or so to the University. I could make it in an hour and forty five minutes, and since I was always going counter traffic -- out of town in the morning, when everyone was flooding into Boston, and in to town when everyone was leaving -- it was usually a pretty easy commute. I was by now so alienated from the Philosophy Department that I had no inclination at all to spend time there, so I simply drove out, taught my classes, and drove home.

There was of course one small problem. During one of its recurrent budget crises, the UMass Administration had removed all of the phones from the offices of the faculty in Humanities and Social Sciences. Their intention was honorable, no doubt. They were desperately trying to avoid having to fire faculty, and I think they reflected that since they never felt the need to call us in Bartlett Hall, we could probably get on without the phones. One could always make local calls from the Department office, but if I wanted to call home, which as a long distance call was not authorized, I had to go to a phone in the basement and feed coins into it. I recall being invited to speak at Trinity University in San Antonio, Tx. As I was chatting with the members of the Philosophy Department before my talk, I mentioned that we did not have phones in our offices. They obviously saw this as an admirable evidence of monastic dedication. When I tried to explain that we really wanted phones, but the university wouldn't put them in, I could see in their eyes the nervous thought, "This man is not quite stable." It was hard to explain.

The Brandeis course I taught that Fall was really just a way for the Department to take a look at me. I found Brandeis itself a bit odd. Located in Waltham, a short drive from Belmont, it is a wealthy private University, but quite different in feel from Chicago or the Ivy League. The first thing that struck me was that seemingly every bit of masonry or stonework or ironwork had a plaque on it with the name of the donor whose gift had made it possible. Harvard and Columbia had buildings named after donors, of course, and UMass had buildings named after politicians, but Brandeis had benches named after donors, doors named after donors. I fully expected to find urinals in the men's rooms named after donors. I was not sure how I was going to like teaching there, but anything would be an improvement on the UMass Philosophy Department.

Fred Sommers pushed ahead with plans to hire me, and the department was pretty much unanimous, but early on there were indications that things might not go smoothly. The first sign was a comment from the Dean when Sommers went to him to talk about their desire to hire me. "Why do you want another Marcuse?," he asked. I was flattered by the question when Fred reported it to me -- I thought it was the greatest compliment I had ever been paid -- but I had the good sense to realize that it was not meant positively. When the appointment moved up the administrative ladder to the Provost's office, the standard next step was to convene an *ad hoc* committee [shades of Harvard]. Marver Bernstein, the President, put together a committee that was, to put it mildly, not likely to be sympathetic, including as it did such well-known conservative figures as Charles Fried and Sidney Hook. Bernstein at one point offered the opinion that "Wolff did some good work when he was young, but now he is burned out."

I was under great strain that Spring. My father, who was both an alcoholic and a very heavy smoker, had been going steadily downhill since my mother's death almost six years

earlier. He had become seriously weakened, and finally had to be hospitalized by my uncle Anoch, who was his doctor, and was part-owner of a proprietary hospital in Queens, New York. It became clear that he could not possibly continue to live on his own in the home he and my mother had bought forty-one years earlier, so on May 3rd, I drove to New York to see my father and find a nursing home for him.

My father had behaved with very great courage and selflessness in those years after my mother's death. His stubborn decision to stay in the house alone was clearly driven by his desire not to be a burden on either Barbara or me, even though he was very overweight, and weakened by the alcohol and cigarettes. One day, he went out to sit for a while on the front stoop of the little house, as he had done so often over the years. It started to rain, and when he tried to stand up to go inside, he found that he could not. He sat for a long time in the rain, getting soaked and risking pneumonia, before he could pull himself up and get indoors. When I heard about the incident, I was horrified and terribly guilty. I knew that I had allowed him to keep any burden from falling on my shoulders, simply turning a blind eye to his obvious need.

On May 4th, I visited him in the hospital. He had a tube down his throat to permit him to breath, so he could not speak, but he was sitting up, and I knew he could understand what I was saying to him. After telling him that I had arranged for him to go to a nursing home when he was released from the hospital, I stroked his head and told him that I loved him. Then I said, "You were a better father to me than your father was to you. No man can be asked to do more than that. I will try to be a better father to my sons than you were to me." Then I kissed him. Early the next morning, he died.

The affair ended badly at Brandeis. The *ad hoc* committee, despite its rightward tilt, told the President that they ought to hire me. Bernstein, who was apparently unhappy with the cost of

a graduate program in Philosophy for which he could see no use, thereupon summarily not only vetoed my appointment but cancelled the entire doctoral program. Coming on the heels of my father's death, the Brandeis disaster marked a low point in my life. Only later did I come to see that Bernstein's decision was a blessing. Over the years, when I have told this story, I have always concluded it by saying that it ended happily, inasmuch as several years later, Marver Bernstein was killed in a hotel fire in Egypt. But I think it is not appropriate for me to write that into my memoirs. So I won't.

Barbara and I were my father's sole heirs, and we had been designated co-executors of his estate. but the task of arranging for the sale of the family house and managing the paperwork fell to me. Fortunately, Bernie Ackerman, a family friend and lawyer in the neighborhood, agreed to help me. Neither Barbara nor I wanted any of the furniture or personal effects. With her consent, I took two portraits that I had grown up with, one of my mother and one of my father, both when they were young adults. They are on the walls of my study here in Chapel Hill as I write these words. Bernie put the word out in the local synagogue that the house was for sale, and he thought it would go quickly. Since I had left home thirty-one years earlier, the neighborhood had slowly turned into an Orthodox Jewish community, and was actually designated an *aruv*.

While I waited for a bid to come in, I went up to the attic where I had sat after my mother's death and pawed through the accumulated boxes. There I came quite unexpectedly on a treasure trove of family letters, papers, and photographs going back generations. It seemed that my mother had been the unofficial family archivist. There were hundreds of letters between my grandfather and my grandmother from the years when he was a leader of the Socialist Party in New York City. There were more hundreds of letters between my parents during their courting

years, as well as every letter that Barbara or I had ever written home. I knew that these things could not be thrown away, even though I had no idea then what to do with them, so I boxed them all up and took them back to Belmont with me.

Finally, Bernie reported that he had a buyer for the house, although not from the Orthodox Jewish community, as he had expected. The little brick row house that my parents had bought in 1940 for \$5999 went for \$80,000. My parents' big risky gamble had actually paid off. But the joke came at the closing. Apparently [I was not there] the new owner showed up with a suitcase full of small bills and the lawyers had to spend hours counting it to make sure it added up to \$80,000. No one ever said anything, but who pays for a house in small bills?

Now that I was living in the Boston area, and wasn't writing books at a mad pace, I decided I might as well pick up some money [I do seem to have been unusually eager to amass bits of wealth, albeit never in very great amounts]. I contacted Harvard Summer School, which was always happy to exploit another academic, and in 1982, I taught two courses there. I continued to teach each summer for a total of five years -- '82 through '86. It was not particularly ennobling work, but it generated some extra income and got me out of the house. Typically, for eight weeks each summer I would drive down to Harvard Square five mornings a week and teach two one hour classes. Then the rest of the day was free. By this time, I had taught so many classes that my preparation could be limited to asking myself, as I drove the fifteen minutes into the Square, what I was going to say that day.

Those of you who have spent some time in Cambridge may be familiar with the Harvard Cooperative Society, The Coop, a large store that dominates Harvard Square. Ever since my days as an Instructor, I have each year bought a little black Coop date book, in which I record all of my appointments, class meetings, social events, and family obligations. Since these books are



produced for an academic community, they begin quite naturally in the middle of the year and end in the middle of the next year. As the years have gone by, I have kept most of them, although there are some regrettable lacunae. By now, I have forty or so, stored in a box that originally held materials from a Copy Cop copy shop in Boston. As I write these memoirs, I sift through the box for the books from the period I am memorializing, checking them for names, dates, and people. When I page through the books from my UMass years, one name appears repeatedly that has not yet found its way into these memoirs, and I think the time has come to give it the attention it deserves.

Milton Cantor is now Professor Emeritus in History at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. He is a distinguished chronicler of left-wing political movements in America who has written many books, the best of which in my judgment is his 1978 study, *The Divided Left*. Milton is the Eeyore to my Tigger --perennially pessimistic about the present and future of progressive politics, as I am unjustifiably, irrepressibly optimistic. Rather surprisingly, Milton is also a spectacular swimmer who, for many years, taught classes at the UMass pool. Milton and I are polar opposites in another way besides our temperament. Whereas I plunge deeply into the internal bureaucratic politics of any university at which I am teaching, Milton, like many academics, views his university merely as his home base, and he looks outward rather than inward for his professional involvements.

I have known Milton for almost forty years, and he is my dearest friend. I am not a terribly outgoing person, for all that I have a cheerful demeanor and an energetic presence. As I have several times indicated, I live much of my life in my head. Ever since I was fourteen, my most intense and absorbing human connection at any time has been with the woman with whom I am romantically involved -- Susie from my fourteenth to my nineteenth years, Cindy from my

twenty-third year until the time I have now reached in my story. I had good friends in high school, I suppose, but I never saw them again once I went to college. I had two good friends in college, but I have seen nothing of one of them since graduating and very little of the other. In the teaching positions I have held, I have been very friendly with my colleagues, but each time I have moved away to take a new position, I have almost immediately lost touch with those I have left behind. I am now seventy-eight years old, and save for my sister, Barbara, and my sons, there are only two people who have over the years remained an important emotional presence in my life: my second wife, and Milton Cantor.

Milton has a genius for friendship that is matched, in my experience, only by that of Sidney Morgenbesser. When I first met Milton, shortly after I arrived at UMass, he began to include me in the broad circle of the friends with whom he periodically arranged lunches. My early phone conversations with Milton were a trifle puzzling because he regularly refers to people only by their first names. During one call, he told me he had had lunch in New York with Dwight and Andre. "Oh yes," I said, frantically trying to figure out who these two folks were whom I was apparently supposed to know. It took me a while to figure out that Milton was talking about the radical social critic Dwight MacDonald and Andre Schiffrin, then the editor of Pantheon Books. This was not name dropping, let me hasten to explain. It is just that Milton sees the entire world as one big Upper West Side Theater for Ideas. There is an endearing affection in Milton's relationships that in no way diminishes the intensity of his political commitments. He is the only person in the world who calls me "Bobby."

Through Milton, I met a number of Amherst College's leading lights, including his old mentor from Columbia, Henry Steel Commager. By the time I met Commager, he was already seventy, and he grew crustier as the years passed. Milton, who was then in his early forties,

very much played the acolyte, although I always found Milton more interesting than Commager himself. Also part of that circle of Amherst College faculty then were the political theorist Gorge Kateb, who later went to Princeton, and Norman Birnbaum, who left Amherst to go to Georgetown. Norman had actually been the Head Section Man when I took Soc Sci 2, Sam Beer's great General Education course at Harvard. Norman was then writing his doctoral dissertation on the fall of the Weimar Republic, one of the topics in the course. Beer invited Norman to give a guest lecture, and Norman seized the opportunity to present virtually his entire dissertation in fifty-three minutes. When we filed into New Lecture Hall, Norman stood up, told us to put away our pens, and then unleashed a hurricane of words. We all shrank back against our seats as the waves of sound washed over us. I do not think any of us could have repeated a thing Norman said that day, but we cheered him to the echo.

Norman could have competed with Bennie Muckenhoupt as my candidate for the *Reader's Digest's* "Most Unforgettable Character I have Ever Met." He was the most engagingly self-absorbed person I have ever known. One of John Kenneth Galbraith's lighter literary efforts was his little 1963 book, *The McLandress Dimension*. It purported to be the report of a scientific study measuring the amount of time certain well known people could go without thinking about themselves. As I recall, the person found to have the shortest McLandress factor was Charles de Gaulle. Norman certainly would have given de Gaulle a run for his money. If you ran into Norman and told him that you had been diagnosed with terminal cancer, his response would be, "Have I told you about the woman I am seeing?" My favorite Norman story comes from a dinner party given by Felix and Shulamith Oppenheim. Felix was a professor in the UMass Political Science Department. Shulamith, very much Felix's junior, had been his student. Felix's greatest claim to fame was that he was the son of the Oppenheim who,

with Carl Hempel, wrote a famous article on what came to be known in the trade as The Covering Law Model of Scientific Explanation. Never mind that. It doesn't matter. Anyway, there we sat, eight or ten of us at a circular table, all chattering away simultaneously so that there was a cacophony of overlapping conversations. Suddenly, as sometimes happens, all of us paused simultaneously for breath, and there was a momentary lull. All except Norman, whose voice boomed out, "As I was walking through Red Square in Moscow the other day ..." He was absolutely mystified when we all burst out laughing.

Although I was not ready in those early Belmont years to begin the large multi-volume work on Marx that I had conceived while teaching the seminar on Classics of Critical Social Theory. I did bring some of what I had learned to the printed page. After the paper in *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, which I still believe makes a genuine contribution to the further development of Marx's analysis of capitalist exploitation, I wrote several papers that were, in one way or another, designed to remind scholars that Marx is not dead, Paul Samuelson and company notwithstanding. [I have always resented Samuelson's off-hand snide remark that Marx was "a minor post-Ricardian autodidact."]

In '82, *Social Research* published "Piero Sraffa and the Rehabilitation of Classical Political Economy," which later appeared in translation in an Italian journal, *Comunita*. That same year, *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* carried "The Analytics of the Labor Theory of Value in David Ricardo and Adam Smith." The next year, the *Journal of Philosophy* published a short paper, "The Rehabilitation of Karl Marx," and in '84, *Social Research* carried a much longer essay called "The Resurrection of Karl Marx, Political Economist" [I was obviously running out of titles.] There was nothing remotely original in any of these papers save the first, but I conceived them as a sort of missionary work, bringing the Word to the benighted primitives

living in Philosophy. I am afraid I was pretty much a flop as St. Paul. None of those papers, so far as I was ever able to tell, made the slightest impression on the readers of philosophical journals.

At the same time, volumes continued to appear with my name on them, even though for the most part they required very little effort on my part. *About Philosophy* had done well enough to warrant a second edition, the work for which was completed while we were still living in Northampton. This revision, the first of what have been ten to date, was rather extensive, involving an expansion and reorganization of the text. The odd practices of textbook publishers being what they are, the second edition carries a 1981 publication date, even though the first copies were actually in my hands before the movers came to transport us to Belmont. And of course the translations continued: German and French for *in Defense of Anarchism* and Spanish for *Understanding Rawls*. Translations obviously require literally no effort on my part. Indeed, I never see the translation until after it has been published, and even then I sometimes have to hassle the publisher to get my free copies. But my life-long obsession with writing books makes me take a secret and unwarranted pride in each new volume -- even a paperback edition -- that carries my name. At this point there are seventy such volumes, all sitting on a shelf in our little apartment in Paris. It is not for nothing that I think of myself as Mr. Toad.

Even though Belmont is only a short car or bus ride from Harvard, it was at Boston University, across the Charles, that I found far and away the most intellectually exciting and socially satisfying opportunity to widen my circle of friends and acquaintances. Two long-time members of the Philosophy Department, Bob Cohen and Marx Wartofsky, had started an operation known as "The Boston University Colloquium for the Philosophy of Science." Each year, they scheduled a number of sessions -- sometimes as many as one a week -- at which a

speaker would present a talk followed by discussion. If you managed to wangle your way into the inner circle of the Colloquium, which I did pretty quickly, you were invited to a dinner for twenty or thirty people before the talk. Those evenings were the high point of my social and intellectual life during the Belmont years.

Bob and Marx had the widest, most eclectic conception imaginable of what counted as "philosophy of science." They brought in historians, medical doctors, physicists, chemists, anthropologists, and sociologists, as well as the usual suspects from Philosophy. The question periods could be riotous affairs, straight out of a Marx Brothers movie. Somehow, no matter how arcane the subject, it seemed that the only other expert in the world was sitting in the audience. I recall one evening when a Professor of Medicine at the UMass Medical School in Worcester showed up to deliver a blood-curdling lecture on the sacrificial practices of the Aztecs. We all sat there in an appalled silence as he went on about priests plucking the hearts from living victims. What could anyone think to ask once the question period came? As soon as Bob called for questions, a young man with long hair jumped up in the back of the room. "I am a descendant of the Aztecs," he began, "and I know something about this." The fight was one. Where on earth had Bob and Marx found him?

I loved those colloquia. They were everything the UMass Philosophy Department had never been. Especially during a time when my marriage to Cindy was becoming more stressful and unsatisfying, the BU evenings were oases in an emotional desert. Bob Cohen had the money for an assistant, who did much of the work of scheduling and such. In the early years of my participation, Debra Nails did the honors. Debra is a philosopher whose scholarly specialty is Plato and the Greeks. She was [and I am sure, after all these years, still is] a vibrant, beautiful

red-haired woman whose intelligence and charm did much to lift the colloquium from the category of a scholarly symposium to something like the Old Regime tradition of the *soirée*.

Despite the Brandeis fiasco, I was still trying to relocate in the Boston area. At one point, discussions began with the B. U. Philosophy Department, which included even some talk about possibly having Bob Ackerman and me take over the running of the Colloquium. Marx had married a New York based political philosopher, Carol Gould, and was planning to move to CUNY. Things went so far as a vote by the Philosophy Department to offer me a professorship, but by then John Silber was President and Emperor for Life at BU, and I was not surprised when he arranged, through his flunky, Provost Jon Westling, to veto the appointment. The fact that I had anthologized Silber years earlier counted for nothing, of course. That was the third time I was denied a senior appointment because of my politics, and in each case things turned out better for the rebuff. But I do feel that I ended one up on John. My Massachusetts automobile license plate for many years read I. KANT. I think he would have killed for that plate.

Even though I was now living in Belmont, I was still responsible for teaching a full load of courses in Amherst. I was by now so alienated from the Philosophy Department that I wanted as little to do with them as possible, and the majority who controlled the Department were even more eager to see me fulfill my duties anywhere but in their program. While I was having lunch with Herb Gintis and Sam Bowles one day, I floated the idea of teaching a course in Economics. "I could teach a seminar on Game Theory, " I suggested, "or perhaps one on the Transformation Problem." [That, for the non-Marxists and non-Economists among my readers, is the name given to the theoretical problem of explaining formally the "transformation" of labor values into equilibrium prices in a capitalist market.] Sam and Herb suggested that I send a note to Jim Crotty, who by then was Department Chair. Back came a memo that said, "You have been

assigned a section of 200 students in Econ 103, Introductory MicroEconomics, for Spring '82. You will have four TAs." It seems the popularity of the radicals in the Department had created a crisis of abundance. Econ was swamped with students who wanted to take an intro course, and there just weren't enough seats in the regularly scheduled sections. Jim jumped on my offer and set things up before I had a chance to protest.

I was stunned. I had never actually taken an Economics course in my life, although I had, thank heavens, sat in on Don Katzner's graduate Micro course. I went to the Harvard Book Store on Mass Ave and asked them, "What textbook does the Harvard Economics Department use for Introductory Micro?" "Lipsey and Steiner," they said. So I bought a copy of Lipsey and Steiner and assigned it for my Econ 103 section. There I was again, teaching something I didn't know as a way of learning it. The story of my professional life. It was Soc. Sci. 5 at Harvard all over again.

The first day of class, I walked into a large lecture hall filled to overflowing with undergraduates. I had the eerie sense that lurking just outside the doors were milling throngs of students who had failed to make it into any of the Econ 103 sections that term, so that if someone walked out of the lecture hall, the seat would immediately be filled. "Good morning," I began, "my name is Professor Robert Paul Wolff." There was an angry murmur, and I suddenly realized what had happened. The course catalogue said "Professor R. Wolff," and of course all of these Freshmen and Sophomores assumed it meant Richard Wolff, one of the founding Marxists and a wildly popular undergraduate lecturer. I hurried on. "You have never taken Micro and I have never taught it, so we will learn it together." It would be an exaggeration to say that I had captured their hearts.



I plowed through all the standard topics. From time to time, when I got really stuck, I would call Sam Bowles, and he would in a few sentences explain to me what I was supposed to be teaching. There were some bad moments, needless to say. One day, I wrote on the board the formula for elasticity of demand, always a crowd pleaser. One of the my four TAs, all of whom regularly sat in the first row right in front of me, said in a stage whisper that could, I am sure, be heard throughout the entire auditorium, "You've got it upside down." I quickly erased the formula and re-wrote it, but I am convinced that for the rest of the semester at least half of the class never got it right. At the end of the semester, the TAs handed out computerized Departmental evaluation forms, and I waited anxiously to find out just how badly I had done. Eventually I received a mathematical analysis of the returns from the Econ Department, and it turned out that my teaching had been a triumph. The students rated me as "average." I decided not to try my luck by doing that again.

Patrick and Toby had gone right into the Belmont public schools when we moved to Garfield Road. For Toby, that meant fifth grade at the Winbrook School, one of several Elementary Schools in town, but for Patrick, it meant Middle School. Now Middle School was an innovation after my time as a schoolboy. In the 40s, you went to Elementary School [or "Public School," as it was called in New York City] from age six to age fourteen, at which point you graduated from eighth grade and entered High School. High School was four years long, after which you could go to college. But shifts in the demographic shape of the population created strains on Elementary Schools, which started enrolling more kids than they had seats for, and around the country, a new division of the sixteen years of public schooling was introduced. Elementary School now taught kids up through fifth grade. Something called Middle School took them for grades six, seven, and eight. And then High School kicked in. This rearrangement

had the consequence, probably unintentional, that during the three absolutely worst years of the entire growing up process, children were separated from younger kids for whom they might be persuaded to serve as role models. The result was *Lord of the Flies*.

Patrick was simply miserable in Middle School. At first, we pooh-poohed his upset and assured him that in a little while he would make friends. Then he started begging us not to take him to school -- not good, from the point of view of two professional academics. We found him a therapist, who laid down the law to me: The one absolute rule in a case of school phobia is that the child **must** go to school. So I would drive Patrick to school, as he cried and screamed and begged me not to make him go. I would physically push him out of the car, and rush off, emotionally shattered. I would then drive out to Amherst, teach, and drive home in time to pick Patrick up at school, dreading the tears and piteous pleas I knew I would face. When I got to the Middle School [there was only one in Belmont], like as not he would come bouncing out and say, "Hi, Dad. What are you doing here?" I wanted to kill him.

Toby, whose social skills were off the charts, fared better than Patrick, but I became really anxious about how the two of them would adjust to high school. I decided to arrange a meeting with the Guidance Counselor at the Middle School. I fully expected that when I had finished with my tale of woe, she would tell me that I was over-reacting, that Patrick was just a sensitive child, and that everything was just fine at the school. I went in, armed with particulars, and explained that I wanted some reassurance from her that things were not as terrible as they seemed. When I was finished with my prepared remarks, she asked quietly, "Have you considered private school?"

I was astonished by this tacit acknowledgement that her school was a snake pit. "But," she went on, "everything will be fine when they go to High School." "How on earth is that going

to help?" I spluttered. "The problem isn't the teachers, it is the kids. This is the only Middle School in town, and Belmont High is the only High School. When Patrick goes to Belmont High, all the kids who are making his life hell will go with him." "I know, I know," she replied, "but somehow, everything gets better as soon as they move up."

I was not reassured, so I talked things over with Cindy, and we decided to look into private school, at least for Toby. In Belmont, this pretty much meant either the Belmont Hill School, which was only three or four blocks away, or something called BB&N, which was the merger of the Buckingham School with Browne and Nichols School. Toby was now taking advanced math classes, and gave every sign of being an extraordinary student. I figured that a fancy private school, though very expensive, would offer him challenges and opportunities that a public high school could not match. At BB&N, they told us proudly that students who completed their regular math curriculum early were regularly sent to Harvard by special arrangement to take college level courses. I was suitably impressed, until we went to the high school. There, in response to our question about advanced math, the counselor closed his door and said, *sotto voce*, that in those cases they managed to place the students in Harvard math classes. Score one for public education.

My interviews at both Belmont Hill and BB&N very quickly revealed that their principal *raison d'etre* was to somehow shoehorn mediocre students into Harvard. Since both Patrick and Toby were spectacular students, and I wasn't so sure I wanted them going to Harvard anyway, it looked to me like a ton of money just to protect them from a social nightmare that the Middle School counselor assured me ended the day the students entered high school. I got a glimpse of why this might be true at the proceedings ending Patrick's Middle School years. For some reason, this was not called a "graduation" but rather a "moving up ceremony." The featured

speaker was the Principal of Belmont High School. He began his remarks by saying, "Up 'til now, nothing you have done in school has mattered, but from the day you walk into high school, what you do will determine the rest of your life." The kids looked terrified, and I began to believe that in ninth grade *Lord of the Flies* might turn into *Little Women*.

By now, Patrick had advanced so far as a chess player that from time to time he went to tournaments out of town, and even out of the country. All of this was pretty exciting, of course, and got lots of attention at home, but it left Toby out in the cold. I really wanted to find something I could do with him that would be fully as exciting as one of Patrick's chess jaunts. Toby had studied some French in third grade in Northampton, continuing that study one Summer in Belmont, so I asked him whether he would like to go to Paris. Smart kid, he jumped at the chance. Since Cindy was phobic about flying, it would be just the two of us, which suited me fine.

Toby and I had already forged a strong bond, not just through Cub Scouts. Starting quite early, while we were still in Northampton, I began the practice of reading to him at bedtime. It had started with storytelling. Each evening, when he was still a little boy, I would make up a story that always began the same way. "Once upon a time, there was a little boy named Toby, who lived with his Mommy and his Daddy and his big brother Patrick in a big house at Twenty-Six Barrett Place..." From this, we graduated to the Narnia books, which seemed endless, and then to *The Lord of the Rings*. I read Toby all three volumes of Tolkein's masterpiece, which I loved as much as Toby did. When we had finished *The Return of the King*, I cast about for something else to read, and tried out *Eighty Days Around the World*. I was surprised and fascinated to discover that the language was too difficult for nine year old Toby, and we never did finish reading it together.

With the trip to France all planned, we waited until summer came, and before I started my Summer School teaching, we flew off to Paris for a two week stay. The Paris trip was an unalloyed success. We stayed in a little hotel on the Left Bank, not very far from where Susie and I now have an apartment, and spent a number of days exploring old Paris, even catching an English Language film at *Action Ecole*, a little cinema on rue des Ecoles that shows golden oldies in the "version originale." For the boffo ending of the trip, we took a train to Reims for a meal at one of France's premier restaurants, the three star Le Boyer. Toby was dressed in a darling three piece suit, and looked like a little gentleman. The meal was wonderful, as might be expected. The capstone was dessert, which was listed on the menu as "Délices de Marjorie," Marjorie being the wife of the chef, M. Boyer. This turned out to be a rolling cart loaded with an assortment of the most delicious looking desserts I had ever seen. One simply pointed at whatever one wished to try, with no limits on amounts or numbers of items, and the waiter would spoon it onto your plate.

Eventually, it came time to leave, and as we stepped outside into the summer night, there was the chef himself, taking a breather after an evening of three star cooking. He greeted us, and Toby, pulling himself up to his not very great height, said, in his best Elementary School French, "C'était le plus bon repas de ma vie." Boyer burst out laughing and replied, "But you have not lived very long." Of all my memories of Toby in those early years, and there are many, many happy ones, I think that is my favorite. On display that evening was the *gravitas* that I have come to love.

Once the boys were in high school, I would drive them to school, frequently before commuting out to Amherst. One morning, as I was pulling away from the circular driveway, there was a frantic honking from the car behind me. The driver got out and ran up to my car. It

was Bob Nozick, whose son and Patrick were classmates. Bob cried, "I knew it had to be you, as soon as I saw the license plate!" We chatted for a bit and I allowed as how I should have gotten a "Question Authority" bumper sticker to go with it. Many years later, very near the tragically early end of his life, Bob taught Patrick in an undergraduate course at Harvard. Bob and I were on opposite ends of the political spectrum, but I liked him enormously. Who could help but like him?

Brandeis and Boston University had been busts, but in the Fall of 1982, a possibility arose from a quite unexpected quarter. I got a call from the New School for Social Research, in lower Manhattan. The New School is a fascinating institution. It was founded in 1919 by socialists, and in 1938 created a University in Exile for European Jews fleeing Hitler. That body eventually evolved into the Graduate Faculty, which under one name or another continues to the present day. Over the decades, the great scholars who had formed the core of the faculty of the University in Exile grew old and retired or passed away. The Graduate Faculty, which had six doctorate granting departments, began to lose its luster, and in the case of some departments shrank until it was unclear whether their faculty was large enough and strong enough to survive. New York State, which periodically reviews and re-certifies institutions granting advanced degrees, officially warned the New School that unless it substantially strengthened several of the departments its certification would be withdrawn.

Faced with the choice of rebuilding the Graduate Faculty or closing it, the Board of the New School brought in a new President, Jonathan Fanton, with a mandate to rebuild the Graduate Faculty and return it to its former distinction. In the Fall of 1982, with the memory of the Brandeis and B. U. affairs fresh in my memory, and with the situation in the UMass Philosophy Department as bleak as ever, I was invited to teach a course at the New School and to

talk with them about taking over the chairmanship of the Philosophy Department. The New School was an odd duck among American universities. Despite the distinguished history of the Graduate Faculty, it had taken to teaching almost all of its courses in the late afternoon or evening, as though it were an adult education program. By the early 80's, many of the people on its instructional staff were drawn from the New York area universities as moonlighters. Nevertheless, I was intrigued by the idea of actually being part of a program in which I would be central, not peripheral, respected, not despised. So on Mondays and Wednesdays, I would drive out to Amherst and teach an Intro to Philosophy course and a graduate seminar on Formal Methods in Political Philosophy, and on Thursdays I would catch the shuttle from Logan to LaGuardia, take a cab to Washington Square, and teach a course on the Philosophy of David Hume.

The offer from the New School, when it finally came, was extraordinary: Chairmanship of the Philosophy Department, Professorships in the Departments of Political Science and Economics, and a salary \$30,000 more than my UMass pay. It was a dream offer, tailored to my particular interests and accomplishments. I would be in a position to recruit an exciting group of philosophers, and to craft a powerful interdisciplinary doctoral program integrated with radical economists and progressive political scientists. It would be the first time in my career that I had actually been hired because of who I was and had become as a scholar and an intellectual.

The only problem with the position was that it would require me to be away from home three days a week at a minimum, and with my sons still in high school, that made me very uneasy indeed. The longer term prospect of committing myself to a commute did not really concern me, I confess. Because of my hesitations, I decided to take the offer to the Department to see what they would say. I gave a copy of the letter to Mike Jubien, who was then Head.

Several days later, he called me at my home in Belmont. "The senior members have met," he said. [He meant the members of the majority -- Bob Ackerman never heard about the supposed meeting.] "We discussed the New School offer, and we think you should take it." And he hung up. I was furious, and insulted. But I refused to slink away, tail between my legs, even if the position to which I was going was far better than any I could ever hope for at UMass. I called Toby into the living room and asked him to sit down. I told him what was going on, and then I said to him, "Toby, I want you to remember this moment, and I want you to learn from it. When someone treats you badly, you don't run away. You stay and fight."

The next day, I made an appointment to see the Provost, a smart, savvy, attractive man named Loren Baritz, who had come to UMass from heading up NYU's Humanities Institute. Baritz's first response when I told him about the offer was surprising and refreshing. He said, "Congratulations." Then he said, "What can we do to keep you?" I had my list of demands all set, and I rattled them off. "First of all, I want you to match the salary." "I will raise your salary by ten thousand. How is that?" I said it would do. Money wasn't really what was driving me away from UMass.

"Second, I want a doctoral program in the Philosophy Department that I can be a genuine part of. I and several others in the Department have been systematically excluded from any real role in graduate education. I want a doctoral program in Social and Political Philosophy." Baritz thought for a moment and said, "I will demand that the Department allow you to create such a program, and if they do not, I will remove the Head and put the Department in receivership."

"Third," I said, "I want a phone in my office."

"I can't do that," Baritz replied. He knew the limits of his power.



Baritz first sent Bob Ackerman and me to see the Dean of the Graduate School, Sam Conti, a smart, brash, no-nonsense guy for whom I have always had a soft spot. When Bob and I told him that we were effectively excluded from the graduate program in the Philosophy Department and that neither of us sat on a single doctoral committee, he told us he didn't believe us. But at UMass, it is the Graduate Dean who officially appoints all doctoral committees, so he had the records in his office. He did a quick check and came back, looking stunned. We were right. That base line established, he called a meeting of the members of the Department to tell them that they had to let us create a track in the doctoral program over which we would have control. Leonard Ehrlich insisted on broadening the scope of the program to include Recent Continental Philosophy as his price for joining our rebellion, and the four of us [Bob, Ann, John, and I] agreed. Fred Feldman assured Conti that there was no interest in those subjects among the students, and that the new variant of the program would be a non-starter, but Conti insisted, and fortunately the members of the majority were too inexperienced in the ways of the Academy to realize that Baritz' threat was really all bluff. The Philosophy Department was viewed as a success by the Administration. Indeed, some years earlier it had been declared one of three "centers of excellence" in the Faculty of Humanities and Fine Arts, a classification that guaranteed it special treatment when Teaching Assistantships and faculty lines were handed out. There was no way the Office of the Provost was going to put it into receivership. I thanked Jonathan Fanton graciously for the offer and stayed at UMass.

And so it came to pass that in AY 1982-83, The Alternative Track in Social and Political Philosophy and Recent Continental Philosophy was born. The AT, as it almost immediately came to be known, was not all that different in substance from the existing doctoral program. Our students would still have to take Logic and the History of Philosophy and all that good stuff.

The difference was that our students would not be bullied and sneered at and told that what they wanted to do wasn't philosophy. Bob and I would run the program independently of the members of the majority. There was even some suggestion that we would get a share of the Teaching Assistantships.

There already were a handful of students in the Department who wanted to study with us, for all that they were, in the words of Isaiah, *despised and rejected*. Phil Cox, Ed Rayher, Margaret Nash, a few others. But very quickly, things began to develop. Quite naturally, the establishment of the AT transformed the *de facto* divisions of the Department into a formal split. We stopped going to their parties and started having parties of our own. Bob and I alternated serving as the AGPD of the AT [which is to say, the Associate Graduate Program Director of the Alternative Track -- Fred Feldman clung like a limpet to the official title of GPD, and I think would rather have died than forfeit it.]

Inasmuch as the creation of the AT had been my price for staying at UMass, I quite naturally imagined that I would now have students eager to study Political Philosophy, but of course nothing quite like that happened. Oh, they all took my courses, even the ones that required them to tackle really difficult logic and mathematics. But their hearts belonged to Recent Continental Philosophy. I should have anticipated this, but I admit it caught me by surprise.

Quite the most astonishing result of the establishment of the AT was the transformation of Bob Ackerman. In one of the most extraordinary bits of mid-course correction that I have ever seen, Bob went from being a Philosopher of Science to being a scholar of Continental Philosophy, seemingly overnight. And I do mean *scholar*. Bob brushed up his German, which was already excellent, and started teaching Nietzsche and Hegel. He wrote a book on Nietzsche

in a year or two. Bob taught himself Danish so that he could teach Kierkegaard. He flipped French word cards to prepare himself for teaching Derrida and Foucault. He very quickly made himself the indispensable core of the AT.

And students responded. To the surprise and dismay of Feldman, Chappell, Gettier, Sleight, Jubien, Matthews, Robison, and the others, incoming students began to opt for the AT in increasing numbers. Within three years or so, fully half of the graduate students in the doctoral program were enrolled in the AT. Bob and I were swamped with students wanting us to direct their dissertations. I suppose I am so far from being an unbiased observer that my recollections have no evidentiary value whatsoever, but our students really did seem more alive than theirs. Our students seemed to be having more fun than theirs. I don't think our students were smarter than theirs, but they weren't dumber either. They simply had more juice.

Those were good years for both Bob and me. At long last, we had forged a real place in the Department that we could call our own. Neither of us had the slightest wish to "take over" the graduate program as a whole, nor did we have any missionary desire to convert the students of the majority to our way of thinking. It was obvious that what we were teaching was capable of drawing substantial numbers of students to our classes, and that was sufficient for us. There was one problem: we needed more faculty to handle the numbers of students signed up for the AT, but there was no way that the majority could permit that to happen. Indeed, at one point, during a time of budgetary constraint when departments were begging their Deans for permission to hire, the Department was actually authorized to recruit a political philosopher, and the majority chose to pass up the chance rather than run the risk that whomever they found would rat them out and join forces with us.

Our Alternative Track became one more element in a campus wide ferment of high powered leftwing thinking. The conversations in those days among colleagues were, I found, exciting, informed, sophisticated, and fluid. I had encountered nothing remotely like them at Harvard, at Chicago, or at Columbia. Rather than talk in general terms about what those days were like, I should like to give readers of this Memoir some concrete sense of the flavor of our conversations and debates by reproducing word for word a two page single-spaced memo that my colleague Ann Ferguson dashed off the morning after a meeting of a seminar conducted by Steven Resnick and Rick Wolff. Resnick and Wolff, you will recall, formed the core of the Althusserian wing of the Radical faction in the Economics Department, with Sam Bowles and Herb Gintis at the heart of the opposed faction. When I came across the memorandum in a folder I was leafing through to check something for these Memoirs, I sent Ann an email and got her permission to include it here. It is hurried and completely in the moment, making reference to things that both of them were aware of. Rather than try to explicate it, I will let it stand on its own as an example of the sort of collegial communication that was happening on the UMass campus. Ann became very friendly with Sam Bowles, as she indicates, and was on the Bowles-Gintis side of the divide in the Econ Department. The memo is dated Nov. 5, 1981. Here it is:

"Dear Steve and Rick, Very interesting seminar, albeit somewhat frustrating. Everyone has their own agenda, we don't know each others intellectual work very well. Thus, every seminar seems like attacking another tip of the iceberg, with so many assumptions undeveloped. I appreciate Rick's question about hostility at the beginning -- it's important to understand our political differences. I know about you guys only from the other camp in the Econ Dept, which perhaps unfairly types your political practice as "Class First" (altho it is admitted by all that no one knows what you two really do for political practice outside the Dep't.) If I were to type my political practice it would clearly be an attempt to do Class, Sex and Race organizing equally; picket lines at strikes for Class, auton. Women's groups around reproductive rights for sex, etc. and working hard to find ways to make alliances with Third World groups and nasty sexist Black Nationalists on campus for race. This is fragmented politics but then the American left is so fragmented that what's to do? And besides, depending on one's criterion for class, it isn't even clear that there is (yet) a coherent American working class, given ethnic, racial, language etc.

barriers, waves of immigrants and all -- like Marx on the French peasantry (see my enclosed paper).

A couple of points that would take a whole lot more talking. Thru political practice not on the theoretical level I've discovered that it is necessary to talk to people about their interests and how they'd be better realized by alliance with certain groups against certain groups, etc in order to bring about the elimination of structural situations (in capitalism, patriarchy, racial domination systems) which perpetuate exploitative relations between groups. Now, either your theory about this kind of talk is that it is necessary but ideological (in Althusser's distinction between ideology and "science"), or you are committed to some statement that suggests a relatively privileged (as opposed to absolutely privileged or anything-you-feel-like relativism) position in this sense: given these interests of these groups I identify with (which may be entirely system-constructed), this group would be better off, would be more likely to meet/get/achieve these interests if they adopted my analysis/entry point and concrete (empirical, contextual) analysis of the relevant social groups and their relationships and understood in this context who their enemies really are: This isn't [Rick] Wolff's absolute correspondence theory; it isn't an absolute (i.e. unchanging) distinction between appearance and reality: on the other hand, it isn't the "I like ice cream" variety of relativism either. This is what I meant by the feeling that your epistemology lacks a way to understand/posit revolutionary values. You may not agree with this but I think any political organizing implied an assumption of shared values and a way to achieve them better. It may not be possible to prove/disprove a sceptic or an "I like ice cream you don't" relativism, but the language of politics implies (I think) some kind of intersubjective test of whether a political change has been successful in meeting the group you identify with's interests. In fact, your language in the epistemology paper (e.g. the distinction between thought-concretes and concrete-reals) assumes a distinction between appearance and reality. You may not want to use the concept of "empiricism" as it has been used in the history of philosophy, but in fact David Hume in that terminology is labeled an empiricist, and he did not hold a correspondence theory. In fact he held that what existed was a collection of sense-appearances in the mind, and then some mental operations of abstraction which collected these together into general concepts. He thus rejected the appearance/reality distinction, and in some terminologies is called an idealist for that reason. Hume was the intellectual giant who was the forerunner in important ways of the Vienna Circle positivist school. Interestingly enough, his analysis of morality as collections of feelings also can be said to connect to the positivist's tendency to assume statements about sensible appearances are factual while moral claims are emotional, thus not "scientific." But he also in a contradictory tendency posited an ideal observer theory: what "good" means is what a fictive rational, well informed person would like in X situation, which is the precursor of the American pragmatist "convergence" theories first suggested by C. S. Peirce -- and probably the tradition that informed Jan Dizard's comments last night.

In any case, Hume's empiricism holds there is no distinction between appearance and reality, and obfuscates the distinction between idealism and materialism. So your claims about two interlocking processes, Thought-concretes and concrete-reals he would regard as "metaphysical" garbage, and in fact a version of the correspondence theory.

I enclose this paper of mine written in 1976 and printed in a collection of essays about the Ehrenreich's "New Class" PMC theory, Pat. Walker, ed Between Labor and Capital, South End 1978. I still essentially agree with the view I espouse in that paper although I've since developed a more extensive "Dual Systems" theory like Heidi Hartmann's, as is shown by Nancy Folbre and my paper in Sargent, ed Women and Revolution, South End, 1981, "The Unhappy Marriage of Capitalism and Patriarchy". As you will see by the footnotes, I have done a lot of talking to Sam Bowles about this stuff. However, we disagree a lot: he wants to substitute Domination relations for Exploitation relations as the basic primitive. I'm not convinced, especially since all he can say to object to my arguments that women are exploited not just oppressed is that there is no way to make the distinction between necessary and surplus labor without markets (thus not in the family!) Which cuts out understanding necessary/surplus labor in feudal, slave etc. economies. Anyway, as you can see, hopefully, the paradigm I presented last night of the Radical Feminist approach to understanding feudalism is not mine! I think we need two (and possibly three, I still haven't figured out how to handle race) points of entry to understand the complex interactions and contradictions between exploitative sex/affective production systems and other material systems of production.

One last point re overdetermination: One can believe in overdetermination without adopting your kind of relativist stance. One can disagree about points of entry and principles of change/tendencies in social totalities without adopting your kind of relativist stance. You've said yourself that E. P. Thompson's epistemology doesn't affect his concept of class or his concrete analysis of the British WC history. So, if there is only a contingent (accidental) and not logical connection between one's epistemology or methodology and the concrete historical analysis one gives, why in fact should those students in the Economics Dep't worry about epistemology?

Cheers, Ann

I am not going to suggest that broadsides of this length, sophistication, and intensity were being fired off daily, but it is obvious that Ann knows she can assume a level of ideological sophistication that on most campuses around the country would be extremely rare. When people ask me whether I am sorry, in the end, that I left Columbia for UMass, I try to explain that UMass was much more exciting intellectually than Columbia and much more politically *sympatico* as well. They always look dubious, but I have never had any doubt.

Ann's last point, about overdetermination, raises an interesting theoretical point which it might be appropriate to say a word about here. This is a topic on which I crossed swords with Rick Wolff one semester when I audited his graduate lecture course for a while. Rick and Steve got the term "overdetermination" from Althusser, and so far as I could make out, they used it to

mean that something has many causes, not merely one. But the term in fact has a quite different meaning both in mathematics and in Freud's explication of dreams. Let me take a moment to explain. When a system of linear equations has more unknowns than equations, it is in general impossible to solve the system. You can always eliminate a number of the variables, or unknowns, from the equations, by solving one equation for a selected unknown and then substituting the result into the rest of the equations. Each time you do that, you eliminate one unknown and lose one equation. For someone discussing Marx's economic theories, as Rick and I both were, this means analyzing a system of linear equations representing the production conditions in the different industries. In such a system, there will be  $n$  equations, one for each industry. Assuming that there is one quality of labor and a free labor market, there will be a single economy wide wage rate. Assuming as well that capital moves freely from industry to industry in search of the highest rate of return, a single profit rate will emerge. So all in all there will be  $n$  equations,  $n$  price variables for the  $n$  products, a wage rate and a profit rate. You can reduce the number of price variables by one by choosing some commodity [like gold, or silver] and arbitrarily setting its price equal to 1. This will then turn all the prices into what are called "relative prices," which is to say prices relative to one unit of the commodity denominated as money. The upshot is a system of  $n$  equations with  $n+1$  variables. The system is then said to be "underdetermined by one degree of freedom." What you can then do, and this is at the heart of all Classical Political Economy, is to solve the system of equations for the relationship between the wage rate and the profit rate, showing that they are inversely related. When the wage goes up, the profit rate goes down, and vice versa. That is why Smith, Ricardo, and Marx all say that the interests of the workers and the entrepreneurs are opposed to one another.

On the other hand, if there are more equations than variables, in general the system is in internal contradiction, because more constraints are being placed on the system than there are degrees of freedom. Such a system is said to be "overdetermined." All of this is well known and not controversial.

Sigmund Freud also uses the term "overdetermined," in an apparently quite different way that turns out, upon examination, to be basically similar to the notion in mathematics or economics. In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, his greatest work [or so he himself thought], Freud argues that when one traces to the unconscious the sources of each of the elements of a dream, through the process of free association, one frequently finds that even after a dream element has been completely accounted for, associations reveal that one or even several other unconscious wishes or memories are also finding expression in that dream element. The dream element, in effect, has too many explanations for its presence in the dream. It is, Freud says, overdetermined. If you think about it, it is clear that this notion of overdetermination and the mathematical/economic notion are really at base the same.

But the notion of multiple determination is totally different. To say that an event or a phenomenon has several causes, and hence is multiply determined, is to say that it cannot be completely explained without invoking all of the causes. No one of them alone is adequate to account for the event or the phenomenon.

I was bugged by this seemingly deviant and confusing usage of a term that already had a clearly defined use in both mathematics and psychoanalytic theory. When Rick started talking about overdetermination in his lectures, I raised my hand and questioned him on the matter. Now Rick is a ferociously smart man, but I simply could not seem to get him to acknowledge my point. After a while, it became clear that I was getting in the way of his teaching, and I stopped



attending the class. But to this day, I do not understand why he and Steve Resnick persist in their usage.

I was still commuting from Amherst, and as 1983 turned into 1984, my marriage to Cindy moved closer and closer to a breach, but there were courses to plan, students to guide toward the degree, battles to be fought in the Department that we could hope to win. It was grand fun. I think I must have been on the phone to Bob Ackerman every day of the week. To the students, we were simply "the two Bobs." On July 15, 1984, I even took a group of AT students to Tanglewood for a classical music concert. We sat on the lawn in front of the Shed, and listened to some Beethoven. I thought the outing was an ideal imitation of the outings my father used to go on with his high school students in the forties, but if I had been a bit more sensitive, I might have noticed that they would have preferred a rock concert. Oh well.

It was during that happy time that I had a really wacky encounter with the famous zoologist Edward O. Wilson. A Canadian philosopher named Michael Ruse was visiting for a year at the Harvard Museum of Comparative Zoology where Stephen J. Gould, Richard Lewontin, and E. O. Wilson all had their offices. I ran into Michael at the B. U. Colloquium, and hit it off with him. After we had met several times for coffee, he asked whether I would like to meet Wilson. I said sure, and Ruse set it up. It was not unlike my arranged kiss with Marilyn Harris in the eighth grade. [Readers who would like to be reminded how that turned out can take a look at Part, Chapter One of these memoirs.] It was agreed that I would spend an afternoon in his office, which doubled as his laboratory. In advance of the *rendez-vous*, we exchanged gifts. I sent him, through Michael, a copy of *The Poverty of Liberalism*, and he sent back a copy of his latest book, *Promethean Fire*, co-authored by Wilson and Charles Lumsden. The volume, which

sits on my shelves today, is inscribed "For Robert Paul Wolff, with warm regards, Edward O. Wilson, Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard U., January 25, 1984."

We met in Wilson's office in the Museum. After the usual greetings, he showed me the centerpiece of the office, a large table on which, under a plexiglass dome, was a bustling, complex ant colony. Wilson banged the side of the table, which set the ants scurrying, and as they poured out of the anthill he pointed out the soldier ants, worker ants, and so forth. I didn't have much in the way of conversation. What can you say about an anthill, after all? So, casting about for something to say, I mused aloud, "I wonder how many ants there are in the entire colony." "Fifteen thousand," Wilson replied. "How can you be sure?" I asked. "I counted them," he said.

There are moments in life when the scales fall from your eyes and you suddenly see clearly something that has hitherto been obscured from view. This was one of those moments. I had from time to time reflected on how different the workaday lives are of people in different corners of the Academy, even though we all call ourselves "Professor." Richard Taub in the Winthrop House Senior Common Room had gone off to India to do the research for his dissertation. Karl Heider had gone to uplands New Guinea. My sister, Barbara, had spent her time in a bio lab. My notion of an expedition was a visit to the Widener Library stacks. Exploring unknown territory meant going to a level of the stacks I had not previously been on. And here was E. O. Wilson, the creator of Sociobiology, who thought nothing at all about counting fifteen thousand ants. Had anyone asked me to figure out the number of ants in an anthill, the farthest I would have gone was watching eight or ten walk by and then guesstimating the rest.

To be sure, philosophers sometimes descend to the level of the particular. Hegel, it is said, attempted to demonstrate *a priori* that there are only seven planets [several readers have assured me that this is the philosophical version of an urban myth.] But our tendency is to go in somewhat the opposite direction. Confronted with the real world, the reflex reaction of philosophers is to ask about possible worlds. It was clear to me that although we were both professors and authors, Wilson and I led lives so utterly different that no real mutual understanding was likely. It was also clear that however much the world might think of Wilson as the tendentious, controversial author of Sociobiology, his real interest was in those ants.

When our conversation about the anthill began to drag, Wilson took me into a nearby room in which there were rows of file cabinets. He pulled out a drawer at random to show me a card on which was impaled an ant. The card identified the ant as belonging to one of the more than twenty thousand species of ants that are estimated to exist somewhere or other on the face of the earth. A second *eclaircissement* illuminated my mind. I had a vision of thousands of English curates and amateur entomologists, each of whom had devoted much of his or her life to searching for, identifying, catching, impaling, and thus nailing down for all time one of those ant species. Here again, I saw clearly how different my field was from Wilson's. Philosophy does not advance by the taking of thousands of tiny steps, assuming for the sake of argument that it advances at all. Instead, ages pass during which little or nothing happens, although thousands of philosophers are doing their best. Then, there is a moment of transformation -- fourth century B. C., in Greece, or the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Western Europe. Suddenly, the subject leaps forward, changing forever the way we think. As for all those good, grey, decent souls [myself included, of course] who soldier away, trying to think new thoughts, we might just

as well not have existed. Great music is like this, I think. Would anyone ever play the music of Salieri had it not been for Peter Shaffer?

But Entomology is not like that at all. Every one of those file cards was the evidence of a worthwhile piece of work, undertaken, completed, and added to our knowledge of the ant. I was properly humbled. After we parted, I reflected that Wilson probably had learned nothing at all from meeting me, but I felt that I had learned a good deal from meeting him. It might not have been good for him, but it was good for me.

Later that year, near the end of the Spring Semester, the famous German scholar Dieter Henrich came to the UMass campus and gave a talk on Hegel. Afterwards, a group of us took him to dinner at The Lord Jeffrey Amherst Inn, located on the Amherst Common. The Lord Jeff is the closest thing Amherst has to fine dining, although in fact there have only been a few times during the thirty-seven years I spent at UMass when its food was actually any good. Henrich ordered a bottle of wine, which the waiter brought with the usual flourishes, opening it, pouring a tiny bit into Henrich's glass, and waiting for him to taste it. Henrich went through the entire ritual. He swirled it, he sniffed it, he tasted it. And then he pronounced it no good. It was the first time in my entire life that I had ever seen someone actually do that. He made some impressive sounding remarks about the hillside on which the grapes were grown, and sent the bottle back for another one. Once again, he went through the ritual, and this time pronounced it satisfactory, to our collective relief. After the waiter had gone, Henrich allowed as how that bottle really wasn't right either, but he did not want to make trouble. I didn't think much of the talk -- I have never liked Hegel -- but I was mightily impressed by the dinner.

As my marriage to Cindy developed more strains, I quite unexpectedly returned to the violin, which I had played as a boy. I had not opened the case since 1961, when Barbara

Bergmann, Ann Carter and I played string quartets several times during my last year as a Harvard Instructor. I got some new strings, took a few lessons, and began practicing a bit. Cindy had studied piano as a girl and played nicely. In the Barrett Place house we actually had both an upright and a Yamaha baby grand on which the boys practiced during their brief engagements with the instrument. Perhaps as a form of therapy to try to repair our marriage, Cindy and I took to playing Handel violin sonatas together. I wasn't very good, Lord knows, but then, we weren't planning to take it on the road.

One evening, John Harbison and his wife Rose Mary came to dinner. Harbison, who is now one of America's most celebrated classical composers, had even then, in his mid-forties, acquired a considerable reputation. He and Cindy were in different Sections of the same MIT Humanities Department. Rose Mary is a concert violinist who specializes in performing contemporary music. When she heard that we had been playing a bit together, she asked to see my violin. It took her no more than a few moments to declare, in rather minatory tones, "Your bow is dead." That sounded really serious, so i went right out and splurged \$300 on a new bow, which did indeed improve somewhat my tone production. I thought of myself as a real big spender. Little did I know that less than twenty years later, I would spend five thousand dollars for a Benoit Roland bow and think myself lucky for having got it at such a good price.

Encouraged by the Alternative Track and the presence in my courses of students who were genuinely interested in what I was teaching, I returned to my Marx project and brought to completion the first of the three books I had sketched in my mind -- the exposition of the evolution of Classical and Marxian political economy leading to my analysis of Marx's explanation of the origin of profit in a capitalist economy. My study of the flood of books published by a worldwide network of Marxian economists gave me a firm grasp of the

theoretical foundations, but much more challenging was the task of recasting them in a narrative that a reader could follow who did not have that mathematical material at his or her command.

I conceived the idea of writing a book that would, in its central narrative, demand no more of its readers than the ability to solve little models consisting of two or three linear equations. My meditation on this formal material had led me to the conclusion that the underlying ideas were fundamentally very simple, so that if I could get them clear enough in my own mind, I could expound them using very simple and easily comprehended examples. I decided that I would put in an appendix the formal proofs of the generalizations of all the claims I made in the text. Readers capable of handling the math could look at the appendix for the proofs, while the rest of the readers could simply follow my story from chapter to chapter.

When I had completed the manuscript, which cost me a good deal of effort principally because of the Appendix, I sent it to Sandy Thatcher at Princeton, and he agreed to publish it. In 1985 it appeared under the title *Understanding Marx*. The title echoed that of my book on Rawls, but the two books could not have been more different. The Rawls book was really an explanation of Rawls' failure to demonstrate his central thesis. In the Marx book I argued that despite problems and confusions, Marx's central insight was and is correct: Capitalism rests on exploitation. By the time I had completed *Understanding Marx*, I was prepared to call myself a Marxist.

*Understanding Marx* sold more than 4000 copies during its lifetime, in both hard cover and paper, so perhaps it reached an audience that found it of use, but the larger project of which it is a very minor part seems to have foundered. While I was working on my book, I believed that if one of the really gifted economists around the world ever wrote a full-scale alternative *Introduction to Economics* that could serve not as a critique of, but as a substitute for, the

Samuelson text and its imitators, we could perhaps fundamentally change the way people in the profession understand capitalism. I had in mind a text that would develop explanatory devices as visually powerful and easy to grasp as the ubiquitous supply and demand curves that every beginning student of economics learns. The idea would be to build into the pedagogy the concept of exploitation, so that instead of portraying the capitalist marketplace as a benign institution smoothly allocating scarce resources in ways that maximize consumer satisfaction and the efficient use of those resources, students would be presented with a model of exploitation and crisis. I still believe that the possibility is there, but it does not seem that any of the sophisticated mathematical Marxists has taken up the challenge. I know my limits well enough to be sure that I am not the person for the job.

In 1984, my marriage to Cindy was in serious trouble. I had started once a week therapy with a McLean Hospital based psychiatrist named Lenore Boling, and I used the sessions really just to give voice to my unhappiness with what my relationship with Cindy had become. Despite the unhappiness, I do not think I ever shed a tear in those sessions over the shambles of the marriage. One day, however, I started talking about my work. I tried to explain to Dr. Boling that in all of my writing, whether it was on Kant's First Critique or Hume's *Treatise* or *Das Kapital*, my goal always was to plumb the depths of the author's central idea and recast it in a form so simple, so clear, so transparent that I could hold it before my students or my readers and show them its beauty. As I said these words, tears started to well up in me, and I finally had to stop talking because I could not finish. It was the only time in twenty years of psychotherapy that I cried openly in a session. Ever since that day, twenty-seven years ago, I have understood that it is this intellectual intuition of the transparent beauty of an idea, not the desire for status or recognition or money, that has throughout my life been the driving force behind my writing and

teaching. This is why it makes little difference to me whether reviewers agree with what I say, and it is why I am made somewhat uncomfortable by praise. The intrinsic beauty of the idea is the focus of my concern. It seems that I am, after all, more capable of shedding tears for the central argument of the Deduction of the Pure Concepts of Understanding than I am for a failed marriage or even for a deceased parent. I am not at all sure that is admirable, but it is closer to the truth about myself than I have ever come before.

Despite our estrangement, Cindy and I continued virtually to the end to talk about her work. She was now working on the poetry of Emily Dickinson, and by late '84 and early '85 had already begun to write what would eventually be her third book. I was if anything even less knowledgeable about poetry than about fiction, despite my youthful enjoyment of Carl Sandburg and e.e. cummings, but I read a good deal of the corpus, and guided by Cindy, began to understand the richness of Dickinson's work. As always, I read every word Cindy wrote and offered editorial suggestions. At one point when her writing had progressed pretty far along, she heard of a new book on Dickinson that had just appeared. [Emily Dickinson is of course a cottage industry, and new things were being published all the time.] Cindy was anxious that someone might have pre-empted her insights, but she was too freaked out to look at the book, so I got a copy from the library and read enough of it to be able to reassure her that her work remained entirely original and unanticipated by this latest addition to the literature on Dickinson.

In late '84, we began to argue a good deal,, and for the first time actually talked about a separation. I am not going to try to rehearse here the substance of those arguments. There was nothing in them that has not been said by countless couples countless times. Neither of us was seeing someone else, or anything like that. If I had to summarize in a sentence what went wrong, I would say that when Cindy finally achieved the recognition that she had so long deserved, it



became more and more painful for her to be in a relationship that had been built on mentoring and guidance. Finally, in February of 1985, we agreed that we would live apart, at least for a while. Very reluctantly, I accepted Cindy's demand that I move out of the house. We called the boys into the living room and told them that we were separating. It was the very worst moment of my entire life, and writing about it even now, twenty-five years and more later, I cringe with pain and shame at my failure to hold the marriage together at least until both boys had finished high school and left home.

On March 1st, I moved into a wretched apartment not far from the Garfield Road house. The apartment had ghastly yellow shag carpeting and painted plywood on the walls. It was rumored to have been a dentist's office in a former incarnation, and at night I thought I could hear the screams of patients denied novacaine. Cindy I went into couples therapy, in a last ditch effort to salvage the marriage. I think there was actually a moment when the four members of the family between us had five therapists. Meanwhile, I saw my boys as much as I could, driving them to school and home again and taking them to dinner. Patrick was by now well on his way to earning the title of International Chess Master, and his world was the world of big league chess, but Toby, who was only fifteen, found the breach a good deal harder to handle.

Sitting alone in my apartment, I began to sift through and read the boxes of family papers that I had salvaged from my father's house. I think it was for me a form of therapy, a way of rediscovering a connection with a part of my life that antedated my long relationship with Cindy. I began with the letters between my parents dating from the late teens of the twentieth century. My grandmother each summer had taken her children to the Catskills to escape the heat and the disease of New York City, while my grandfather stayed in town to work as a cigar salesman and to pursue his political career as one of the leaders of the Socialist Party in New York. My father

and mother were childhood friends, because my father's mother and my mother's mother had worked together in a New York sweatshop as girls. My parents began their courtship in Circle One of the Young People's Socialist League, or YPLS. My mother was forced to leave school at sixteen because of her father's crippling stroke, which made it difficult for him to support the family. As the oldest, my mother had to go to work as a secretary. Fairly quickly, she secured the position of secretary to the City Editor of the old Herald Tribune. All of this meant that in the summers, my father was in West Shokan or Big Indian while my mother stayed in Manhattan. They wrote to each other endlessly, my father sometimes taking my mother on imaginary hikes in the Catskills and describing to her what he saw. As I began to read these letters, I came to an appreciation of how much they had loved those mountains. As I have already written, when my sister and I were little, the family went back to the places where my father had gone as a boy.

Ever since the death of my father, I had had in my possession two urns. One contained the ashes of my mother, which my father had never been able to part with. The other contained my father's ashes. By a stroke of fortune, just at that time, I received a letter from Leon Botstein at Bard College, inviting me to give a lecture. I decided to use the occasion of the talk to find a resting place at long last for the ashes of my parents. On Thursday, May 2, 1985, I set out for Annandale-on-Hudson, just across the river from the Ashoken Reservoir. Early in the afternoon, I found my way to a deserted part of the reservoir, which was very low because of a long drought, and walked fifty feet across the sandy shore to the water's edge. There I sat down with the two urns and read some of my father's lyrical descriptions of the Catskills, and my mother's loving replies. I reflected on the long association of myself, my parents, and their parents with

this lovely part of New York. Then, mixing the ashes of my parents, I scattered them in the Reservoir, hoping finally to take leave of them.

The ritual did not achieve the resolution I had sought of the complex feelings I still felt for my parents, for there were unanswered questions, and an imbalance in their marriage that cried out to be righted. The questions concerned my father: Why had he become an alcoholic? Why had he changed from a hard-driving, ambitious, vigorous young man to a bitter, self-defeating, resentful older man? Why had he abandoned the deep moral and political commitments of his father, and instead turned inward? The imbalance concerned my mother -- the condescending and deprecatory attitude that my father always adopted toward her because of her lack of formal education and his arrogation to himself of the role of family intellectual, despite the fact that -- as was obvious to my sister and to me -- our mother was more intelligent and intellectually livelier than our father.

For years after I scattered the ashes I was troubled and puzzled by these matters, and I longed to find some answers to my questions. Eventually, I concluded that I might achieve insight and genuine closure by writing the story of their youth, their courtship, and the early years of their marriage as they were revealed in those letters. I have written that story in an unpublished book that sits on my shelf, next to the unpublished book I have written about the love story of my grandparents, and my grandfather's career in the Socialist Party. But those stories are theirs, and this story is mine.

The attempt Cindy and I made to reconcile failed, despite the best efforts of ourselves and our teams of therapists. On June 15, 1985, Cindy came to my apartment and told me that she wanted a divorce. The twenty-eight year love affair was over that had begun when I visited

Whitman Hall, on leave from Fort Devens, and saw a beautiful young woman sitting at the Bell Desk. Our marriage of true minds was at long last ended.

## **Part Three**

### **My Once and Future Love**

I take my title from T. H. White's re-telling of the Arthurian legend, *The Once and Future King*, supposedly the inscription on King Arthur's tomb. In that charming book, which I read many years ago, the wizard Merlin is represented as living through time backwards, which explains both his great wisdom and his seeming ineptitude at dealing with the world in which he finds himself. Writing my memoirs has turned out to be rather like living my life backwards, because although I know full well how it has turned out, I am constantly surprised to discover things about my earlier days that I had forgotten. Whether I have acquired wisdom in the process I leave to my readers to judge.

## Preface

"Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." So Tolstoy famously begins *Anna Karenina*, thought by some to be his greatest novel. Although this volume begins at the lowest point in my life, it very quickly becomes a story of almost unalloyed happiness. A great deal has happened in these most recent twenty-five years of my life, and I am hopeful that some of it will prove to be of interest to you who read my words, but those looking for conflict, sadness, and bitter regrets will, I fear, be disappointed.

The first two thirds of my story were devoted almost entirely to the life of the mind. In the present volume, you will see me trying my hand at affecting, in however small a way, the larger world about which I had spent so long thinking and writing. I am reminded of the great passage in Plato's *Gorgias* in which Callicles chides Socrates for the unworldliness of the life he has chosen. Plato is of course putting into the mouth of Socrates' antagonist the doubts he had about his own decision to withdraw from public life and found the Academy. "When I perceive philosophical activity in a young lad," Callicles says, "I am pleased; it suits him, I think, and shows that he has good breeding. A boy who doesn't play with philosophy I regard as illiberal, a chap who will never raise himself to any fine or noble action. Whereas when I see an older man still at his philosophy and showing no sign of giving it up, that one seems to me, Socrates, to need a whipping. For ... such a man, even if he's well endowed by nature, must necessarily become unmanly by avoiding the center of the city and the assemblies where, as the Poet says, 'men win distinction.' Such a fellow must spend the rest of his life skulking in corners, whispering with two or three little lads, never pronouncing any large, liberal, or meaningful utterance." [W. C. Helmbold's translation, with one emendation]

## Chapter One

### I Once Was Lost But Now Am Found

When Cindy walked out of my apartment that June evening, I felt as though my life had come to an end. It was not just that my heart and my mind had been deeply intertwined with hers for my entire adult life. I was without a fixed point of reference because no one in my extended family had ever been divorced. Even my sister, Barbara, who had long since separated from her husband, Reed, was still technically married to him, and would be for many years to come. Now, we are a Jewish family, so it goes without saying that a good many of my relatives were unhappy. But divorced? They might as well have been Roman Catholics for all the advantage they had taken of the liberalized New York State Civil Code.

I was committed to yet another summer of teaching at Harvard, so that would get me out of the apartment five days a week, but beyond that, I was sailing uncharted waters. Bernard and Susan Avishai, a couple I had come to know through Cindy's connection with M. I. T., became my principal emotional support in those dark months. Bernie and Susan are Canadian by birth and education, although their ties to Israel were, it seemed to me, much tighter than to their homeland. Bernie is a tall, handsome, vigorous man with a shock of curly black hair and a perpetual smile on his face. He was then teaching in the Writing Program of the Humanities Department at M. I. T., although his doctorate from the University of Toronto is in philosophy. He has become, through his books and his writings for newspapers and journals, a very well known voice for peace and understanding in Israel. Susan is an artist, some of whose most exquisite works are pen and ink drawings. They had three ebullient children [who are now, by the mysteries of time, all grown up.] Even though Bernie was "Cindy's friend," they folded me into their family with a supportive love.

Let me devote one short paragraph to a subject that was utterly new to me, but has been written about endlessly in the large and amorphous literature on "relationships." When Cindy and I definitively entered the world of divorce, I found that along with the disposition of our chattels movable, we were also expected to divide up the family friends. I got to keep my professional colleagues, of course, along with my books and papers. But ever since coming to Belmont, we had been socializing with people who were "her friends." It was a generous act on Bernie's part and a bit of a daring one on mine for me to put the Avishais on my side of the list of belongings to be parceled out. All during our marriage, I had assumed that people entertained us, when we were a couple, because they liked Cindy and more or less accepted me as part of the package. It came as a gratifying surprise to discover that people actually liked me well enough to see me unaccompanied by Cindy. [Yes, I know that I sound like Sally Fields accepting her Oscar, but I am trying to be true to the moment here.]

It came as a very bitter surprise to discover that as a consequence of our break-up, Barry and Betty Moore wanted nothing more to do with me. No one has ever explained this breach to me, though for reasons I cannot now recall, I have always believed that it was Betty who decided that Cindy was the injured party and I the cause of the divorce. I believe I was actually listed in Barry's will as his literary executor, a role I would have played with great pride and diligence, but after one very painful lunch at a Ground Round in Cambridge, Barry and I never spoke again. I am convinced that it was the breach, and not the subject of the essay I wrote, that led the editor of Barry's *festschrift* to reject my essay when I sent it to her.

The divorce itself took an unexpectedly long time, principally because Cindy felt deeply aggrieved and wanted an unequal division of the family property, despite the fact that she and I had equivalent jobs and almost identical salaries. I wrote endless memoranda to my lawyer,



Robert Mann, carrying out elaborate calculations designed to guarantee that Cindy would be in no way materially hurt by the divorce. Bob charged me for the time it took him to read them and then filed them away. In the end, which was not to come until the last day of 1986, we agreed to an equal division of property, appropriate child support for Toby, who was still a minor, and a sharing of the costs of Patrick and Toby's college education.

While all of this was going on, I was teaching summer school, and then my fall courses. I would pick up the boys to take them to school [by now they were both in high school], drive out to Amherst to teach, and drive back in time to pick them up and take them home. [It was during one of those runs that Bob Nozick honked.] Patrick had become an important national figure in chess, but it was Toby who stunned me one day with an accomplishment of which I was entirely unaware. I was driving him home from one of our weekly dinners, when more or less to make conversation, I asked what he was doing at school. He told me that he had joined a group called The Madrigals. "What voice do you sing?" I asked, very interested because of my own college involvement with madrigal singing. "Countertenor," he replied. Now, you have to understand that to early music aficionados like me, countertenors are the *crème de la crème*. I had first heard Alfred Deller at a Sanders Theater concert, and was in the front row again at Sanders some years later when Russell Oberlin sang *zefiro torno*, a transcendently beautiful duet by Monteverdi. It seemed to me unlikely in the extreme that Toby actually could sing countertenor. Probably he meant that he was a tenor, which would have been nice enough, heaven knows. I asked which madrigals the group was rehearsing. He named several with which I was quite familiar, and then began to sing a few lines. Out of his mouth came an exquisite true countertenor sound, quite like anything I had ever heard him make. Astonished, I blurted out, "Toby, that is the most wonderful thing any son of mine has ever done!" Later that

year, the Madrigals gave a concert, dressed in brightly colored costumes that looked as though they had come from the studio wardrobe for *A Connecticut in King Arthur's Court*. This was no flash in the pan. Toby continued to sing, earning money while at Yale by serving in local church choirs. He studied for a while with the famous American countertenor Drew Minter, and during his senior year sang with the Whiffenpoofs. He even had a solo at Tanglewood in a student performance of Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*.

At some point that I cannot decisively pin down in the chronology of this Memoir, Toby announced that henceforward he was to be known as Tobias. Since I prefer to err on the side of caution, I shall from this point on speak of him only as Tobias and no more as Toby. I do this with some sadness. He was an adorable child, but he has become an admirable man. Perhaps both the boy and the man can share a place in my heart.

Despite the upheaval in my personal life, things were going well in the AT. Students kept choosing our track, in great measure because of the heroic efforts Bob Ackerman had made to turn himself into a one-man Department of Recent Continental Philosophy. I have lost contact with our students after all these years, but they have made lives and careers for themselves in academic philosophy, for the most part. Mecke Nagel is at SUNY Cortland, exploring penal abolition and African peace making approaches. [Those who have read my blog post about Macros and PC have already met her. It was she who challenged her fellow students' unthinking use of the formula "racism, sexism, classicism, and homophobia."] Alex Pienknagura is one of the coordinators of the 2010 Radical Philosophy Association meetings. Kevin Dodson is still at Lamar University in Texas, where he is now a full professor. Kim Leighton is at American University in D.C., Amie MacDonald is at John Jay College of CUNY, Lisa Tessman is the GPD of philosophy at SUNY Binghamton, and George Leaman, the unofficial chronicler and archivist

of the AT, is now with the Philosophy Documentation Center. Early on, George did some splendid detective work on Heidegger's Nazi connections. All of them, and our other students as well, would undoubtedly have found their way into academic philosophy without the AT, but I think it would have been a good deal harder for them to pursue the sort of philosophy that attracted them. All of it, needless to say, was **not philosophy** in the eyes of the departmental majority.

I was still attending the Boston Colloquium, of course. It remained a highpoint of my rather bland calendar. That November, a talk was scheduled by Debra Nails, the former Colloquium Coordinator, and I was penciled in as Chair. She had left the Colloquium to follow her husband, Berendt Kolk, to Johannesburg, South Africa, where he was Professor of Physics at the University of the Witwatersrand. Debra, it turned out, was teaching in the Philosophy Department at Wits, which was chaired by Jonathan Suzman, nephew of the famous anti-apartheid activist Helen Suzman. At the Colloquium dinner before her talk, Debra asked me whether I would have any interest in coming out to South Africa to lecture on Marx to the second year undergraduate philosophy majors. Now, as I have noted, Cindy was phobic about flying, with the result that we never went anywhere interesting. When we broke up, I decided that I would speak anywhere I was invited, so long as I had to fly to get there. I asked somewhat facetiously whether you had to fly to get to South Africa, and Debra replied that it was a very long boat trip. Well, I was owed another sabbatical by UMass that I had actually postponed in order to serve as the AGPD of the AT [we talked like that], so I said I would be delighted. It was agreed that I would come out for six weeks starting in late April.

It was about this time that I finally got myself out of the awful apartment and into a very attractive upscale apartment in Watertown. The owner had had some trouble renting it, and I cut

a pretty good deal with him. It was a three story townhouse with rooms on the upper two floors and a garage on the ground floor. It was just off Arsenal Street, near the Arsenal Mall. I could see the Marshall's from my rear window. That move gave me a great psychological boost -- I no longer felt that I was being punished for unspecified marital sins -- and I spent a very happy fifteen months there. Since Cindy had finally sold the Garfield Road for a hefty sum, half of which was mine, I could finally acquire my half of the family furniture. Opting for value rather than quantity, I ended up with several very nice pieces of eighteenth century English furniture that still grace my Chapel Hill condominium today.

I tried my hand at dating. God knows, I had hated it as a fourteen year old, and it had not improved four decades later. Milton Cantor, always the supportive friend, arranged for me to meet a lovely woman in New York City, and I actually asked one or two women to dinner on my own, but since all I wanted to talk about was what had gone wrong in my marriage, not surprisingly nothing came of those forays into the singles world. Instead, I turned my attention back to the cache of family letters and papers that I had rescued from my father's house. I felt that my life had suffered what I can only describe as a metaphysical break. I could not repair it by falling in love with someone new, and I certainly could not even imagine starting a new family. I **had** my sons. I was their father. I no more wanted another child than I wanted another heart or brain. I felt a need to reach back to a time in my life that antedated my long involvement with Cindy, and that could only mean my earliest years.

And so I read the letters that I had written home from Harvard, the letters my sister had written home from Swarthmore. I found myself holding in my hand letters like this one, written in the Fall of my Freshman year:

"Greetings, folks, I received your letter today, with the enclosed invite from Shaker Village [the teenage summer work camp I had attended in '47, '48, and '48]. I don't think I will

go. I don't have the money or the time, and I want to see a lot of both of you two and Sue during the vacation. I won't be able to work out that staying at home business. There are complications. I was wondering if I could stay home on Friday and go to Harvard Sat. with Sue. I don't want to miss classes, though, so I don't know what I'll do. I had a very wonderful weekend with Sue. The only thing wrong was that I didn't get enough time to see her. This business of seeing her every two weeks is getting me down. We have decided to get married, by the way, although not for a while yet."

I was sixteen. My mother must have freaked out at the last line, because in a later letter from Swarthmore, my sister reassured her that I was a sensible kid and would not do anything foolish.

As I read these letters, I thought more and more about my boyhood love. Susie and I had "gone steady" for five years, and even though we had never gone "all the way," I had thought of her always as my first love. Suddenly, it struck me that the break in the continuity of my life could be repaired only by reaching out to her, for I had loved her before I had ever met Cindy. Immediately, I contacted Connecticut College for Women [as it was then still called], and asked for her address. Rather primly, the Alumnae Office explained that they did not give out the addresses of their graduates, but that if I wrote a letter to her and sent it to them, they would see that it was sent on to her.

I crafted a long, chatty letter, all about my life, my sons, and the ending of my marriage. Back came a very brief note from Chapel Hill, North Carolina [Susie never liked to write letters], in which was enclosed a photo of the two of us at my 1950 graduation from high school. [Susie needed two more courses to graduate in three and a half years and did not finish up until the end of summer school.] She said nothing at all about her marital status, but the return address printed on the envelope read "Mrs. Susan S. Gould." Now, I am well enough brought up to know that a woman does not style herself "Mrs. Susan S. Wolff" unless she is widowed or divorced, but I did not let on that I had decoded this. Instead, I wrote back, telling her that I was

scheduled to give a talk at St. Andrews College in Laurinberg, about one hundred miles south of Chapel Hill. Could I perhaps drop in on the way home and visit with her and her husband? Two days later, the phone rang. It was Susie.

It seemed she was indeed divorced, from Floyd "Jerry" Gould, and was raising her two sons, Jon and Lawrence, by herself in Chapel Hill. She would be happy to see me when I came to North Carolina. I nattered on happily, mentioning that in March, shortly after the St. Andrews gig, I would be going to a conference in Dubrovnik, which I had never seen. "Oh," Susie burst out, "That is my favorite place in the whole world." "Well," I replied, "perhaps you could show me it to me." After a bit, I got off the phone, saying again that I would see her in March during my visit to North Carolina.

Two days later, another brief note came from Susie. "If you would like me to show you Durbrovnik, I would be happy to." Right away, I called her up. "Look," I said, "this is early February and March is a long way off. Why don't I come down to see you tomorrow?" In a soft voice, she said, "All right, if you would like to." "I will call you back," I said. I got off the phone, did my laundry, got a haircut, and called Piedmont Airlines. Then I called Susie once again and told her that I would be arriving the next day at Raleigh Durham Airport. I told her the time and flight number, and she said she would meet me.

As my plane was about to land at RDU, it suddenly struck me that I had not seen Susie in almost thirty years. We had met briefly my first year in Chicago, but that was it. Would I even recognize her? When I got to the terminal, no one who could plausibly be Susie was waiting, but then, after a moment, she walked up. She looked different, of course, but somehow, she looked exactly as she ought to look after all those years. It was as though I could imagine the intervening time in my mind's eye.

When we got to her modern ranch style home on Brookview Drive, we stood in the kitchen while she made us a little something to eat. She said quietly, "I was so glad to get your letter. I was waiting for you." I was stunned, and overjoyed. "What would you have done if I had not written?" I asked. "I would have gone on waiting," she answered. That night we made love, and the break in my life was healed. I have often since said that I have loved only three women in my life, and two of them are Susie. She was and is my once and future love.

Three days after returning to Boston, I met Dr. Boling for my customary weekly therapy session. I told her excitedly about my visit with Susie, all of which had been arranged since our previous session. She listened to me for a while and then said, quietly, "You have a very simple relationship with Susie." I did not know what to make of that remark, but it has stayed in my memory over the years, and on reflection I have concluded that she was right. My relationship with Cindy had been extraordinarily complicated, requiring constant thought and management. But after a separation of thirty years, Susie and I almost immediately settled into an easy, warm, loving, intimate union. I told her about my sons, about the breakup of my first marriage, a bit about my career. She told me that she had been married three times, first for two years to Gordon, the son of the uranium king, for whom she had left me thirty-three years earlier, then for two years to Ed, a medical student in Chicago, where she had followed Gordon and then settled, finally to Jerry Gould, a University of Chicago Business School professor with whom she had had her two children. Susie's lifelong love of botany had led her to do graduate work at U. of C. and to work for some while both as a graduate laboratory instructor and in the lab of one of the professors there. But neither of us was really interested in spending much time talking about the intervening years. Each of us put away those memories, preserved an important and protected place for our children, and renewed the bond that we had forged as High School Sophomores.

As Boling seemed to intuit, it made me uncomplicatedly happy just to be with Susie. We still both loved the baroque music we had so enjoyed as teenagers, and as the years have passed, that has remained an important part of our lives.

The remaining months of my sabbatical were a whirlwind of travel. I have reconstructed my doings from my little Coop book for that year. After coming home from Chapel Hill, I turned around less than three weeks later for my scheduled visit to St. Andrews College, stopping both on the way and on the way back to spend time with Susie. The visit to St Andrews was instructive to someone who had spent his career at universities. After talking to the faculty there about their undergraduate philosophy program, I realized that despite being a small school offering no graduate degrees, they were giving their students an extremely solid grounding in philosophy. I have found this at many of the small liberal arts colleges I have visited. Staffed by faculty who trained at some of the best doctoral programs in the country, and who keep up with the field by regularly attending the national professional meetings, these small Philosophy Departments take their students through a rigorous introduction to the history of philosophy and the foundations of epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, and logic. In many ways, their students are better served than they would be as undergraduates in big graduate oriented programs in which most of the undergraduate teaching is done either by graduate assistants or by faculty who would rather be teaching their graduate seminars.

A week after returning from St. Andrews, I flew off to Greece, for a visit on my way to Dubrovnik. I was invited by Ann Caccoulos, an ebullient philosopher who lived in Athens with her husband and taught philosophy there. My most vivid memory of the week's stay, aside from an enormous platter of baby lamb chops that is a traditional dish at Easter, was my visit to the Agora. It was much larger than I had imagined, and it had never occurred to me that it was lined



by covered stalls. I am afraid the stones did not speak to me as I walked where Socrates had talked with Plato.

Then it was on to Dubrovnik. I do not think I have ever felt so grown up as I did when I checked in and was told that "Ms. Gould is waiting for you in your room." I was there to give a paper at a conference, and I guess I did, but the proceedings left no trace in my memory. Of course I fell in love with old Dubrovnik. Who would not? AS we walked on the Placa, the main street of the town, our voices were reduced to whispers echoing from the ancient walls. The stones beneath our feet were worn smooth from centuries of walkers. It was a magical place, perfectly attuned to our mood. Although we have been back only once, Dubrovnik remains for both of us a graceful and sentimental memory.

A week and a half after returning to Boston I was off again to see Susie in Chapel Hill. Two weeks after that, I flew down yet again, but this time I stopped off in New York to attend the annual meeting of the Socialist Scholars' Conference. A session had been organized on *Understanding Marx*, and several high powered Marxists, including Anwar Shaikh, were scheduled to comment on the book. The meeting was held in The Borough of Manhattan Community College, which is housed in a huge building in lower Manhattan, near Stuyvesant High School. I had to walk all the way around the building before I found the way in, but as I entered the vast reception area, I was stunned. It was packed with people there for the conference. My first thought was, "My God. These are all socialists. We are going to take over the world." But my second thought was, "This is all of us, and we fit into one large room."

The session was a shambles. Shaikh had prepared a fifty minute attack on me, but at the last minute was told he only had ten minutes to present it. The room was so full people were standing in the hallway trying to hear, and each of them, it appeared, had his or her own theory

about the tendency of the rate of profit to fall. It was nice to be thought of, I decided, but that was not something I wanted to try again. Two weeks later I was off to Africa to teach at Wits.

I went to South Africa on a lark, not realizing that the trip would transform the rest of my life. When I flew out of JFK, the focus of my attention was on a little game viewing excursion I had arranged for myself on the way to Johannesburg. I had always been mesmerized by movies and stories of East Africa, and since I figured this was the only time I was going to be in the neighborhood, I decided to go to South Africa by way of Kenya. In those days, it was impossible to fly non-stop to Africa from the United States, so I flew Pan Am to London, changed planes, and headed East for Nairobi. The flight made a series of stops along the way at various West African airports, but I never actually left the plane until we arrived at Jomo Kenyatta Airport in Nairobi.

My first stop in Kenya was the Treetops Hotel in Aberdare National Park. It is [or originally was] literally a hotel built into the top of a stand of trees near a waterhole. One sits in comfort in the hotel and looks down at the waterhole. The managers put out blocks of salt to guarantee that animals will come to the hole, and sure enough they do. This is very much an old-fashioned British Raj conception of game viewing. Treetops' greatest claim to fame is the fact that Princess Elizabeth of Great Britain was visiting there in 1952 when her father died and she ascended to the throne. As they liked to say, "She went up into Treetops a Princess and came down a Queen." I have since gone on many real safaris, but this was my very first sight of a wild African animal not in a zoo, and I have a warm spot in my heart for that waterhole. If you have never been on safari, I should tell you that the real thing is very little like the films and television shows you have seen. Films are focused and cut to foreground the cheetah or warthog or giraffe or lion being discussed, but of course nothing like that happens in real life. Animals move

slowly and quietly. They drift toward a waterhole, emerging so gradually from the surrounding brush that frequently you do not notice them until they have been fully in view for a while. They blend magically into their surroundings, so that it is perfectly possible to be looking straight at a large animal and not see it. I was once sitting in a Land Rover with some other safari guests staring at a copse of trees for quite some time before I realized that there were several elephants in it.

From Treetops it was on to Amboseli, at the base of Mount Kilimanjaro. Another tip for first time game viewers: rain is great for the animals but bad for seeing them, because in the dry season, they all come to the few remaining waterholes. There had been many days of heavy rain when I arrived at Amboseli, and as a result, I spent most of a day being hustled hither and yon in a Land Rover by a driver trying desperately to find as many of the Big Five as he could [elephant, rhino, lion, leopard, and buffalo]. After a good bit of scurrying about [we did spot the ears of a rhino in the tall grass], my driver got a call on his walkie-talkie and we rushed to a site where five other Land Rovers were already gathered into a semi-circle. As we edged into the group, I saw three or four lions lounging about next to a little grassy rise. I guess this should have been a transformative moment, but I could not help wondering whether one of the lions had said to another, "Wake up, Myrtle, it's eleven o'clock. Time to show ourselves to the tourists." Truly exciting game viewing would have to await a future safari.

I flew to Johannesburg, landed at Jan Smuts Airport, as it was then called, and was picked up by Debra and Berendt, who drove me to their home in Melville, a northwest suburb of Johannesburg. The road from the airport was a broad six lane highway, indistinguishable from highways in the United States [save that everyone drove on the left, not the right]. We moved pretty fast, but if I looked carefully, behind the fences that lined the highway I could see acre

after acre of hovels. These were shack settlements, "informal communities," not even up to the level of the dismal organized townships like Soweto to which much of the non-White five sixths of the South African population had been consigned.

Melville is a lovely suburb of graceful walled homes with manicured lawns, marred only by the ubiquitous razor wire atop the walls. The influx control laws passed in the late 40's by the Afrikaner government forbade Africans from remaining in White cities after sundown, so each morning at dawn, I would see Black women trudging the miles from the train stations and taxi drop-offs that brought them from Soweto and the other townships to their work as servants in the homes of White South Africans. The only exception to the law was for live-in servants, but since it was illegal for Blacks and Whites to sleep in the same building, White homes had a little rondoval in the back yard, physically separated from the main house, where the servant lived. Debra and Berendt used theirs as a guest cottage, and that is where I slept for five weeks.

A word about terminology, which in South Africa was, and still is, extremely important. There are four distinct racial sub-populations in South Africa, a division that under the *apartheid* regime had the force of law. The descendants of the Dutch and English colonizers, along with European and North American visitors or immigrants, are categorized as Whites [and within that category, informally by language as Afrikaners or English]. The descendents of the people living in Southern Africa at the time of the colonization are categorized as Africans. The descendents of the intermarriages, or interbreeding, of Dutch settlers or Malay sailors and Africans are called Coloureds. The Coloured population lives principally in and around Cape Town, and is, surprisingly, Afrikaans-speaking. Finally, the descendents of the Indian laborers brought by the English from India to work on the sugar plantations of the Eastern part of South Africa are called Indians or Asians. Africans, Coloureds, and Indians collectively are referred to

as Blacks, although the contemptuous term *kaffir* is sometimes used by Afrikaners, always to refer to Africans. In a country whose entire *raison d'etre* was race, these terms were heavily laden with meaning, and I very quickly learned to use them correctly. Twenty years after liberation, these racial categories still define the social landscape and dominate the politics of the country.

I settled into an office in Central Block on the East Campus of Wits, just north of Jorissen Street, and began teaching the students in the second year philosophy class. South African education, as I will explain at length in a later chapter of this memoir, is organized on the English model as a three year undergraduate program with a fourth Honours Year, after which a student can continue for an M.A. and [much less often] a Ph. D. Students apply to a specific program, and without any General Education courses and such, launch into the study of what we in the United States would call their "major." In Philosophy, for example, there was a single first year course, a second year course, and a third year course taken in lockstep by all philosophy students. [Some of this has now changed, but that is a later part of my story]. My job was to teach five weeks of the second year course.

The Wits Philosophy Department, I very quickly discovered, was dominated by men whose conception of philosophy was scarcely broader than that of the majority in the UMass department. Despite living in one of the most political charged places on the face of the earth, they exhibited not the slightest interest in any questions of social justice or even educational reform, preferring to take their guidance from American journals of analytic philosophy. They were dedicated to circling the wagons as tightly as possible around what "was philosophy," keeping away from the campfire anything that smelled of the real world. Pretty clearly, Debra's real reason in inviting me to come out to Wits was her hope that I would serve, momentarily, as a

counterweight to their blinkered conception of philosophy. Well, I hadn't flown ten thousand miles to put up with this sort of nonsense again, so I formally challenged the narrowest and most dismissively condescending of the lot to a public debate on the question, "What is Philosophy?" There was a lot of excitement among the students at the prospect of an academic bloodbath, but he backed out, and the debate never took place.

Leaving to one side the Philosophy Department, South Africa was the most exciting place I had ever been. This was 1986, remember, when the struggle against *apartheid* was in full swing. Everyone I met was instantaneously either my comrade or my enemy. There was no middle ground. It took me a while to adjust. One day I went to a protest on the campus of Wits. The person next to me said, "If you hear a sound like wildebeest stampeding, start running. That means the police are charging, and if you get caught they will beat you really badly." I was astonished and delighted to find that my Marxist convictions placed me not on the margins of polite discourse but right in the middle of a vibrant conversation in which abstract theory and practical politics were fused. The people I met were as likely to read *The New Left Review* and *New German Critique* as I was. Marx and Marcuse were on the tips of their tongues. I had travelled halfway around the world but I felt that I had come home.

I was having lunch with the Economics Department after I had been at Wits for a while, and when one of the men [all White, of course] asked how I liked South Africa, I said that I loved it, but that I had not yet seen anything of five-sixths of the population, except for Black men in orange jumpsuits doing work on the roads. The next day, at another rally, a young man drifted up to me and said, "I hear you want to see some more of the country. How would you like to go to Gazenkulu and Lebowa with me this weekend?" Another brief word of explanation. The Afrikaner ideologues who had crafted the pseudo-philosophical rationale of the *apartheid*

state had promulgated a theory of cultural unities [ostensibly derived from Edmund Husserl's writings -- don't ask] according to which each "people" should have its own homeland. Most of South Africa, including all the good farmland, was declared the homeland of the Whites, and Blacks were therefore to be excluded from it [although that did not quite meet the labor needs of the capitalist sector, so townships were to be permitted inside the White homeland.] The African population was then divided, principally along linguistic lines, into ten "nations," and through a series of forced removals and resettlements, sometimes splitting families apart, the Africans were consigned to a collection of dismal provincial territories, each with its own puppet government, passports, and phony national independence. In practice, this meant sending the women and children and old people to desperately poor rural areas and allowing the men to live in hostels near the big cities while they worked in the mines and the factories. Gazenkulu and Lebowa were two of these ten Homelands.

The young man was named Edwin Ritchkin. He was, he said, a graduate student in Sociology, doing his doctoral research in the Northern Transvaal. The next weekend, he would be returning with a small group of Wits undergraduates who belonged to SAVS, the South African Volunteer Services. They had been gathering funds to build schools for the African children and were planning to visit some of their projects. When I told Debra I was going, her first reaction was caution. "Let me check him out. He may be a police spy," she said. Obviously I still had a lot to learn. But she came back and said Ritchkin was all right. I could go. [I have totally lost touch with Edwin, but Google tells me that the next year, he published an article based on the research he was then doing.]

Early Friday morning, we climbed into a Wits Combi and set off for the Northern Transvaal [a combi is what we would call a van.]. As we turned off the main highway into

White River, I suddenly saw a Kentucky Fried Chicken. I thought, "I came all this way into the Transvaal to see a KFC?" But very quickly, we left the White areas and plunged into Homelands South Africa. The students were there to see the schools they had helped to fund . These were bare cinder block structures without blackboards, desks, or glass in the windows, but they were dramatic improvements on what had gone before. Edwin was there to see Willis Ngobe, one of the subjects of his research. Willis was a successful local faith healer, living with his two wives and one of his mothers-in-law in a substantial structure that had no electricity. Parked in the driveway was an Audi. Chained in the backyard was one of Willis' patients, a man of about forty who suffered from delusions and fits. Willis explained that he kept him chained while he was being treated so that he would not harm anyone.

Edwin was also serving as a courier, an intermediary in an important legal dispute over land and water rights. The Mashele brothers, both serving in the Lebowa parliament, were engaged in an attempt to secure for their constituents the right to access the irrigation system currently reserved for wealthy White farmers just over the "border" in what the government considered South Africa. Before the imposition of the Homeland system, the Mashele family had been leaders of the Northern Sotho-speaking people who were now consigned to Lebowa. Edwin had consulted in Johannesburg with a prominent Indian lawyer, who was engaged in this indirect way in negotiations with the Masheles. All of us -- the students, Edwin, and I -- were invited into the home of one of the Masheles, served tea, and then allowed to listen to the negotiations. Edwin would deliver a message from the lawyer in English. Then the Mashele brothers would consult in Sotho with a group of local bigwigs who had gathered for the discussion. When they had all arrived at agreement, one of the Masheles would relate their response to Edwin in English, and Edwin would then offer the reply he had been instructed to



give by the Jo-burg lawyer. This went on for an hour or more, as I watched fascinated. Finally, Edwin was given a message to carry back to Jo-burg, and we left.

Edwin had arranged, or so he thought, for us to sleep that night at a nearby Convent, but when we got there, the watchman claimed to know nothing about the agreement. He wanted some official confirmation of our identity, which Edwin could not provide. Finally, in desperation, I pulled out my UMass picture ID, which I used to check out books. This seemed to satisfy him, and we were permitted to bed down for the night. The next day, we drove back to Wits and Edwin dropped me off in Melville.

Since I was in South Africa and had no idea whether I would ever return, I did everything I could to see as much of the country as possible. I did make one visit to Soweto, with a philosophy graduate student named Vincent Maphai, who lived there, but it was at night, when Soweto was almost totally dark, and I saw very little of the community of one million. Soweto was the largest of the townships, but there are many others, each containing as many people as a middle sized American city. The Boers constructed the townships with an eye to controlling them like prisons. There were at most a handful of ways in and out, each of which could be guarded by South African soldiers in Casspirs, the armored vehicles the state used to police the Black population. Vincent has become quite an important person in the new South Africa, but I am afraid I remember him principally because of his sexual harassment of a woman studying at Wits who later became a very good friend.

Much more important than my SAVS expedition for the unfolding of the rest of my life was the trip I took to Durban, the city on the Indian Ocean in what was then the province of Natal and is now the province of KwaZulu Natal. I was invited to give a talk at the University of Natal, a White university perched on a hill to the east of downtown Durban, but during my visit,

I met Rathnamala Singh, a member of the philosophy department of The University of Durban-Westville. UDW, as it was called by everyone, was the institution of higher education created by the *apartheid* government for Indian students. Mala was then the Professor of Philosophy [this was again the English system, with only one person in a department accorded the title of Professor]. In 1986, UDW, like the other universities set aside for Black students, had a White Rector, but shortly thereafter, one of Mala's close friends, a professor of dentistry named Jairam Reddy, was named the first Indian Rector. Mala became the Chair of the Philosophy Department. Mala's husband, Prem Singh, was a Lecturer in Politics. Unlike Mala, he did not have a doctorate, but he was a very scholarly man and a dedicated teacher. In time, Prem became my closest friend in South Africa.

Quite the eeriest episode of my first visit to South Africa was my dinner in Pretoria with Koos Pauw, a philosopher then serving as the number three man in the Ministry of Education. I had gone to Pretoria to meet with the director of the Human Studies Research Council, a government funded body that underwrote most of the post-graduate study and academic research in the Social Sciences and Humanities. The visit began with a sightseeing trip to the Voortrekker Monument, a memorial to the famous overland journey that the Boers took in the 1830's and 40's from the British controlled Western Cape east and north into the interior of South Africa, a journey that led to the establishment of a number of what were later South African provinces. ["Trek," by the way, actually means "pull," a fact I learned one day when I saw a door that said "stoot" (push) on one side and "trek" on the other.] The monument is the angriest building I have ever seen. Waves of resentment flow from it as one walks up to the entryway. It told me more about the Boer mindset than a dozen books could have.

That evening I had dinner with the Director and Koos Pauw. As it happened, a convention was in town of elders of one of the three Dutch Reformed Churches in South Africa. They had been debating whether to let Blacks into their church [they decided not to], and now they were unwinding from the day's exertions. They were all stern looking burly men with thick sideburns, shaved cheeks, and carefully trimmed bushy beards. Had they been a happier lot, they could easily have passed for Amish. Our dinner table conversation was an eye opener for me. Pauw was intelligent, relaxed, well-spoken, and utterly evil. I imagined it was what it would have been like to dine with a sophisticated Nazi. I challenged him about *apartheid* [my parents, you will recall, had taught me to speak up if anyone passed an anti-Semitic remark at a dinner table, and this was the closest I had ever come to putting their advice to use], but he was totally unfazed by my objections, all of which he had of course heard many times.

I fell completely and permanently in love with South Africa. The political atmosphere was intoxicating. In left-wing academic circles, there was serious talk of completely transforming higher education, of instituting formal accreditation for what Black men and women had learned outside of classrooms, on the job, in the streets, in the Townships. Communities like Soweto were effectively governed by unofficial committees chosen from within their confines. Over the years, Black men and women had acquired administrative skills at least as impressive as those that could be learned in the classroom while taking a degree in Public Administration at Wits or Cape Town or Rhodes. Just as the stately mansions of the Old South were built, and sometimes designed, by slaves, so the Black population, which was, after all, five-sixths of the population of South Africa, had built the road I drove in on from the airport, and indeed the airport itself. Men like Enver Motala, who later became a good friend,

had labored for years in worker education programs sponsored by the labor unions, and they believed fervently in breaking down the gulf between head work and hand work.

The people I was meeting were alive, *engagé*, ready to risk jail and worse to achieve the liberation of their nation. In America, one could know someone for years and have only the vaguest notion of his or her politics. In South Africa, people wore their politics on their sleeve. I had read about what it had been like for those deeply involved in the American Civil Rights Movement, the Socialist Party of my grandfather, or the Spanish Civil War, but despite my efforts in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the anti-Viet Nam War protests, I had never known anything like the South Africa of the mid-eighties.

Besides, South Africa is an exquisitely beautiful country. There is something about the soil, the vegetation, the landscapes that feels ancient. With my childhood fascination for archeology and physical anthropology, I could *feel* that this was where the human race had begun its long journey. One day, I took a hike with some Wits friends on the High Veldt, where I could almost imagine the small bands of hominids hundreds of thousands of years earlier. We even had a *braai*.

The Braii is a distinctive South African institution. A braii, quite simply, is a barbecue, an outdoor meal cooked over an open fire or a grill. It is an Afrikaner institution, not at all English, and one of the Boer's greatest contributions to world culture. To an Afrikaner, a balanced meal is four different kinds of roasted meat. A typical braii consists of an arrangement of steaks and chops on a grill, circled round by a long string of sausages, and washed down with beer or wine. The braii has spread from the Boers throughout the heterogeneous South African population, so that some years later, when a group of us went from UDW to a resort in the

Drakensberg Mountains for an intellectual weekend of sociological debate, the centerpiece of our two-day seminar was a huge braii.

I returned to Watertown from South Africa in time for Patrick's graduation from Belmont High School on June 8, 1986. Patrick had been admitted to Yale, but he wanted to take a year off from school to travel and play chess. My fond memories of my *wanderjahre* thirty years earlier persuaded me to support his plan, and I offered to help underwrite the year off. Very quickly, Patrick won his third and final IM norm in Biel, Switzerland, becoming an International Master at the age of eighteen. He was now officially part of the international chess firmament. Somewhat later that year, I got an international call from him. "Dad, I am traveling in Italy." "That is very nice," I replied. "Italy is beautiful," he said. "So I have always found it," I replied. "The Italian food is great." "Yes, I have always liked it." "I have fallen in love with a French girl." "That," I said, "is news."

So off he went to Paris to be with Isabel. He played some chess, but mostly he hung out in cafés, drinking coffee and picking up the language the way you do when you are in love. He even got a job for a bit as an *au pair*, looking after a little American boy. I confess I did not see Patrick as a nanny, but it paid the bills. When he returned, he was ready to tackle college.

The really important twists and turns in my life seem always to occur more or less by accident. Had Swarthmore not been so skittish about a boy who had been in psychotherapy, I might never have gone to Harvard. Had I not driven in from Ft. Devens to visit Adair Moffat in Whitman Hall, I would never have met Cindy. Had Mac Bundy not gone off to Washington to work for Jack Kennedy, I might still be at Harvard. And if I had not been dining with Dick Sens, I might never have managed to get arrested.

Richard Sens is a Boston area psychiatrist who, like me, was a regular at the BU Colloquium in the Philosophy of Science. In '86, Dick was also going through a difficult divorce, and the two of us fell into the habit of having dinner once a week so that we could commiserate and swap horror stories about lawyers. Usually we met at a tapas place on upper Massachusetts Avenue, but on August 11th, we switched to Thai food. Dick brought along a friend who thirty years earlier had been a student in one of my Philosophy 1 sections at Harvard. She was Jean Anderson then, but she had been married for a while to Juan Alonso, who later became a professor of Romance Languages and Literature. Now, Jean Alonso was working at Raytheon, where she was a union organizer. Jean was a member of an organization called Harvard/Radcliffe Alumni and Alumnae Against Apartheid, or HRAAA, that was working to persuade Harvard to divest.

In those days, the anti-apartheid struggle in America was fought along two fronts -- disinvestment and divestment. Disinvestment meant persuading corporations to pull their capital investments out of South Africa. Since South Africa had far and away the most advanced economy in Southern Africa, it badly needed capital investment, and disinvestment, if carried out on a large enough scale, could bring the economy to a standstill. Divestment was really a symbolic act at best. It meant getting institutions like universities to sell their holdings in companies that continued to do business in South Africa. Every share of stock sold on an exchange is bought by someone, of course, so divestment had no concrete economic effect on the companies. It made no difference to them who owned their shares. But big American corporations are very sensitive about their public image, and they did not like having large institutional shareholders put them on a no-buy list. A number of universities had already divested, including UMass [whose portfolio, needless to say, was tiny], and it would have been a

big deal for Harvard, the richest and most prestigious university in the world, to divest. So far, they had steadfastly refused.

HRAAA [or Hurrah, as they rather exuberantly called themselves] had two arrows in their quiver. Their major effort was to try to elect write-in candidates to the Harvard Board of Overseers, chosen annually by all of Harvard's graduates. They had actually succeeded in electing Gay Seidman, daughter of a well-known anti-apartheid activist. But in addition, HRAAA from time to time tried its hand at some direct action. Nineteen Eighty-six was the three hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Harvard College, and President Derek Bok had organized a big celebration., Even Prince Charles was coming. One of the premier events was to be a black tie and evening gown dinner at Memorial Hall for Harvard's biggest donors. The event was scheduled for Thursday, September 4th. When Jean heard that I had just returned from South Africa, she asked whether I would like to join the protest. "Is there a chance that we will be arrested?" I asked. "Yes," she replied. "O.K., then I'm in," I said. I had always been rather embarrassed that I had not been arrested during the Sixties. Although neither Patrick nor Tobias would ever say so, I suspected they looked down on me a little because of my lack of a record. I thought this might be a chance to redeem myself in their eyes.

Thursdays were one of my teaching days, with a 10 a.m. class in Intro Phil and a late afternoon Kant seminar, but the 4th was the first meeting of the seminar, and I figured I could cut it short. That day, I raced home from class to meet my co-conspirators at a house near Harvard Square. Along the way, I stopped at a pay phone and called Susie to tell her that I was about to get arrested. "All right," she said. We all drifted casually toward Mem Hall by twos and threes. When we got there, maybe half an hour before the dinner was scheduled to start, we joined up, locked arms, sat down on the pavement, and blocked both entrances. Pretty soon, rich Harvard

alums dressed to the nines started to arrive. We tightened our blockade and chanted slogans. Since it was a dinner, our premier chant was "If you wanna digest, you gotta divest." Now, to be honest, I don't much like protests and demonstrations. I always feel like a fool, shouting slogans at people five feet from my face. Most of our group were young, although there were a few old hands, grizzled veterans of a hundred causes. Some of the dinner guests looked as though they might be my classmates, and when they saw me sitting on the cold pavement [my rear end was getting frozen], I could tell that they were thinking, "What on earth are you doing sitting there like a teenager?" We stood our ground, or more accurately sat our ground, and Bok was so totally taken by surprise that he never called the police. In the end, he donated the top of the line food to a homeless shelter [say what you will, Harvard has a certain panache], and fed his guests pizza in Fogg Art Museum.

So I didn't get arrested. But I got another chance. A donors' dinner was arranged at the Fogg Art Museum for November 21st, and we decided to have a go at interrupting their meal. We showed up on Quincy Street, across the street from Harvard Yard, and divided into two groups. One group walked up the steps to the front door of the Museum and jammed themselves into the entryway, blocking access. I went with the other group, marching up and down the sidewalk in front of the Museum, holding placards. This time Bok was ready for us, and as soon as we appeared, the police were all over us. In no time at all, we had been arrested, and paddy wagons parked down Quincy pulled up to take us to the Central Square police station for booking. Some of the people in our group had been part of the 1969 Harvard student uprising, and some of the cops had been there to arrest them that time too. They greeted one another as old friends and gossiped about the good old days on the way to the station. We were all fingerprinted, booked, and released on our own recognizance.



Now, I realize that in the grand sweep of American protest movements and direct action, this is pretty small potatoes, but these are my Memoirs, and this is the only time in seventy-eight years that I managed to get arrested, so you are going to have to let me go on about it for a while. The story has a pretty good punch line, so wait for it. The group in the doorway were charged with trespass, since it was technically Harvard property. Those of us on the sidewalk were charged with disorderly conduct, "loitering on the common without legitimate purpose." The specific claim was that our picketing was forcing passersby to step into the street, thereby putting them in danger from traffic.

This was not exactly the most serious piece of court business before the Commonwealth that Fall and Winter. The arraignment did not take place until February 3, 1987, two and a half months after our arrest. At the arraignment, Judge Arthur Sherman offered us a deal -- cop a plea, pay a small fine, and everyone would forget about it. If we tried to do anything pushy like offering a "necessity defense," he would hit us with contempt charges. A Necessity Defense, for those of you not familiar with the ins and outs of protest politics, is a plea that the act committed, though technically against the law, was necessary in order to prevent a greater harm. The idea is that if you rush into a burning house to save a child, and then get charged with breaking and entering, you can say that although technically you were breaking and entering, it was the only way to save the baby. Protesters sometimes get a sympathetic judge who lets them put on witnesses to testify that the harm being prevented -- apartheid, the Viet Nam War, Jim Crow -- justifies the trespassing or disorderly conduct. Judge Sherman was having none of it.

Seven of us turned down the deal and decided to go to trial. Besides myself, there were Chris Tilly, then an MIT grad student and now Professor of Urban Planning at UCLA, Dorothee Benz, then the Executive Director of HRAAA and now Director of Communications for the

CUNY Professional Staff Congress, or union, Margaret Schirmer, a life-long activist for peace and justice who died earlier this year at the age of eighty-nine, Abigail Schirmer [her daughter, I think], Joel Reisman and Jeffrey Weinberger, a slender young man who died tragically when still in his twenties.

Even though we were acting *pro se* [i.e., being our own lawyers], we were coached by some sympathetic leftie attorneys, and following their lead, we filed a motion calling upon Sherman to recuse himself. Somewhat to our surprise, on May 3rd, Sherman said ok. "Although I find no impropriety on my part," he wrote in his own hand on the document I had submitted for the other six who had decided to go to trial, "I can reasonably understand the defendants' apprehension of impropriety. Allowed." The trial was set for May 27th, roughly six months after the protest.

All Spring, we met at my Watertown apartment to plan strategy and prepare for the trial. This being Massachusetts, our opponents were not exactly bad guys. The DA was Scott Harshbarger, who had started his career as a civil rights lawyer, and later on, after narrowly losing the Governorship as the Democratic candidate, headed up Common Cause for three years. Like everyone else in the affair on all sides, he was a Harvard grad. The Assistant DA to whom the case had been handed was young Peter Bellotti, son of Francis X. Bellotti, former Lieutenant Governor and Attorney General of the Commonwealth. [In Massachusetts, there are only about seven family names. It is sort of like Korea, where half the population is named Kim.]

We had pretty grandiose plans for our necessity defense, at one point thinking of calling Harry Bellefonte and Jesse Jackson as witnesses, but in the end, our star witness was Mel King, long time Black Boston political activist who had spent nine years as a State Rep. The original group had numbered sixteen, so on a lark, I had a bunch of T-shirts made up that read "Free the

Fogg Sixteen." When we got to trial, we found that the new judge assigned to the case was a woman whose son was at that very moment a Harvard undergraduate. Oh well. It was Boston, after all. Sitting prominently in the front row were two men wearing the most expensive suits I had ever seen. Harvard had sent the B-team from its legal staff to observe the proceedings.

At this point, I need to get something off my chest that has rankled for twenty-five years. **Technically, I was not guilty.** Here is why. The charge against me and the other picketers was that by blocking the sidewalk we were endangering pedestrians. But because Bok had been waiting for us, the police had actually blocked off both ends of Quincy Street **before** our protest started. So there was no traffic that could endanger pedestrians forced to step into the street. Since I am naturally combative, I brought this up during one of our planning sessions, but the group decided not to go with that defense. The problem was that if some of us got off, the solidarity of the group would be destroyed. I recognized the political wisdom of this point of view, and agreed not to offer my defense, but I really hated having to sit there and let the police claim something that just was not true.

We tried out our necessity defense line on the judge, and during the *voir dire*, we presented our witnesses, each of whom said what he or she would testify if allowed to appear. After each potential witness, she denied our request. My favorite moment in the trial came after Mel King had given a brief summary of his proposed testimony. The judge said, in a sad voice, "Mr. King, I would be happy to hear you speak on the subject of justice in any venue in the world except this court." Pretty clearly, we were going down.

The trial itself took almost no time at all, and the six jurors [our offenses were misdemeanors] brought in a verdict of Guilty. Then came the sentencing phase. Peter Bellotti proposed that each of us be required to perform one hundred and ten hours of community service

[as though our protest was not itself community service.] When it came my turn to propose an alternative penalty for myself, I bethought myself of Plato's *Apology*. "Your Honor," I said, "I have for sixteen years served the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as a Professor at the State University. In light of my long public service, I propose that the State give me a pension." The Judge, who despite having a son at Harvard was obviously not up on her Plato, looked at me as though I were crazy, and sentenced each of us to a fine of \$72.50, or an equivalent amount of community service.

We decided to appeal, but it turned out that the tape recorder serving as court stenographer was so old that no one could get a reasonable transcript from it, and in the end of the case dropped into a black hole and was never heard from again.

Despite the terrible legal jeopardy we all were in, the trial was not actually my primary concern that Fall and Winter. The divorce negotiations had finally been concluded, and Cindy and I were scheduled to be formally divorced on December 31, 1986. As soon as I knew I was going to be a free man, I pressured Susie about marrying me, and she agreed. We decided that we would pool our resources -- the proceeds from her house in Chapel Hill, and my half of the proceeds from the house in Belmont -- and build our dream house in the Amherst area. I found two adjacent building lots on Buffam Road, a rural road in the little town of Pelham on the eastern edge of Amherst. The State Senator for that area, a former Amherst College professor named John Olver, owned land in Pelham, and had put up four lots for sale. Behind the four lots was a huge swath of woods that Olver had been unable to develop because he could not gain access to it from town roads, so for tax purposes he had donated it to the State as conservation land. That meant that although the two lots only totaled a bit more than four acres, they were really the front part of a hundred acres or more that could never be built on. I bought lots three

and four. Lot two did not perk, which meant we would be protected on all sides. [For you big city dwellers, when you build in the country far from town water and sewer, you have to put in a well and a septic system. To guarantee that the sewage will not back up, the land must be tested to see whether water percolates down into the ground at an acceptable rate. This is called a "perk test."]

Four years later, Republican Silvio Conte, who had represented the huge First Congressional District for more than thirty years, died in office. When Conte had first been elected, the Massachusetts First was as safely Republican a district as you could find, but the entire area had been moving steadily leftward for two decades, Conte with it, and everyone knew that once he left the scene, the action would be in the Democratic primary. Olver announced for the job, as did Jim Collins, the only member of the State Legislature who had actually attended UMass. Olver was farther to the left, but he had cut down all the deciduous trees on Lots 1-4 before putting them on the market, and I was so mad at him that I voted for Collins. At least in Massachusetts, all politics really are local.

We found a local builder named Don Gross, who headed up a little construction company called Sundance Associates. Don put us on to an Amherst architect, Steve Woolf, who told Susie and me to make up a scrap book of pictures from magazines showing the sort of look and features we wanted in a design. Susie was a real estate agent in Chapel Hill, and had once seen a master bathroom with a circular shower that she loved, so she asked Steve to put that in. I had always wanted a vaulting ceiling, so Steve designed a living room with a twenty-two foot ceiling. For me, there would be a study with built in book shelves. For Susie, an octagonal study off the bedroom with a tray ceiling. We found some lovely tile in Chapel Hill, and had it

shipped up. I found some more tile in Watertown and almost broke the springs on my car hauling it out to Pelham.

Well in advance, we set our wedding date for August 25th, as late as possible before the new school year to give Gross time to finish building our house. To no one's surprise except mine [I had never had a house built before], Sundance Associates were no where near finished as August approached. So Susie boarded her standard poodle, Jacques, and her cat, Kitty, and came north for the wedding. On Tuesday, August 25, 1987 [which, as it happens, was that year the Islamic New Year], we stood before the County Clerk in the Northampton Town Hall and swore our vows. Thirty-seven years after I wrote home from Harvard to tell my parents that Susie and I planned to be married, "but not right away," we were finally husband and wife.

**Part Three**  
**Chapter Two**  
**Newlyweds**

I had accumulated so many frequent flyer miles during my repeated trips to North Carolina that we flew to London free. After taking a fast train to Edinburgh, we rented a car and set out on a honeymoon trip around the British Isles. It was a trip right out of the tourist books. We visited Loch Ness [no monster]. We toured the Isle of Skye [lots of one lane roads there -- I mean, one lane, period, with little turnoffs every so often in case you meet someone coming the other way]. We drove down to Wales, where I bought some cashmere sweaters. I found my way to a pre-booked hotel in Bristol [stumbled on a spectacular Greek restaurant]. Then we flew home.

Our house was still nowhere near finished, and this created a problem. Susie had two pets: a big, friendly black standard poodle named Jacques, and her cat. But I had been completely unable to find someone who would rent us an apartment short term in Amherst if we insisted on bringing our pets. Don Grose promised us that we would be in the house before Christmas, so that meant we had to find somewhere to stay for four months.

The only thing I could think of was to rent a trailer and park it on the construction site. We owned the land, so no one could say no. Don Grose was clearly not amused. The last thing he wanted was the client on site twenty-four seven, watching every move his workmen made. But he could not refuse, so we flew back to Chapel Hill, rented a U-Haul trailer, loaded it with Susie's clothes and her scores of plants, including a ten foot tall cactus, and drove north to our building site in Pelham. The trailer I had rented was no luxury double wide. It had a sleeping area no bigger than the bed, a tiny kitchen, a sitting area, and a bathroom attached to a tank that

had to be pumped out once a week. We ran an electric line from the building site, and even managed to get the phone company to pull a line in from the street to give us service. Then we settled in with Jacques and Kitty.

We were two fifty-somethings with four grown sons and four failed marriages between us, but we felt like kids, and the whole thing was an adventure. Susie cooked dinners on the tiny stove. I took charge of having the sewage tank emptied periodically. I drove into Amherst to teach, and we wandered over every day to see how they were coming with our house. It was just as well we were there. One day, after the workmen had left, we lifted the corner of a tarpaulin and discovered that someone had delivered the wrong siding. We managed to alert Don to the mistake before the men started nailing it up. In a way, it was a typical Pioneer Valley operation. The site boss was a big young man named John Sackrey whose mother had started the Valley Women's Center, a focus of early Northampton radical feminism.

As an outgrowth of my South African trip and protest participation, I had gotten myself on the Board of HRAAA. The Board meetings were always telephone conference calls, and I can still see myself crouching over the phone in the trailer sitting area trying to hear what people were saying. The Board of Overseers write-in campaign was showing some signs of success. In addition to Gay Seidman, we also managed to elect the distinguished Duke University historian of South Carolinian slavery, Peter Wood. But of course, Harvard was obdurate. I don't think the Corporation was pro-apartheid. I just think they didn't like anyone telling them what to do with their huge endowment.

Among the people I had met during my South African adventure was Mark Orkin, a Johannesburg-based sociologist who was working for a research organization. Mark organized a conference on sanctions against South Africa, and invited me to give a paper. I jumped at the



chance, even though I knew precious little about the subject, and on November 3rd, after putting Jacques and Kitty in a kennel, Susie and I flew off to Harare, Zimbabwe [it was, of course, out of the question to hold the conference in South Africa itself.] No sooner did we arrive in Harare than we learned that the Zimbabwean government had withdrawn its permission to hold the conference in their country. At the last minute, we arranged to transfer the conference to the gambling resort, Sun City, in Gabarone, Botswana. Using my American Express credit card, I bought tickets for a bunch of folks and off we flew. For the next several days, while Susie disported herself at the pool and in the casino, I sat at a square table and talked sanctions.

One of the things I love about South Africa is that it is really a rather small country with a tiny elite. I have been a professor in American universities for fifty years, and in that time, I have never met a single person from the U. S. Department of Education, nor even from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Education. The only member of the House of Representatives I have met is John Olver, and that is just because he sold me some land. I was a Harvard classmate of Teddy Kennedy, but I never met him, either as an undergraduate or after he became a senator. In South Africa, on the other hand, I have met Two Ministers of Education, many of the Rectors of the universities, and all manner of people who played a significant role in the liberation movement,. The people gathered at that table were, or became, major players in the transformation of South Africa into a democratic state.

Seated next to me for most of the conference was Tom Lodge, a thin, dour Wits historian who is the leading chronicler of the African National Congress. He played Eeyore to my Tigger. Alec Erwin, later Minister of Public Enterprises, and a leading theoretician of transformation, was there, as was Jakes Gerwel, who became the first non-White Rector of a South African university and went on to serve as Mandela's right hand man in the first post-apartheid

government. Hillary Joffe, later a well-known journalist, was there, and so was John Dugard, then a Professor of International Law but later a distinguished Judge. My contribution to the conference, and the volume that came out of it, was forgettable; the experience was, for me, anything but.

Since we had come ten thousand miles for those few days, Susie and I had made plans to continue on to South Africa. Once again, we stayed with Debra and Berendt in Melville. Debra rounded up a Wits archeologist who took us all to Makapansgat, a famous site one hundred miles north of Pretoria. The entire Makapan valley is filled with digs from which valuable bones and artifacts have been recovered, but the cave called Makapansgat is of special interest because until the nineteenth century, it had been uninterruptedly inhabited for more than twenty thousand years. The walls and cave floor had of course been elaborated excavated, so we had to be careful walking through the site. As we were about to leave, I saw a microlith half projecting from one of the cave walls. It was a tiny arrowhead, perhaps many millennia old. When no one was looking, I put out my hand, plucked it from the wall, and put it in my pocket. I do hope the statute of limitations has run on illegally importing archeological artifacts into the United States.

Even though on my first visit I had been to Johannesburg, Soweto, Pretoria, Durban, Bophutatswana, Lebowa, and Gazenkulu, I had not yet been to South Africa's most beautiful city, Cape Town, so when the Philosophy Department of the University of Cape Town invited me to give a talk, I jumped at the chance. Susie and I flew down for a quick visit. Susie, who has all her life been a dedicated botanist and gardener, very much wanted to visit the Botanical Gardens of Cape Town, so she went off to see it while I gave my talk. The Department was rather strange, I must say. The premier scholarly effort then under way by one of the senior members was a collection of jokes and anecdotes contributed by famous philosophers from

around the world. Quine had contributed a joke, as I recall. When the time came for my talk, the Chair of the Department rose to introduce me. As he launched into an effusive welcome, everyone in the room froze. He apparently thought I was Richard Rorty. I must say, he had some very nice things to say about Dick, whom I had known, as the saying goes, since before he became Richard Rorty. It was a little hard to figure out just exactly what to say when my turn came, so I just launched into my talk.

Susie was as taken with South Africa as I had been, and on the long trip home, we agreed to return soon. We even saw a West End performance of *Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* as we passed through London on our way back to the States. We were eager to see whether Don and his crew had made any progress on our house, but when we got to our trailer, I found that I had a more pressing problem. There had been an early November cold snap, not that unusual in rural New England, and the slender pipes in the trailer were frozen solid. Unless I could get them unfrozen, we would have no toilet, so I climbed under the trailer with Susie's hairdryer, an extension cord out one window, and blew hot air on them until they let loose.

Six days after we got home, all four of our sons -- Patrick and Tobias, Lawrence and Jon -- came to visit us and take part in a celebratory Thanksgiving dinner at the Old Deerfield Inn. They arrived at different times from different corners of America, and as each one entered our little home, he said the same thing: "YOU LIVE HERE?" We had quite gotten used to the trailer, and were a bit offended that they could not see its charm, but it occurred to me that although we felt like a couple of kids, we were, after all, their fifty-five year old parents.

Don Grose had promised that we would be in our new house by Christmas, and so we were, but only just. On December 23, 1987, we abandoned the trailer that had been the first home of our married life, and moved grandly into our splendid new house. At first, we tended to

crouch defensively in one corner of a room, as though we did not believe that there was so much space, but little by little we ventured into the living room, the den, the sun-lit glass enclosed breakfast room, and even up to the second floor. In no time at all, we had appropriated the space as our own.

The recounting of the happy events of that time has momentarily driven from my memory the fact that I was then about to publish another little book, the second volume of what I still hoped would be a trilogy on the thought of Karl Marx. In the Spring of '86, while my first marriage was coming to an end, I had delivered a series of three public lectures at UMass, the Romanell-Phi Beta Kappa Lectures. In those lectures, I finally came to grips with a question that had fascinated and puzzled me from my first encounter with *Das Kapital*: Why had Marx chosen to write what he himself conceived as his greatest work in a language and style utterly different from any that had previously been adopted either by economists or by philosophers? The language of *Capital* is highly inflected, shot through with witty ironies and literary allusions. Commentators, especially those from England, have tended to view the language of Marx's *hauptwerk* as a sign of incapacity on his part, as though the author of *The Communist Manifesto* could not say it straight when he wanted to. I thought otherwise.

I took the title of my lectures from a wonderful passage in the chapter on "The Buying and Selling of Labour-Power." The original English translation, overseen by Engels himself, perfectly captures the mocking tone of the original:

"In order to be able to extract value from the consumption of a commodity, our friend, Moneybags [*Geldbesitzer*], must be so lucky as to find, within the sphere of circulation, a commodity, whose use-value possesses the peculiar property of being a source of value, whose actual consumption, therefore, is itself an embodiment of labour, and, consequently, a creation of value. The possessor of money does find on the market such a special commodity in capacity for labour or labour-power."

The original has *Geldbesitzer* twice, first where Aveling and Moore render it as "Moneybags" and second where they give the more literal "possessor of money." But "possessor of money" misses the dead metaphor in the original. The image conjured up by the German is, or ought to be, of someone sitting atop a pile of money, and "Moneybags" captures that sense perfectly.

I have always believed that these lectures, published in 1988 by the University of Massachusetts Press under the title *Moneybags Must Be So Lucky*, are pound for pound, word for word, the best thing I have ever written, but the world seems to have a very different view. The book went unnoticed, unreviewed [save for a very lovely review by George Scialabba in, of all places, *The Village Voice*], and unsold. All these years later, UMass Press has yet to unload a thousand copies. My little book, in the immortal words of David Hume [who was himself, after all, talking about the greatest work of philosophy ever written in the English language], "fell still-born from the presses."

Since these are my memoirs, I should like, one last time, to take a moment to explain what I was doing in those lectures, before they are consigned to "the dust heap of history." Some of Marx's work is a conscious debate with, critique of, and extension of the Classical Political Economy of the Physiocrats, Adam Smith, and David Ricardo. My first book on Marx, *Understanding Marx*, had explicated that debate in an attempt to identify what was new, revolutionary, and defensible in Marx's economic theories. But unlike his predecessors, Marx believed that capitalist economy and society is deeply mystified, concealing its true exploitative nature beneath a surface appearance of tranquil, unproblematic equal exchange in a marketplace supposedly, but not actually, cleansed of the superstitions and mystifications of feudalism and Christianity. Since Marx believed that all of us are embedded in those mystifications, suffering from what, in another context, would be called false consciousness, he sought some way

simultaneously to give voice to and to debunk the ideologies of the capitalist market. The epiphany of which I spoke earlier in these Memoirs was the realization that the extraordinary language of the opening chapters of *Capital* is Marx's deliberate attempt to accomplish this task.

I concluded that a full and deep grasp of the insights of *Capital* would require, at one and the same time, an engagement with the formal economic theory of the Classical Political Economy tradition *and* an understanding of the psychology of mystification *and* a literary analysis of Marx's language. If Marx is right that the social reality of capitalism is thus complicatedly multi-dimensional, then some way would have to be found to read the irony into the equations and the equations into the irony. *Moneybags* was my attempt to complete the second stage of the process that I had begun in *Understanding Marx*.

The quirks of my mind being what they are, I sought to *show* this idea rather than to *explain* it, by voicing in my lectures something of the irony and humor that I had found in *Capital*. In the third lecture, which is, I believe, the first successful attempt actually to explain the famously obscure disquisition on "the relative form and the equivalent form of value" that mystifies the readers of Chapter One, I chose to begin with an old Jewish joke about Mrs. Feinschmeck's blintzes. I think it is fair to say that no one who has ever read my book [and that cannot be many people] has ever understood the deep and complicated purpose behind that apparently facetious literary choice.

So be it. UMass Press did a lovely job designing the little book, with a splendid Daumier caricature of a top-hatted banker counting his money on the cover. If the writing of this Memoir accomplishes nothing else, perhaps it will send a curious reader or two to that neglected book.

As we took possession of our dream house, there were darker storm clouds gathering than merely an under-appreciated book. In keeping with standard UMass procedures, the Dean

appointed an outside Visiting Committee to evaluate the department. Robison, Gettier, Feldman, Sleigh and the rest got the Dean to appoint a committee dominated by their buddies, who apparently subscribed to G. E. Moore's theory of organic unities. After a careful examination of the departmental doctoral program [which was pretty much all anyone cared about], the Committee announced that the "analytic" program was a distinguished operation, deserving of its splendid national reputation, but that the mere presence of the Alternative Track diminished the overall value of the program and threatened so to discredit the entire department as to undo the magnificent work the majority were carrying out. Bob Sleigh had put in some time in Loren Baritz's office as an Associate Provost, and he must have learned enough to know that the original threat to place the department in receivership had been a bluff. Since the existence of the AT was the product of nothing more than a departmental vote [albeit one taken under duress], it could be terminated by nothing more than another vote. By now, Baritz had moved on, to be replaced by Richard O'Brien, a scientist who neither knew nor cared about what was happening in Philosophy. So the boys called a meeting and summarily voted the Alternative Track out of existence, effective the end of the academic year 1987-88.

The program was grandfathered, of course. Any students who had started in the AT would be permitted to finish in the AT. Furthermore, in an effort to avoid bloodshed, they threw Bob and me a bone. Each of us would be permitted to serve for one year as GPD of the entire graduate program. Apparently, Fred Feldman had concluded that we would not be able to do irretrievable damage to his carefully managed operation in that brief a time span.

I was beside myself with anger, and uncharacteristically depressed both by the abrupt murder of a program into which I had poured so much energy and by the lack of response to my latest book. I reacted by turning away from scholarship and teaching, making a series of efforts

to channel my energies into various forms of administration. My first move involved HRAAA. The organization was falling into debt, and though the amount was not very great -- sixteen thousand dollars or so -- we had always run on a shoestring. Dot Benz, the wonderful young woman who had served for some years as a paid Executive Director [and as my co-defendant in our show trial], wanted to do graduate work under Frances Piven at CUNY. During one of our many Board conference calls, I volunteered to serve as unpaid Executive Director and to see whether I could turn things around.

I threw myself into the job with all the energy that now had no other outlet, and pretty quickly managed to put us in the black. Since I was running the organization out of my home without salary, our only expense would be the annual write-in campaign for the Board of Overseers. While I was in our circular shower one morning, it occurred to me that Archbishop Desmond Tutu would be the perfect HRAAA candidate. To be sure, none of Tutu's degrees was from Harvard. But it is an odd thing about the Harvard Board of Overseers. It is rather like the Vatican. Just as you don't have to be a cardinal to be Pope [or even to be a priest, for that matter], so you don't actually have to be a Harvard or Radcliffe graduate to serve on the Board of Overseers. The rest of the HRAAA board thought it was a great idea, and as you can imagine, it was going to be no trouble at all to collect signatures on a petition to nominate Tutu. The trickiest part of the whole operation was getting Tutu's agreement to stand as a candidate.

Tutu had won the Nobel Peace Prize four years earlier. After Mandela, who was, of course, still on Robben Island, he was the best known South African in the world. You didn't just call him up. I made some calls to South Africa, and managed to get the name and phone number of his assistant, a young Episcopal priest. I explained what we were proposing, and after a few days, he called back to say that His Grace would be pleased to be a candidate. I swung



into action and started working to elect Tutu to the Overseers. How could Harvard say no if Archbishop Desmond Tutu made a personal appeal to the Board? We thought we had found the secret to success. After an all-out campaign in '88-'89 that combined mailings, phone calls, and as much publicity as the name Tutu could get us, we succeeded in electing the Archbishop. When the new academic year started in the Fall of 1989, he would officially be a member of the Harvard Board of Overseers. Harvard did not react by divesting, unfortunately. Instead, the Harvard Alumni Association changed the rules for electing Overseers in an effort to guarantee that nothing like that would ever happen again.

Meanwhile, I looked around for any administrative job I could find. I certainly did not want to leave the house we had just built, but the Pioneer Valley is unusually well endowed with institutions of higher education. Hampshire College was looking for a President, so I threw my name in the hat. A student called me from Wesleyan University in Connecticut to ask whether I would consent to be a candidate for the Presidency of that institution. I hope I am not shocking any of my readers when I report that neither of those ideas went anywhere. But Amherst College was looking for a Dean of the Faculty, and I thought I might actually have shot at that job, so I applied. Somewhat to my surprise, I made the first cut, and was asked to meet the Search Committee for a formal interview. Things seemed to be going pretty well until someone on the Committee asked me what new ideas I would like to bring to Amherst, if I were chosen.

Now, I need to explain something about the curious relationship between faculty members of UMass and Amherst College. Since we all worked in the same little town, lots of us knew one another and showed up at the same parties. On almost any subject of conversation you could imagine, we were quite compatible, and as this was well after the Sixties, when dress codes went all to hell, if you didn't know who was whom, you probably couldn't have told us

apart. Except when it came to gossiping about salaries. UMass is a state university, so all the salaries are public. You can actually go to the UMass library and take a look at a big computer printout that lists the salary of everyone from the Chancellor on down to part-time secretaries. But Amherst College is a private institution, and people do not know what their colleagues are making. At one of Shulamith Oppenheim's parties, if the conversation turned to who was making what, the UMass folks there would rattle on happily while the Amherst types would fall silent. It always seemed to me that the UMass way was healthier.

When the Search Committee asked me what innovations I might like to introduce as Dean, I thought of that curious fact and said that I thought it would be a nice idea to make everyone's salary at Amherst College public. The temperature in the room dropped abruptly about ten degrees, and I realized that I had lost any chance of becoming Amherst's next Dean. They picked a nice man named Rosbottom who taught French Lit. His wife wrote cookbooks.

An even likelier prospect opened up closer to home in '90-'91. Murray Schwartz left the Deanship of Humanities and Fine Arts at UMass to go to Emerson College in Boston, and Provost O'Brien decided to conduct an internal search. A bunch of us from HFA put our names in. A formal Search Committee was named and each of us got to make a pitch to our colleagues. [Since the search was internal, it would have been tacky to make a first cut, so everyone who expressed an interest had his or her day.] In the end, two people were on the short list that the Committee forwarded to the Provost. One was Lee Edwards, a Professor of English who specialized in nineteenth century British fiction and had played a very important role in the creation of the quite successful Women's Studies Program. I was the other one. We both had interviews with O'Brien, who then picked Lee. So far, I was 0 for 4.

While this search was going on, however, we all got the joyous news that South African President de Klerk had agreed to release the Robben Island prisoners and lift the ban the African National Congress. A bit of background is called for here, including some things that even careful readers of the news may not have picked up on. The original manifesto of the South African liberation movement was a document issued by the ANC called The Freedom Charter. This document contained an extraordinary vision for a new South Africa. In addition to proposing the complete elimination of all distinctions and legal disabilities based on race, the Freedom Charter called for a sweeping return of agricultural lands to the displaced and disinherited Black majority and at the same time for State ownership of South Africa's industrial means of production. Land Reform and Nationalization, more than racial liberation, were the truly controversial elements of the ANC program.

Land reform was a direct attack on the economic base of the Afrikaner population, because it was the Boers who had seized the good farmland and built their wealth on it. Nationalization was a threat to the economic base of the English segment of the White elite, for all that a good many of the most important companies [such as the diamond giant, De Beers,] were in Afrikaner hands. Some of my friends in the Mass Democratic Movement [the wing of the Liberation Movement that had stayed in the country rather than go into exile] had bootlegged to me a copy of a revision of the Freedom Charter then being circulated in the leading circles of the movement. The key change in the revised document was that land reform and nationalization had been dropped in return for full-scale democracy, one person one vote. Secret negotiations had been going on between de Klerk and the imprisoned Nelson Mandela. The revised charter was the basis of the deal being struck.

In left circles in South Africa, there was considerable dismay over a deal of this sort, and some of the people I had come to know in the Natal Province area believed strongly that it would be better to reject the deal and continue fighting than to bargain away what they [and I, I must confess] believed to be central to the Movement's vision for South Africa,. But leaving to one side the fact that I had no skin at all in this game, and was quite free to return to my comfortable home in Pelham after each brief trip, there were facts on the ground that dictated the compromise. For all the brave talk about "one Boer, one bullet," the armed struggle being carried on from neighboring states was not going at all well. The liberation forces were totally outgunned and outmanned by the South African military, and nobody thought there was the slightest chance of an armed overthrow of the Pretoria regime.

But why would de Klerk even consider one person one vote, which, whatever else it might accomplish, would certainly bring to an end White control of the state? I puzzled over this quite a lot, and finally, with the help of my friends in the Movement, achieved at least some insight into what might be the thinking of the de Klerk government. Briefly, the Black opposition was split. In the Black areas of Natal Province north of Durban, a Zulu-based organization called The Inkatha Freedom Party, or IFP, had been for a long time engaged in a struggle with the ANC for supremacy in the Black community. The leader of the IFP was Mangosuthu Buthelezi, who had entered into a devil's bargain with the de Klerk regime in return for supplies of weapons. de Klerk deliberately fomented violent confrontations between IFP and ANC supporters in the single-sex hostels, on the trains bringing workers from the townships, and elsewhere. He then figured to position himself as the neutral party able to maintain peace between the warring factions. Implausible though it may seem in retrospect, de Klerk seems

actually to have believed that he could prevail in a three-way electoral contest with Mandela and Buthelezi.

All of that was in the future, however. First, Mandela had to be released and the ANC unbanned. In early February 1990, the news broke that Mandela was to be released. As luck would have it, Archbishop Tutu was in Cambridge for a meeting of the Board of Overseers. The Board meeting was scheduled for Sunday, February 4th. I was granted a meeting with Tutu at the Charles Hotel in Brattle Square on Saturday, February 3rd. It was my one and only meeting with one of the great figures of the modern age.

Tutu was warm and quite informal. He thanked me for my work in getting him elected to the Board [he had been briefed], and then went on to speak movingly about the need for *reinvestment* in the new South Africa that was about to be born. Reflecting on the meeting during my drive back to Pelham, I realized that the divestment struggle was over. Once Mandela was released, an entirely new stage in the evolution of South Africa would begin. I was not sure what all of this meant for HRAAA, save that we could not simply go on reflexively doing in the future what we had been doing in the past.

As luck would have it, just at that time, the new Chair of the Philosophy Department at Durban-Westville, Mala Singh, wrote to me with an urgent appeal. Her graduate students had no money to pursue their studies. Was there anything I could do to help? Very quickly, I sent an appeal to some hundreds of philosophers at American colleges and universities, and managed to raise enough money to enable Mala's students to continue their studies. It occurred to me that this might be the shape of my new effort. I had learned how to raise money by mail, using my computer. Perhaps I could start a charitable organization to offer scholarship aid to poor Black students going to historically Black universities in South Africa. The idea would be to support

them there, not bring them to the United States [which would have been prohibitively expensive.] If I worked out of my home and paid myself nothing, I could send virtually everything I raised to the students.

To create a scholarship organization that could help poor Black students in South Africa to get a university education, I needed to do four things: Choose a name for the organization, get it declared a tax-exempt charitable organization by the IRS, find someone in South Africa who was willing to select the scholarship recipients and look after them, and then RAISE SOME MONEY. Susie and I mulled over a good name for the new organization. During our trips to South Africa, we had noticed that many of the pro-liberation groups had similar sounding acronyms, because they all had the letters "SA" in them: NUSAS, COSATU, SASCO, and so forth. We finally came up with University Scholarships for South African Students, or USSAS, which had a very South African ring to it. One of the lawyers who had given us informal advice during our Fogg Art Museum trial led me through the paperwork involved in applying for tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Tax Code [hence the familiar phrase, "a 501(c)(3) organization."] I intended to do all the work myself, but the law required that I list a Secretary and a Treasurer, in addition to myself as President, so I put down Susie's name as Secretary and an old HRAAA comrade, Joel Krieger, as Treasurer. Very quickly, I received a letter from the IRS granting USSAS provisional status as a tax-exempt organization. Permanent status would not come for several years.

It was clear to me that I needed someone in South Africa to select the students and look after them, someone who would also do this pro bono. On my next trip, I decided to travel around the country, looking for an academic who would be willing to take on this essential, but rather burdensome, task. I made a grand circle of the country, starting in Johannesburg, and

moving on to Cape Town, Alice [home of Fort Hare], Umtata, Durban, and back to Johannesburg. It was in Durban that I found my in-country coordinator, Prem Singh. Prem, a slender Indian man of forty or so, was deeply committed to the well-being of his students, and he was willing to take on the responsibility of managing the South African side of USSAS, assuming that I could raise some money. Prem died some years ago, very suddenly, of a heart attack, and I have not, until now, had the opportunity to testify publicly to the absolutely essential role he played in the growth and success of USSAS. It was not merely a matter of choosing the scholarship recipients, although that was obviously crucial. Prem had to negotiate the Byzantine complexities of the South African banking system to set up the account into which the money would be transferred, and -- equally tricky -- to get it out again at the appropriate time and transfer it to the proper account at the University. Prem served as the unofficial Mentor and Advisor to the student bursary recipients, who quickly came to number well over one hundred a year. He put me up in his home each time I came to Durban, and took me in charge as I visited the students, the new Rector, Jairam Reddy, members of the faculty, and also the townships surrounding Durban. My relationship with the students, inevitably, was distant and episodic, but Prem's was intimate and daily. As my story unfolds, it will become clear how central his role was in the early and middle years of USSAS.

USSAS has played a central role in my life for twenty-two years now, and I would like in these Memoirs to render a full account not only of how it came into existence but also of how it has evolved over two decades. To do that, I need my readers to know a good deal more about South African higher education than they are likely to have been able to learn from the occasional newspaper or television report. Rather than scatter information into the narrative of my life and career as it unfolded year by year, I have chosen to gather all the information into a

coherent story and set it here, in my Memoir, even though much of what I say will relate to events still many years down the line. The best way to do this is to devote a separate chapter to USSAS, which, if anything in my life, qualifies as "my onion."



## Part Three

### Chapter Three

#### University Scholarships for South African Students

Let me begin with a systematic account of the history and structure of South African higher education, which is very different from the American variety, so that you can understand exactly why USSAS was needed, and what it does. The South African higher education system is a typical colonial educational system, on to which have been imposed two distorting influences: the existence of two dominant colonial languages, Afrikaans and English, rather than one, and the complex system of racial segregation and domination known by its Afrikaans name, *apartheid*. When the two colonizing populations, one from Holland and the other from England, combined to form the modern Republic of South Africa, two groups of universities were established, one using Afrikaans as its language of instruction, the other using English. The first institution established was The University of South Africa, or UNISA, which was, and remains today, a correspondence or distance learning institution. The other universities started life as campuses associated with UNISA, although fairly quickly they gained independent status. Virtually all of the educational institutions in South Africa, until very recently, have been state supported, though the historically White universities, both Afrikaans and English, have very sizeable endowments. With the exception of UNISA, which now has more than 100,000 students, South African universities were small by American standards -- six or seven to fifteen thousand students, more or less. [This has changed in recent years.]

In addition to the White English and Afrikaans universities, one university was established very early on to educate Black students -- Fort Hare University, in what used to be called the Ciskei [meaning, literally, "this side of the Kei River -- the other side of the river being

Transkei.] Nelson Mandela was educated there, as were many of the men who eventually become leaders of sub-Saharan African nations after the post World War II wave of liberations.

The entire university system is not large, by American standards -- sixteen universities or so. The University of the Witwatersrand, or Wits, and the University of Cape Town, or UCT, are the leading English language historically White universities, and the University of Pretoria and Stellenbosch University are the principal Afrikaans language historically White universities. There is considerable competition among them to determine which is the academically best campus, with all of them fervently and mistakenly believing that they are the equivalents of Oxford and Cambridge, or Harvard and Berkeley. In fact, the strongest universities in South Africa can plausibly be compared with second tier State Universities in the United States -- UMass, UConn, maybe Ohio State, but probably not Michigan State, and certainly not UCLA or Berkeley.

In 1949, the Nationalist Party came to power in South Africa, and a wide-ranging system of racial laws was put into effect formalizing, and also very much complicating, the segregation and exploitation that already existed somewhat more informally. Underlying the laws was a pseudo-philosophical theory of racial identity, claiming to find its intellectual rationale in the phenomenological school of thought established by Edmund Husserl. The people of South Africa, it was claimed, formed a collection of racial, cultural, linguistic, and intellectual unities that ought to be kept separate and permitted to develop, each in its own unique manner. In addition to the Afrikaans and English-speaking Whites, twelve other groups were identified. The first was the large number of descendants of the Indian workers who had been brought to South Africa in the nineteenth century to work in the sugar plantations on the Indian Ocean coast of Southeastern South Africa. This population, numbering more than one million, is native English

speaking, and has maintained relatively few ties with the old country. The second group were the descendants of intermarriage between the Dutch settlers or Malay sailors and the indigenous population of the Western Cape area. This population, called Coloured in South Africa, was [and remains to this day] Afrikaans speaking, and is located primarily in and around Cape Town. The other ten groups are indigenous African people, differentiated primarily by their languages -- Zulu, Xhosa, Sotho, Tswana, Venda, Ndebele, and so forth.

A vast and extremely cruel program of relocation was undertaken to sort the African peoples into their "natural homelands." Ten quasi-independent nations were created, with puppet governments and ostensibly traditional lands carved out of the agriculturally least valuable farmlands and rural areas of South Africa. Individuals were classified by official Boards, set up to determine their "true" ethnicity, and were then required to relocate to those areas, in many cases tearing families apart. In 1986, when I first visited South Africa, it was still the case that each year people were re-classified, from White to African, or from African to Coloured, or from Coloured to White, and then forced to relocate. The Indian, Coloured, and African persons not consigned to the Homelands were forced into townships separate from the White cities in which they served as pools of cheap labor. Stringent Pass Laws and Group Areas Acts made it a crime for a non-White person to be found within a White city after sundown, forcing the people who performed menial labor in the cities to travel long hours each day to and from the townships. Since huge numbers of African men were required in the mines and the factories on which South Africa's growing wealth depended, single-sex hostels were built near the work sites, and the men were permitted several times a year to return to the Homelands to see their wives and children.

At first, Africans were permitted to work only in menial jobs for which they needed no more than minimal formal education, and an ideological justification was developed according to

which they were intellectually incapable of work requiring more sophisticated understanding, or even literacy. A national system of Bantu schools, so called, was created to provide primary education for Black children, and Teachers' Colleges were set up to train the Black women who would serve as teachers in the Bantu schools. Drawing yet again on distorted and corrupted versions of Continental Philosophy, the Afrikaner intellectuals who served as rationalizers for the *apartheid* system developed an educational theory, called Fundamental Pedagogics, to justify the stringent discipline and rote learning imposed on the students in the Bantu schools.

Eventually, however, as the economy grew, and the White population shrank as a proportion of the total population, it became clear that some sort of higher education was going to be required to prepare the non-White population for jobs that there were too few Whites to fill, and so a number of new universities were created, along strictly racially segregated lines. By this time, there were thirteen separate Departments of Education in South Africa -- one for White schools, one for Indian schools, one for Coloured schools, and one in each of the ten Homelands. The Whites already had their universities. For the Indian students, the University of Durban-Westville was created, with a White Rector, of course, but eventually with some Indian as well as White academics. For the Coloured students, the University of the Western Cape was established in Bellville, a community not far outside of Cape Town itself. For the Black students, a number of universities were created in the Homelands in addition to Fort Hare, ostensibly funded by the puppet Homeland governments, but actually supported by the central government. Thus, there came into being a University of Zululand, a University of the North, a University of Venda, and so forth. Inasmuch as the entire South African governmental system was a vast works project for otherwise idle White South Africans, not surprisingly the Homelands university system became a place to locate politically connected Whites with

marginal claims to academic qualifications.

g Along with this now quite complex system of universities, there was created a system of Technikons, modeled on the Continental rather than British system, in which a cross between technical and vocational subjects were taught. Parallel to the White Technikons, there now came into existence a number of racially segregated Technikons for Indian, Coloured, or Black students. This, in somewhat simplified form, was the situation with regard to tertiary education in 1990, when the ANC was unbanned, Nelson Mandela and his colleagues were freed from Robben Island, and the process of transition to a free South Africa began. It is the situation I found when I first travelled to South Africa in 1986.

South African university education is organized on the English model: a three year B. A. degree, followed by a one year honors degree, if one has done well enough. A student can then earn a Master's Degree, by writing a Master's Thesis, and a doctorate by writing a doctoral dissertation. Normally, there is no further course work associated with either the MA or the Ph. D., although that is changing, and there are now what are called "coursework Masters." Until quite recently, it was standard for the entire year's work to be evaluated by a single end-of-year written examination, or "script." Fail that exam, and lose all credit for the year's work. Also until quite recently, it was in practice impossible to transfer credits from one university to another, even if one had earned the credits at one of the elite institutions. Even now, it is quite unusual for a student to complete a B. A. at one university and do an Honors Year at another, and it is even very unusual for a student to transfer at the Master's or Doctoral level.

As in Great Britain, many of the university faculty hold only the M.A. degree. Also as in the old-fashioned Continental and English universities, only one person in each field or

department holds the title of Professor, and is referred to as THE Professor of Chemistry, or History, or Education. That person is also typically the Head of Department.

To an American visitor in 1986, the South African educational system seemed hopelessly rigid and inflexible. Practices and arrangements that have long been customary and unquestioned in the United States were viewed with a suspicion verging on horror by even the most politically radical academics. A few examples will illustrate the gulf between the two systems. There was almost no room for choice of courses in the South African curriculum. There was no room at all for students to change their fields of concentration midway through an undergraduate education. If you started in Public Administration, you finished in Public Administration. Transferring from one university to another was unheard of. It could be done, but it required a vote of the full Faculty Senate. Taking time off from one's studies was unheard of, which in practice meant that only those from families that could support a student through the entire degree had a chance at earning a B. A. It was, and still is, impossible to transfer from a Technikon to a University, let alone from a Teachers College to either a Technikon or a University. Courses typically were a year long, and were graded by a final examination, so that the American system of accumulating partial credits toward a degree was unknown.

The result of these practices and proscriptions was paradoxical in the extreme to an American visitor. On the one hand, South African academics espoused a social and political philosophy that was unimaginably radical by American standards. As I remarked earlier, even I, with my far left convictions, found myself surrounded by academics who viewed me as mainstream. But on the other hand, the actual administrative and pedagogical practices of South African higher education appeared to me utterly medieval. I quickly became aware of the baleful effect of these practices on the Black students who were now my primary concern.

Typical of colonial educational systems around the world, the faculty and administration I met were obsessed with MAINTAINING STANDARDS, a goal that they sought to achieve by means of an extremely high failure rate. Even at the Historically Black Universities, or HBUs, and even when those grading the examinations were themselves Black [or perhaps especially because they were Black], the failure rates, from an American perspective, were and continue to be appalling. These failure rates are bad enough for White students from privileged backgrounds [which is to say, virtually all of the White students]. For Black students, whose parents, extended families, and even communities have cobbled together the money for tuition at extraordinary cost to themselves, the failure rate is catastrophic. One story will illustrate the point. Very early in my travels to South Africa, I visited the University of the Transkei, in Umtata. I was told of a young man whose father had sold his stock to come up with the first year tuition charges, only to see his son flunk out. In my blind American fashion, I imagined this meant that he had sold shares of GM, but of course what it really meant was that this peasant farmer had sold his few cattle, thereby condemning himself and his family to utter poverty, all so that one member of the family could have some chance of escaping from their village.

I have spent twenty years fulminating and arguing and protesting against this punitive and destructive grading practice, to virtually no effect. The faculty tend to view the Black students as stupid, because English is not their first language [even though it is, typically, their third or fourth or fifth language], and consider themselves to bear no responsibility for the success of those in their classes. They, after all, are maintaining standards. One year, while on the campus of the University of Durban-Westville, I managed to obtain a huge computer printout of the results in all the final examinations given in the entire university the previous year. I asked to see the Chair of the Economics Department, a young White English speaking man clearly very

pleased with himself. I pointed out that in the previous year, in which he had taught the First Year course, only 11% of the students had passed. [That is not a typographical error. It was eleven percent.] Yes, he said sadly, they really are unprepared for Economics. "What makes you think that you are a teacher?" I asked him. "If you were a doctor running a hospital and only 11% of your patients left the hospital alive, you would be brought up on charges of malpractice." He looked at me uncomprehending and unrepentant. I simply did not understand how badly prepared the students were. There was, as far as he was concerned, no more to be said. It had never occurred to him that he bore any responsibility for helping his students to succeed.

Admission to universities is also problematic in the extreme. At the end of each secondary school year, the students in the highest grade are required to take a battery of school leaving examinations called Matriculation Examinations, or The Matric. The Matric is administered nationally, and under *apartheid*, four examinations were given -- one each for Whites, Indians, Coloureds, and Africans. Students seeking to go on to university must take a certain mixture of parts of the examination, including some at a more advanced level [for which, as you will easily imagine, the Bantu system hardly prepared the African students], and must achieve a certain level of performance. The results of the Matric exams are awaited each year with bated breath and rate front page stories in the press, because unless one does sufficiently well to earn what is called, for mysterious reasons, a "full university exemption," one is simply not permitted to go to university. [I think the phrase refers to an entrance examination that was once administered, from which one could be exempted if one did well enough on the Matrics, but I could be wrong. No one I asked could ever give me a straight answer.] If the university chooses to admit a student without a Matric Exemption, the state funding formula will not



allocate any money to the university for that student, and regardless of how well he or she does, the university will in general not be permitted to award the degree.

There are two exceptions to this draconian rule, and during my many years with USSAS I have encountered both of them. First of all, students who take the Matrics several times and fail to achieve a Full University Exemption can apply for a Mature Age Exemption and, in some circumstances, win the right to enter a university [if one can be found to admit them] with somewhat weaker Matric scores. Second, there is some room for the Faculty Senate of a university to allow students without a proper Exemption to enroll and study for a degree, under a provision called the "Senate Discretionary Rule." Such students can in fact earn degrees, but under the system that was in place when I first arrived in South Africa, students admitted in that fashion did not count in the Funding Formula used by the State to decide the amount of the university's annual allocation. In effect, the university had to underwrite the education of those students out of its own funds.

The grading of the African Matrics was haphazard, corrupt, and unpredictable. Only a small fraction of each age cohort of African students actually managed to finish secondary school and sit the exams, and only perhaps 1-2% of the entire age cohort earned an Exemption, and thus was eligible to apply to university. Making it into this select company did not guarantee admission. Far from it. Each university was free to impose its own admissions standards, more rigorous than those required for an Exemption, and there was in general nothing resembling financial aid.

At one point shortly after his appointment, Jakes Gerwel, the radical new Rector of the the University of the Western Cape [the University for Coloureds] announced with great fanfare that he was adopting a policy of Open Admissions -- first come, first served. Familiar as I was

with the practice of open admissions at the old CCNY in New York, it took me a while to realize that this revolutionary policy only applied -- indeed could by law only apply -- to the tiny group of non-White students who had managed to obtain an Exemption. Later on, after Jakes had gone into Mandela's government, UWC announced an experimental program under the Senate Discretionary Rule to admit students without Matric Exemptions. I was very excited by this revolutionary move, and underwrote it with USSAS funds as much as I was able. The results were exactly as I had expected. There was no discernible difference between the academic performance of students entering with a Matric Exemption and students entering under the Senate Discretionary Rule, but even though Mandela was now President of South Africa and Kadar Asmal was Minister of Education, UWC could not get the Ministry of Education to adjust the funding formula so as to recognize the legitimacy of the several hundred students in the experimental program.

When I first went to South Africa in 1986, radical proposals for the transformation of higher education were everywhere. The old leftist dream of breaking down the wall between hand work and head work was taken seriously by academics and reformers, and it was easy to imagine that once liberation was achieved, South Africa would leap to the forefront of the world movement for educational reform. It was into this exciting, frustrating, bubbling mix of contradictions that I thrust myself, eagerly and somewhat naively, when I founded USSAS in the Spring of 1990.

All the legal and organizational arrangements had been made, but I still had no money. What to do? My only experience with fund-raising was my stint as HRAAA Executive Director, and that had been conducted principally through mailings, so I decided to assemble the largest list I could find of potential donors and send out letters. I had the HRAAA list still installed on

my computer, and a Boston-based anti-apartheid organization named *Free South Africa*, or FREESA, agreed to lend me part of their list [all but the big donors], so that was a start. But since it seemed to me that academics were my best target population, I decided to buy sets of mailing labels from six or seven academic professional associations -- the American Philosophical Association, the American Economics Association, the American Sociological Association, and so forth. My next step was to draft an appeal letter and get famous members of each association to sign a letter of appeal to their colleagues. A sheltered workplace in Boston would handle the task of folding and stuffing and labeling the letters, for not too much money. In all, I planned a mailing of about 85,000 letters. [The number of American academics is vast -- something that is completely outside the experience of their South African colleagues.]

Sam Bowles actually managed to persuade a group of superstars in Economics to sign, including Nobel Laureates Paul Samuelson and Kenneth Arrow, and future Laureate Amartya Sen. With the help of Milton Cantor and other friends, I recruited historians, sociologists, and literary critics to sign letters. I rounded up the philosophers myself, but I ran into an odd problem when I tried to recruit John Rawls. The letter I had drafted said that we were aiming to help "poor Black South African students who have been active in the struggle against apartheid," and Rawls thought mentioning participation in the struggle was a bit too strong, so he declined to sign. [Readers of these Memoirs will have noticed that I take a jaundiced view of Rawls' genuine commitment to social justice. It is incidents like this that explain my dismay.]

Out went the 85,000 letters. I waited anxiously for the returns. My expectations were absurdly overblown. How could any members of the Economics profession turn down a request from Samuelson, Arrow, and Sen?, I thought. In fact, experienced fundraisers will tell you that a 1% response to a letter of that sort is considered very good. In the end, I did a bit better than 1%,

and managed actually to cover the cost of the mailing. No money yet for students, but I now had more than 1,000 people who had given once, and might be persuaded to give again. I was on my way. From then on, Susie and I did the mailings ourselves, at first twice a year and then later once a year.

Putting together a mailing for a thousand people is a rather complicated process, at least for someone with my limited computer skills and a modest PC. The donors are on a database -- a small program at first, later on Excel. Some of the letters go to one person [Professor so and so], some to two people [Professor So and So and her husband, Professor So and So. Very early on, I learned the dangers of assuming that the wife or husband of the person on my list was NOT also an academic]. Some folks have one address, some two [i.e., Apartment X, or whatever]. And some people are addressed as Dear Professor Lastname --- while others, whom I actually know personally, are addressed as Dear Firstname. Thus, there are eight possible permutations, and therefore eight sub-lists to be broken out. [I know, I know, you are supposed to be able to do all of this at once with filters and sorts and if then statements, but I have never figured out how to do it, and so twenty years later I am still going through the same tedious process.] Then, using my desktop printer, which can hold ten envelopes max, I generate eight sets of envelopes, taking care to keep them in alphabetical order. After this, I write the appeal letter, limiting myself [for reasons of weight and postal costs] to two sides of one sheet. I make two versions, one signed with my full name, the other [to be sent to the people I know] signed "Bob." These are xeroxed up, and then merge printed with the address and the salutation being inserted from one or the other of the eight files. Now we are ready to fold and stuff. Each Number 10 envelope gets a letter, a return envelope [number 9], and a contribution card with suggested donation levels. [It was a major move when, after some years of offering donors a minimum contribution of \$35, I

dropped that and made \$50 the suggested minimum.] With a wet sponge, the letters are sealed, and then finally stamped. A thousand letters actually fill up several pretty big cardboard boxes. They then go off to the mailbox [or several mailboxes -- you can't stuff one thousand fat envelopes into the standard curbside mailbox.]

Over the past twenty years, I have tried all manner of things to broaden the support for USSAS and coax donations from those whose names and addresses I had on my database. At one point early on, I managed to get hold of a Directory of Black Owned Businesses in America. I wrote a letter of appeal and actually got Archbishop Tutu's signature on it. Out went the letter to more than five hundred businesses, but not a single one made a donation. I sent a second round of letters to a the membership of a few more academic associations, and that did expand my list of donors somewhat. But for the most part, I have continued to go back, year after year, to my faithful supporters. The fundamental rule of all fund-raising, I guess, is that those who give, give. That is to say, the people most likely to donate to one cause are the people who donate to other causes. That rule probably does not hold for donations to religious organizations. In that case, the donor populations are discrete and particular. But if I wanted to raise money for an environmental cause or to fight world poverty, I think my best bet would probably be to go to my South African scholarship donor base.

From the outset, I imposed strict guidelines on the selection of recipients of the USSAS bursaries, which have, with one revision, continued to the present day. There are six principles:

1. All recipients must be Black, which in South African terms means African, Indian, or Coloured. At Durban-Westville, an historically Indian school in transition to a majority African student population, we made an effort to balance the races, but there were very few Coloured students attending UDW.

2. We must strive for gender balance. This has been rather easy to accomplish, and in fact over time, a slight majority of women over men have received awards.
3. We should try to strike a balance between urban and rural students. This has proved very difficult to achieve, and in fact, because of the bizarre distortions of population distribution imposed by the apartheid regime, has proved impractical.
4. We are NOT trying to identify the very best students. This is not a merit based program. In light of the stringent filter of the Matric system, I assume that every student who is eligible for admission to a university is capable of succeeding, given a decent chance. One sees here the influence of my American experience, and my long-standing hostility to the elitist system of university admissions in this country. With our limited funds, we support the first students who apply, so long as they fit the guidelines and genuinely cannot continue in school without our help. Unfortunately, there is never a shortage of students who fit this profile.
5. If one of our bursary recipients manages to do well enough in the end of year examinations to be permitted to return the next year, he or she will automatically receive a bursary, assuming that I am successful in raising the necessary money. This is one of the most important decisions I made in setting up USSAS, and seems to have played a very large role in the striking success of our USSAS scholars. I shall talk about it more below.

I am the official head of USSAS, having conferred upon myself the title of Executive Director. In fact, I am really the only person on the staff of USSAS, although for governmental purposes I maintain the fiction that we have a Board of Directors, so I guess I am the head and the tail and everything in between. Since I go to South Africa infrequently, I have very little direct hands on contact with what is happening there. For that reason, whenever I go, I make sure to spend as much time as I can with the students USSAS is helping. These meetings at

Durban-Westville, then at Cape Technikon, UWC, MEDUNSA [The Medical University of South Africa, the only Black medical school], and the Qwa Qwa Campus of the University of the North, are always the high points of my South African trips. I learn more from them than I do from my meetings, however enjoyable, with Rectors and Vice-Rectors and Ministers of Education.

The most important thing I have learned is that the students, scorned by the faculty as unprepared and even stupid, are in fact bright, lively, able young men and women. These are people, remember, who are fluent in three, four, five or six languages. Now, I must explain that I am, as we say delicately, linguistically challenged. I have, I flatter myself, a complete mastery of English, but my French is execrable despite my many trips to Paris, and my German is almost non-existent [a painful admission for a Kant scholar who has also written two books about Karl Marx.] Consider one typical USSAS student, Benedict Zhivani, a very serious young woman at UDW. Ms. Zhivani, when I met her, was studying for the LL. B. degree. We were chatting in English, needless to say, when I asked her what languages she spoke. "English," she replied with a smile, "and Afrikaans [which, incidentally, is required by anyone seeking to argue before a South African court], and French, and Zulu, oh, and Latin." In the United States, this alone would have been enough to earn her admission to Harvard, but at UDW, she was considered a marginal student at best because her English was a little rusty. A young man, asked the same question, replied "English, and Zulu, and Sotho, and of course. Xhosa." "Why of course?" I asked. "Well," he replied, "Zulu and Xhosa are almost the same language." I must have looked a trifle surprised, because he undertook to demonstrate the fact. He pronounced a word in Zulu. He then pronounced a word in Xhosa that to my untutored ear sounded utterly different. "You see?" he said, as though talking to an idiot or a child. "They are the same."

These were some of the rewarding moments of my visits, but there were less happy moments, enough to bring me to tears. Prem came to me during one visit with a special case -- a young woman who had applied for a USSAS bursary after all of our regular money had been allocated. Her mother was the sole support of an extended family, working as a household maid for pathetic wages. The young woman had no money at all for food or lodging, and had somehow put together enough for the registration fee. [Keep it in mind that she had earned a Matric Exemption, placing her in perhaps the top 2% of her age cohort. Without it, she would never have come to our attention at all.] She was sleeping on the floor of a friend's room, and subsisting on scraps of food brought back from the student dining room. Could we find the money to pay enough of her remaining tuition fees so that she could stay in school? Of course I said yes. She didn't make it, flunking out at the end of the year. But as I explained to Prem, that was perfectly all right. We had done the right thing. The purpose of USSAS was to give young men and women like her a chance, not to restrict ourselves to students who were sure to succeed.

As USSAS was getting started in 1990 and 1991, the situation on the ground in South Africa with regard to higher education was changing rapidly, and we were forced to alter our guidelines and procedures to adjust to that change. The first response of the historically Black universities to liberation was to expand their intake enormously, in an effort to meet the pent-up demand. UDW, Western Cape, Zululand, Venda, Transkei, Fort Hare all began taking many more students. On the opening day of term [which in South Africa is January or February, of course, because the country is in the Southern Hemisphere], young men and women would show up at the doors of the university, sometimes with nothing more than the clothes they were wearing, having walked hundreds of miles from the rural areas. They would put down the small registration fee and begin classes, with little or no idea of where they would get the remainder of



the tuition. So long as the students were passing their exams, the universities would do everything possible to carry them on the books while they and their families tried to get loans from local banks for the unpaid fees. But those who did not pass -- and there were many, thanks to the punitive grading practices of even the HBU's -- simply walked away at the end of the year, leaving their accounts in arrears and uncollectible.

Very quickly, the HBUs fell into deep financial trouble. At first, a few large American foundations bailed them out with multi-million dollar grants. The Mellon Foundation gave a grant to UWC, huge by South African standards, to balance their books. But the situation was unsustainable, and in response, the universities changed their rules by raising the registration fee, so that it came to represent half or more of the year's tuition charges. At the same time, the new government, which came to power in 1992, created a national student loan scheme, called TEFSA [Tertiary Education Fund of South Africa -- you see why I say all the acronyms sound alike]. But the catch was that in order to be eligible for a TEFSA loan, a student had to be registered, which meant coming up with the very large registration fee. Incidentally, it is worth noting that this new enlarged registration fee was on the order of 5000 Rand, which, at the exchange rate of those days, was only about \$500.

Prem and I discussed this new problem, and decided that the best way we could stretch the bits of money I was able to raise was to offer bursaries sufficient to cover the registration fee, and then let students apply to TEFA for the remainder. That is what we have done for almost fifteen years now. Each \$10,000 I can raise in the United States translates into twenty students able to register and study for another year.

USSAS has never been a big money operation. In a really good year, I might raise \$50,000 or more, but in a typical year, I raise between \$35,000 and \$45,000. Most of my

donations fall in the range of \$50 to \$100, but there have been a few astonishing and welcome surprises. One December, early on, I was in Johannesburg, visiting Debra Nails at Wits, when a fax came in from Susie back in Pelham. Someone had just sent a check for \$14,000. What should she do? "Deposit it!" I faxed back. The donor, I eventually learned, was a retired Professor of Eighteenth Century English Literature, not on my list of previous donors. He made comparable donations for many years, the check always arriving just about on the last day of the year. I sent lavish thank you letters, of course, but never heard from him personally [the money came from something called a Unitrust in his name -- some sort of tax device], and were it not for the internet and the fact that he has a rather unusual name, I would not even know that he is a retired professor.

Since the only costs incurred by USSAS are the printing and postal charges, a dedicated fax line, and some money to help pay for my trips to South Africa, almost everything I raise can be sent over to our South African bank account and used for bursaries. Over the years, USSAS has given perhaps 1500 awards, so there are hundreds and hundreds of South African men and women who have earned university degrees as a result of our efforts. Each year, when I come to South Africa, I explain to the students we are supporting that I have no idea whether anyone will send money next year, but that if they do, and if the students pass their exams, they will once again get bursaries. The evidence from our experience at UDW shows that this simple promise, combined with the personal attention paid to them by Prem, and later by Tania Vergnani and Frida Rundell and others, has resulted in a startling improvement in the pass rate of our bursary recipients, by comparison with students generally. It is, for me, one more confirmation of my long-standing conviction that virtually all of the students who make it to university are capable of doing well enough to earn their degrees.

The one big change in my guidelines for the selection of bursary recipients came about in response to the horrific HIV/AIDS epidemic in South Africa [the latest figures are that 20% of the population is HIV positive.] I shifted the focus of USSAS, and decided to require that bursary recipients be involved in the struggle against HIV/AIDS in some way or other. In practice, this has meant supporting a group of students in the Child and Youth Development Program at Durban University of Technology who are being trained to work with street children and other young people who are HIV positive or have been affected by the epidemic [for example, by losing a parent to the disease], and also requiring the students I support at the University of the Western Cape to be involved in the extraordinary HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention program run on that campus by Dr. Tania Vergnani -- arguably the best such program in the country.

During my years working at UDW, I got involved in a variety of other activities there, in addition to the USSAS scheme. The United States Agency for International Development [USAID] launched a program called the Tertiary Educational Linkages Program [TELP], and invited the HBUs to submit proposals for grants. For those who have not had experience with USAID, I should explain that USAID programs, although designed to assist underdeveloped economies, characteristically spend most of their money hiring Americans to travel abroad on comfortable per diems to tell the benighted locals how to run their affairs. In a typical USAID grant, maybe 90% of the money will be paid to Americans, and only 10% will find its way into the local economy. Well, the South Africans were awash in American experts of all sorts, South Africa in the early nineties being very much the flavor of the month in American academic circles. Since there are four thousand American institutions of higher education as contrasted with maybe thirty of the same in South Africa, and since every American academic wanted to

spend at least a few weeks on a South African campus, the last thing the HBUs needed was another flood of American experts paid by a grant supposedly designed to help them. I went to a wonderful meeting chaired by the expensively paid TELP coordinators and attended by the Rectors of all the HBUs [most of whom, incidentally, were manifestly better educated than the Americans who were there to lead them by the hand into the world economy], and in no uncertain terms, they stated that they wanted the preponderance of the funds to come to their institutions, to be spent as they thought best. Since Nelson Mandela was then possibly the most widely respected person on the planet, USAID caved.

UDW really had no one at the middle management level capable of writing grant proposals. The lack of second tier academic administrators, as a consequence of the apartheid policies, is one of the signal weaknesses of the South African HBUs. By then, I had been rather successful on my home campus with some grants I had managed to secure for a school to college program I was running for minority high school students in Springfield, MA, so I volunteered to try my hand at the TELP opportunity. In the end, I wrote five TELP proposals, four of which were funded. One of them was for a "modularization" conference, to begin the process of restructuring the UDW curriculum. The idea, which seems second nature to an American academic, was to break the big, unwieldy year long sequenced courses into modules of eight or twelve or sixteen weeks. This would allow students who could handle part of the year's work to get credit for it nailed down, even if they weren't up to meeting the pass standard for a module farther along. Students would also be able to accumulate partial credits, for perhaps half a year of work, and then leave the university to work or look for money to continue their studies. Simple and self-evident as this may seem, it was a revolution in South Africa, and met with considerable resistance.

My visits to South Africa weren't all work, of course. Three experiences in particular stand out in my memory. The first was a weekend trip to a resort in the Drakensberg Mountains, west of Durban, where I read a paper I had written attacking the concept of culture as an ideological construct. After a solemn afternoon of intellectual discussion, we all turned our attention to the real purpose of the outing, a true South African Brai. The Drakensberg is hauntingly beautiful, with springbok and impala grazing on the slopes of the hills.

The second event was what is called a Midlands Ramble. The Midlands in South Africa is the area between the lowlands around Durban on the coast and the Drakensberg, which though not of Rockies stature, is still a pretty decent range of mountains running down the center of the country. Tucked away in the Midlands, at the end of dirt roads and little hollows, are countless artists' and craftspersons' studios where pottery, painting, woodworking, basket weaving, glass blowing, and jewelry making flourish. They may live in rural isolation, but these folks are no rubes. They sell into the world market, and know quite well the value of what they make. The ramble, with half a dozen friends from UDW, was an all day affair, broken for lunch at an impossibly quaint inn called -- I kid you not -- Granny Mouse's House. I think I bought a necklace for Susie, but it is long ago, and I am no longer sure.

But far and away the most extraordinary experience of my entire twenty year involvement with South Africa was the night I spent at the Beatrice Street Y in downtown Durban, attending, and filming, an isicathamiya contest. Isicathamiya [it is a Zulu word, the first syllable of which is actually a sibilant click] is a contest of male Zulu a cappella singing groups. The most famous of these groups is Ladysmith Black Mambazo [which means, roughly, the black horned bull from the town of Ladysmith], though as I discovered during that remarkable night, Hugh Masakela's group does a prettified version of isicathamiya, suitable for White

audiences. The tradition of male *a capella* singing is rooted in Zulu history, but has been strikingly influenced by African American musical styles, including the Cake Walk.

At a contest, groups of men who have practiced under the leadership of the group director strut their stuff. The groups, usually ten to twenty strong, all affect the same uniform -- black pants and shirts, white socks, and black shoes, for example. They sing Zulu songs about life, love, work, and family, achieving keening, penetrating harmonies, to which they join fancy dance steps, a bit like the Radio City Music Hall Rockettes. There are very strict rules for the competitions, which are held all night in an available venue. [All night because the pass control laws made it illegal for the participants to be on the streets of the White cities after dark, so they would start when the work day ended, and keep going until dawn the next day.] Each group pays a small fee to enter the contest, and the pot thus accumulated goes to the winners. A random passerby is recruited to act as judge, and his decision is taken as final, even if he falls asleep during the contest! The audience, which for the most part consists of the girl friends and wives of the singers, is forbidden to applaud or cheer, save for a small designated claque for each group, who get up periodically, applaud, and in general show their approval of their heroes. Each group warms up in the rear of the room until their leader decides they were ready. They then dance in, singing as they come, do two or three numbers, and dance out again. The sounds are piercing and hauntingly beautiful, as only African singing can be. I spent all night filming with a video camera I had bought, and later on, wove selections of the isicathamiya contest into the half hour video I produced [myself!] as a fund-raising device for USSAS.

I have several times spoken about the punitive character of the South African grading practices. It occurs to me that I ought to tell one story to illustrate what I mean. Early in my trips to UDW, I happened to be on campus just when final exams were being graded. Everyone had

big piles of exam books stacked on their desks. I asked Mala what the passing grade was, and she said it was 50%. "Let me see some exams that received 47s or 48s in the first year course," I said. In other words, I wanted to see the exams of students who had come close, but had nonetheless lost all credit for the entire year's work. She pulled six or seven from her pile, and I sat down to read them. The questions were all pretty standard for an Intro Phil course, and could easily have been taken from Philosophy 100 at UMass. After I had read through them all, I turned to Mala and said, "You know, every single one of these students would have received a passing grade at the University of Massachusetts." She was rather startled by that. Despite being quite sophisticated and widely traveled in America, Europe, and Asia, she suffered from the typical colonial self-doubt. "But they are not really prepared for the Second Year course," she responded. "All right," I said, "then give two passing grades, one that admits you to the second year course and the other that does not, but nevertheless gives you credit for the year's work. Not all of our first year students go on to be majors." Now Mala was the most sophisticated of the South African academics, the president [as it happens] of the national organization of progressive university teachers. And yet this simple solution had never occurred to her, nor, it was pretty clear, had she given the matter much thought.

For some years, I was content to focus my efforts solely on UDW, where Prem was doing so good a job of managing things, but eventually, during one of the periodic budget crises, he decided to take an early retirement package [as they call it in SA]. By this time, Mala and he had separated [for reasons that I have never been able to fathom], and she had moved on to an important post in the national education ministry working on Quality Assurance. [This is an enormous subject all its own, too complicated to go into here. Suffice it to say that it is a sort of bureaucratic institutional and programmatic certification process, very big around the world but

not as important in the United States]. Prem, who despite his much less impressive educational credentials was always the more intellectual and thoughtful of the two, had made himself knowledgeable about the subject, and secured a post at UNISA to work on Quality Assurance. Following him, I took my money to UNISA, and for a year or two tried rather unsuccessfully to integrate my efforts with their own rather lacksadaisical financial aid office.

During this time, Prem made the acquaintance of the newly appointed Rector of the QwaQwa campus of the University of the North, and after some long distance consultation, we decided to bring USSAS to QwaQwa in support of the new Rector's rather dramatic plans to transform that sleepy rural campus. Olusegun Dipeolu, or Segun, as he was known, was a very curious man indeed. A Nigerian parasitologist with seemingly hundreds of publications, he hit the backwater QwaQwa campus like a tornado, immediately stirring up enormous controversy and hostility. QwaQwa was about as far from UWC or UDW as it was possible to get, academically, and still have any claim at all to the honorific "university." The campus sits in the shadow of the western slopes of the Drakensberg [QwaQwa, in Sotho, means "white white," and refers to the snow that sometimes gathers on the peaks of the mountains in the dead of winter -- an unusual enough occurrence in South Africa to warrant immortalizing in the campus name]. Although it was then officially a campus of the University of the North, hundreds of miles away, it actually lies in the middle of the Orange Free State, not far from Harrismith, and closer still to the Homelands community of Phuthaditjhaba [and you had better believe it took me a while to master that spelling!] At about the time we left QwaQwa, Kader Asmal rearranged things so that QwaQwa became a satellite campus of the University of the Orange Free State, a considerably more rational organizational plan. The Orange Free State was perhaps the most obdurately segregated and repressive region of the old South Africa. Prem and Mala both remarked that



prior to liberation, they would not have been allowed to stay overnight in the province while driving from Johannesburg to Durban.

The small QwaQwa campus was presided over, prior to Segun's arrival, by an old boy network of Boers who had scheduled the classes in the evenings so that they could devote the daylight hours to their farms or butcher shops. Nothing remotely resembling research took place on the campus, and the students, drawn almost entirely from the Sotho and Zulu population of the area, were, to put it mildly, ill-served. Segun proposed to transform all of that, with a series of dictates and mandates designed to get the faculty teaching, crank up their research output, and put QwaQwa on the map.

For two years, Prem and I were enraptured by Segun's energy and ambition, but little by little, we concluded that his dreams for the campus were simply incompatible with the facts on the ground. A grandiose plan for a program in urban development and planning was undertaken, but nothing ever came of it. We grew increasingly uneasy about whether our money was being well used, and finally we pulled out of the campus, shortly before it joined the University of the Orange Free State. I did get something from the experience, however. Segun's wife, who was a very talented fabric designer, made two beautiful dashikis for me as gifts, and I wear them still on formal occasions.

We moved USSAS next to two campuses -- MEDUNSA and Cape Technikon. MEDUNSA, The Medical University of South Africa, is located in a rural section of Bophuthatswana, more or less northwest of Pretoria. We chose to bring some of our funds there as part of our first attempt to respond to the HIV/AIDS epidemic then beginning its devastation of South Africa. The shocking, shameful, incomprehensible response of Mandela's successor, Thabo Mbeki, to the AIDS crisis had demoralized medical personnel and progressives generally

in the country. For a long time, the White medical schools had been producing superbly trained White doctors who then took their skills abroad, leaving their countrymen and women unserved. We thought it made sense to offer support to Black medical students who could be counted on to stay in South Africa. For three years, we provided bursaries to five students each year, and by now, I trust, they are practicing as doctors somewhere in South Africa.

Cape Technikon was an historically White Afrikaans language institution, extremely well endowed, that had for many years served the mostly Afrikaner student body of the Western Cape province. However, an old African friend from UDW, Marcus Balintulo, had been appointed the new Rector, and I hoped that my personal relationship with him would make it possible to gain entry to the campus and do some good work there. The experience, which was in many ways very disappointing, was an extraordinary window into the thinking of the entrenched Afrikaner academic community -- the people I had called, in a commencement address at UDW, the "old crocodiles." The Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic -- roughly what we would call a Provost on an American campus -- was a Boer named Koch who resisted every proposal put forward by Marcus to transform the campus. Because of the job security not only of the tenured faculty but also of the administrative officers, Marcus was able to do surprisingly little to change the place, despite being nominally the chief administrative officer. For several years I did my usual thing, offering bursaries and meeting with the students. But the deeply rooted problems of the campus only became clear to me during one visit, when by chance the administrator who accompanied me to the meeting with the students was called away, and I had the opportunity to talk with them privately. After a bit of hesitation, they opened up, and I learned some things about classroom practices that truly horrified me. These were African students, many from the Eastern Cape though some from other parts of South Africa. Their first languages were Zulu, Sotho, or Xhosa,

and the language in which they had done their secondary school work was English. For the most part, they did not speak Afrikaans. The instructors were all Afrikaners. Apparently, it often happened in a class session that a White or Coloured student would ask a question in Afrikaans. The instructor would reply in Afrikaans, and then proceed to teach the remainder of the class in that language, completely shutting out the African students. Come exam time, they were examined on materials that had been covered in a language they did not speak. When I told Marcus about this, he was astonished [but did nothing to rectify the situation].

Without warning, Prem died suddenly of a heart attack. I was stunned and saddened, and totally at a loss to know what to do about USSAS. I had no idea how to continue the work of USSAS, but at that moment, an old friend, Sheila Tyeku, stepped forward to offer to take Prem's place. Sheila has a long history in the struggle for liberation, working in the Eastern Cape area where she grew up. During the dangerous days before the release of Mandela, when a wrong step could mean house arrest or prison, she balanced raising her children with going to secret meetings, working toward the day when South Africans would be free. In those days, she came to know and form close bonds with many of the men and women who would later play prominent roles in the New South Africa.

Sheila had gone from UDW, where she worked on a project for which Mala had secured funding, to the Council on Higher Education, when Mala took over that organization. Sheila had also been elected as the Chair of the Council of the University of the Western Cape, so it was natural that USSAS would move its work to that campus. The Council of a South African University is an important governing body that, among other things, chooses the Rector. In the South African system, the Chancellorship is a purely honorific position, and the real head of the

campus, the Rector, holds the title of Vice-Chancellor. The principal administrative posts are called Deputy Vice-Chancellorships.

I had by this time totally committed the USSAS funds to students making a contribution to the struggle against HIV/AIDS. As it happens, UWC has, in the person of Dr. Tania Vergnani, a brilliant and charismatic head of the anti-AIDS effort. I was also directed by the friend of a friend to Dr. Frida Rundell, a wonderful woman who had started, and headed up, the Department of Child and Youth Development at Durban Technikon. Frida's students were being trained to work with AIDS-impacted children in the KwaZulu/Natal Province -- roughly, the area around and north of Durban. I made trips to walk-in shelters, street clinics, and halfway houses for children entangled with the law, seeing firsthand the character and extent of their work. It was clear to me that Frida's program richly deserved whatever little support I could provide. So it is that for the past seven years or so, I have been dividing our USSAS money between UWC and what is now, under the new transformation arrangements, Durban University of Technology [actually the merging of an African, an Indian, and a White Technikon into one institution.]

Over the years, while pursuing my primary goal of making higher education available to poor Black South African men and women, I have become very deeply involved in the efforts to rid the higher educational sector of its *apartheid* past and bring it into the modern world. Once liberation finally came in 1990, calls went up across South Africa for Educational TRANSFORMATION. There were Transformation Conferences, Transformation Committees, Transformation Officers at each of the universities, Transformation grants from the USIA, Transformation Workshops. At times, it seemed that the regular business of the universities had been indefinitely set aside while everyone engaged in transformation.

The three transformation goals most often posited were first, increasing the number of

Black students at universities, second, increasing the number of Black academics and administrators in universities, and third, rationalizing the overlapping, duplicating hodgepodge of institutions bequeathed to the new South Africa by the *apartheid* regime. It took me a while to realize that transformation was unlikely actually to reach into the classroom and change the way students were taught and examined. The rigidities of the existing educational bureaucracy made any sort of genuine change extraordinarily difficult. Perhaps most distressing to me was the discovery that my radical friends, who had talked so bravely of Marx and Engels and Lenin and Trotsky and Mao, actually had no desire at all to change what they themselves did. They were quite as convinced of the essential rightness of their pedagogical practices as were my American friends convinced of theirs. The only people who were genuinely eager to implement the radical proposal to give formal educational credit for life experiences were the organic intellectuals, as Gramsci called them, who had been working in the townships and the unions. Indeed, in all of my time in South Africa, I can think of only one academic, Prem Singh at UDW, who actually spent time experimenting with new teaching techniques in an effort to reach his Indian and African students. Each time I came to UDW, he would show me new lesson plans, and with great excitement pull out essays that his students had written.

The effort to increase the numbers of Black students at university proceeded along two fronts. The existing historically Black universities rapidly expanded their intake. Durban-Westville, Zululand, Western Cape, Venda, and the others started admitting larger numbers of students, for despite the crippling requirement that admittees have a Full University Exemption on their Matric, which restricted the pool of applicants to a tiny sliver of each age cohort, there were still many, many young Black men and women in that small group who were being denied access. The historically White universities, even those at which Afrikaans was the language of

instruction, began cherry-picking the even tinier pool of Black students who had actually done well on the Matrics, trumpeting their new-found progressive commitment by going after the children of returning ANC leaders and such. I was on fire with revolutionary zeal, and talked to anyone who would listen about my belief that Durban-Westville and Western Cape would become the leading universities of the new South Africa, but my naive enthusiasm was not shared by the new Black elite. They all chose to send their children to Wits and Cape Town.

The search for Black administrators was considerably more difficult, even though the numbers needed were very small, inasmuch as the entire higher education sector is tiny by American standards. A few positions went to those who, like Jakes Gerwel and Jairam Reddy, had remained in South Africa during the struggle. Some posts went to exiles who began to flood back into the country. Kader Asmal, a distinguished legal scholar who had taught law for twenty-seven years in exile in Dublin, Ireland, returned to become the first Minister of Education in Nelson Mandela's government. Kader is a marvelously flamboyant character with many of the same endearing traits as our own Larry Summers. I had a boisterous dinner with him and other returnees in Cape Town at a restaurant that had, in the bad old days, been a meeting place for revolutionaries.

The call for structural rationalization garnered the most national attention, and inevitably became a subject for complicated political maneuvering and log-rolling. It made no sense to support two Technikons side by side in Cape Town, one for White students and the other for Coloured students, both offering the same range of courses and degrees. Everyone could agree to that. But was rich, well-endowed, well equipped Cape Technikon to merge into poorer, less well equipped Peninsula Technikon, simply because Pen Tech was Coloured and Cape Tech was White? And if the two were to become one, which Rector would survive as the head of the new,

rationalized institution? Over a period of many years, as I returned again and again to South Africa, I watched Kader Asmal and the Cabinet juggle a dozen or more such hot potatoes.

One of the less well publicized rationalization efforts involved reducing the number of Teacher's Colleges from more than one hundred to two or three dozen. This effort was overseen by Ben Parker, an old friend on whose doctoral dissertation committee I served as external reader. Ben, who passed away last year much too early, had done extensive field work on the system of farm schools that existed along side of formal educational institutions in the old South Africa.

But despite the frenzied Transformation efforts throughout South Africa, change came very slowly, if at all. The Matric system remains in place, still excluding countless talented African students from higher education. The flexibility and array of second chances that is, in my judgment, the glory of the American system is still unknown to South Africans. Perhaps I should not have been surprised by the deeply rooted institutional conservatism of South African academics, since it mirrors so well traits I find distressing in American higher education. South Africa has not yet produced a John Dewey or a Robert Maynard Hutchins, let alone a Paul Goodman.

As I watched my friends settled back, post-liberation, into their accustomed habits and practices, I grew more and more dismayed. Eventually, when I was invited to give a talk to the Education Faculty of the University of Pretoria, I gave voice to my disappointment with the failures of genuine change in the South African higher educational establishment. [If you Google "Tertiary Education in the New South Africa: A Lover's Complaint" you can take a look at it.]

It will become clear, as I return to my narrative of the events of the past twenty years, that my focus came increasingly to be on trying to have some impact on the world rather than restricting myself to writing about it. As the young Karl Marx famously proclaimed in the Eleventh Thesis on Feurbach, *Philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it.* My efforts, slender though they have been, have taught me an important lesson, and as I conclude my account of University Scholarships for South African Students, which has been far and away my longest lasting effort to make a change in the world, I should like to share a bit of wisdom that I have gained from that experience.

I am a philosopher, and for the first thirty-four years of my half century in the Academy, I taught philosophy at the undergraduate and graduate level, and wrote books of philosophy. Now, what philosophers do is think -- no fieldwork, no lab work, not even much in the way of library research [my books are notorious for their lack of footnotes.] Very quickly, one learns as a philosopher that so long as all you are doing is thinking, you might as well think big. So philosophers do a lot of thinking about God, about the universe, about Being, about possible worlds in addition to the actual one. The idea of Everything, it turns out, weighs no more than the idea of Something. Neither one involves any heavy lifting. However, as soon as you try to make a difference in the world, you learn that it takes a great deal of effort to make a tiny difference, and a great deal more to make a slightly bigger difference.

All of this came home to me very quickly once USSAS was up and running. In our very best year, thanks to a complicated deal that Prem struck with the UDW administration for cost sharing, we were able to help maybe 120 young Black men and women. Now 120 students gathered in a room looks like a lot of people, but viewed from the perspective of South Africa as a whole, it is really so small a number that it does not even constitute a blip in the national



educational statistics. Even after twenty years, the 1500 or so students Prem and Frida and Tania and my many donors and I have been able to help constitute a tiny fraction of all the Black students who have gone to university in South Africa in that time, and an even tinier fraction of all the young people who were eligible to go, let alone those who had the talent and the ability, but not the Matric Exemption. All that folding and stuffing, merge printing and sealing and stamping, all those trips to South Africa, all those thank you letters banged out on my home computer, and from a philosophical perspective, precious little to show for it.

It might have helped, of course, to be religious. After all, if eternal bliss is in the offing, what is a slog through a pile of mailing materials? But absent the comfort of faith, I have found that I must learn to be satisfied with the knowledge that at the end of each day, there are identifiable young people in South Africa who would not have gone to university were it not for my meager efforts. You see, while the Thought of Somebody is very little in the presence of the Thought of Everybody, a real person, even just one, is very significant. Indeed, one actual person, no matter how insignificant, is more important than all of the philosophical ideas ever thought.

## **Part Three**

### **Chapter Four**

#### **Free at Last! Free at Last! Thank God Almighty, Free at Last!**

**[Much of this chapter is taken from my book AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN EX-WHITE MAN]**

Although my deepening involvement with South Africa gave me some outlet for my energies, and began what would be a twenty-five year long engagement with the world, I was still trapped in a hostile department. I had had my turn as momentary GPD of Philosophy, and Bob was having his, but all the life had gone out of the department as far as we were concerned. Against all odds, we had created a hugely successful, intellectually exciting doctoral program, and after six years, it had been killed. I can forgive my colleagues for their treatment of me in the early years of my time in the UMass Philosophy Department. They had never wanted me in the first place. But I have never forgiven them for destroying a successful, productive academic program merely out of spite.

My dark night of the soul was not to be long-lived. Apparently, I had made a good impression on my colleagues during the Dean search, and when Lee was chosen, some folks behind the scenes decided that something should be found for good old Bob. Happily, something came up just then. Loren Baritz, during his time as Provost, had created a little operation with a big name: The Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities, or IASH, as everyone called it. Baritz had little or no money for IASH, giving it just enough to underwrite a secretary. But he did have the power to release senior faculty from one course of their required teaching load, so he conceived the idea of Faculty Seminars. Each seminar was conducted by a member of the faculty, who got a course reduction, and was attended by other members of the UMass faculty, by faculty from the Five Colleges, and even by independent scholars living in the

Valley. These seminars turned into one of the intellectually most exciting activities on the campus. The long memorandum from Ann Ferguson that I quoted *verbatim* earlier was a response to one session of just such a seminar.

Baritz put two people in charge of IASH as co-directors. The first was Jules Chametzky, a senior member of the English Department and an expert on American ethnic literature who had helped to start, and then had edited, the extremely widely respected *Massachusetts Review*. Running IASH in tandem with Chametzky was Esther Terry, Chair of the W. E. B. Du Bois Department of Afro-American Studies. Esther, who had spent time as Associate Provost under Baritz, had been a member of the Dean's Search Committee. Just at that moment, Jules decided to accept an early retirement deal and step down, leaving open the Co-Directorship of IASH. The folks looking for something I could do with myself decided that I should step into his shoes. At the beginning of the Spring semester of '91-'92, I was asked whether I would like to take on IASH. I jumped at the chance, so at 10:30 a.m. on Friday, April 10, 1992, Esther and I met with the new Acting Provost, Glen Gordon, lately Chair of Political Science, to discuss the possibility of my appointment. It may have occurred to the careful reader that there seem to have been an awful lot of Chancellors and Provosts and Deans at UMass. Late in my long tenure at UMass, I undertook, as an exercise in memory, to recall the name of every Chancellor and Provost under whom I had served. After ten Chancellors and Acting Chancellors and fifteen Provosts and Acting Provosts, I gave up defeated. I knew there had been more, but I simply could not call them to mind.

Glen was not a fan of IASH, and as usual there was a budget crisis on, so he said flatly that he had no money to give us. He agreed to keep funding our secretary, an indispensable woman named Nancy Perry, but that was it. "No problem," I said grandly, "I will raise the

money." That was fine with Glen, so he approved the appointment. I had not the slightest idea how I was going to raise money, or for what.

Two weeks later, Esther Terry and I had lunch at the Lord Jeffrey Amherst Inn in the middle of Amherst, Massachusetts, to discuss IASH business. We sat next to a big window, looking out on the picture postcard New England Common, drinking wine and talking. Esther Terry is a tiny black woman with a radiant personality that fills any room she is in and makes everyone she meets believe that she is their best friend. When she walks through the halls of the Administration Building, Vice-Chancellors and secretaries come out of their offices to throw their arms around her and greet her. Being with her makes me feel as though I were in the train of the Queen of Sheba as she entered King Solomon's court. She is the daughter of North Carolina share-croppers, the descendant of slaves, and has, I think, the shrewdest political mind I have ever encountered.

As a young woman at Bennett College in the Fifties, Esther was one of those brave students who launched the modern Civil Rights movement with their sit-in at the Greensboro Woolworth lunch counter. Esther was there at the counter with the young men from NC A&T on the very first day, and she has earned the right to show her scars when veterans of the Movement gather to tell war stories. Esther came to UMass from North Carolina to do a doctorate in Literature and Drama, and stayed to become a founding member in 1968 of the W. E. B. Du Bois Department of Afro-American Studies. Her life has been devoted to educating, caring for, and fighting for the rights of Black students both on the UMass campus and elsewhere.

As we ate, Esther talked more and more animatedly about her dream of establishing a full-scale departmentally based doctoral program in Afro-American Studies. At that point, there wasn't but one such program in the whole country – the Afro-Centric program created at Temple

University by Molefi Asante. Esther and her colleagues were not at all sympathetic to Asante's approach, so the program of which she dreamed would be the first of its kind in the world. She talked about how difficult it had been simply to keep Afro-American Studies alive in the quarter century that had passed since the uprisings of the late Sixties brought the Civil Rights Movement to northern campuses. After the initial enthusiasm of the early Seventies, Black Studies was sharply cut back across the country, with five hundred programs or more dwindling to two hundred. The UMass administration had been supportive – much more so than at most other schools – but repeated budget crises had taken their toll, and the Department was now only half as large as at its height. Finally, after the second glass of wine, Esther looked up at me and said, “How would you like to come over and teach philosophy in Afro-American Studies?”

You might imagine that I would be an obvious recruit for Afro-American Studies -- a senior professor who had created a doctoral program in Philosophy and now was deeply involved in the education of Black students in South Africa. You might imagine that, but you would be wrong. In fact, it was astonishing that the members of the Afro-Am department would even consider asking me to join them. This will take a little explaining.

In the middle seventies, UMass was in the remarkable position of having both a Black Chancellor and a Black Provost. The Chancellor, Randolph Bromery, was a widely respected geologist who had been a member of the UMass faculty for some time. The Provost, Paul Puryear, was a political scientist who had been recruited in a national search from his position at Florida State University. As I have noted, up to this point, the top administrative positions at UMass had been controlled by a small group of senior science professors, who more or less rotated Deanships, Provostships, and Chancellorships among themselves. Although the Chancellor was a scientist, he was not a part of that circle, and they actually formed an ad hoc

“advisory” group to keep an eye on him [a group into which I was invited, I am now embarrassed to admit.]

Shortly after arriving, the Provost launched an attempt to shift resources and faculty lines away from Arts and Sciences and toward the professional schools. This was hardly unusual; indeed, it was merely part of a national trend that had been going on for some years, and continues to the present day. But he wanted to move quickly, without the elaborate consultations of the sort preferred by faculty. Almost immediately, he alienated large segments of the campus by trying peremptorily to carry out a rather far-reaching restructuring. In the late Spring of 1977 things came to a head, with a call for an extraordinary meeting of all of the faculties of the University, for the purpose of issuing a vote of no confidence in the Provost. I was asked by a group of professors opposed to the Provost to give a public speech to the hundreds of professors gathered in the campus’s largest lecture hall.

This effort was unprecedented at UMass, and was fueled by a variety of motivations, some of which were racial. I registered none of this at the time. To me, this was just one more opportunity to attack authority, something I had done at Harvard as an undergraduate, at Chicago as an Assistant Professor, and at Columbia as a senior professor. I loved nothing better than to stand before a crowd and call for the resignation of a Dean, a Provost, a Chancellor, or a President.

The members of the Afro-American Studies Department knew better. Regardless of the Provost’s administrative style, which some of them had serious doubts about, they saw a concerted attack to get rid of a Black Provost, in the name of academic collegiality and due process – shibboleths that had for generations been invoked to keep Black men and women out of positions of authority.

I was in hog heaven. I like nothing better than joining with my colleagues to rail at the powers that be. Here was another chance to make a big public splash by denouncing someone in authority. My opponent in the public debate on this occasion was Michael Thelwell, a tall, elegant, eloquent Jamaican who was a senior professor in the Afro-American Studies department, and had been its first Head. Thelwell is a graduate of Howard, a comrade of the late Stokely Carmichael [whose authorized biography he wrote], and during the Sixties the head of the SNCC office in Washington. He is a genuine hero of the Movement, and one of the most brilliant orators I have ever heard.

Well, it was a warm Spring day, and I chose to wear a white suit, one of my few bits of reasonably nice clothing. I looked like one of the plantation owners in the ball scene from *Gone With the Wind*. The larger meaning of the event was not lost on Thelwell. In a long piece published in the Black Students' newspaper under the heading, "The Savaging of the Provost: Ritual Murder Among the Humanists," he used his quite considerable rhetorical powers to excoriate those who were calling for the head of the Provost. After ridiculing the pretensions of the attackers who had invoked the sanctity of the cultural, intellectual, and aesthetic traditions of Western Civilization in their assault on the Provost, he took dead aim at me. "It would all have been infinitely more moving had there really been barbarian hordes at the doors threatening to rape 'the life of the mind,' pillage 'the spirit of a great university' and worse burn the articles of governance. Or if one did not know that the most self-righteous, smug and unctuous of the lot was himself a failed candidate for the position of provost. I am talking about Robert Paul Wolff of the philosophy department, lest there be any doubt."

It is nothing short of miraculous that, fifteen years later, I was invited to join the W. E. B. Du Bois Department of Afro-American Studies at the University of Massachusetts. What could

possibly have prompted so unexpected an offer? Somehow, I had managed in the intervening years to redeem myself in the eyes of the members of the department. They saw something in me that perhaps I did not even see in myself – something that persuaded this proud and accomplished group of scholar-activists that I deserved to be a member of the oldest free-standing Black Studies Department in America, and that I might be able to contribute something to their plans for a ground-breaking doctoral program.

I have turned this puzzle over in my mind for more than twenty years now, and I may never fully solve it. Perhaps it was my involvement in the anti-apartheid movement. Though I did not know it at the time, the Afro-American Studies Department and the Black Chancellor had spearheaded a successful effort to make UMass the second university in the country to divest. Almost certainly, the department decided that my enthusiasm for creating new academic programs could be put to good use in their own efforts. During her time on the Search Committee for a Dean of FHA, Esther had heard me speak about the great pleasure I took in working to establish new educational programs. Having roots in the traditions of the Black church, although none of them now is a believing Christian, perhaps they were simply moved by the parable of the prodigal son. I may never know the answer, for the subject was never mentioned during my sixteen years in the Department.

At any rate, when Esther asked her question, without missing a beat, I said, “Sure.” Needless to say, not by the most generous stretch of the imagination could I claim the slightest scholarly competence in Afro-American Studies. But Esther’s enthusiasm was infectious, and I immediately began spinning plans in my head of ways that I might be part of the effort to create a new doctoral program. That night I wrote a three page single-spaced memorandum suggesting steps we could take to win approval for a doctoral program. My memorandum was appropriately



tentative, because I was not sure I had really heard Esther invite me to join the department, but my excitement was obvious, and within days she called me with the news that she had won a unanimous vote of approval from her department for the invitation. It was only years later that I realized how delicately and carefully she had dropped that suggestion into the conversation, very much like an expert fly fisherman casting a Royal Nymph over a pool harboring a deep-lying trout. [My thanks to Mike Thelwell for this lovely simile.]

Ordinarily, moving a professor from one department to another is a bureaucratic nightmare. The biggest problem is "the line." Each department is assigned a number of faculty lines in the budget, and it fights tooth and nail to hold on to them. When a professor leaves or retires, the first question put to the Dean is always, "Can we keep the line?" In other words, can the department undertake to recruit a new member to replace the old one? The annual budgetary in-fighting for a share of the Defense Department budget has nothing on academic struggles over faculty lines. Esther knew all of this, of course, so her primary concern was what price she would have to pay for transferring my line from Philosophy to Afro-American Studies. Fortunately, both departments fall under the same Dean. Had it been necessary to transfer a line from Humanities and Fine Arts to Social and Behavioral Sciences, for example, even the Chancellor would have had difficulty.

But I knew how the majority in the Philosophy Department felt about me. They had killed our Alternative Track, and I was dead certain they would jump at the chance to get rid of me as well. So I said to Esther, as she set out to meet with John Robison, "See how much they will give you to take me." I could see in her eyes that she did not think she had heard me correctly, but I decided not to give her a little lecture on the economic theory of negative price. Ordinarily in the marketplace, sellers offer commodities and buyers pay something to take them

away. This is called a price. But sometimes, the person holding the commodity wants to get rid of it, and there is no one willing to take it for free. Garbage is an example. So sellers must pay buyers to take the commodity off their hands. Think of it as a cartage fee. I knew that the Philosophy Department was so eager to unload me that, if played correctly, they might agree to pay something to Esther to take me -- a couple of TA-ships, maybe.

Esther returned, glowing. "John Robison has agreed to the transfer," she said delightedly. "How much did you get for taking me?," I replied dryly.

Scarcely two months later the transfer was completed, and I became a Professor of Afro-American Studies. It seemed like a lark – one more change of field in a career in that had seen me teaching Philosophy, Political Science, History, and Economics. As I walked across the campus on a warm June day, I scarcely realized how completely that simple move was to transform my perception of American society, and the world's perception of me.

The office buildings at the University of Massachusetts are for the most part ugly functional structures, with neither charm nor history. Bartlett Hall, where Philosophy is housed, could pass for the regional offices of the Veterans' Administration. My new department was located on the East side of the campus in a four story brick building that was indistinguishable, architecturally, from the dormitory across the street.

Walking up the front steps of my new home, I saw a striking black and red wooden plaque over the door proclaiming that this was "The New Africa House." Inside, I found the walls covered with brilliant murals, painted, I later learned, by the students of my new colleague, Nelson Stevens. It was years before I was told something of the history of the building and the role it had played in the struggles of Black students and faculty on the campus.

The building had indeed originally been a dormitory, as the layout of rooms and large communal bathrooms on each floor testify. But in 1969, during a protest against the racial policies [or lack of policies] of the university, a group of Black students were chased by threatening White students back to their dormitory. The Black students barricaded themselves in the dorm, told the White students there either to join forces with them or get out, and liberated the building, declaring it to be their space. The newly formed Afro-American Studies Department responded by moving itself collectively into the now-emptied dorm, and the building became The New Africa House.

This seizure of space was symbolic of the ambitious dreams of the department, for the founding faculty were not simply establishing yet another academic department. Instead, they sought to create what can only be described as an entire counter-university in which the experiences, struggles, triumphs, and wisdom of Black Americans, and more broadly of all the peoples of the African Diaspora, would take their rightful place in the Academy.

The first and most pressing need was to give the small but growing number of Black students on the campus a structure of support, counseling, and legitimation. To that end, members of the department, who had been providing these services on an ad hoc basis in addition to their normal teaching duties, created the Committee for the Collegiate Education of Black and Other Minority Students. Esther headed it up at the beginning. CCEBMS [or “Sebs” as it came to be called,] began the work of overcoming the hostile and unwelcoming environment that routinely confronted Black students [and students of other minorities] when they came to UMass.

In pursuit of its dream, the department recruited a broad spectrum of scholars and artists. Over the next few years, historians, political scientists, anthropologists, sociologists, writers,

literary critics, painters, sculptors, dancers, and musicians came on board. Simply calling the roll of the faculty in those early days gives some sense of how grand the vision was. Among those who taught in the department in the early days were jazz immortal Max Roach, Johnetta Cole, later to become President of Spelman College, sociologist William Julius Wilson, Shirley Graham Du Bois [the second wife of W. E. B.], the great James Baldwin, and Africa's most distinguished writer, Chinua Achebe. Still in the department when I arrived were Jazz saxophonist Archie Shepp and Stevens, one of the founding members of the Black Arts movement.

New Africa House quickly became not merely a classroom building or an office building but a world. In addition to the department and CCEBMS, it soon housed a restaurant, a barbershop catering to Black customers, a radio station, and even a day care center. Old-timers tell stories of groups of six -year olds marching up and down the steps chanting revolutionary slogans. The memories of these struggles, of three decades of triumphs and defeats, were gathered in New Africa House as I approached it that day, though at the time I was oblivious to them.

My very first day in New Africa House was something of a revelation. I walked up to the third floor, and wandered down the hall looking for the department office. As I drew near, I heard a sound that was entirely new to me in academic surroundings: loud, unforced, hearty laughter. Not snickers, or smirks, or hedged giggles, with which I had become all too familiar during my many years in the UMass Philosophy department, but big, healthy belly laughs. My new colleagues were clearly people confident of their accomplishments and commitments, comfortable with themselves and the world around them, free of the convolutions and status anxieties that make most university departments so ready a target for satire.

People asked why I had abruptly transferred from Philosophy to Afro-American Studies. In their voices I heard the unexpressed question, "Why leave a department like Philosophy for *that* department?" Some made it clear that they thought I was slumming, doing good works in the Ghetto. Nothing could have been further from the truth. I am a philosopher, and as anyone will tell you who knows philosophers, what we value above all else is intelligence. Quite simply, my new colleagues were smarter than my old colleagues. I do not measure intelligence by the ability to write a backwards E. By intelligence, I mean an ironic, nuanced grasp of social reality, a self-awareness that finds expression in complexities of syntax and diction. Judged in this way, my old colleagues [with the notable exception of Bob and Ann] were dodos, boring literal minded people who had neither self-understanding nor a grasp of the larger social world. In Afro-American Studies, I could carry on a *conversation*.

Esther wasted no time. In July, shortly after my transfer, we began work in earnest on the proposal to create a doctoral program in Afro-American Studies. Almost immediately, someone – I think it was John Bracey, Jr. – had the idea of building the program on the foundation of a required first-year seminar in which our students would read masses of classic works in Afro-American Studies and write scores of papers. In this way, we would define a core of intellectual material that would be shared by every student in the program, no matter what he or she went on to specialize in. At that first meeting, we began the exciting and exhausting task of choosing the books.

The first dispute was over how many books to require. John argued hard for one hundred, but the rest of us didn't think we could get even the most dedicated students to read carefully one hundred scholarly works in two semesters. In the end, we agreed on fifty as a reasonable number. If the seminar met two afternoons each week during the Fall and Spring

semesters, that would work out to just about one book for each meeting. A paper on each book – fifty books, fifty papers. Now began the debates over which fifty books to include.

Internal politics as well as intellectual demands dictated that we devote half the list to history and politics and the other half to literature and culture. John is an historian, and faced with the prospect of being forced to limit himself not to fifty works of history, but to a mere twenty-five, he made one last effort to expand the list to one hundred. We beat him down, and went to work.

This is perhaps as good a time as any to say a few words about the people engaged in this collective creation of a canon. My new colleagues, I learned very quickly, were an extraordinary group of people, quite unlike the members of any Philosophy department I had ever been a member of. Virtually all of them came to the University of Massachusetts from some form of radical Black activism, and a quarter of a century later, their world view, intellectual style, and personal commitments were still shaped by that experience.

Esther, as I have said, came from the sit-ins in Greensboro. John Bracey, although an academic brat [his mother taught at Howard University] with an archivist's encyclopedic knowledge of documents, texts, and sources in Black history, came out of a Chicago Black Nationalist experience. John is a man of enormous presence and intellectual power, very much the scholarly center of the doctoral program, who is as much at home teaching in a local prison as he is poring over documents in the Library of Congress. He has edited countless collections of documents both from the ante-bellum period of slavery and from twentieth century political movements in the Black community. A burly man with a full beard now streaked with gray, John was the first academic in the United States to teach courses on the history of Black women,

and he recently co-edited a large volume of materials on the relations between Blacks and Jews. John is an inexhaustible source of bibliographical references, archival information, and stories about Black scholars, most of whom he seems to have known personally. One day, after he had given a one hour impromptu lecture in the Major Works seminar on the location of Herbert Gutman's scholarship within the entire sweep of modern historiography, I complimented him, and told him how impressive I found his command of the literature. "That's just what historians do," he replied, but I suspect there are few scholars now teaching who could have pulled that lecture out of their memory banks

Michael Thelwell was the founding Chair of the department. Mike is a novelist and essayist, and also an expert on the Civil Rights movement, in which he played an important role. He has a special affection and respect for the work of Chinua Achebe, who is in fact the godfather of Mike's son, Chinua. Soon after joining the department, I sat in on the course Mike teaches from time to time, on Achebe's novels, and had my first sustained introduction to the literature produced by the great African writers.

One day in the Fall of my first year in Afro-Am, I was a deeply moved participant in a little ceremony – there is really no other word for it – that brought closure to that awful moment fifteen years earlier when I had done my imitation of an ante-bellum plantation owner. Mike, whose office was catty-corner to mine across the hall, invited me in for cup of tea. With an air of great formality, he told me about an old West African custom among the Igbo and other peoples. Young men of the same age, who together go through the rituals of passage to adulthood, form a bond of comradeship, and ever after think of one another as brothers. Boiling water on a little hot plate and carefully putting tea bags in two cups, Mike noted that he and I were of roughly the same age, and hence should think of one another as part of the same age cohort. Not a word was said of the confrontation all those years ago over the Black provost, but I knew that he was once and for all offering to forgive me, and was welcoming me into the brotherhood of those who had together created and sustained the department for a quarter of a century. We have never spoken of this, but when he reads these words, he will know how grateful I am to him for the generosity of that gesture.

Directly across the hall from me was the office of William Strickland. Bill is a political scientist and activist who ran the New England part of Jesse Jackson's campaign for the presidential nomination in 1984 and 1988. He grew up in Roxbury with Louis Farrakhan, and went to Harvard after preparing at Boston Latin. Bill is a talented polyglot who is prone to lapse into Spanish, French, or German. He has long-standing connections with scholars and political figures in Cuba, and a while back took part in a ceremony in Havana celebrating the publication of the first Spanish language translation of W. E. B. Du Bois' classic work, *The Souls of Black Folk*. Bill and others worked with Vincent Harding thirty years ago to found the Institute for the Black World in Atlanta, and more recently has served as a consultant to the prize-winning



television series, *Eyes on the Prize*. Although our colleagues would almost certainly dispute it, I think Bill and I are currently the politically most radical members of the department.

The last member of the group who crafted the doctoral program is Ernest Allen, Jr., currently the acting Chair. Born in Oakland, he was part of the Black nationalist movement there and in Detroit before coming to UMass. Ernie is an expert on Black intellectual and religious movements, and has done ground-breaking work on the Nation of Islam and the various Black Masonic lodges of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Although he is, like the rest of us, thoroughly secular in outlook, his speech is peppered with the images and expressions of Black evangelical Christianity, and he is prone to cry “Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!” as he walks down the hall toward the department office.

There we all were, gathered into Esther’s office, arguing endlessly about which fifty books constituted the core of the field we were seeking to define. Mike argued unsuccessfully for the inclusion of at least one of Achebe’s novels. Bill insisted that Gunnar Myrdahl’s classic work, *An American Dilemma*, be added to the list, but John countered that it is full of mistakes and has long since been superseded. And so it went.

And what was my role in this high-powered intellectual argument? The simple answer is scribe, amanuensis, and general dogsbody. All those years ago, at Harvard, I had sat and listened as my colleagues dropped the names of works of historiography during the meetings of the Soc. Sci. 5 staff, and here I was, thirty-four years later, doing exactly the same thing. As John or Mike or Bill or Esther or Ernie would mention a book, I would write it down, pretending that the title wasn’t complete news to me. There were some embarrassing moments. Since it was my job to type up what we had agreed upon for our next meeting, my ignorance was on display to all. “Sinclair Drake,” John gently pointed out to me, was actually “St. Clair Drake,” a

distinguished Black sociologist and co-author of the classic work, *Black Metropolis*. *Cane* was of course not written by Gene Tumor, but by Jean Toomer, *Plum Bun* by Jessie Fauset, not Jessie Fauset. And so on and on. My colleagues were endlessly tactful with this new member of the department. After a while, Bill Strickland took to drifting into my office from across the hall and asking whether I had read this or that work of Black political theory. The answer was always no [despite the fact that I featured myself something of a political theorist], and he would answer, gently, “Well, you might be interested in looking at it.”

After several more meetings, we nailed down our list, and with occasional changes, it has stood the test of fourteen successive classes of doctoral students. Every one of the students who enters the program must start his or her education with us by reading all “fifty books” [although with successive additions and subtractions, the number has crept up to fifty-six.]

Scholarly argument, activist credentials, laughter – these were my first impressions of my new department. But very quickly, I was exposed to a rather darker side of the African-American experience. Since getting official approval for a new doctoral program is a forbiddingly difficult process at the University of Massachusetts, involving review not only by a hierarchy of committees and administrators on campus but also by the President’s Office, the Board of Trustees, and a state agency called the Higher Education Coordinating Council, we decided early on that it would be prudent to consult the chief academic officer on our campus, the Provost and Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs. So we invited that luminary to visit with us in our offices in New Africa House.

The Provost was the same Glen Gordon who had just approved my appointment as Co-Director of IASH, a pleasant Political Scientist of no discernible scholarly accomplishments or intellectual distinction. He had never actually set foot in New Africa House, and over the phone

displayed a certain uneasiness about venturing to what he obviously thought of as the other side of the tracks, but at last he agreed, and on July 13, 1992, at 3:30 p.m., we all sat down in Esther's office for a chat. As soon as the meeting began, it became clear that Gordon had grave doubts about our ambitions, and it was very difficult to avoid the conclusion that he just did not think a group of Black people were capable of putting together a satisfactory proposal. "There is a great deal of paperwork," he kept emphasizing, conveying the impression that he was not entirely sure we were literate.

The rest of the department had had a lifetime of experience with the condescensions and racism of White administrators. They had long since learned to choose when to give voice to their outrage, and when to refrain in the service of some larger end. But I was accustomed to being treated with deference and respect in academic settings – one of the fringe benefits, I now realize, of being White. So as the Provost went on, I started to get angry. Then, abruptly, the Provost changed his tune. Something we said – I cannot now recall what it was – suggested to him that this project might be viewed as a contribution to multi-culturalism, then becoming a popular cause on our campus. So long as a doctorate in Afro-American Studies were viewed in that light, and not as a standard academic degree, he allowed as how he could see his way clear to supporting it.

I completely lost my cool. "If the Philosophy department didn't have a doctoral program, and came to you with a proposal to create one, the only thing you would ask is whether it was academically sound. But when the Afro-American Studies department comes to you with a proposal for a doctoral program, you ask whether it is a contribution to multi-culturalism. Are you saying that you hold our department to a standard different from the one you hold the Philosophy Department to?"

This was 1992, and academic administrators had become accustomed to the most meticulous even-handedness and punctiliousness in any matter even remotely touching upon race. My question was little more than a rhetorical flourish. No department Chair, Dean, Provost, Chancellor – or, for that matter, Admissions Officer or Dorm Counselor – could actually admit to treating Black people any differently from anyone else, for all that they routinely did.

The Provost thought about my question for a moment, and replied, “Yes.”

We looked at each other. It had become clear that we were in the presence of someone who was a greater danger to himself than he was to us. Very gently, Esther brought the conversation to a close and sent the Provost on his way. It was my first lesson in the realities of what it meant to be Black on a White campus.

In the next few weeks I drafted a full-scale proposal for a graduate program in Afro-American Studies, complete with a massive volume of attachments as specified by the documents from the administration. September rolled around, and as usual, UMass began its new academic year right after Labor Day. At the beginning of the semester, Esther called a department meeting – one of the very few formal meetings held each year.

The meeting was held in a large classroom down the hall from the department office. We sprawled in the uncomfortable chairs with their writing arms, and gossiped as Esther got the meeting started. In addition to the six of us who had drafted the doctoral program proposal, there were several other members of the department present, including Femi Richards, a soft-spoken gracious West African scholar of African art and culture, and an expert on the design and creation of textiles.

As the meeting proceeded, Nelson Stevens, who lived in Springfield, kept getting up and looking out the window to make sure that the parking police were not ticketing his car at a metered place down below. [I try hard to resist the temptation to paranoia, but it did seem that they paid closer attention to the meters in front of New Africa House than to any other row of meters on the campus.]

Nelson's exaggerated concern triggered some comments, and then, slowly, something quite remarkable began to happen. Mike, John, Ernie, Esther and the others started telling stories about their run-ins with the Campus Police. Mike told about rescuing a stranded undergraduate one evening and being stopped by a campus policeman who saw only a Black man in a car with a White woman. Esther, who is perhaps the most widely recognized person on the entire campus, told of being called to a meeting in the Administration Building during one of the periodic racial crises, and being refused entry by a campus officer until a colleague – a White man – vouched for her. John talked about being called out in the middle of the night to speak on behalf of Black students arbitrarily rounded up by campus officers during post-game revels.

For a while, I simply listened, fascinated by stories of events so completely unlike anything I had experienced during my more than twenty years on the UMass campus. But then I grew puzzled. This group of professors had been colleagues for more than two decades. They were all natural story tellers. Surely, they had all heard these stories a hundred times. Why on earth were they rehearsing them yet again?

And then, of course, the scales fell from my eyes and I realized what was really going on. My new colleagues were telling *me* the stories, although they were apparently talking to one another. My arrival in the department had confronted them with a rather delicate problem of communal etiquette. On the one hand, I had been on the campus for twenty years, and courtesy

required that I be presumed to know something of what routinely occurred there. On the other hand, I was obviously completely ignorant of what it meant to be a Black professor at the University of Massachusetts. How to initiate me into the collective experience of the department and educate me to the elements of the racial reality of the campus without unduly calling attention to my ignorance? Their exquisitely gracious and tactful solution was to engage in an orgy of storytelling in my presence, so that, like a child permitted to sit up of an evening with the grown folks, I could become a participant in the on-going life of the community. I was deeply touched.

But that was not the end of the matter. Later on, as I thought over the stories I had heard, I realized something both startling and humbling. In two decades, I had not so much as spoken to a member of the Campus Police Force. My colleagues seemed to know many of them by name, and could tell you which ones were likely to give a Black student a fair shake. It dawned on me that they and I had been inhabiting two entirely different campuses all these years.

This is not a novel or very profound observation. At some abstract level, I had long been aware of the fact that the privileged and powerful see the world differently from those who are forced each day to deal with the insults, constraints, and worse visited on those stigmatized by race. But this had always been for me a knowledge derived from reading or inference, not from immediate experience. Now, by the simple act of walking across campus and transferring from one academic department to another, I had changed the ground on which I stood, and quite literally, my *perspective* changed as well. I was a Professor of Afro-American Studies – *these* were my colleagues, not the philosophers I had left behind in Bartlett Hall. I was beginning to stand beside my colleagues, if not in their shoes, and to see the world from their place in it. That world was starting to look strikingly different.

While we were hard at work crafting a proposal to create a doctoral program in Afro-American Studies, I was trying to figure out how I was going to raise some money for IASH. Then, more or less by accident, I heard about a little program being run in Springfield for Latino high school students. The organizers of the program were several staff members of something called the Bi-Lingual Collegiate Program, an office that had been spun off from CCEBMS to attend to the counseling needs of the growing number of Hispanic students at UMass. Originally, CCEBMS, as its name suggests, was designed to serve all of the non-White students. There were so few that one program could handle them all. But over the years, African-American, Hispanic, Asian-American and Native American students had grown in numbers until, by the time I began to pay attention, close to 20% of the undergraduate body at UMass was non-White. In the early nineties, Benjamin Rodriguez was the Director of BCP and Dr. Lucy Nguyen, a scholar of Southeast Asian literature, had formed the United Asia Learning Resource Center, or UALRC. The three minority programs -- CCEBMS, BCP, and UALRC -- reported to an Associate Provost, and worked more or less in tandem to fight for budgets and a place in the university bureaucracy. All three organizations provided academic advising in addition to non-academic counseling, and from time to time even offered academic credit bearing courses for their students.

CCEBMS, BCP, and UALRC will make repeated appearances in these pages, as I recount my two decades long efforts to raise money for programs serving the academic needs of minority students. I learned some very important lessons from these efforts about the obstacles and challenges one meets in the trenches, at the very lowest bureaucratic level. The on-the-ground realities of academic institutions are very different from the educational theories debated at the level of Commissions and Presidential Task Forces. It is unusual for a senior scholar like

myself to become involved in the day to day operations of academic support programs. Usually, the real work is done by low-level staffers, who report to Oversight Committees and Governing Boards of senior faculty. As I crafted programs and sought outside funding for them, I learned that unless I immersed myself in the minutiae of bureaucratic detail, I would have little success in actually helping the students.

The BCP staff brought tutorial services to a small group of Latino secondary school students in Springfield. Building on their work, I designed a much larger program that would pay high school teachers to provide after-school tutoring to African-American as well as Latino Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors. The centerpiece of the program, for which I did succeed in winning administrative approval -- was a guarantee. If the students in my program stayed in the tutorial program and earned passing grades in the courses required by the University for admission, then they would be admitted to UMass. Having learned from my South African experience about the importance of a good acronym, I christened the scheme the **Springfield UMass Minority Achievement** program, or **SUMMA**.

I asked for a meeting with the professional fund-raisers in the UMass Development Office and pitched my plan to them. Would they help me find money for it? Their response was decidedly lukewarm. They knew, as I did not, that the typical fund-raising effort makes applications to ten foundations or government agencies for every one grant actually secured. "Come back when you get your first grant," they said, "and we will help you with the second one." A little library research turned up the L. G. Balfour Foundation, a pretty big operation endowed by a man who had made his money selling class rings and other paraphernalia to graduating seniors. I applied for, and was awarded, a \$600,000 grant to run my program. The next time I met with the Development Office, I got a little respect.



Getting the funding turned out to be the easy part of the plan. Negotiating the rapids and shoals of the Springfield School System was another matter entirely. Early on, I discovered that UMass did not have a good reputation in the secondary school systems of the region. There are two cities with sizeable minority populations in Western Massachusetts -- Springfield, twenty miles south of the campus, and Holyoke, midway between the two. In Springfield, a city of somewhat less than 200,00, roughly 47% of the population is Black or Latino, with the Latino segment the larger. In both cities, the UMass Education faculty had mounted programs ostensibly intended to help the local residents but actually designed to give the Ed. D. students appropriate credentials for their *vitae*. The professionals in the Springfield and Holyoke school systems were not amused by this, and initially viewed me as another carpetbagger coming down Route 90 to take advantage of them.

There is a great old Burt Reynolds movie about a con who comes out of the big house and heads for New Orleans to take a little revenge on those who set him up. The first thing he does is to go to see the local crime boss. As Reynolds explains, "When I was in stir, I learned that you have to ask permission. There is always someone you have to ask permission." In Springfield, this meant that my first stop had to be the Superintendent of Schools, a bright, ambitious young man named Peter Negroni. I took Esther along as my enforcer, and we pitched the SUMMA program to him. We made a good impression on Negroni, so he gave us permission to speak to the Principals of several of the high schools. But they were only the titular heads of their fiefdoms. The real gatekeepers were the Guidance Counselors.

You don't just waltz into a high school and talk to the students. The Guidance Counselor has to o.k. your presence. He or she then tells the classroom teachers to release the kids for a conference with us. Our program was obviously a potential boon to the Guidance Counselors,

because we were promising guaranteed admission to UMass, but it was also an implied criticism, because if they were doing their jobs properly, they wouldn't need the SUMMA program.

The next step was to recruit the teachers who would serve, for pay, as after school tutors to the students, and that meant going through the Union. By an extraordinary coincidence, the President of the Union was one of Esther's dearest friends, Melanie Kasparian. Melanie, who died at a tragically early age, was a tough union organizer who made sure that our program in no way interfered with the contracts she had won for the union, but we managed to negotiate that potential hazard.

The last problem was one I had completely failed to foresee, and addressing it required altering the game plan for the program. Since we were dealing with high school students, some as young as fifteen, we obviously were going to have to bring the parents into the program in some way. I had anticipated that. But I very quickly learned that there was a big difference between the African-American and the Hispanic parents. The African-American parents were delighted by the prospect of their sons and daughters going to UMass, so the guarantee of admission to students who completed our program successfully was very attractive to them. But the response of the Hispanic parents was quite different. Family ties were extremely important to them, so much so that they were very apprehensive at the thought of their children going so far from home to attend college. In my mind, the campus was next door to Springfield. I had left home at sixteen to travel two hundred miles to college, after all. But the UMass campus might as well have been in Seattle as far as these parents were concerned.

This was only one of many instances in which my own cultural blinders misled me and had to be removed before I could see the world from the standpoint of the families my program was designed to help. The solution was to schedule regular visits to the UMass campus by the

parents, so that they could see the dorms, the classrooms, the dining halls, the playing fields, and the laboratories where their children would be living and studying. Even with this programmatic adjustment, we were fighting deeply entrenched family ties, and a number of the Hispanic students who completed the program ended up attending STCC, the Springfield Technical Community College right in town. The students could live at home and attend college with no real change in the patterns they had followed as high school students.

As I plunged ever deeper into the details of the admissions process at UMass, I discovered obstacles to minority students that I had never suspected. Two examples, one state wide, the other peculiar to the Springfield situation, will give some idea of the sorts of hindrances and disabilities built into the bureaucratic regulations of Massachusetts. I do not think any of the senior administrators had the slightest knowledge of these problems, because they looked only at system wide statistics and summary reports provided by their underlings. I am going on at such length about these matters, which cannot possibly be interesting to anyone not directly engaged in trying to increase the minority representation on a university campus, because I quickly realized that it is these details that shape the national figures about which high level government officials pontificate. There is a much larger lesson to be learned from my parochial experience.

First the local wrinkle. Massachusetts, like many states, mandates certain course requirements that must be fulfilled by any student seeking admission to the state university. One of the requirements -- the most difficult for many students to fulfill -- is satisfactory performance in two years of Mathematics. In all of the Springfield high schools but one, Math 1 and Math 2 fulfilled the state requirement, so guidance counselors helping a student plan his or her programs would make sure to put them into Math 1 and Math 2 if the student had any aspiration to go to

college. But in one of the high schools, attended principally by Black and Hispanic students, Math 1 was divided into two parts, so that a student who had taken two years of Math had actually satisfied only one year of the state requirement. When we started working in that high school, we found student after student who came into the senior year thinking that he or she had satisfied all of the requirements for admission to UMass, only to discover that the transcript, as interpreted by the UMass Admissions Office, was one year of Math shy. Ben Rodriguez knew this, of course, and he had actually created a summer program for students with this defect in their transcripts. He got permission to offer these students provisional admission, and then put them through a summer program to bring them into compliance by the time the Fall semester rolled around.

The second problem concerned the formula, once again mandated by the State Legislature, by which the Admissions office converted the transcript of an applicant into a GPA. As part of its effort to upgrade the student body at the State colleges and university campuses, the legislature had ruled that in calculating a student's GPA, College Preparatory courses were to be automatically upped half a grade, and Advanced Placement courses a full grade. So a B+, or 3.5, in a College Prep science class became a 4.0 for purposes of calculating the student's GPA, and a 3.5 in an Advancement Placement math class became a 4.5. This is why some students actually came to college with a GPA higher than 4.0, which was supposedly a perfect score.

Not surprisingly, the high schools in Massachusetts with very high concentrations of Black and Latino students by and large offered many fewer College Prep and Advanced Placement courses. No matter how academically proficient a student at one of those high schools might be, he or she could not possibly rack up a GPA as impressive as even a less able

students at one of the well-funded suburban schools where College Prep and Advanced Placement courses were readily available.

Eventually, I succeeded in getting supplementary funding for SUMMA from the NELLIE MAE Foundation and the Boston Globe Foundation, so that in all I raised close to \$800,000 for the program. Operationally, it was a modified success. College became a believable option for a number of Springfield students who might otherwise never have considered post-secondary education, and a number of the SUMMA students actually won admission to UMass under the agreement I had worked out with my administration. I even managed to get the University to take ownership of the program after the outside funding ran out. But despite our efforts, we really did not make a noticeable change in the numbers of minority students attending UMass.

My grandiose dreams for the expansion of SUMMA, however, ran smack into the bureaucratic intransigence of the university administration, and the net result was that I was officially and very publicly rebuked. I conceived the idea of applying for a major grant from the U. S. Government under something called the Trio Programs. My idea was to expand SUMMA to all four undergraduate campuses of the University and to several additional Massachusetts cities, including Worcester and Boston. I spent endless hours meeting with the central school administrations of the cities, as well as with representatives from the UMass Lowell, UMass Boston, and UMass Dartmouth campuses. My big idea was that by integrating SUMMA into the entire state, we would be able to guarantee a student from any participating high school in Massachusetts admission to any one of the four campuses. At one of the many meetings I attended, I met the President of the UMass system, and won his approval for the idea.

All hell broke loose on the Amherst campus. I had violated the first and most fundamental rule of all bureaucracies. I had jumped the chain of command. I had spoken to the

President without first speaking to the Chancellor. A solemn meeting was called in the Chancellor's Board Room in the Whitmore Administration Building. Everyone was there. The Chancellor, the Vice-Chancellor for Student Affairs, Floyd Martin from CCEBMS, Ben Rodriguez from BCP, Lucy Nguyen from UALRC, and a bevy of Associate Provosts, Deputy Vice Chancellors, and Assistant Provosts. Even Esther was there as my Chair. I was publicly rebuked, and told in no uncertain terms that I must **never** do anything like that again.

Needless to say, no one mentioned the merits or demerits of my plan, nor was the subject of educational opportunity for minority students ever broached. No one at the meeting cared about that half so much as they cared that I had spoken to the President without first speaking to the Chancellor. I blush to admit that I was completely unfazed by the dressing down. You see, I knew that I was the only distinguished scholar in the room, and in my universe, that was all that mattered. There is nothing that protects you from the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune quite so well as sheer intellectual arrogance.

## **Part III**

### **Chapter Five**

#### **Life Intrudes**

While I was settling into my new department, helping to shepherd our Ph. D. proposal through the many stages of review and approval and developing the SUMMA program through IASH, two things of the very greatest importance happened that had nothing at all to do with philosophy, Afro-American Studies, IASH, SUMMA, or South Africa. The first concerned Susie, the second my son, Tobias.

The house we had built was situated on a country way called Buffam Road in the little town of Pelham. Our section of Buffam Road ran straight for several miles, up and down gentle hills. Susie had carved out for herself a nice three mile walk that she took most mornings, early enough so that she might see birds, rabbits, the occasional deer, and even the flock of wild turkeys that had taken up residence in the woods behind our house. One morning in late April 1993, as Susie was on her walk, she experienced a sudden weakening and instability that almost made it impossible for her to get home. She had had a previous, even more dramatic episode twelve years earlier, while living in Chapel Hill, but no explanation had ever been given for it, and it had not recurred. This time, tests showed that she was suffering from Multiple Sclerosis.

MS, as the disease is universally referred to, afflicts somewhere in the neighborhood of one tenth of one percent of the population. It is an auto-immune disease, the causes of which are very poorly understood, that attacks the myelin sheaths surrounding the axons in the brain and spinal column. It afflicts young people principally, and women more than men. The damage to the nervous system produces a bewildering array of symptoms, ranging from disturbing bodily

sensations sometimes described as "tingling and burning" to progressively more severe loss of mobility. It also can produce a variety of cognitive problems, such as loss of attention span, forgetfulness, and the inability to follow sequential instructions like recipes or driving directions.

Two forms or stages of the disease are distinguished simply from observation, since they have never been correlated with clinical data of any sort. The earlier form, called "relapsing-remitting," presents as a series of discrete attacks or exacerbations, after which the patient recovers most of the physical capacities that have been lost in the attack, but typically at a somewhat lower level of functioning. Over time, a series of such exacerbations can dramatically reduce the patient's mobility and well-being. In later stages, this sequence of attacks gives way to a slow, steady diminution of capacities, referred to as the "secondary progressive" phase of the disease. There are a great many medications that have been developed either to address the symptoms or to slow the progress of the disease. Many of those suffering from MS become extremely knowledgeable about the latest experimental treatments, and share information and experiences in support groups .

Although MRIs revealed signs of lesions in her brain and spinal column, indicating a loss of myelin, Susie's case was promising for several reasons. First of all, she was sixty when the dramatic exacerbation occurred, and all the evidence suggested that MS was less serious in older patients. Secondly, she very quickly recovered from the debilitating weakness, and seemed restored to her normal active, vigorous condition. Nevertheless, under the care of a neurologist, she began a series of self-administered injections, first with a substance called Betaseron, later with a different medication, Copaxone.

Susie responded to this sudden and frightening affliction with enormous courage. After discovering that there were no MS support groups in our part of Western Massachusetts, she



organized one herself, and from then until we moved away, fifteen years later, she welcomed a group of MS sufferers into our home one afternoon a month. The promising prognosis proved correct, and for a very long time, Susie's MS made very little difference in our routines, save for the regimen of injections. We continued to take overseas trips, to Paris, to Dubrovnik, to Italy, to Israel, and to South Africa. She resumed her walks, and at least for some while was able to handle the entire three mile course [which, I discovered on the rare occasions when I accompanied her, was not so easy!]

As the years passed, Susie took to walking with a cane, and she began to suffer some of the cognitive effects of the disease. But I have always said that I hoped its progress would be so slow that we would never quite be sure whether any loss of abilities was a result of MS or simply of age. When I first starting saying that, it was, I think, a bit of bravado, a secular prayer. But now that we are both close to eighty, I think my prayer has been answered. There is no doubt that the disease has diminished Susie's abilities in ways that I can see each day, but we have just returned from a three week trip to Paris as I write these words, and in November of 2010, we went on one more safari -- a Massachusetts Audubon trip to the Serengeti Plain. Not bad for a pair of senior citizens.

The second life-altering event occurred later that same year. In November, 1993, my son, Tobias, came up from New York to join Susie and me for Thanksgiving dinner. Following his graduation from Yale in 1992, he had been spending some time working in New York City as a paralegal before attending NYU Law School. Tobias walked into our house with a broad smile on his face, wearing loafers without socks and carrying a large leather satchel on his shoulder with his clothes and things. After hugs all around, he settled onto the sofa in the living room,

and said he had something to tell us. With very little preliminary, he said that he was gay, and had decided to come out both to me and to his mother.

After he made this announcement, I told him that I loved him. I then said that for a very long time I had been concerned about him, because, although he worked very hard and had made a brilliant career for himself at Yale, I felt that his libidinal energies were not engaged, that he did not seem to have in his life the sort of intense erotic and emotional experiences that were, I thought, an essential component of a fulfilled life. I said I very much hoped, now that he was coming out to his parents and to the world, that he would fall in love and experience the joy of being intensely and intimately involved with another person.

Having a gay son has opened my eyes to things in the world that I might before have grasped intellectually, but did not appreciate with an emotional immediacy. Odd as it may sound for me to say this, the impact on me was rather like the effect of becoming a member of an Afro-American Studies department. One brief story will perhaps convey something of what I mean.

A year after coming out, Tobias enrolled in NYU Law School, where he promptly ended at the very top of his first year class, was elected editor of the NYU Law Review, transferred to Yale Law School, was elected as an Articles Editor of the Yale Law Journal, and in 1997 was awarded the JD degree by Yale. He was then selected to serve as a clerk to William Norris on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, in Los Angeles. Tobias invited me to drive out with him to LA, and I jumped at the chance [although, in the end, he refused to allow me actually to drive his beloved Toyota 4Runner, so I went along as a passenger.] We took the Northern route, and spent a day in San Francisco, where Tobias had friends, before continuing down the coast to L.A.

The afternoon that we got to San Francisco, we visited the apartment of his two gay friends. Several other gay men were there as well. It was a quite casual gathering, and one or

two of the men were lounging on a sofa idly watching a rerun of a nighttime sitcom. Like most sitcoms, it revolved around a romantic relationship between a man and a woman. I glanced at the television screen, and suddenly it struck me that a gay man watching a show like that must experience a very deep cognitive dissonance. The writers of such shows, and of novels and movies as well, assume without giving it much thought that their audience will be straight men and women who will, if the story is written skillfully enough, identify with one or another of the characters, and derive a good deal of their enjoyment from that identification. But a gay man cannot, in that way, identify with the male lead [or with anyone in the storyline]. So inevitably, there must be a distancing that takes place as he watches the show. The same thing will be true for the countless advertisements that use sex as a commercial lure, for popular music, and for virtually every other element of our high and popular culture.

There is nothing novel or particularly insightful about this realization, and I imagine that at an earlier time, I would have got all the words right if I had been asked a question about it. But it was only then, with my own son inextricably implicated in the contradictions of being gay in a straight world, that I felt its full force. Once again, I find that my deepest moral and political convictions and commitments flow not from theoretical deliberation but from my immediate personal involvement with someone I care about.

In the twenty years since coming out to me and to the world, Tobias has matured into an extraordinarily accomplished legal scholar, but also into one of the leading gay legal rights activists in the United States. In addition to publishing groundbreaking legal articles on the subject [which is not at all his specialty within the field of academic law], he has played an ever more prominent and important political role in the ongoing struggle for the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered persons [from which comes the oft-repeated acronym -- LGBT]. In

2004, he served as an advisor to the John Kerry campaign on these issues, and in 2008, he chaired the Advisory Committee on LGBT issues for the Obama campaign. In that latter campaign, he spent endless hours [and a good deal of his own money] working in states around the country to mobilize support in the LGBT community for Barack Obama and Joe Biden.

At the same time, Tobias has authored *amicus curiae* briefs in a number of important state legal cases deciding whether same-sex couples will be allowed to marry. He regularly consults with the White House on such matters, and with the Pentagon as well. In short, he has become an important public intellectual. To say that I am proud of him would be like saying that Mt. Everest is a very high hill. If I may borrow a phrase from the world of gossip and celebrity spotting, I think I can fairly say that I have two trophy sons. At long last, little Toby's rueful plaint has been put behind him. Tobias quite definitely has "a national reputation."

It must have been roughly at this same time that I had a small epiphany, a moment of self-understanding that helped me to make sense of the direction my life and career had taken. I was sitting at my computer desk one day in my lovely second floor book-lined study, glancing out the window to my left at Buffam Brook, which ran behind our house, musing on the odd trajectory of my career. After a quite successful start to my professional activities, I had chosen to rusticate, first in Northampton, then in Pelham. I was pretty sure that the philosophy profession had totally forgotten about me, although the periodic publishers' royalty reports suggested that someone out there was still reading my books. I was, it seemed to me, something of a failure. I thought to myself, "Here I am, almost sixty, and yet I have no disciples, no former students who are carrying on my work. No one looks to me, as so many former students look to Van Quine and Nelson Goodman, as their mentor. Surely that is supposed to happen to successful philosophers when they reach this age" And then, I was struck by a thought that had

never occurred to me before. I did not *want* disciples! I was actually made somewhat uncomfortable on the rare occasions when a student or reader uncritically embraced my views as his or her own. I recalled that lovely ironic passage in the Preface to Kierkegaard's *Philosophical Fragments*, one of my favorite philosophical texts: "But if anyone were to be so polite as to assume that I have an opinion, and if he were to carry his gallantry to the extreme of adopting this opinion because he believed it to be mine, I should have to be sorry for his politeness, in that it was bestowed on so unworthy an object, and for his opinion, if he has no other opinion than mine."

What I wanted, what I had always wanted, was to wrestle with a great and difficult text until it yielded up its secrets to me, and to fashion and refashion it in my mind until I could exhibit its simplicity, power, and beauty. Then, in my books, or in the classroom, I would be able to share that power and beauty with others. I realized that my books were, to me, more like paintings or sculptures than like scholarly reports. That was why I had never shown what I had written to others before publishing it, and why I cared very little whether my readers agreed with me, but a great deal whether they had seen the beauty I had found in the text or in the idea. A great weight fell from my shoulders. It did not matter that I had no followers, no students who looked to me as their Teacher. I had no idea whether I would have had such a retinue, had I wanted it. Perhaps not. But since it was not something I wanted, it made no difference.

And so I settled into my office on the third floor of New Africa House, and went about the usual business of being a professor, something I had done every year since 1958. Rummaging about in the drawers of the heavy old desk that I had inherited, I found several name plates, the remnants of former inhabitants. I was delighted to see that one of them read "James Baldwin." Another read "John Wideman." I was following in the footsteps of giants.

Almost immediately after changing departments, I confronted a tiny personal dilemma that, in my eyes, took on an unusual significance. Once more, some background is called for. When I joined the Afro-American Studies department, I was in my thirty-fifth year of full-time university teaching. For all of that time, I had gone through the world introducing myself, when asked, as a philosopher, or perhaps as a Professor of Philosophy. Now, philosophy has a very special cachet in our culture. It is quite possibly the most prestigious of all the Humanistic academic fields in the eyes of the general educated public. [Though not in the eyes of *everyone*, to be sure. Recall that in the army, my doctorate so impressed my basic training sergeant that he rewarded me by making me chief of the latrine cleaning squad – head head man, as it were.] Whenever I identified myself as a philosopher, I could feel, ever so slightly, a *frisson* of respect, of deference, even on occasion of awe. Oh! A *philosopher* – I could see it in their eyes, on their faces, hear it in the half-voiced acknowledgment that I was something special – not merely a professor, but a Professor of Philosophy. By 1992, I had long since become accustomed to these fleeting recognitions as somehow my due. I realize now – though not at the time – that I was indulging myself in a bit of ego-massaging each time I was called on to identify myself in a new setting. Inasmuch as there are roughly nine thousand Professors of Philosophy in the United States, there is a certain measure of misleading advertising in the announcement. Not all of us, presumably, can genuinely claim descent from Socrates. Nevertheless, I had come to view those moments as one of the perks of my job.

But now I was a Professor of Afro-American Studies, though I had retained my membership in the Philosophy department in order to continue directing several doctoral dissertations. How ought I to introduce myself from this point on? The very first time the question arose – I cannot now recall the circumstances – the entire array of possibilities flashed

before my mind, and I recognized that I had to make a choice that was for me [though not, I think, for my new colleagues] profoundly significant. There were four possibilities: I could continue to identify myself as a Professor of Philosophy, which was at least technically true; I could identify myself as a Professor of Afro-American Studies *and* Philosophy, or perhaps, of Philosophy and Afro-American Studies; I could describe myself as a Professor of Afro-American Studies, but add some explanation, to the effect that I used to be a Professor of Philosophy; or, I could simply reply, without explanations or elaborations, “I am a Professor of Afro-American Studies.”

I was not merely passing through the Afro-American Studies department. I had been invited to join the department, and to my rather conventional and old-fashioned way of thinking, that invitation was the greatest honor the faculty of a department could bestow upon me. To conceal or fudge my new identity would, I felt very keenly, be an act of betrayal to colleagues who had welcomed me into their world. At the same time, of course, I was fully aware that I could at any moment, if it suited my *amour propre*, revert to being a Professor of Philosophy and exact that small moment of respectful recognition to which I had become accustomed. Odd as it sounds coming from someone thoroughly secular, I experienced this permanent possibility as what Catholics call an occasion of sin. It was a temptation that it was important for me to put behind me.

I did not know it then, but I later learned that in enacting this private drama, I was re-enacting a very important and public choice that had faced all of my colleagues a quarter of a century earlier when the department had been established. In the early days of Black Studies, the question arose again and again what the status would be of the men and women invited to teach the new discipline. The Academy lives and dies by tenure, and tenure is granted within

departments. At many universities, such as Yale and Harvard, the administrators who were responding to pressure from Black students and the Black community wanted to get the protestors off their backs, but they did not really want to make a permanent commitment to something that they were unprepared to acknowledge as a genuine academic enterprise. So they hedged their bets, appointing Black historians, sociologists, and writers to visiting lectureships, short-term contracts, non-tenure track contracts, and – where these dodges were denied them – to tenure track professorships jointly with some already established department. When the heat died down, the temporary, non-tenure track folk could be quietly terminated. Those in real tenure-track joint appointments would have to clear the tenure review process not only in the Black Studies department, but in their other departmental home as well, where, administrators could permit themselves to hope, the candidates would face insurmountable obstacles to approval. Finally, if all else failed, and the Black Studies faculty actually were awarded tenure, it would still be possible to close down the Black Studies department as a separate unit and farm its tenured faculty out to their second departments, where they could be absorbed and ignored.

In the late sixties, precisely these choices and options faced my colleagues, who were then young, untenured, and quite unsure how long their experiment at UMass would last. It is a testament to their wisdom and courage that, led by Mike Thelwell, without hesitation they insisted on regular non-joint tenure track appointments solely in Afro-American Studies. Indeed, there were several scholars to whom they refused the option of joint appointments, believing that it would weaken the department's position in the university. One scholar of Black literature asked for an appointment jointly with English and was told, gently, that he had to choose. He taught for many years in the UMass English department before accepting a position elsewhere.



Thirty years later, it is clear to me that my colleagues made the right choice, a choice that undergirds our young and very successful doctoral program.

Having made the decision to express solidarity with my new colleagues by identifying myself solely as a Professor of Afro-American Studies, I now confronted the sharply different reception of my new self-description. A while later, Susie and I were at an elegant little luncheon given by an Amherst couple – she had been my older son’s kindergarten teacher twenty years earlier. I was seated next to the host, who oversaw with considerable pretension the pouring of the three different wines that accompanied the meal. After a bit, just to make conversation, he asked me what I did. “I am a Professor of Afro-American Studies,” I replied. He did a double-take worthy of Buster Keaton, stared at me intently for a long moment, and finally blurted out, “You’re not Black, are you?”

I got a somewhat less amusing reaction while on a visit to Atlanta with Susie to have Thanksgiving dinner with her older son, Lawrence, and his wife. Susie and I are accustomed to a glass of wine each evening before dinner [well, she has a glass -- I usually have two], but her son and his wife did not drink, so we walked down the street to a local neighborhood establishment. I think it was the first time in my life that I have ever been in what could genuinely be called redneck territory. They didn’t have wine, of course, so we settled for beer and bellied up to the bar. There were maybe ten people in the bar in all, including the bartender. Seated next to Susie was a middle-aged man, wearing a T-shirt with a pack of cigarettes in a rolled up sleeve that revealed a tattoo. Susie and I were not talking loudly, but we were obviously out of place, and everyone in the little bar could hear us. After a bit, the man leaned over and said, “Are you Yankees?” I allowed as how I was [it was the first time I had ever been called that], and we got into a desultory conversation about the weather up north as compared with the local weather.

After a pause, he asked, “What do you do?” Not really thinking, I said, “I am a Professor of Afro-American Studies.”

The bar fell silent and the temperature dropped abruptly about twenty degrees. “I suppose you think they have been treated pretty badly, should be given jobs and all,” he said. I didn’t have to ask who “they” were. “Well,” I pointed out quietly, “they built your homes, nursed your children, grew your food, and then cooked it and baked it, so I guess they have pretty well proved their abilities.” He muttered something I couldn’t pick up, and then said grudgingly, “Well, I suppose they work all right under direction.” This from a man who didn’t look to have held a steady job in some years. Susie and I finished our beer and left. When I told this story to Esther and Ernie the next Monday, they both said, with genuine concern, “Bob, don’t do that again.”

There were lighter moments, during which I enjoyed some of the sheer fun of being a member of the Afro-American Studies Department. In October, 1993, I drove to New York City with Bill, John, Ernie, and Nelson to attend an enormous celebration at Carnegie Hall of the one hundred twenty-fifth anniversary of the birth of our patron saint, William Edward Burghardt Du Bois. [Du Bois was actually born on February 23, 1868, but the celebration was being held in October.] The event was intended as a fund-raiser organized by our colleague, Du Bois’ step son David Graham Du Bois, son of Shirley Graham. The idea was to raise a ton of money for the Du Bois Foundation, which David heads. We had dinner before the celebration at a small restaurant, and then we all walked up Seventh Avenue to Carnegie Hall. Nelson got it into his head that it was time to teach the white boy how to walk Black, so as Ernie, Bill, and John collapsed in laughter, Nelson strutted up the avenue and I followed, imitating him as best I could [Nelson’s

walk is a wonder to behold, and I am not sure my highly amused colleagues would have done much better.]

When we got to Carnegie Hall, we ran into Esther, who had come down from Amherst in another car. Everyone was there. I have never seen so many well-dressed Negroes and superannuated Jews in my life. I held onto Esther's coat and tailed along as she greeted one luminary after another. One tall woman rushed up, threw her arms around Esther, and gave her a big kiss before going off. "Who was that?" I asked. "Betty Shabazz," Esther said, searching the crowd for more friends. "You mean the widow of Malcolm X?" I sputtered, astonished. "Yes," she said, "Betty did a degree in the Ed School at UMass. We are old friends." As the evening wore on, I began to realize that my colleagues knew, and were known by, just about every Black man or woman who had become famous in the struggles over the past thirty years.

In the end, despite the fact that Carnegie Hall was sold out, the event lost money. The last straw was Bill Cosby, who went on so long on stage talking about his friend Herbert Aptheker that the union stage hands had to be paid overtime, which ate up the slender profits. I took that as a cautionary lesson for my own nascent fund raising efforts.

My new colleagues in Afro-American Studies were smart, knowledgeable, politically engaged, and interesting. Talking to them, I never had the distressing feeling that I was speaking a foreign language to someone intellectually challenged. It is not merely that I learned from them – vastly more, I suspect, than they ever learned from me. It is something much more fundamental: there were levels of irony and nuances of moral and political judgment in their conversation that keep me perpetually on my toes. When Mike Thelwell saw my son, Patrick (by then a grandmaster) on television, playing and beating the first Black International Master (now Grandmaster) Maurice Ashley, he called me up and in perfectly deadpan Jamaican English,

asked me why I had not instructed my son not to humiliate a brother. I had to do a good deal of verbal tap-dancing to conceal my failure to realize that he was teasing me. In later years, when I worried endlessly about how few applicants we had to our doctoral program as the deadline approached, John Bracey would say, in avuncular fashion, “Bob, stop worrying, they are out there, but they are operating on C.P.T.” [Colored People’s Time.] John was right, of course.

The second question also concealed a suppressed premise. Since I knew considerably less about Afro-American Studies than one of our undergraduate majors, what could I possibly teach in my new department? Well, I had a go at it. I taught an undergraduate course on the political economy of race and class, drawing on my knowledge of radical economics. I cobbled together a course on Black Philosophy, using collections of writings by such Black philosophers as Bernard Boxhill and Lucius Outlaw, and writings by African philosophers debating the existence of an authentically African philosophy. I taught in Afro-Am a seminar on Ideological Critique that I had first offered in the Philosophy department. But I knew, and my colleagues knew as well, that Black Studies was not my field of scholarly expertise.

The course on the political economy of race and class had some delicious moments, to be sure. At the very beginning of the semester, a young Black student from Springfield showed up. Al Lizana was something of a celebrity on campus, a bigwig in the student government, eventually serving a term as the student representative to the University's Board of Trustees. I was flattered that he had signed up for the course. The next class period, Al was joined in the front row by about seven other students who had not been there the first day. These, it turned out, were all his cousins. As their guide and protector, he had come along first to check me out. When he decided that I was o.k., the rest of his extended family enrolled.

A rather tense moment arose one day while we were discussing Fanon's *Black Faces, White Masks* [a very powerful book, which I recommend if you have not looked at it.] One of the traditional rationalizations of slavery, of course, is that it is the legacy of the curse that Noah laid on his son, Ham, and Ham's son, Canaan [*Genesis*, Chapter 9, for those of you who are not intimately familiar with the Good Book.] African-Americans, it was said, were the descendants of Canaan, and hence condemned by Noah to be the servants [i.e., slaves] of the descendants of Shem and Japheth. I asked whether any students knew the story of Noah and Ham. A number of hands went up, including Edes McCrae's. This was one of the things I really loved about teaching Black students. In an age when most undergraduates seemed less and less literate, the Black students could be counted on to know the Bible.

I called on Edes, who gave a very creditable account of the Bible story. I then remarked what a really kooky rationale for slavery it was, because of course Ham wasn't Black. "Oh yes he was," said Edes. "Now Edes," I replied as gently as I could, "Noah and Shem and Japheth weren't Black, so how could Ham and his son be Black?" "But it says in the Bible that Ham was Black," she said with great confidence. "No it doesn't," I said, getting a trifle rattled. "But it does. My grandmother told me so."

Now, I was new to the Afro-American Studies Department, and I had a great deal to learn. But I was not stupid, and I knew that one of the things you didn't do is tell a young woman that her grandmother was full of it. So I dropped the subject and moved on to more profitable topics.

Still and all, I really was not competent to pull a full load of courses in Afro-American Studies, so I undertook to handle all of those departmental chores that absorb the time and try the patience of senior professors. I took on the Chairmanship of the Personnel Committee, a time-

consuming administrative task. Eventually, I became Graduate Program Director of the new doctoral program. I ran the admissions process for that program. I also became the sole fundraiser for the department, endlessly seeking money to support our new graduate students.

An ethnic allusion will perhaps make clear just how my role in the department evolved. In the shtetls of Eastern Europe in the nineteenth century, the orthodox Jews faced a problem imposed upon them by the rigor of the Talmudic laws to which they submitted themselves. Religious law forbade them to work on the Sabbath, and “work” was interpreted so broadly that even such simple tasks as lighting Sabbath candles were forbidden. The practice arose of hiring a little Gentile boy from a nearby town to come in on Friday evening and perform these proscribed chores. This lad was called the “Shabbes goy.” I became the Shabbes goy of the Afro-American Studies department.

Meanwhile, our doctoral program proposal was slowly ascending the administrative ladder, though not nearly fast enough to satisfy me. There were hitches along the way. No sooner had we drafted a full-scale proposal, with multiple attachments, in conformity with the official documents sent to us by our campus administration than the Higher Education Coordinating Council promulgated an entirely new set of guidelines, designed to make the process nigh on impossible to complete satisfactorily. We dutifully recast our proposal to meet the new guidelines, and sent it on its way again. At the very first stage of campus approval, we ran aground, thanks to the racial anxieties of a professor on a Faculty Senate Standing Committee who had been handed the job of recruiting a three-person review sub-committee from the faculty as a whole. After nine months of stalling, she allowed as how she couldn’t find anyone to serve because they were all afraid of saying anything negative about a proposal put

forward by a group of Black people. In twenty-four hours, we rounded up three very senior unimpeachable scholars to perform the review, and the proposal resumed its journey.

In the first flush of excitement, at the end of the summer of 1992, with a completed proposal in hand, I had rashly predicted that we would surely complete the approval process in time to launch the program in the Fall of 1995. This was not merely misplaced optimism. I was at that point fifty-eight years old, and I was beginning to worry that I would not be around to see the first class of students get their degrees. But nothing can be done that quickly on a university campus. Even getting approval to offer a new course usually takes an entire year. So 1992-93 passed, and 1993-94, and 1994-95 began. Finally, the proposal made its way to the office of the President, then to the Trustees, and on a triumphant day in October, was approved by the Higher Education Coordinating Council. We would have our doctoral program, after all. I mailed out a host of the eighteen thousand new brochures I had designed and ordered, and we were officially launched. The next Spring, we selected seven promising applicants from the twenty-nine who applied, and sat back to await their arrival.

Once I had recovered from the elation of having our doctoral program approved, it occurred to me that I had a small problem. In the Fall, seven eager young people would show up to begin their doctoral studies. Inasmuch as I would be the Graduate Program Director, they would look to me for advice. And I did not know anything about Afro-American Studies! There and then, I decided to read all fifty-three books on the first year reading list during the summer, before the students arrived. I bought them all, and sat down to begin.

The books piled up on the coffee table until they threatened to block the view of my living room. Fifty-three books, twenty thousand pages of African-American history, politics, fiction, essays, and poetry. It was the first day of June 1996, and I had to read them all by

September 3rd. There I sat, knowing next to nothing about the history, the trials, the triumphs, the artistic creations, the experiences of Black folk in America. To be sure, I had managed an anti-apartheid organization of Harvard graduates for two years, and for the past five years, I had run a little one-man scholarship organization raising money for poor Black university students in South Africa. I had picketed Woolworth's in the sixties, supporting the young Black students who started the modern Civil Rights Movement with their sit-in in Greensboro. But I knew virtually nothing about slavery, Reconstruction, share-cropping, Black Codes, Jim Crow, the Harlem Renaissance, the World War I riots, or the Black Arts Movement.

I am a slow, methodical reader, incapable of skimming lightly through a book. This is fine if you are going to be a philosopher. Close reading of a small number of famous texts is what philosophers do. I often pointed out to my students during my days as a Professor of Philosophy that you could get a pretty fair education as a student of philosophy by mastering perhaps twenty-five or thirty texts from the Western tradition. Indeed, if you were willing to treat all of Plato's Dialogues as one enormous book, you could probably bring the list down to twenty titles. So the mountain of volumes awaiting me was daunting indeed. It was going to be a long summer.

I sighed, and reached for the first book on the pile. It was the seventh edition of John Hope Franklin's classic work, *From Slavery to Freedom*. I didn't take notes. I just read carefully one book after another, in the order prescribed by our syllabus, making marginal comments, as I have always done. My goal was to immerse myself in them, so that I would have a grasp of the over-arching shape of the story of Black Americans.

As the title suggests, Franklin's work is an up-beat history of African-Americans, beginning with the torment of the Middle Passage and slavery, and taking the reader out of that



darkness and into the sunlight of freedom. First published in 1947, the text has been revised again and again to incorporate the tribulations of post-war Jim Crow, the triumph of *Brown vs. Board of Education*, the drama of the Civil Rights Movement, and the struggles over affirmative action. Every page is filled with names, dates, and events about which I knew next to nothing.

John Hope Franklin was the Dean of African-American historians, held in the highest esteem by younger Black historians, many of whom he trained at Chicago and Duke. In a profession that for generations did not even acknowledge the Black presence in America, save in the most dismissive and abusive of terms, John Hope had to struggle to gain any sort of professional recognition. Eventually, his White colleagues were forced to admit the weight of his scholarly contributions, and elected him the first Black President of the Southern Historical Association, the Organization of American Historians, and the American Historical Association. I knew none of this on that day in June. To me, the book was just the first in a large pile waiting to be read.

After plowing through Franklin, I read a collection of four famous slave narratives, edited by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and followed that with *Black History and the Historical Profession, 1915-1980*, by August Meier and Elliott Rudwick. This last work struck me as an odd pairing with the Franklin and Gates, but my colleague John Henry Bracey, Jr. was the protégé of Augie Meier, and later his collaborator on a number of scholarly essays and editorial collections, so it seemed that we were engaging in the time-honored academic practice of introducing our students to those who had been our own mentors.

I read on. Eric Williams' *Capitalism and Slavery* is a classic thesis book about the role of Caribbean slavery in the growth of British capitalism. Originally his doctoral dissertation, it

argues the striking and controversial thesis that the growth of British industry was funded by the profits from the slave trade and the sale of slave-produced Caribbean sugar. *Black Majority* by Peter Wood, another classic work, focuses on the early period of slavery in South Carolina. This is a natural successor to the Williams, because of the important link between Barbados and South Carolina during the eighteenth century. Reading the book, I learned for the first time of the hideous practice of “seasoning” newly captured Africans in Barbados – which is to say beating them into submission – before selling them to South Carolinian plantation owners. Peter was an old friend of mine from my struggles against apartheid at Harvard, and I was delighted to encounter him in the pile.

Early in the Summer, I read *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*, written by Herbert Gutman as a response to Patrick Moynihan's notorious "benign neglect" memorandum on the African-American family. Through the sort of painstaking archival scholarship that Moynihan did not trouble himself with, Gutman demonstrated that against all the odds, in the face of the brutality and disruptions of slavery, Africans and their descendants had created and maintained strong family units. Often, they were forced to counter the destructive effects of slave sales by substituting extended kin relations for those of the nuclear family. If a father or mother was sold down the river, an "aunt" or "uncle" would step in to take over the burdens of child-rearing. This practice of kin caring for children continues down to the present day, putting the lie to Moynihan's claim that the economic troubles of Negroes are due to an absence of what are today called "family values."

As the weeks passed, I became more and more absorbed by my reading. Some of the historical works were fascinating and beautifully written. Judge A. Leon Higgenbotham's *In the Matter of Color* deals with the law of slavery in six of the American colonies prior to the Revolutionary war. For the first time, I learned something of the extraordinary complexity of the early attempts by judges and lawyers to find in the English Common Law some justification for the racial oppression of chattel slavery.

I was ravished by the outpouring of vivid contemporary detail in Leon Litwack's *Been in the Storm So Long*, an astonishing book about the ways in which the slaves experienced and reacted to liberation at the end of the Civil War. In Litwack's pages, the slaves and freed people began to come alive to me as individuals, with passions, skills, and a fully developed ironic understanding of their own situation. More perhaps than any other single work in the pile, this

book weaned me away from my tendency to look *at* Black men and women rather than to look at the world *through* their eyes.

Some of the books were solid, workmanlike monographs, useful for fleshing out the story of the African-American experience: Gary Nash's *Forging Freedom*, a portrait of free Blacks in Philadelphia; *They Who Would Be Free*, by Jane and William Pease, telling the story of Black abolitionists. Another old friend from anti-apartheid days, Nell Painter, turned up with *Exodusters*, her account of the migration of freedmen and women from the South to Kansas in the years just after the Civil War.

Later in the summer, I worked my way into the twentieth century, reading *Black Metropolis* by St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton, a massive work, more than eight hundred pages long. This is a classic sociological study of the Black community in Chicago, one of the first major works of urban sociology. Only years later would I learn that Drake had been one of John Bracey's teachers, and a major figure in Pan-African and American Negro political movements. For the moment, I was content to learn something about the Black community in the South Side of Chicago, which I had lived next to but had never explored during my two years at the University of Chicago.

The literary half of the list started slowly, with *Clotel*, *Iola Leroy*, *The Conjure Woman*, and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* representing pre-Civil War fictions. *Clotel*, a novel by an escaped slave, William Wells Brown, is based on the belief widely held in the Black community that Thomas Jefferson had fathered mulatto children by one of his slaves. It took the miracles of modern science to demonstrate to the White community that the oral traditions of Blacks are frequently more reliable than the written assurances of established scholars.

Near the end of the summer, I read *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and *Jonah's Gourd Vine* by Zora Neale Hurston, *Native Son* and *Uncle Tom's Children* by Richard Wright, *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison, *If He Hollers Let Him Go* by Chester Himes, and *Go Tell It On The Mountain* by James Baldwin. Our students were in for a treat!

I was so absorbed in the enterprise of reading this huge stack of books – checking off titles, shifting volumes one by one from the to-read to the already-read pile – that for much of the summer, I did not take the time to reflect on the experience I was undergoing, but slowly, little by little, as I drew closer to the end of the list, I began to realize that something quite remarkable was happening to me, something I had not anticipated when I began my labors.

This was actually the third time in my life that I had attempted a concentrated bout of reading of this magnitude. The first time had been in the Spring of 1958, when I read the major works of Western political theory, and then went on to read twenty thousand pages of European history in preparation for teaching Freshman history at Harvard. The second time had been just twenty years later, when I immersed myself for a sabbatical semester in theoretical economics so that I could master the modern mathematical reinterpretation of the economic theories of Karl Marx. Each of these efforts had greatly broadened the scope of my knowledge and insight, but neither had in any fundamental way changed me. I was the same radical philosopher after the political theory, history, and economics that I had been before.

But as the story of the African-American experience washed over me in all its horrible and glorious detail, the very structure of my perception and conception of America underwent an irreversible alteration. I saw everything differently – I saw the Puritans differently, and I saw Rodney King differently; I saw the Civil War differently, and I saw O. J. Simpson differently. I saw my colleagues differently; I even saw myself differently. By the time the summer was over

and nothing remained in the pile of books to be read save *The Negro Caravan* [which I never did manage to plow through], I found myself living in a world I had never before inhabited, seeing the world through entirely new eyes.

How exactly had my perceptions, my conceptions, and I myself changed? It is not so easy to put the changes into words. The change was not merely a matter of accumulated information. I now knew about the Stono Rebellion, and I understood the structure of the triangular trade that circulated slaves, raw materials, and finished goods among Europe, West Africa, and North America. I had for the first time some feel for the complex detail of the laws governing slavery in the Colonies and then in the United States prior to the Civil War. Perhaps most important of all, I understood that the long, painful saga of Black men and women in America was not a story of slow, steady improvement, but rather an endless repetition of hopes raised and then dashed, of advances followed by brutal reversals. I have tried to capture the structure of this changed understanding in my short book, *AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN EX-WHITE MAN*.

But facts were not the substance of what had happened to me, though they played a role, to be sure. Rather, I was for the first time beginning to see America from the standpoint of African-Americans. Let us be clear. I was still, as I had been and am now, a New York Jewish intellectual from a non-religious middle-class family. I was under no illusions about being Black or thinking Black. But because I had made the life choice to change my departmental affiliation, with everything that meant, I found myself beginning to be able to see how the world might look to my colleagues. And it was starting to look the same way to me.

I think more than anything else my perceptions were altered by the sheer repetition of detail in the books I had read – the fictions as well as the historical accounts. Reading about one

whipping or one lynching is upsetting. Reading statistics of the numbers of whippings or lynchings is an education. But reading description after description, in book after book, of maimings, killings, whippings, and lynchings in the seventeenth century, the eighteenth century, the nineteenth century, and the twentieth century made me finally understand why so many of my colleagues seemed deeply, irreversibly pessimistic about the prospects for anything resembling racial justice. To them – and, by the end of the summer, to me as well – the beating of Rodney King was neither remarkable nor unexpected. It was an episode that was continuous with almost four centuries of oppression.

The images of the fictions blended in my imagination with the factual accounts dredged from archives by historians. The Battle Royal in *Invisible Man*, the lynching in *Uncle Tom's Children*, the bitter unfairness of the ending of *If He Hollers Let Him Go* were no more terrible, no more implausible, indeed no more powerfully realized in their literary settings, than the purely factual accounts of the Negro who was lynched on the stage of a theater before Whites who had paid to see the show.

Stories have a power to shape our experience, to impose interpretations on what we think we know – both true stories and fictional ones. The story of America organizes our collective social memory, high-lighting turning points, bringing some facts into sharp focus, concealing others. If our national story is told wrongly, we shall forget our real past, and then – because stories have this power – we shall misunderstand our present and lose the ability to shape our future. Race is the dirty little secret of the American story – not greed, not sex, not power. Until the American story is rewritten with the fact of slavery and its aftermath given its true place, none of us in the White community will be able to understand the story of America aright.

That first year was a hoot. The seven students showed up, ready to begin their doctoral studies in our brand new program. At 10 a.m. on Wednesday, September 4th, I met with them, greeted them in my new role as Graduate Program Director, and explained that in the first year, all of them would take a double seminar on Major Works of Afro-American Studies, meeting for two and a half hours each Monday and Wednesday. In addition, I said, during the second semester, they would be expected to take a third course or seminar, either in our department or elsewhere in the University. That same afternoon, at 2:30 p.m., they were to gather in the seminar room at the end of the hallway for their first class.

The faculty were a little bit over the top with excitement, and in a moment of sheer folly, we decided that all us would attend every session of the Major Works seminar. Seven young, rather nervous students gathered around a table with Esther Terry, John Bracey, Mike Thelwell, Ernie Allen, Bill Strickland, and me. There wasn't enough oxygen in the room to draw a deep breath! I had instructed the students that they were to read three books over the summer in preparation for their studies -- the Franklin, the slave narratives, and the Meier and Rudwick -- and were to bring to the first class a paper on one of them. To each class they were to bring enough copies so that each member of the class and each professor could have one -- thirteen copies in all. I advised them to keep a file of these papers. In future years, I explained, when they were professors somewhere and were called on to teach one or another of those fifty books, they could pull out the file and see what their colleagues -- now also professors -- had had to say about it. I assured them that it would make class preparation much easier.

And away we went. Each time we met, the students were responsible for another book and another paper. Seven students, fifty papers each, three hundred and fifty papers in all. That first year, I read every single paper and returned it the next day with marginal hand-written



comments and a brief typed comment clipped to the front. We were insane, of course. My five colleagues had been arguing among themselves about the substance of Afro-American Studies for almost thirty years. Gathered together in one room, they could scarcely restrain themselves from rehearsing those arguments, and they made very little effort to do so. The students would plaster themselves up against the walls, struck dumb by the sight and sound of an entire department of professors in full bellow.

There were moments whose truly extraordinary character was, I think, lost on our students, who simply assumed that all graduate programs were like ours. The assignment one day was Margaret Walker's novel, *Jubilee*, which chronicles the life of a young woman born into slavery, liberated at the end of the Civil War, and then struggling to make a life for herself during Reconstruction and in the terrible aftermath of Jim Crow. One of the students asked whether the novel could be read as a work of feminist literature. Mike Thelwell said that it certainly could not be so read. John Bracey, who knew a great deal about feminism, then launched into a lengthy and extremely interesting rebuttal to Mike, distinguishing a number of different schools of feminist thought, and suggesting that the novel might be read as feminist by one or another of those schools, but not by yet a third or fourth. Mike Thelwell, who disliked feminist literary theory as much as he disliked every other school of literary theory, stood fast, insisting that there was no way that the novel could be construed as feminist.

The next class period, the students came in, having read a new book and having prepared a new paper. As soon as we were convened, Mike began to speak in his characteristically courteous and somewhat orotund fashion.; "You will recall," he said, "that my esteemed colleague, Professor Bracey, and I had a disagreement when last we met about whether Margaret Walker's novel, *Jubilee*, could be construed as a feminist work. I said that it could not, and

Professor Bracey mistakenly argued that it could. I was quite persuaded that I was correct, but I did not wish to leave my judgment thus unsubstantiated, so after the class ended, I went home and I called Miss Walker. We had a very pleasant conversation, during which I asked her whether her novel could be construed as feminist, and she assured me that it could not."

John exploded at this, saying that every literary critic knew the author was the last person you wanted to ask about the proper interpretation of a piece of fiction, and pointing out that a collection of Mitchell's short stories had been published by a feminist press [a fact of which everyone in the room save John was, of course, ignorant.] At that point, the rest of us intervened and suggested that we start discussing the book assigned for that day. But I am very much afraid that the students came away from the experience thinking that in graduate school, when one had a disagreement about the meaning of a text, the normal thing to do was to call up the author, with whom one was, of course, good friends.

Later on, we read Anne Moody's *Coming of Age in Mississippi*, and Esther remarked casually that some while back, when Anne was a bit on her uppers, she had stayed with Esther and Gene in their Amherst home. When we got to Zora Neale Hurston's great novel, *their Eyes Were Watching God*, John told stories about Zora, who was, it seems, a good friend of his grandmother. Zora was visiting John's grandparents in Florida when she got the \$200 advance for the novel, and she and John's grandmother went out shopping, whereupon Zora blew the whole advance on a splendid new coat. I was in a state of perpetual intellectual arousal. I had been around the Academy for forty years, at that point, and I had never seen anything like it.

One moment in the seminar remains in my memory as emblematic of an important fact about the ideological convictions of my colleagues. One of the books we read was Herbert Gutman's important work, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*. Michael Forbes, who had

come to us from Eastern Michigan University, where he had majored in Black Studies, observed that when he took a course on the Black Family as an undergraduate, they had not read Gutman's book "because he is White." John Bracey delivered a long speech about the large number of White scholars who had made invaluable contributions to Afro-American Studies. Some while later, when we were talking about my difficulties in raising money for the graduate program, John remarked that the department was "nationalist but not separatist." That fact went a long way to explaining why they were able to welcome me into the department, as they had another White scholar earlier, and as they welcomed two more White scholars subsequently.

There was no way we could continue with the mad scheme of having the entire department attend every class. After the first year, we calmed down, and started handing round the responsibility for leading the discussion on this book or that. Because we were so short handed in those first years, I actually got to teach some of the books on the list, even though I was not, by any stretch of the imagination, an expert on any one of them. For several years, I led the discussion on *Cane*, on *Their Eyes*, and on two books I had personally championed on our list, Skip Gates's *The Signifying Monkey* and Thomas Morris's five hundred page monograph, *Southern Slavery and the Law 1619 -1860*. My colleagues hated Gates for pandering to the moneyed white liberals and having no roots in the Black community, and everyone in the department but me hated the Morris book, which I found utterly fascinating, so after a couple of years both books were voted off the list.

Each year, near the end of the Spring semester, we would meet as a department to discuss possible changes in the Major Works list. At first, people argued for adding titles, but could not agree on dropping any, so the list crept up from fifty to fifty-six. Finally, in one of my few acts of administrative rank-pulling, I laid down the law that henceforward, anyone wanting to add a

title would have to couple the proposal with the name of the book he or she was proposing to drop. Over the twelve years during which I presided as GPD, the list did undergo changes, but it held remarkably constant. The practical consequence was that in any of the advanced courses or seminars in the department, one could confidently assume that every student had read the same fifty foundational works, to which one could therefore refer without further explanation.

Pedagogically speaking, that is an invaluable foundation for truly productive graduate teaching.

We learned a great deal during those early years. The first thing we discovered was that the Graduate Record Examination was totally useless as a measure of an applicant's ability to do well in our program. The GRE scores of our applicants were dismal -- three hundreds and four hundreds, which, as the philosophers reading these memoirs will immediately respond, means that a student is utterly incapable of graduate work. But there they were, reading books by the score and writing solid, intelligent papers. Our response, at my suggestion, was simply to stop requiring GRE scores as a part of the application file. Instead, we introduced the requirement that each applicant submit a substantial piece of written work -- a term paper or seminar paper. Since "The Graduate Admissions Committee" was simply the entire department, this meant that each year, all of us read every paper submitted by every applicant. As the number of applicants crept up from twenty-nine to forty or fifty, this became a serious demand on everyone's time, but we did it, because we knew that those papers were a better indication of real promise than anything else a student might present.

I knew very little about Afro-American Studies, but by this time in my career I knew a great deal about graduate programs, and I worked very hard to make ours a success. I began by laying down an absolutely inviolable rule: No matter how much or how little I could raise to support our students, the money would be divided equally among all of the students. There

would be no A-list and B-list of students, no inner circle considered the favorites of the faculty, with everyone else forced to pick up such scraps as they could. Contrary to every other doctoral program I had ever seen or been a part of, this was going to be a collective effort of students and faculty.

This rule went hand in hand with a departmental ideal whose strongest proponent was Esther herself: If we admitted a student, then we would do whatever we could to make sure that that student completed the program and earned a doctorate. I was myself very deeply committed to this conception of education, as my comments about the Army and South Africa have already made clear. The structure of the program embodied this conception of our mission. Each class of students was expected to work as a team in the first year Major Works seminar, studying together, helping one another, looking out for one another, and that is indeed what happened. No student fell through the cracks, no student was allowed simply to slip from view. If a student missed a class, everyone in the department knew about it. If a student was having trouble grappling with the flood of texts, we would know that immediately because we were reading the papers that were turned in twice a week. The National Association of Colored Women, founded in 1896, adopted as its motto "Lifting As We Climb," and the spirit of that commitment was built into the structure and the ethos of our doctoral program.

It took a while for this conception of graduate education to take hold. Our first year, one of the seven new students was judged too weak academically. We gave him a terminal Master's Degree at the end of the first year and required him to leave the program. Two others chose to transfer out of the department, one of whom went to a Labor Studies doctoral program at UMass, and eventually earned a doctorate in that program. That was the last time that any student was

required to leave the program, and in the twelve years that I served as Graduate Program Director, only a tiny handful chose to leave, always for doctoral programs in other disciplines.

It is worth pausing for a moment to consider what became of the students who entered the program. In the first two years, twelve students were admitted [after the first class, we settled on five per year as the appropriate size for each class]. Of the four students remaining in the first year class and the five students who were admitted the second year, *every single one earned a doctorate, and eight of the nine now hold tenured or tenure track teaching jobs in American colleges and universities.* By way of comparison, according to a recent study by the Council of Graduate Studies, the national ten-year doctoral completion rates for African-Americans is 47%.

In that first year group, Michael Forbes, the man who questioned the appropriateness of reading scholarly works by White authors, went on to write a fascinating comparative study of Richard Wright and Ernest Hemingway as expatriates. He is currently Assistant Professor of English and Black Studies at DePauw University. Njubi Nesbitt, who came to us after earning a Master's Degree in Communications Studies, wrote a study, since published, on the role of African-Americans in the anti-apartheid struggle. Njubi is now a tenured Associate Professor of Africana Studies at San Diego State, and the author of several books. Tanya Mears, a tall young Black woman with a mordant sense of humor, wrote a ground-breaking study of Colonial American execution texts about people of African descent, a genre of literature that preceded the much better known Slave Narratives. Tanya has just accepted an Assistant Professorship of History at Worcester State College, after spending several years of back-breaking work at Norfolk State, an historically Black college in Virginia. Brandon Anderson Hutchinson, while starting a family, has earned tenure at Southern Connecticut State University. Her dissertation was a study of three Black female playwrights.

The second year class has been equally successful. Chris Lehman, a serious, deeply religious man, married to a minister who had studied at Harvard Divinity School, astonished us all by choosing as his topic "derogatory images of African-Americans in animated cartoons," or, somewhat more colloquially, coonery. He studied old animated cartoons, interviewed as many of the writers and animators as he could find who were still alive, and produced a completely original study that was subsequently published as a book. Chris lives with his wife and children in St. Cloud, Minnesota, where he is a tenured Associate Professor of Ethnic Studies at St. Cloud State U. Rita Reynolds, who had already studied both African-American Studies and Photography before she came to us, wrote a fine archival study of a group of wealthy free Black women of Charleston, South Carolina. Rita, who is one of my very favorite all time students, is now a tenure track Assistant Professor at the College of Staten Island. One of her closest friends in the second year cadre was Andrew Rosa, the first Latino to join our doctoral program. Andrew is a cheerful man with a penchant for the theoretical as well as the archival. He fixed for his doctoral dissertation on St. Clair Drake [yes, the same man whose name I misspelled as Sinclair Drake while we were crafting the first year Major Works Seminar.] Despite being the most important African-American scholar after W. E. B. Du Bois, Drake had been virtually unstudied when Andrew began his research. Indeed, Andrew was the first person to make a systematic study of the one hundred boxes of Drake's papers and other materials stored at the Schomburg Library in New York. Because Drake had been John Bracey's teacher at Roosevelt University in Chicago, John was able to arrange personal interviews for Andrew with several of Drake's contemporaries who were still alive. Andrew is now bringing his intellectual biography to completion and readying it for publication. When it appears, it will be an indispensable

contribution to the political as well as the intellectual development of twentieth century African-American thought. Andrew is an Assistant Professor of History at Oklahoma State University.

Let me tell one brief story about Andrew, to give some idea of the sort of commitment we all had to the success of our students. For several years, Andrew carried out his doctoral research, traveling repeatedly to New York, to Chicago, and elsewhere in pursuit of original materials. When to came time for him to start writing, however, he got stuck. I think he simply had so much material that he was unable to subdue it to a satisfactory and manageable narrative line. I knew that he was having difficulty, but since I was not directing his dissertation, I really had no role to play. [Readers of this Memoir who are not themselves academics may be puzzled by this remark, inasmuch as I was the Graduate Program Director, but at UMass, and more generally in graduate programs of any sort, it is the dissertation director, and no one else, who is in charge of a student's progress, once he or she reaches the dissertation stage.]

Finally, I decided to step in informally. I asked Andrew to meet me in my office with everything he had written thus far. He showed up with about one hundred pages or so of material. I took a quick look and found that it was really alternative versions of the same material, or fragments from different stages in Drake's life and career. so I set it aside and started to talk Andrew through the structure and organization of his project. Since he had undertaken an intellectual and political biography of Drake, the narrative structure was obviously going to be chronological. Andrew had a very clearly defined and quite precise conception of the successive stages of Drake's education and career, so it was not difficult to see how the dissertation should be broken into chapters. However, since Drake lived to be seventy-nine and played a major role not only in African-American affairs but also in the Pan-African Movement following the end of World War II, it was obvious that Andrew could not possibly cover the entirety of Drake's life



and career in a doctoral dissertation. Following Andrew's lead [I knew nothing about Drake -- I mean, *nothing*], I proposed a cut-off point for the dissertation, essentially at the end of the research project that led to Drake's most important scholarly work, *Black Metropolis*, written with Horace Cayton and published in 1943.

Once we had defined the limits of the dissertation, I talked Andrew through an outline of the successive chapters, each of which he really already had conceptualized in his mind. Finally, after more than a hour, we reached a point at which Andrew had a clearly defined game plan for the writing of the dissertation. At this point, I said to him, "Andrew, I want you to go home and today write the first page of the first chapter. When you are done, I want you to email it to me as an attachment. I will read it, make any corrections I think it needs [of an editorial nature -- I was certainly not qualified to make any substantive corrections!], and I will email it back to you. Tomorrow, I want you to send me page two. I will do the same thing. Every day, including Sundays and holidays, you are to send me an additional page. I may go to Europe with Susie for a vacation, but you are to continue sending me a page a day, regardless. You will do that for eight months. At that point, you will have a draft of your dissertation. If I see you wandering from the outline, or getting ahead of yourself, I will warn you and get you back on track. If you are patient, you will get your degree at the end of this year. Once you have a complete draft, submit it to your dissertation director [John Bracey], for his comments, corrections, and required revisions.

For the next eight months, Andrew sent me a page a day, which I read and sent back to him that same day. Andrew completed his dissertation, which was fully as impressive as I knew it would be, and off he went to Oklahoma State. I have done the same thing with two other

students in the doctoral program, always, of course, without having more than the most rudimentary knowledge of the subject matter of the dissertation.

The fourth student from that second year group was Carolyn Powell, an older independent scholar who came to us after a career in the secondary schools of New York City. [John Bracey became very excited when he read her application file, because it seemed that he routinely assigned an essay she had published in one of his undergraduate courses.] Carolyn wrote a very controversial dissertation about consensual sexual relations between slave masters and female slaves in the Old South, and as luck would have it, was writing about Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings just at the time the DNA evidence confirmed the oral tradition in the Black Community, steadfastly denied by Jefferson's White descendants, that the Founding Father had fathered a child with his slave, Hemings.

This is perhaps the appropriate time to say something about an aspect of our program of which I am most proud. Over the years, we attracted and admitted a number of older Black students like Carolyn who had been away from the Academy for as much as twenty years or more, and now wanted to return to earn a doctorate with us. These were in every way non-traditional students, and each, in his or her own way, found the transition back to student life difficult. W. S. Tkweme, a very tall, elegant graduate of Harvard, had had a bad experience in the Ivy League, and had located in Atlanta, where he ran a radio program devoted to Black culture and started a John Coltrane Society. Tkweme [as he styled himself -- it was not his birth name] was obviously made somewhat uncomfortable by once again being a student after making a life for himself as an accomplished and mature man. With exquisite tact, he took to calling me "Dr. Bob," which nicely triangulated our relationship. He chose to write on the politics and economics of the jazz world in the 60s, and took advantage of the fact that one of our colleagues

in the department was the great jazz saxophonist Archie Shepp. After earning his doctorate, Tkweme accepted an Assistant Professorship in the Department of Pan-African Studies at the University of Louisville.

Lloren Foster had dropped out of college and pursued a career as a computer expert, before returning to complete his undergraduate degree while in his forties. He then applied to take a doctorate with us. Lloren wrote a comparison of liberation fiction in America and South Africa, and on one of my periodic trips abroad, I was actually able to track down for him a number of South African novels in a Cape Town bookstore. When Lloren was still a long way from completing his dissertation, he was offered a job at Hampton University teaching Freshman English. The teaching load was crushing, and I knew from Cynthia's experience that the task of grading student papers could be mind-killing. I urged Lloren not to take the a job until he had finished with the dissertation, but he had a family to support, and decided to accept. "The Lord will provide," he assured me, and so He did. Lloren is now Dr. Foster, and is a regular member of the Hampton English Department.

My favorite student among the older contingent was Marieta Joyner, who came out of a sharecropping background in rural Alabama. Marieta had been serving for a number of years as a staff assistant in the Clinical Psychology Department of the Boston campus of UMass. I worked long and successfully with her to help her to reacquire the ability to handle the heavy load of reading and writing that we demanded of all our students. Marieta, who was in her early fifties when she started our program, had a grown son who had gone deaf as the consequence of an illness, and this got her interested in a subject that no one at all had done any research on -- the education of deaf African-Americans. Marieta learned American Sign Language, and presented it in satisfaction of the language requirement that was a standard part of our

Preliminary requirements for the doctorate. She visited Gallaudet, conducted a number of interviews with old-timers there, and produced the first scholarly study ever done of the subject.

Marieta is now Associate Lecturer in History and Politics at Curry College in Milton, MA.

The last of the students in that second year class was Jennifer Jensen-Wallach, the first White student we admitted [there would be a number of others.] Jennifer came from an evangelical Christian family in Arkansas [her mother, who eventually left the Church, wrote an autobiography about her experiences that is now a movie in which she is played by Vera Vermiga, the co-star of the George Clooney movie *Up in the Air*. Talk about seven degrees of separation!] Jennifer had done graduate study in Southern History at Ole Miss, and had also worked on the Martin Luther King papers. She conceived the idea of writing a genuinely interdisciplinary dissertation in which she would do a literary analysis of a number of memoirs of the Jim Crow south, written by famous and accomplished authors, in an attempt to discover whether there are insights into an historical era that can best be accessed through a literary rather than an historiographical approach. I ended up directing the dissertation, to my absolute delight. Although Jennifer needed no help at all from me, or indeed from anyone else, in the writing of the dissertation, I was able to make some philosophical suggestions about the epistemological questions raised by her approach that I would like to think strengthened her argument. The dissertation was published as a book to great critical acclaim. Jennifer is now a tenure track Assistant Professor in the History Department of the University of North Texas, and has just signed a contract for her fourth book.

All of us in the department were especially close to those first classes of graduate students. At the beginning of each year, Esther would throw a party at her big home for the entire department. Somehow, the extended Black community of UMass would get wind of the

party, and they would all show up, considering the Afro-American Studies Department their home as well. In its way, this community was rather like that circle of people in New York who considered the Columbia Philosophy Department their second home.

There was a certain amount of hi-jinks that took place, inevitably. One day, I walked into my office to discover that it had been festooned with little cardboard cutouts of Bob the Builder, a children's play figure after my time as a kid [or as a father.] But I think my favorite joke arose out of a conversation I had one day with Jennifer Jensen-Wallach. My time in the Afro-American Studies Department was, after all, rather cognitively disorienting. To the students, I was good old Bob, the Department *shabbes goy*, who seemed to do everything administrative that no one else wanted to do. Most of the them had no idea that I actually had a certain reputation as a philosopher. That was all right with me, but sometimes I wanted to let them know that I wasn't just a pile of chopped chicken liver. So in the midst of a conversation, prompted by I know not what, I suddenly blurted out to Jennifer, "You know, this may be hard to believe, but I am actually a World Famous Philosopher."

Well, from then on, to this day, she took to calling me The WFP. Her first book is dedicated to The WFP, and when her husband, a writer for *The Nation*, came back from a *Nation* sponsored cruise, he brought with him, for me, a picture of Rachel Maddow, inscribed "To WFP." I am sure Maddow has no idea what that actually meant.

During the twelve years that I served as Graduate Program Director of the doctoral program in Afro-American Studies at the University of Massachusetts, we achieved an astonishing record with our students. Almost all of them finished their degrees and went on to good teaching jobs and a growing record of distinguished scholarly publications. During that

same period, the flashy "Dream Team" at Harvard got all the press, but we were doing the Lord's work at UMass, and we were phenomenally successful.

**Part Three**  
**Chapter Six**  
**Scribble, Scribble, Scribble, Eh Mr. Gibbon?**

The failure of *Moneybags Must Be So Lucky* to attract either reviews or readers had at least for a while killed in me any desire to go on publishing books, but it did not quell my desire to write. For years, I had been carrying around the horde of Wolff family papers as I moved from Belmont to Watertown to Pelham, and at last I decided the time had come to pay them some attention. My first task was to transform them into a usable archive. I carefully sorted the papers and letters, arranged them chronologically according to author and recipient, and set up an elaborate filing system in a large file cabinet. I began with the several hundred letters that my grandparents, Barnet and Ella, had written to one another, along with a small number of letters one or another of them had written to third parties [including a charming letter written by my grandfather to the little girl who would eventually marry his oldest son and become my mother.] My grandfather had been elected to the New York Board of Alderman on the Socialist ticket in 1917, and among the papers I found a large cardboard file folder holding his Aldermanic correspondence. Although almost all the papers from that generation derived from the Wolff family, rather than from my mother's family, the Ornsteins, I did find several very early letters from her father to her mother, written before they married.

With the letters and papers were hundreds of photos, some faded and discolored with age. I could identify some of the people in the photos, but alas, many were unknown to me, and even my mother, ordinarily so careful and systematic in such matters, had failed to write their names on the back. Still and all, I sifted and sorted them as best I could and filled a number of manila envelopes with pictures of this or that branch of the family.

When I turned to the materials from my parents' generation, things were a bit easier, although even in those piles there were pictures to which I could not put names. In addition to many hundreds of letters between my father and my mother, starting in the late teens of the twentieth century and coming forward until after my sister was born in 1930, I found a sizeable collection of letters that my father had written to his boyhood friends [he kept copies], and somewhat fewer letters written by them to him. There was also a substantial pile of written and printed materials relating to my father's career, especially from the years when he served as Principal first of William Cullen Bryant High School and then of John Baum High School, both in Queens, New York.

And then there were the materials from my own generation: all the letters [and there were many of them] that my sister or I had written home from summer camp; every letter that first she and then I wrote home from college and graduate school [in 1948-49, my sister's first year at Swarthmore, Barbara wrote *eighty* long, multi-page letters to our parents, describing in detail what she was doing and learning.]; the hundreds of pages of letters that I wrote home during my post-college *wanderjahr* in Europe; and large numbers of related documents from our lives.

I spent a very long time laboriously typing my sister's letters onto my computer, arranging them by year and month and day, deducing from internal evidence the location in that series of the small number that were not dated. By the time I was done creating the entire archive, I had read every single letter and document, beginning with a brief note from my grandfather to my grandmother dated March 26, 1900. It opens "My dear friend Elka." His next letter, dated July 31, 1900, was addressed to "Dearest most beloved Elka." He was a fast worker.



I was morally certain that no one save the members of my immediate family would take the slightest interest in this massive accumulation of documents, but I felt an irresistible urge to transform them into two books -- one devoted to my grandparents, the other to my parents. Over a period of more than a year, I sat in my lovely second floor study and worked away. My plan, which I eventually brought to completion, was to write what were in effect two epistolary novels, created from the letters, the first devoted to the love affair between Barnet and Ella [as she came to be called], the second to the love story of my parents. I hoped by this literary device to bring all four of them to life through their own words. What on earth had moved me to so large an undertaking?

If I may borrow the lovely phrase first coined in 1915 by the literary critic Van Wyck Brooks, I was in search of a *usable past* -- an understanding of the family from which I had come that could serve as a frame for my own political and personal commitments. In the case of my grandparents, I wanted to understand more fully my grandfather's lifelong commitment to the socialist ideals that I had, somewhat mysteriously, inherited from him. I wanted as well to know my grandparents as the young, romantic couple that the letters revealed, not merely as the ancient figures from an incomprehensible past that they had been for me when I was a boy.

My need with regard to my parents was more immediate and urgent. I knew that my father had been a vigorous, energetic, hard-driving, ambitious man when young, and I even had personal memories of him like that, dating from my early and middle childhood. But something had happened to my father, not too many years after his own father died. He had started to drink heavily, to gain weight, and to retreat into himself, just at the moment in his career when he was offered an opportunity for an exciting professional advancement. I wanted to understand the

causes and nature of his transformation, in part to reassure myself that I was not reenacting a dismaying pattern.

When I began crafting the book about my grandparents, I very quickly realize that it would not be enough simply to tell the story of their personal relationship through the medium of their letters. Although Barney, as he was called, earned his living as a cigar salesman for Monday & Sons, it was the Socialist Party that was his life. From the evidence of the papers and letters in the archive, it appeared that he had thrown his life and energies into socialism from a very early age. I needed to know a good deal more about the activities of the Socialist Party in New York City in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Though I have several times observed in these memoirs that I am no sort of a scholar, I did, for once in my life, engage in something very like genuine archival research.

My principal resource was a newspaper called *The New York Call*, usually referred to simply as *The Call*, which was published daily from 1908 through 1923. *The Call* was written in English, unlike *The Forward* [*Vorwärts*], which appeared in Yiddish. The UMass library did not have *The Call* on microfilm, but through interlibrary loans, they managed in the end to obtain the entire run from one source or another. By the time I was done, I had read my way rapidly through the entire fifteen years of the newspaper, scanning both for references to my grandfather, which were many indeed, and also for a more general sense of the evolution of the party in New York.

Both the Lower East Side of Manhattan, where my grandparents grew up, and Brooklyn, to which they moved after they were married, were very much assemblages of immigrant communities in those days, with enclaves in which Yiddish or German or Italian was the *lingua franca*. The roots of the Socialist Party of America, formally organized in 1901, lay in

nineteenth century labor activism enhanced and in some cases led by European immigrants fleeing the reactionary repressions of revolutionary uprisings in 1848 and 1870. The Party fought for the rights of working men and women, grounding itself in Marx's critique of capitalism.

I found that the best way to get some organized sense of the Party's political orientation was to take a close look at the Party Platform, published in *The Call* on Monday, November 9, 1908. After a rafter rattling preamble full of the sort of Marxist rhetoric that gets my juices flowing, the platform enunciated a series of General Demands, Industrial Demands, and Political Demands. Taking account of a few cases in which multiple demands were listed under a single heading, I counted twenty-seven demands in all. **No fewer than eighteen of these demands have been met in the one hundred four years since the promulgation of the Platform - most of them during the New Deal administration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt.** Indeed, if one sets aside the demands for alterations in the political system, such as abolition of the Senate [this was five years before the adoption of the Seventeenth Amendment, remember], amendment of the constitution by majority vote, and abolition of the power of the Supreme Court to declare acts of Congress unconstitutional, the only significant remaining demand that has not been met is the collective ownership of the means of production.

It is not difficult to see why reactionaries in American today cry “socialism” whenever they contemplate the social welfare programs of the New Deal and its successors. As has often been noted, FDR and the New Deal Democrats successfully separated off the social welfare component of the Socialist Party program from the call for collective ownership, and managed by using the power of the state to salvage capitalism from its inherently self-destructive tendencies. By so doing, they were able to maintain for capital the stability and viability of the

system of private ownership of the means of production and production for profit rather than for use. Almost a century later, we see a society still capitalist in its fundamental structure, vastly wealthier, but actually **more** unequal in the distribution of the social product than was the America at which Barney and his comrades were looking. [This is, I realize, a surprising claim, but the statistics bear it out. The share of the total social product going to the poorest one tenth of the population is roughly one-half of what it was at the beginning of the century, though of course the absolute quantity of goods and services allocated per capita to the poorest Americans is much larger. In recent decades, the gap between the top and the middle has also widened.]

Local politics in those days was conducted on street corners and in meeting halls. When an election was on, the Socialist Party would send out speakers each day to prominent intersections, where they would put up some signs and an overturned box, and start speaking. There were no microphones or amplifiers. One needed a good crowd presence, a pair of leather lungs, and a ready tongue to gather a crowd. My grandfather and his close friend and ally, Abe Shiplacoff, would speak three, four, or even five nights a week in the month before election day. For stellar occasions, a flatbed truck would be rented, and the speakers would travel from location to location, repeating their speeches. My Uncle Bob, when he was in his eighties, recalled that the children and their mother would not see Barney very much in the evenings, what with Party meetings, public speaking, and the meetings of the unions in which he served as an officer.

*The Call* was an essential part of the campaign planning. Each day, there would be a long list of the street corners meetings with the names of the speakers, and sometimes an indication that the speeches would be in Italian or Yiddish. The notices were as much for the speakers as for the audiences. There was really no other way for the Party to get the word out as

to where Barney and the others were needed. As part of my research, I bought a street map of Brooklyn and had a copy shop blow it up repeatedly until I had a huge detailed map of the section of Flatbush where Barney spoke. I mounted the map on a large piece of plaster board, and as I gathered detailed listings from the pages of *The Call*, I put red pins in the map at all the intersections and speech sites. The area Barney covered really wasn't very big, looked at that way. It was maybe fifteen or twenty blocks square. I was doing this in 1998, ninety years or so after the event, but save for the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway and few other innovations, the streets were unchanged.

Although Barney ran for office half a dozen times, his great moment came in 1917, when he and six other Socialists were elected to the New York Board of Aldermen. "The Seven Honest Men," they were called. He apparently had a truly impressive voice, and there are some wonderful descriptions in pages of *The Call* from 1917-18 of Barney holding forth at Aldermanic meetings. I found a great deal to be proud of as I looked deeper and deeper into Barney's political career. In 1910, he went with a delegation to a national meeting of the Party held in Chicago. The hot button issue that year was the admission of "Asiatics" to the United States. This meant Chinese workers, whose predecessors had been brought to America to work on the Trans-Continental Railroad. Some of the Socialists wanted to bar them from the country in order to limit the supply of labor, but Barney, to his eternal credit, was one of a handful of delegates who voted against the discriminatory policy.

In 1914, a series of events was unleashed that permanently changed the course of history, and with it the fate of the socialist cause throughout the world. We can trace the effects of these events, albeit from a somewhat parochial perspective, in the pages of the *Call*, but oddly, there are few if any references to the events in Barney's letters to Ella.

On June 28, 1914, the Archduke Ferdinand was assassinated in Sarajevo by Serbian nationalists. One month later, on July 28, Austria declared war on Serbia [or “Servia,” as it was always referred to in the *Call*.] In quick succession, Germany declared war on Russia and France, England declared war on Germany, and Austria declared war on Russia. The Great War had begun. No event, save the French Revolution, has had a more profound transformative effect on modern world politics [with the possible exception of the Chinese Communist Revolution.] The complicated structure of European alliances was shattered, America’s isolation from world affairs was permanently ended, Africa underwent yet another colonial subjugation, and the hopes of socialists everywhere for an international alliance of working people against exploitative capitalism were dealt a death blow.

The initial reaction of the *Call* and its readers to the war was complicated in several different ways. One of the central tenets of the Marxist analysis of capitalism was that the internationalizing, centralizing tendencies of capital would have the unintentional consequence of progressively unifying wage laborers, transforming them into a genuinely self-conscious working class. As described by Marx in *The Communist Manifesto* and elsewhere, this process begins in individual factories, where previously isolated workers, operating in a “putting-out” system, are brought together for reasons of capitalist efficiency of production and first come to realize their common interest in opposing the exploitation of the owners. As capital revolutionizes the process of production and distribution, workers in one factory, then in one industry, then in several regions of the same nation, and eventually workers throughout the world discover their common interest and join forces in ever larger and better organized combinations. The relentless transformation of the social relations of production drives the development of greater ideological understanding.

As a result of this analysis, which seemed to have been confirmed by the half century of economic developments following the publication of *Capital* in 1867, socialists confidently expected that the working classes of the world's most ideologically advanced nations, Germany and France, would refuse to fight one another at the behest of their capitalist bosses. There seemed to be every reason to believe that socialist solidarity would trump appeals to nationalist loyalty. So, for example, in the July 27, 1914 issue of the *Call*, just a day before the first declaration of war, there appeared the bold headline:

“SOCIALISTS OF AUSTRIA AND GERMANY WILL HOLD DEMONSTRATIONS TO HALT WAR PREPARATIONS.”

The failure of working-class solidarity, and the willingness of millions of European and American workingmen to fight one another for four bloody years, fatally undermined the hopes for international solidarity. Patriotism, it seemed, was stronger than class consciousness.

At this time, the New York socialists were for the most part immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe with strong ties to their countries of origin. The pages of the *Call* exhibit as much interest in events in Vienna, Berlin, Paris, Warsaw, or Petrograd as in the doings in Washington.

Ironically, the contradictory factors of ideology and nationality combined to produce a strong pacifist or anti-war sentiment in the socialist ranks. Large segments of American society responded similarly, although for different reasons, but over time, and in response to the increasingly destructive submarine attacks on trans-Atlantic shipping, American sentiment in general began to shift very strongly in favor of support for the British and French. As war fever rose, the socialist opposition came more and more to be seen as a treasonous betrayal of the nation by foreigners who could not be trusted.

At first, the American debate focused on preparedness for war, with the socialists trying unsuccessfully to persuade their fellow workers that the war in Europe was nothing more than a struggle for markets between the bosses. Individual socialist leaders took varying positions. Meyer London, one of the Socialist leaders who was by now a member of Congress, offered tempered support for war preparedness, a fact that infuriated some of his comrades in the movement.

By late 1916 and early 1917, the sinking of American ships by German submarines had generated considerable support for a war effort, and on April 6, 1917, the United States formally declared war on Germany. Now the opposition of the socialists was seen as straight-out treason, and a frenzy of red-baiting and government repression began that extended throughout the country. On June 15, 1917, shortly after America's entry into the war, Congress passed the Espionage Act, a far-reaching act of repression that contributed to the hysterical sentiment arising in the nation. All things German became anathema to good Americans. German classical music disappeared from concert programs, even the study of the German language was suspect. My uncle Bob told the story of a Professor of German at City College in New York who walked into his departmental office at the beginning of the Fall semester in 1918 to discover that all of his courses had been canceled. "Very well," Bob claims he replied, 'I shall be at home if you want me,' and he walked out, content to be paid for not working. According to Bob, the College relented and rescheduled his courses. Similar things were happening elsewhere. At The University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, the entire German Department was fired!

Intersecting with the onset of the war, and considerably complicating and compromising the socialist response, was the second great event, the Russian Revolution. We are, of course, talking about two revolutions, not one, for what we now think of as *the* Russian Revolution



began as a social democratic displacement of the Czar in March, 1917, and culminated in the Bolshevik seizure of power on November 6, 1918 [or October 24, according to the Old Style Gregorian calendar then used by the Russian Orthodox Church - hence "October Revolution."]

The overlap of the events in Russia and the entry of the United States into the war placed socialists in a double opposition to the mainstream sentiment in America, for if there was any bogeyman more feared and hated than the German, it was the Bolshevik. With the overthrow of the Czarist regime and the installation of an openly Communist government in Petrograd, the American socialists became, in the eyes of their countrymen, double traitors, and it was not long before the Government began indicting them for their public expressions of support for Lenin and Trotsky.

The downfall of the Czarist regime was greeted ecstatically in New York socialist circles. This was, after all, the hated regime that many of them had fled, fearing either pogroms or impressed service in the Czar's army. In addition, as the revolution developed in Russia and moved steadily leftward, it held out the hope of redeeming Marx's vision of an international workingmen's revolt against capital. The workers and peasants were refusing to support Russia's failing war effort, and it was not hard for loyal socialists to hope that this great refusal would spread to Germany, France, Austria, Italy, Great Britain, and even America, triggering both an end to the war and an end to capitalism.

Two weeks after the fall of the Czar's government, a mass meeting was organized in Brownsville to celebrate. Here is the *Call* story of March 28, 1917 in its entirety.

"Brownsville will celebrate the Russian revolution tonight at a mass meeting in Congress hall, Vermont street and Atlantic avenue. It is the first mass meeting in the district since the news of the revolution, and it is expected that the Russian Jewish exiles living in the district will

turn out in full force to celebrate the czar's downfall and the dawn of democracy in their native land. B. Vladek, William Karlin, William Morris Feigenbaum, Abraham Aleinicoff, and Barnett Wolff will be the speakers. The Socialist Musical society will play Russian songs and recitations. Admission to the hall will be 10 cents. The meeting is arranged by Branch 2, 23<sup>rd</sup> Assembly district, Socialist Party."

As events developed in Russia, the *Call* expressed excited support for the revolutionary forces. In April, the Germans sent Lenin and his colleagues back to Russia, in the hope, quite realistic as it turned out, that they would foment sufficient unrest to cause Russia's withdrawal from the war. [This is the now famous journey in a sealed train carriage, ending at the Finland Station in Petrograd.] With the benefit of hindsight, we are able to tell what was happening and choose up sides, but at the time, the events seemed rather chaotic. The Bolsheviks and the Kerensky government, which we now perceive as irreconcilably opposed to one another, looked to contemporary observers simply as competing wings of the same anti-czarist movement. As late as November 13<sup>th</sup>, a week after the fall of the Kerensky government, the *Call* was still temporizing.

Eight days later, the great communist journalist John Reed, who was in Petrograd reporting for *The Call*, filed a dramatic account of the Bolshevik uprising which the *Call* printed on page one with a banner headline. Reed unequivocally declared the Bolsheviks to be the wave of the future, and consigned Kerensky to the trash heap of history. He filed a twenty-five page cablegram, which the *Call* edited very lightly and published virtually verbatim. Here is the text of the original cable. In order to make it comprehensible, I have added full stops from time to time, and I have not reproduced it all in capital letters, as in the original, but otherwise it is exactly as it came into the offices of the *Call*, with the cable page breaks indicated by "/"

"New York Call, New York//Petrograd October 31 Reed - Petrograd garrison Kronstadt sailors and red guard altogether Bolshevik army last night defeated Kerensky' army seven thousand Cossacks Junkers and Artillery//attacking capital. Attempted Junker insurrection Sunday by Committee of Salvation comprising Mensheviks cadets put down by heroism//Cronstadt sailors who took armored car and telephone station by assault also Vladimir Junker School. Hundreds delegates arrived Smolny Institute Headquarters government and Soviets to report to Bolshevik Solidarity army front. This the real revolution real class struggle proletariat workmen soldiers peasants against bourgeoisie. //Last February only preliminary at present moment proletariat triumphant rank and file workmen soldiers peasants soviets control. Lenin Trotzky at head. Land given to peasants natural resources industry armistice and democratic peace conference. Extraordinary immense power Bolshejiki lies in fact Kerensky government absolutely ignored desires of masses expressed in Bolshevik program peace land workers control //industry. Entire insurrection magnificent spectacle proletarian mass organization and action bravery generosity. Was at dispersal soviet republic morning with Junkers defending Winter Palace. Afternoon opening all Russian Assembly //Soviets evening at assault Winter Palace. Midnight entered with first Bolshevik troops saw Duma members going unarmed to die with provisional government. Witnessed arrest ministers was at city Duma morning. //26 When Mensheviks Cadets etcetera declared against Bolsheviks formed committee salvation night witnessed stormy meeting city regiments deciding which side to support. Then Soviets meeting Smolny declaration peace land decree abolition [sic] capital punishment taking over government //by Soviets and appointment new cabinet. Then 27 watched bourgeois counter revolutionary movement growing. City Duma visited Peter Paul fort midnight to see prisoners 28 rumors Kerensky //coming with troops battles went to Tsarskoe Selo saw falling back Bolshevik troops. Smolny midnight war preparation 29 factories rifles shovels soldiers sailors to defend city telephone station and //Hotel Astoria taken by junkers retaken Bolshevik [sic] sailors. 30 Battles against Kerensky troops Ulkova Krasnoie Selo Colpinno Tharskoe Selo Gatchina all victorious. //I went front with Red Guard. Movement to give all power Soviets growing long time. Attempt by masses to force Soviet take power in July resulted so called Bolshevik insurrection blocked //by center socialists parties led by Lieber Dan Theretelli Gotz etcetera who held power. Then impotence provisional government created discontent disgust led to astounding growth Bolsheviks accelerated by Lieber Dan bunch forcing coalition //with Cadets against evident will democratic assembly September. Meanwhile with Lieber Dan Bunch heading central all Russian Soviets separate soviets one by one went Bolshevik demanded calling new all Russian assembly soviets which was opposed by old crowd all central army. //Fleet peasant and labor unions committees elected early in revolution just as reactionary but masses or another mind insisted on calling all //Russian soviets insisted on power to soviets and downfall provisional government eve of all Russian meeting which sabotaged by Lieber Dan bunch Cadets etcetera. Provisional government made quiet preparations to suppress any //demonstration for all power soviets. tried to send revolutionary Petrograd garrison to front replace with loyal troops. Garrison refused demanded representative in staff was refused. Garrison then refused to take orders from anybody //except Petrograd soviet formed military revolutionary committee. Staff planned to take action but overheard night 24 25 by members Pavlovsk regiment who at once began arrest staff and government. The insurrection was off could not stop. Military revolutionary committee took charge //put into execution perfect comprehensive plan captured whole city and patrolled first three nights while insurrection going on. No disorders no crimes committee Bolshevik [sic] patrols kept town //absolutely quiet. Many stories being sent out Bolshevik looting murdering without foundation. In fact after

being captured and released on word of honor many Junkers again took part treacherous fighting some murdered by outraged opponents but very few while Bolshevik //losses five times as great. All newspaper except Bolshevik retailed lies to excite population and yet many of the[m] not suppressed. City Duma center of absolute hostility to//Bolsheviks. no workingmen present but center and right socialist parties cadets all sorts of representatives of bourgeoisie breathing threats and mobbing guards caught alone. Not arrested however. Now other socialist parties are //forming new government and debating whether or not to allow Bolsheviks to take part. no one with the Bolsheviks except proletariat but that solid. All bourgeoisie and appanages relentlessly viciously hostile. Employees all //government departments bank telephone etcetera on strike paralyzing business of government. refuse to work with Bolshevik ministers. New Bolshevik plan government to run by series of collegiums instead of ministry headed by chairman//called peoples commissars who meet in soviet of peoples commissars with Lenin chairman. News from front and all over country shows that though some fighting going on in cities masses pretty solid Bolshevik except Don region where general //Kaledine and Cossacks have proclaimed military dictatorship. Good to be alive. Trotsky and Lenin through CALL send to American revolutionary international socialists greeting from first proletarian republic of the world and call to arms for international social revolution. Send me money."

How is it that I have the precise wording of this historic document? Therein lies a lovely story. My great-aunt Fanny, Ella's sister, was working as a secretary in the editorial offices of *The Call* when Reed's cable came in. After she had finished transcribing it, she asked the editor whether she could keep the original stack of cable pages, and he agreed. The cable, yellowed with age but still intact, was passed from her to my grandfather and grandmother, from them to my father, and from him to me as part of the mass of papers in my parents' attic. For many years, it simply sat on my shelf, but eventually, I decided to donate it to the John Reed Archives in Houghton Library at Harvard [Reed, of course, had been a Harvard graduate], in memory of my grandfather and grandmother. This is the same library in which I had sat, as a graduate student, reading the microfilm of the German translation of James Beattie's *Essay on the Nature and Immutability of the Truth*, and thereby establishing an essential link in Immanuel Kant's knowledge of the sceptical arguments of David Hume. It seemed appropriate that I repay them in some way for their assistance during the writing of my doctoral dissertation.

There is an amusing coda to the story. When I came to write the book about my grandparents, I asked Houghton Library for a copy of the cable, so that I could quote it in my book. They charged me a fee, even though it was I who had donated it to the library. I wrote a restrainedly ironic letter to Harvard's President, Neil Rudenstine, and received a very contrite apology. I urged him **not** to send the money back, as that would, I suggested, not be a classy thing to do, and he had the grace to accede to my suggestion. I gather that in future the donors of documents will be able to get copies of them gratis.

Two years after the revolution, the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks ["majority" and "minority", or "greater" and "lesser"] split, triggering fratricidal warfare in socialist parties all over the world. My grandfather sided with Menshevik faction in the American party, led by Norman Thomas. Thus it was, two generations later, that I grew up in a socialist but violently anti-communist home. It was many years before I discovered the roots of my father's hatred for Lenin and Stalin.

Writing a book about my grandparents did indeed give me a usable past. I found in Barnet Wolff a man I could admire and celebrate and perhaps manage in some small measure to emulate. But I also found in my grandparents a young, exuberant, romantic pair of lovers who charmed me as I read their letters to one another. My grandfather especially was a playful, witty correspondent who endlessly teased and wooed my grandmother. Mind you, I have pictures of them from their earliest days, and Elka Nislow was not, by any stretch of the imagination, a looker! But my grandfather saw himself as the luckiest man in New York, as having made a great catch.

Why so many letters between a husband and wife? The reason is that to escape the heat and dirt and very real danger of serious infections during the New York summers, Barney would

send Ella and the children to the Catskills and remain in town to work. These were no holiday outings to fancy resort hotels. The family would board with a farmer in Big Indian or Westshokan, and Ella, from the testimony of her letters, would worry endlessly about whether her four little children were getting enough milk. The postal service was much better then than it is now, and Barney and Ella could count on a letter arriving the day after it was mailed. Indeed, the very same anxiety my parents expressed if my sister went a few days without writing home from college is merely an echo, I came to realize, of the eagerness with which Barney and Ella awaited the post.

Late in the series of letters, in August of 1918, when the Flapper Era was about to start in America, Barney got it into his head that it would be a most fashionable thing for him and Ella to get a divorce [or “devorce” as he puts it, mimicking the pronunciation.] We don’t have the beginning of this bit of fancy, nor do we have Ella’s replies, but here is the first of the two letters in which Barney sets out his very modern proposal:

"Aug 12, 1918

Now as to that Devorce; I see no reason why we cant remain the best of friends afterwards. I would be a single man and as such I would be worth going after. You would be a "poor" woman who had suffered from a "bad" husband and as such would be interesting and would of course deserve a great deal of sympathy. I would of course do my best to understand you. A thing which your husband "never did" and altogether it would be very jolly and up to date. So if you think you want it why, I'll do my best to be a gallant Frenchman. For I surely would not want to disapoint a lady. By the way as I am very poor now and may not be able to come out to see you, you can sue on the ground of desertion and non-support. But before doing it wont you be at least once more my dearest Elka and let me be as ever lovingly your Barney! "

When it came time to choose a title for my book on my grandparents, I recalled a lovely letter that Ella had sent to Barney after they had been married a while. "I would have loved you," she wrote, "even if you were no socialist," I decided to call it *Barney and Ella: A Socialist Romance*.

The book about my parents, perhaps not surprisingly, was somewhat more difficult to write, despite the fact that I had a wonderful array of letters from each of them. As I have already indicated, the Wolffs and the Ornsteins were friends, because the young girls, Ella Nislow and Clara Perlmutter, had worked side by side in a cap-making sweatshop in Lower Manhattan when they were in their teens. My father, Walter, was the eldest of his brothers and sister, and my mother, Charlotte [or Lotte, as she came to be called] was also the eldest of the Ornstein children. In their late teens, they both belonged to Circle One of the Young People's Socialist League of Brooklyn. The Yipsels, as they are known, were the youth branch of the Socialist Party. They would have periodic get togethers that were part serious political talk and part dancing and gossip. Walter went to Boy's High School, from which he was apparently suspended at one point for making political speeches. As you can imagine, my sister and I were put under a good deal of pressure to excel in school. It came as a great delight, therefore, for me to discover that my father, the Great Brain and High School Principal, had graduated with a 65 average.

My mother was forced to leave high school at the age of sixteen to get secretarial training and find a job, because her father suffered a crippling stroke that placed severe economic burdens on the family. She became a spectacular typist and stenographer who could organize an entire office or turn a department store upside down over the phone if she did not get what she had ordered. Very quickly, she secured a position as secretary to the City Editor of the *New York Herald Tribune*, one of the major New York evening newspapers [and heir to the *Herald* in which Karl Marx published rafts of political reporting from his home in London.]

After squeaking out of Boys' High, my father enrolled in City College, which for generations offered poor young men an outstanding free college education [it was not until

1929, much later, that women were admitted to graduate programs, and only in 1951 did it become fully co-educational]. Walter, my uncle Bob, who was one year younger, Sidney Hook, and Ernest Nagel were all students together. Those were storied times, when each tiny faction on the left had its own booth in the student cafeteria. My father would take notes on the lectures he attended, and then repeat as much as he could to his friends in Circle One who could not even afford a free college education.

From the letters of those teenage years, I gradually formed an image of my father as an intense young man with severe hang ups about anything sexual. In the archive are several painful letters from him to his friends in which he writes with the stern disapproval of a Savonarola about the innocent kissing games that "the bunch" engaged in during their gatherings. Even as a young man, he exhibited the self-important pomposity that infuriated me so. But joined to this rather unattractive side of my father's personality was a genuine and quite charming love of the nature and of the Catskills where he spent each summer hiking and camping.

While Walter left New York each summer to hike and camp in the Catskills, Lotte stayed at home, working. They wrote to one another almost every day. Lotte told stories of seeing General Pershing march up Fifth Avenue in triumph after the conclusion of the Great War. Walter wrote lyrical descriptions of the mountains. At the risk of trying the patience of my readers, I am going to reproduce here *in toto* two letters written on the same day, September 6, 1919, the first from Walter describing a hike in the woods, the second from Lotte describing a meeting of Circle One. Taken together, they capture not only the relationship developing between these two young people [Walter at this point not yet eighteen, Lotte already turned nineteen] but also something of what their world was like.

Dear Lottie,



I left off in my other letter with a discussion of my prowess as a walker - ha!ha! After leaving the men I attempted to live up to my reputation. The sun was hot, but the woods moist and cool; this alone was sufficient to spur me on.

I pushed up the trail at a great rate - past Brisbane's (of the Journal) house, up, up, always up! And while rushing headlong on my way - I saw - the prettiest, daintiest, little fawn imaginable.

it was so tiny, so frail, and evidently so unsophisticated, even for an animal with its knowledge of the woods, that I felt like offering to help it. it was not even afraid of me! There it stood, thirty-five feet away, while I twisted and turned to a better position. When I could see its beautiful head, I stiffened; here we stood!

The fawn could not understand or recognize this object which did not move; the wonder of it is that it stayed near the trail while I was coming up, making so much noise; I verily believe the fawn was so young that it did not know 'man.'

it was a sweet creature, tho' slight, of a dark brown thruout, except for the white patch on the throat underneath the jaw, and a similar patch, similarly colored on the under side of the tail.

Its eyes were dark, and limpid. Its ears delicately wrought as a Chinese vase.

All this I noticed as we stared at each other - Finally, it turned to go, as it did so I whistled - swift as a flash its head was turned toward me; I played with it for a minute or two - and then with a flirt of its tail it bounded away!

It was the second deer I have seen in a wild state - and it made me feel happy all the way up - it was as dainty and beautiful as if it had been cut from a picture; I hope I did not frighten it.

(But, gee, I wish you had been there - it would have given you so much pleasure to gaze into those liquid-eyes, and to whistle as it turned to go - all right! wait until next year, I'll show you)

Well, I arrived - including the time I wasted washing my mouth at two springs, taking off my sweater, and watching the deer (not wasted) it took me one hour and five minutes - and I now, right here, lay claim to the world's championship for climbing Belle Ayre - one man, I know, went up in 58 minutes - but he never stopped - I wasted at least ten minutes - so Who Is Going To Dispute My Claim! (-- supposed to represent stentorian tones --) I pause for a reply!

The observer on Belle Ayre is a good friend of mine - he was very glad to see me - and so we chatted for a while before I went up the tower.

But I did go finally, and then - oh! Lottie, I wanted you there so much - if for nothing else than to see the astonishment, and the look of pleasure on your face, as you gazed on the most magnificent view of the Katskills.

The day was perfect! The air remarkably clear! Is it surprising that we saw the Berkshire Hills? (Yes, we, you and I: I had intended taking you up Slide, but I can't resist the temptation - and we'll go up Slide, anyway.)

And do you remember how the view was divided: on the left fields, houses, clearings, roads, railroad tracks - on the right, hills, mountains, woods, and green trees all over?

To the left we saw magnificent hotels, beautiful inns, and cozy little homes. Do you remember the one I picked out for you - I'll give it to you if you promise to make me a frequent guest! It was so pretty, there, in the sunshine, its red tile roof shining brightly, and its white sides giving the impression of coolness. And its garden, and lawn were so well kept - is it any wonder you wanted it?

And then - to the front, and right - mountains upon mountains, one growing out of the other, until to the right, towering high above them all, we saw giant Slide!

Lottie, I will never forget the grandeur of that scene - oh! how glad I was that you could be with me - to stand by my side and marvel at what Nature had done. And do you remember, how I explained all those formations? How I pointed out that the action of the wind, and rain, and above all the cutting action of the streams had worn down a gigantic plateau, until today, we have a region of hills and valleys?

Truly, Nature is wonderful - and the most wonderful part of it all was that we should be there; two minute specks in the world of ours - two 'nothings' in the universe which contains an infinite number of solar systems vastly greater than ours. The wonder of it all held us then - we could hardly speak, for fear that the spell would be dissolved, and we would once more assume our egoistic attitudes.

Yes, Lottie, such philosophic moments are good; they teach us more than schools and books can. They make us realize our true position; they give us humility, they give us, above all, patience and understanding.

But it grew a little chilly then, and we were forced to leave the tower. Oh! how hungry we were - we did justice to our lunch, did we not? Mr. Persons was kind enough, then, to show us around the place - to explain how he built his cabin, and his garden - both of which represent years of toil.

There was much more to learn from this fine, kindly old man, grown philosophic and patient of the world and its ways because of his long sojourn on the mountain. Eleven summers, from April to November, he has stayed there; apart from the world, and with but few people to whom he can talk, even in Summer months, when hardly a day passes without some visitors.

But the tower was too fascinating, and we were almost compelled to climb it once more. There we sat, our backs against the wire netting which surrounds it, wrapped in warm sweaters, and with a world of beauty before us.

Ah! what a place for conversation, Lottie. Just enough clouds to make the sky beautiful, a gentle breeze no longer chilling, the fields, the woods, the mountains - all about us, and above us - and we two perched there high above everything - is it remarkable that our mind was philosophic - and our discourse of the same nature?

We talked about life - about the earth - and about the universe - and marvelled that such things should be; and that we should sit there and consider them.

We wished that the millions of boys and girls the world over who lived in slums and worked their lives out for a mere pittance could come to the mountains,

and could get, if only once, the Weltanschauung (world-outlook) which an experience like this gives one.

We talked about the Movement, the part we would like to play in it, the part we should play in it - and we spent many minutes considering what part a mother should devote to it. We agreed in many matters, and failed to agree in others - but we understood each other better for the discussion.

And then the conversation turned to our friends, their faults, their good points - and what they meant to us - a topic never-ending in its interest, and limitless in its scope.

But it was late then, and we were due at supper - How everyone would be frightened if we failed to appear - and how the tongues would begin to wag. 'I knew he would hurt her by taking her up Belle Ayre, I knew it!' Ha!Ha! we fooled them, eh? We had a wonderful time, we were raised on the wings of philosophy and friendship to heights we never dared to climb and those prosaic fools were afraid he would tax her strength! As if he did not know how far he could go, and as if he would dare go farther!

The climb down was uneventful, we went down the Big Indian Trail - walked through the Fort Close Hollow, and, wonder of wonders, got a hitch! We were late for supper, just a bit, but we made up for it, all right! It was a pleasure to watch you eat - you'll gain ten piunds if you don't watch out.

A rest will make you feel better, and give back to you that vitality, that snap and vigour which will take you up Slide, which would take you anyplace.

Writing this has been a great pleasure to me - I hope you enjoy it as much as I have.

As ever Walt

Sept 6, 1919

Dear Walt,

Today I must write to you, even if there were no 'one a day, 2 on Sunday' schedule, as per you. I'm sure you're dying to hear about the meeting.

Well, in the first place, Anne Shevitz was there. They have moved back to the city already. The honorable Louis Troupp was also there, as were, Joe Lapidus, Herb Cohen, Ben Batchkin and the rest of the lesser lights of the Club. Oh yes, Eddie Cohen was there, too.

Anne and Louis veritably fell on each other's necks after not having seen each other for so long. There wasn't much of a program. Nothing was prepared so we had an unprepared discussion on the Socialist movement in Mexico, and the relation of Mexico to the U.S. It was a very spirited affair - led by Torgman and carried on mostly by Ked Ziegler, Herb Cohen and Torgman.

By the way, Torgman resigned from the circle last night and made a very touching little farewell speech.

After the meeting we sang songs and there was certainly a lot of pep in the singing due to Anne Shevitz's good playing.

Then we danced! And, oh Walter some dancing! Some strange fellow

(strange to me) dropped in, and he played. My, but he could play ragtime! You just had to dance! Even staid Herb Cohen was dancing the shimmy. Think of it. We didn't want to go home. It was 12 before we left. Joe Lapidus walked me to the station. He is dying to learn to dance, so he's coming out to my house next week for a preliminary lesson.

Walt, if you don't stop calling me sick I'll kill you. I'm feeling splendidly, only as I said, I could stand a little more rest.

[Written above: I delivered all your regards. Anne said she hadn't received a letter from you yet.]

After this week tho, I think I'll be able to quiet down a little. My friends and the dressmaker have been leading me a merry chase for the past 2 weeks.

You ought to see the beautiful pink rose I have on me now. I saw it in the florists and couldn't resist buying it. If I thought you were still sentimental I'd press it and send it to you. I'll save it anyway, until, you write and tell me how sentimental you are.

Its funny to watch Louis Troupp and me. We're so very formal to each other, but in a jesting way. You see, when Morris and the gang and I went to Sea Edge Sunday, Morris was with me most of the time (yes, Tess was there, I know) and naturally we spoke a little about Louis Troupp and me.

Like a fool I told him the truth - that I really admired Louis for his actions, etc. I suppose he told Louis and he with the usual egotistic masculine mind, put his own construction on it and probably thinks I only said that to hide my real feelings, that my heart was broken, etc. And again, like most men he takes pleasure in breaking a heart. The poor fish - if he only knew.

One thing and a very valuable one he has taught me however. Never to be serious with the boys in the Club. I don't know how I even got that way! Now, things are sailing beautifully I josh around with all of them and let them see I'm joshing. My trouble always was that I was too sincere. henceforth, I'll be very wary who I am sincere with. Some day I'll thank Louis for the lesson he taught me. I could kick myself for having to be taught such an obvious lesson. But, its all right. We all have to learn. No more paper, so, au revoir.

As ever,           Lottie

All my life, I have struggled with two conflicting images of my father -- the young, vigorous, athletic, romantic man, full of energy, eager to take on the world, and the old, overweight heavy smoking alcoholic, disappointed and bitter, seemingly insecure despite his professional success. I can see hints of the older man in the younger, to be sure, but I have never been able to discern in my experience of him, or in the letters and papers with which I spent so many hours, what went wrong. For many years, I was haunted by the fear that I would follow his path. Periodically, I dieted, I exercised, and -- though it might seem oddly incongruous -- I

made certain repeatedly to tell my sons that I love them, something my father never once said to me. Now that I am seventy-eight, only one year from the age at which my father died, I am confident that whatever other failings I may have, I am not that man whose final years caused me such dismay.

By the time I had finished my immersion in the archive of family papers and letters, I had two books, each roughly 120,000 words long. I made a selection of photographs from the manila envelopes and assembled the entire thing into two desktop published books. Collective Copies in Amherst xeroxed them and put them in ring binders, with a pair of pictures of Barney and Ella as grandparents on the cover of the first and pictures of Lotte and Walter as young adults on the second. Then I bundled them up and sent them off to my sister, my sons, and my cousins.

Barbara was quite interested in both volumes, of course, and my sons made polite comments, but only Cora, of all my cousins, even acknowledged the receipt of the books, and none of them seemed terribly interested in this intimate portrait of their forbears. I knew that there was no chance whatsoever of real publication, so I put the books on a shelf with my other unpublished work, the early book on deterrence theory and Game Theory, and more or less forgot about them. The writing had served its purpose. I felt that I had done honor to my grandparents and had come to terms with my feelings about my parents. Perhaps, after another fifty or one hundred years have passed, someone will find it valuable to have a detailed picture of life in early twentieth century New York socialist Jewish circles.

## **Part Three**

### **Chapter Seven**

#### **Money Makes The World Go 'Round**

From the moment Esther floated the suggestion that I come on board to help create a doctoral program in Afro-American Studies, I knew that the key to our success would be my ability to find money to support the graduate students. UMass is perpetually underfunded and afflicted by periodic budget crises. Save in the sciences, which live off research grants into which doctoral student support is routinely built, graduate education is funded almost entirely by Teaching Assistantships. There are a handful of graduate fellowships, open in a university-wide competition, but without the TA-ships, doctoral programs in the Humanities and Social Sciences would wither and die. As is the case at countless other public universities in America, the allocation of TA-ships at UMass is tied to undergraduate enrollments, particularly in the introductory courses that are officially designated as satisfying the course distribution mandated by the university's General Education requirements. For this reason, major departments such as Economics, Psychology, and History routinely offer large introductory courses crafted to satisfy the Faculty Senate's General Education guidelines. Hundreds of students are enrolled in these courses, which are taught by a combination of lectures and weekly discussion sections. Doctoral students lead the discussion sections and do all the grading and student counseling associated with the course. All of this is of course second nature to anyone who has spent time teaching in a public university in America.

Since Afro-American Studies until this point did not have a graduate program, it received no allocation of Teaching Assistantships, but over the years, the Dean of Humanities and Fine Arts had given one or two TA-ships to the department because several of the courses actually enrolled so many students that the instructor could not handle the grading. The principal

recipient of this assistance was Femi Richards. Femi taught a wildly popular Introduction to African Studies that regularly drew as many as two hundred undergraduates. He recruited his TAs from other departments -- Art and History, principally.

Once our doctoral program had been approved, we applied to the Dean for an allocation of TA-ships, but immediately we ran into a problem that I had seen coming for the entire four years during which we had been planning our program and shepherding it through the approval process. TA allocations are a regular part of the annual Dean's budget. Each year, when it comes time to make up the next year's allocation, the default position is for every department to get the same allocation it currently enjoys. Every department asks for, indeed, demands, more TAs, flaunting its enrollment figures as justification. There was never a reserve pool of money from which those demands could be met. Every new TA position given to History meant one fewer allocated to Classics or Comparative Literature. As for TA transfers across deaconal lines, say from History to Economics, it would have been easier to ask the two departments to exchange buildings.

Thus when Afro-American Studies suddenly popped up with a brand new doctoral program, the Dean -- Lee Edwards, who had run for the job on a platform of favoring Women's Studies and Afro-American Studies -- gave the department exactly **no** new TA-ships. We had had one and a half TA-ships the year before [yes, this precious commodity, like the *lembas* carried by Sam and Frodo, was carefully parceled out in fragments], and we would have one and a half once our doctoral program was running. It would have been easy to conclude that this was racism rearing its ugly head once more, but that was not in fact the case. It was something much more insidious -- institutional inertia. The Dean was simply not prepared to weather the storm

of protest she would have stirred up had she shifted her scarce TA money around to give us a fair share of it.

What to do? It was perfectly obvious to me that there were only three solutions, and even before the first students showed up to launch our new program, I began an effort to try all three. The first option was to apply for General Education accreditation for a number of our undergraduate courses and then reconfigure them so that they became lecture courses with discussion sections. At that time [this changed, subsequently] allocation of TA-ships specifically for Gen Ed courses was actually funded by a separate pool of money controlled by the Provost's Office, and I was pretty sure that if we could produce the enrolments, we would get some sort of TA allocation from that source. The Provost was less immediately answerable to departments than were the Deans. [If all of this strikes you as a lot of inside baseball, you are correct. Programs at public universities in America live and die by this sort of machination.]

Getting Gen Ed accreditation, although time-consuming, was entirely doable. The request had to go through a number of Faculty Senate committees and then to the floor of the Senate -- ordinarily a process consuming a year. I got that process under way. But there was considerable resistance in the department to the suggestion that we reconfigure our courses into large lectures with discussion sections. The members of the department had for a quarter of a century been running a first class undergraduate program, to which they devoted a great deal of time and energy. They saw themselves as performing an important educational service to countless White as well as Black students, and they were right. John Bracey was the most vocal opponent of the proposal, even though he actually had the most to gain professionally from the establishment of a successful doctoral program. John regularly drew many more students than could be handled even by the large room at the end of the hall in which we periodically held our



department meetings. When John's classes met, students would pour out of the room into the hall, and sit on chairs pulled in from other classrooms, craning to hear what was going on inside the room. When I suggested that he move his courses to any one of a number of larger lecture halls in other buildings, he angrily refused. In the end, the idea of tapping into the existing pool of TA-ships on campus by using the General Education requirements went nowhere.

The second possibility was to bypass the Dean of Humanities and Fine Arts and try to get support directly from the Dean of the Graduate School. At UMass, the Graduate Deanship is a somewhat inferior position, inasmuch as it has a relatively small budget and no departments or programs reporting to it. In 1996, however, as we waited the arrival of our first class of students, the Graduate Dean was Charlena Seymour, an African-American Communications Disorders scholar who was past president of her national professional organization and a long-time friend of our department. My appeal to her actually produced a really significant measure of support, without which we would have been unable to make our program a success. Charlena went from the Graduate Deanship to the position of Interim Provost in 2001, and then to the regular Provostship in 2004, a completely unexpected and heaven-sent development that resulted in significant administrative support for our doctoral program for ten years.

Even with Charlena's help, we were going to need more money. The problem was a simple matter of math. We planned to take five students a year [although in the first and third years we actually admitted seven], and since we expected students to finish in five or six years, that meant that before long I was going to be looking for funding for as many as twenty-five or thirty active students. I knew from long experience in doctoral programs at UMass and elsewhere that adequate funding was the secret to success for our students. This was especially true because of a wrinkle in the rules governing student fees. Thanks to the fact that the graduate

assistants had unionized and fought successfully for a pretty good contract [alongside their comrades, the members of the Faculty Union], a graduate student with at least a one-half Teaching Assistantship received a waiver of tuition and many additional fees, including a very hefty fee covering health care for the student and his or her family. The stipend for a full Teaching Assistantship wasn't much -- it crept up above twelve thousand by the time I left, hardly "full funding" by any stretch of the imagination. But with the various waivers, the value of the full package was as much as twenty-five thousand dollars a year. So the difference between being funded and not being funded was enormous for our students. It was clear that I would have to put on an all-court press to secure the third source of support: outside grants and donations.

I had been raising money one way or another for almost ten years, by that point. What with HRAAA, USSAS, and IASH, I thought I was a pretty accomplished and successful fundraiser. Well, I tried everything. My first idea was to reach out to the hundreds of former students who had come through our department's undergraduate program, many of whom, I was sure, had fond memories of Esther, John, Ernie, Mike, Bill, Archie, Max Roach, and even Jimmy Baldwin and Chinua Achebe. Surely they would be thrilled to support a revolutionary doctoral program. Alas, it was not to be. Working with the University's Development Office, I sent out hundreds of letters to our graduates, but the return was miniscule.

My next thought was to go to several of the big foundations who had laid major bread on the Temple University Africana Studies Program and other Black Studies programs around the country. I was especially optimistic about the Rockefeller Foundation, and actually made a trip to New York with John Bracey to talk to a program officer, but in the end, we got not a penny from them. John was convinced that the real reason for their refusal to help us was that "they

know us, Bob. They know we are a dangerous group, from their point of view. Temple may talk big, but they are no threat, and neither is Skip at Harvard." He may have been right; but the result was no money.

At about that time, UMass had its moment of basketball glory with John Calipari as coach and a star, Marcus Camby, who went on to the NBA with a multi-million dollar contract. All of the UMass basketball players had studied in our department, and John Bracey was sure he could shake big bucks out of that tree, but there again, we got not a single dollar. We even had high hopes for Bill Cosby, who had taken a degree in the UMass School of Education. One of the graduate students in our first group was the granddaughter of a woman who had taught at UMass and was very friendly with Cosby's wife, Camille, but although the granddaughter did splendidly, the family connection never brought in any money.

So I spent a good deal of time in the Graduate School Fellowship Office, pouring over huge books listing all of the thousands of foundations that had a record of supporting educational programs. I discovered that while there were a good many fellowships for individual students fitting this or that profile, virtually no one offered programmatic support for doctoral programs in the Humanities. My search was not without results, however, for as I paged through endless listings of foundations, I began to notice that there *was* money out there for programs that helped minority students to make the transition from high school to tertiary education, and to succeed academically once they enrolled in a college or university. I had, I thought to myself, created a successful school-to-college program for minority students in Springfield, and had raised almost \$700,000 to support it. Perhaps I could turn that success to my advantage.

Thus was born the idea for a new program, which I christened *Scholars of the Twenty-First Century*. My idea was simplicity itself. I would create a program for first year minority

undergraduates that would combine a demanding academic component with a great deal of small group and one-on-one mentoring and instruction. I would recruit the Freshman students from each UMass entering class and hire my Afro-American Studies doctoral students as Tutor/Mentors. Even though fewer than twenty percent of each entering cohort could be considered "minority," in a class of four thousand Freshmen, there were more than enough potential Twenty-First Century Scholars. Fairly quickly, I settled on the structure and parameters of the program. [I had already learned that if you run everything by yourself, you need waste no time holding committee meetings or circulating memoranda. I routinely made major decisions for USSAS while taking a shower or waiting at an intersection for the light to change.]

I decided to divide the students into groups of five. To each group I would assign an Afro-Am grad students as Tutor/Mentor. In the Fall semester, all of the groups would do a three-credit course, as part of their regular five course UMass load, focused on the minority experience in America. There would be a great many short papers with instant feedback from their graduate student Instructor, trips to the University Library to learn how to use a research library, and individual meetings as well as group discussion meetings each week. We would choose a single text to be used by every group, but the graduate students would be free to flesh out the assigned reading with materials of their own choice.

In the Spring semester, the three credit course would be devoted to independent research. Each student would choose an individual research topic on *any* subject that interested him or her, and the semester would be spent working on that project under the guidance of the Tutor/Mentor. The written work of the semester would be first a brief statement of the project, then an outline, after that a series of preliminary drafts, and then a final paper submitted in time for the end of

semester celebration. At that celebration, we would start with a dinner, after which a number of the students would get up before the entire group and assorted guests [the Chair of Afro-Am, the Dean, the Provost, etc.] and make a brief presentation of the results of his or her research. Over the summer, I would assemble all of the research papers, those that had been the subject of oral reports and those that had not, and I would desktop publish a volume of them that would be distributed to each student and to administrators as evidence of the quality of the students' work.

Although I designed the *Scholars* program quickly, I did not do so haphazardly or fecklessly. In fact, the program embodied three beliefs that I had long held about tertiary education, both in the United States and in South Africa. First, I was convinced that so-called "objective tests" like the Scholastic Aptitude Test are virtually worthless as indications of the ability of a young man or woman to do satisfactory work at college. I decided, therefore, that I would test this thesis, if I were able to raise the money to launch the program, by deliberately recruiting minority Freshmen with strong high school records but very low SAT scores.

Second, I had long believed that the key to success for beginning students is a demanding curriculum combined with a great deal of individual and small group instruction. This, I had observed, was the sort of education routinely offered to students at elite small private colleges [although not at the richest and most highly rated large universities, where the senior professors by and large play little or no role in direct interactions with beginning undergraduates.] By limiting the *Scholars* classes to five students, I ensured that students would receive the sort of attention I believed would result in their success.

Finally, I wanted to test my conviction that students needed the experience of serious independent research at the beginning of their undergraduate careers, not the mere pretense of "research" in introductory science courses. Perhaps I was influenced in this belief by my farcical

encounter with laboratory research in Harvard's much-hyped Physics 11 course, back in '50 - '51.

In addition, by allowing students to choose any topic they wished for research, whether it bore a relation to the subject matter of the first semester or not, I hoped to engage their intellectual energies and curiosities in a way that the exercises in the large "Gen Ed" courses never could. If I may get ahead of my story just a bit, once the program was launched, students took advantage of the latitude allowed in the second semester to write their research papers on a range of topics that I would never have been able to anticipate. A young woman who had been born in Puerto Rico and hoped to become a small animal veterinarian wrote a lovely paper on endangered birds of Puerto Rico. A young Cape Verdean man took the opportunity to explore the patterns of immigration from the Cape Verde Islands to the Southeastern shoreline communities of Massachusetts and Rhode Island. An Asian American woman studied the relationship between traditional Chinese medicine and modern Western medicine. A young African-American man looked into opportunities for minorities in the medical professions. And - my favorite - one woman even wrote a first person narrative account of what it was like to be the only woman working in an automobile body shop.

When I began my search for funding, I ran into a bit of luck. During the time I was running the *Summa* program out of IASH [which, you will recall, was the Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities], I had managed to secure four one year \$25,000 grants from the Nellie Mae Foundation to supplement the big Balfour grant. Nellie Mae is the New England Loan Management Corporation or NELM [hence Nellie Mae], and in its original incarnation, it ran a small foundation whose grant limit was \$25,000 per project per year. But in 1999, Nellie Mae was bought by Sallie Mae [SLM, or Student Loan Management Corporation -- are you following this?] and suddenly the endowment of the Nellie Mae Education Foundation was increased

tenfold. Just as I was looking for support for the *Scholars* program, the NMEF announced that it was increasing its grant limit from \$25,000 to \$250,000.

The success of the *SUMMA* program had given me some street cred with Nellie Mae, and I succeeded in getting first a one year \$100,000 grant [while they were making the transition to the new foundation format] and then a four year one million dollar grant. I was off and running. From then until I retired in 2008, I was able, by combining the Nellie Mae money with the support from Charlena and the bits and pieces of TA-ships from the Dean, to provide full support every year for every single one of our doctoral students. The first year students got scholarships, so that they would be free to tackle the big Major Works seminar. Thereafter, they were awarded TA-ships either to serve as Tutor/Mentors in the *Scholars* program or to work as regular TAs in departmental courses. Even the Nellie Mae money, generous as it was, was never quite enough, but some of our students won fellowships on and off campus, others were recruited by the University's Honors College to teach there, and for still others I was able to arrange teaching gigs at Hampshire College which, through a reciprocity agreement, carried the same waiver of tuition and fees.

I think I am more proud of my success in funding our doctoral students than I am of anything else I accomplished during my half century career, with the possible exception of USSAS. It was a constant scramble, the desperate nature of which I concealed as best I could from my colleagues. All they knew was that each year, old Bob provided. But I would sit at dinner, moaning to Susie that I did not know where I was going to find enough money to cover everyone the next year, and she would assure me that somehow I would manage. I have never been quite sure whether my colleagues understood how crucial to the success of our doctoral program this funding really was. As I have indicated, the funding was never lavish. Other

universities, I knew, offered students five year funding commitments of as much as \$25,000 a year in addition to tuition waivers. But I held firm to the principle of equal sharing, and so there never developed that A-List/B-List split that caused so much trouble in the UMass Philosophy Department. This funding principle, which of course, all the students were well aware of, was our way of expressing our commitment to them in hard cash.

Needless to say, the Nellie Mae wanted evidence that the program was a success, so I built into the initial proposal several quantitative and qualitative measures that could provide some indication that our program was having the desired effect. My long-term hope was that some of the students we enrolled in the *Scholars* program would end up pursuing professional and academic careers, but we would not know about that for many years to come. The immediate measures were two: Their first year academic performance, as measured by grades, and -- most important of all -- the "one year retention rate." This latter is a very commonly used measure of the academic performance of a group of students. It is simply the proportion of Freshmen who make it through the first year and show up to enroll for their Sophomore courses. UMass has masses of statistics on the "one year retention rates" of all Freshmen, of men, of women, of African American students, of Latino students, of Asian American students, of science majors, humanities majors, business majors, engineering majors -- no matter how you slice and dice a class of undergraduates, the UMass Office of Institutional Research can tell you how likely they are to make it to the Sophomore year. The gold standard of this sort of measure is the "six year graduation rate," a statistic that has built into it the expectation that many students will take time off on their way to the degree, but by the time we would have numbers of that sort, our grant would have run out.



Almost immediately, it became clear that the program I had designed was succeeding in raising significantly the one year retention rate for the minority students in *Scholars*. Indeed, in the first few years, we lost almost no students at all, despite the fact that I had deliberately recruited students with sub-par SAT scores. I was very pleased, needless to say, and I flaunted the numbers wherever I could, virtually buttonholing administrators to tell them how successful our program was. Once again, I got lucky. It turned out that the particular bee in Charlena Seymour's bonnet was *mentoring*. She was focused principally on the mentoring of graduate students in the sciences, and mentoring of junior faculty on their way to the tenure decision. Nevertheless, there I was, building a program for minority undergraduates around mentoring, and she loved it.

Although I was delighted at our success, I cannot say I was especially surprised. It really seemed to me to be a no-brainer. If you take a group of students who have been thrown onto an enormous, impersonal, rather forbidding university campus, where they may actually make it through four years of undergraduate study without ever getting to know a single one of their instructors, how surprising is it that they do better if you pay attention to them, talk to them, and give them some individual instruction?

I would give each of my graduate student mentors a list of their five students before the first meeting of class in September. *When those five students walked into the classroom on their very first day, their instructor already knew their names.* I trained the graduate students to serve as much more than just instructors. They learned where on campus a student could go for help with writing, with math, with housing problems, with roommate conflicts, with health issues. My Tutor/Mentors were expected to learn what other courses their five students were taking, and to find out right away if there were problems. In a school as large as UMass, the first sign that a

student is having trouble is a series of failing grades at the end of the semester. By then, it is often too late to do anything about it, and the student gets discouraged and drops out. But we were like canaries in a mine shaft. We could spot trouble when it cropped up on the first quiz or short paper.

The Mentors served two other functions, one of which I had planned for, the other of which, I confess, I did not at first anticipate. These were minority students of one category or another, being taught mostly, but not only, by minority doctoral students, all of whom were visibly academically successful. Their mere presence in the room as Instructors told our Freshmen that academic success was possible for them and that the demands we placed upon them were well within their capabilities. I had fully expected that this would be one of the benefits of using the Afro-American Studies doctoral students as Tutor/Mentors. But these Freshmen were also students of color on an overwhelmingly white campus. In many of their other courses, they were a tiny minority of Black or Latino or Asian-American students in a sea of White students. Almost all of our Freshmen had come from high schools with very large minority populations. Given the residential segregation that is as common in Massachusetts as it is elsewhere in America, some of them had come from virtually non-White high schools. They were frightened and intimidated by being thrust into a mostly White campus. The weekly meetings in their small *Scholars* class was an opportunity not only to study the Minority Experience in America but also to talk personally about their experiences as minorities at UMass. When Nellie Mae hired an outside firm several years later to do a systematic examination of the successes and failures of the *Scholars* program, that benefit of the structure of the program surfaced again and again in the replies of former students to the questions posed by the evaluators.

It was also clear from the responses of those interviewed that the Spring semester research paper was an unqualified success as a program element. Many students reported that this was the first time anyone had ever asked them to undertake an academic project of that magnitude [a devastating comment on the quality of the secondary education they had received from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts]. I was especially heartened by the many students who said that having completed one such project, they now felt confident that they could do it again, when it was required of them in more advanced courses.

Our doctoral students performed splendidly as Mentors, to my great relief and delight. I think they all liked being responsible for so small a group of students, and they enjoyed the opportunity to shape the curriculum to their particular interests. I knew that it would be valuable to them to be able to list their service as Instructors and mentors on their *vitae* when the time came for them to go on the job market. When I was starting out, in the late 50's of the last century, departments recruiting Assistant Professors looked long and hard at the disciplinary specialties of applicants, but they tended to pay little attention to evidence of teaching experience. By the 90's, however, budgetary pressures were forcing departments in the Humanities and Social Sciences to ramp up enrollments as a hedge against cuts to their professorial rolls. Hiring departments had started asking for graduate student teaching evaluations and other evidences of teaching ability. On-campus finalist interviews now routinely included the teaching of a class with members of the recruitment committee sitting in the back row of the classroom. I knew that my ability to write detailed letters about the performance of my Mentors would serve them well in the job market.

Inevitably, some of the grad students were better mentors than others, although I always insisted that, like the children in Lake Woebegone, they were all above average. Jennifer Jensen-

Wallach seemed to have the ability to form unbreakable bonds with her students. When the year was up, they would ask whether they could return to study with her as Sophomores. One year, there was a mix-up in the scheduling of the first meeting of the course in the Fall -- the meeting at which I would match up each Mentor with a group of five students. Two rooms were listed, and I was terrified that some of our students would get lost and never resurface [I tend to worry, as Susie points out to me on occasion.] I sent Jennifer to the room originally listed, in case a few students had not received word of the room change. Sure enough, about fifteen minutes into the hour, she showed up with a little band of strays who had gone to the wrong room. When the time came to sort the students into their groups, one young woman got very upset. It seems she had bonded with Jennifer on the walk over from the other room, and now would not hear of having anyone but Jennifer as her Mentor. After that, I took to calling Jennifer "my Velcro Mentor."

The *Scholars* program was so successful that Nellie Mae extended our funding while UMass arranged to take ownership of it in an expanded and revised format. There was no way that the university could fund a program that put only five students in a class with a TA, so Charlena told me that I had to expand the class size to twenty. I pleaded and cried, and cried and pleaded, knowing that the essence of the program, and our great success, would be lost if we were forced to expand each group in that way. In the end, I was allowed to limit the groups to ten, at least in a transitional phase. The other change she insisted on was that I draw half of my Mentors from other departments. There was no way that she could lay that much bread on Afro-Am alone. I ran the expanded program, with some wonderful graduate students from Anthropology, English, and several other departments. One of our Afro-Am doctoral students, Cristina Tondeur, instituted several very successful supplementary programmatic features, most

notably a fabulously successful day bus trip to New York that included a tour of Harlem, a visit to the Schomburg Museum, and a matinee performance of *The Color Purple*.

The discerning reader will have noticed that several themes run through the programs I created and ran in the latter portions of my career. I have in mind particularly USSAS in South Africa, the *SUMMA* program in IASH, and the *Scholars* program in the Afro-American Studies department. In each case, I focused on ordinary students, not the handful of outstanding students, and in each case I sought to combine academic rigor with positive, supportive programmatic structures designed to counteract the discouragements and obstacles that average students so often face on their way to tertiary education. These concerns have their origin in the aversion I developed to the elite private higher educational sector that was my world for two decades, from 1950 to 1971. My concerns were reinforced by, but did not originate in, my ideological orientation, which very early on became radically progressive and has remained so, unwaveringly, to the present day. When I look back on the arc of my evolution in matters pedagogical, I am somewhat bemused by the fact that this populist, egalitarian strain in my thinking and action goes hand in hand with an utterly uncompromising elitism in the theoretical writing that I consider my real work.

**Part Three**  
**Chapter Eight**  
**Fun Stuff**

Life wasn't all program building and good works, heaven knows. A good deal of fun stuff happened once we had all survived the Y2K panic. While the new decade, century, and millennium were getting themselves going, I decided to make a serious re-entry into the world of amateur chamber music. As with so many important turning points in my life, this came about quite by accident. Susie and I were shopping at a little fresh produce market one day -- a sort of Whole Foods without the pretension and self importance -- when we ran into Barbara Greenstein, a fellow resident of Pelham and wife of George, an Amherst College Physics Professor. Barbara was a warm, lively, pixy of a woman, deeply involved in all manner of Valley good works, and also a long-time serious classical quartet player. She knew that I had played a little violin in my time, and invited me to join her at her home for some quartets that next week. I dusted off my violin [and the bow I had bought at the urging of Rose Mary Harbison], and sat in as second violin. With her signature kindness, Barbara assured me that I had not done badly, but of course I knew better.

In Watertown, I had switched to viola, the better to find people willing to tolerate my playing, so I decided that if I was going to give quartets a try, I had better stay with that instrument and find someone to teach me how to play the thing. Stammel Strings, the local Amherst *luthier*, kept a mimeographed list of people in the Valley who offered lessons on the violin and viola, and I picked a woman who played viola with a local early music group that Susie and I liked. But she turned out to be having carpal tunnel problems [the bane of string players], so I went down the list a bit further and found another woman living in the town of

Hadley, which sits like a strip mall between Northampton and Amherst. I made the call, and was set up for a first lesson.

Delores Thayer turned out to be a tall, beautiful blond woman who was co-principal violist of the nearby Springfield Symphony Orchestra -- a serious professional musician. After listening to me play for a bit, she started me out with a C major three octave scale -- one small step beyond learning which hand to hold the instrument with. Thus began an extraordinary eight year journey that brought me, by dint of countless hours of practice and weekly ninety minute lessons, to a point at which I could do a creditable job of the viola part in a middle Beethoven quartet or Schubert's Trout Quintet. I studied every major and minor three octave scale. I learned how to play them one note on a bow, two notes, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven [hard one, that], and twelve notes on a bow. I studied all of the natural, harmonic, and melodic minor scales, and then began on two octave double stop scales -- thirds, fourths, sixths, and octaves. I worked my way slowly and with great determination through Kreutzer and every other book of exercises Dolores had on her shelf, and tackled one solo piece after another, even essaying the Spring Sonata and the Bach Suites for unaccompanied cello, arranged for the viola.

A word about the little matter of arrangements for the viola. In the world of string instruments, the viola don't get no respect. There are websites devoted entirely to viola jokes [example: What is the difference between a lawnmower and a viola? Answer: You can tune a lawnmower.] Relatively little in the way of solo literature, or even exercise books, has been written expressly for the viola, so violists subsist on arrangements, usually from the vast violin literature, but sometimes, as in the case of the Bach Suites, from the smaller but still impressive cello literature. The one corner of the musical world in which the viola is acknowledged and

respected is in the domain of the string quartet. I mean, if you don't have a viola, a quartet is just a trio. I had no illusions about being a solo violist, of course, nor even any real desire to be one. I just wanted to play well enough to be invited to participate in amateur quartets.

Very early on, I made a rather surprising discovery about arrangements. Many of the arrangements I was playing had been made by Joseph Vieland. Joe and Fera Vieland, you will recall, had been among my parents' closet friends, and I actually learned from their daughter not too many years ago that it was the Vielands who recommended to my parents that I study the violin with Irma Zacharias.

As a boy, I never practiced [I am here rehearsing some things that I say in Part One, Chapter One of this Memoir, for those of you who joined me along life's way], but since I was, as teachers liked to say to parents, "talented," I managed to learn to play with some rudimentary facility. This time around was a totally different experience. Loree Thayer was a no-nonsense teacher, and I think she quickly sensed in me a pupil who was ready to do some serious work. Each day, I would go into the second floor spare bedroom next to my study and practice for an hour. Now, an hour a day is not much practicing for a *real* student of a string instrument. Those boys and girls on the way to careers as performers think nothing of putting in six or even eight hours of hard work each day. One hour, for them, is just a kind of clearing of the throat, some leg stretches before the serious running begins. But an hour was a great deal more than I had ever done, and before too long I could hear the difference. I actually learned how to play in tune.

Some things eluded me. Despite weeks on end of boring repetition and finger exercises, I never did develop a slow, beautiful vibrato. I had learned a sort of nervous shake as a boy, and could not break that bad habit. But I did learn how to play double stops, which as a boy had intimidated and baffled me.



Very shortly after I began my lessons, Barbara invited me to join several of her friends for regular weekly quartet playing. Don White, a retired professor, was a short man with considerable facility on both the violin and the viola. He would play first violin. Don actually had a case that could hold both a violin and a viola nestled side by side, something I had never seen before, but that I learned is common in the amateur quartet world. Barbara Davis was our cellist. Barbara was a young mother [young compared with the rest of us, that is to say] married to a neurologist who was in practice with Susie's MS doctor. Barbara was very self-deprecating, but she had a beautiful tone, and since, as viola, I sat next to her, I got to enjoy that sound while we played.

I was hopelessly outmatched by Don and the two Barbaras. They had been playing quartets forever, it seemed. Barbara Greenstein, who was several years older than I, had started when she was a girl, and told stories about her own teacher, who lived to be a hundred. Although each Haydn or Mozart or Beethoven quartet we played was an old, familiar friend to the three of them, it was *terra incognita* to me. Their customary *modus operandi* was simply to sit down and say, "What shall we play today?" But I insisted that they decide a week in advance which several quartets we would attempt, so that I could work on the viola parts before we met.

Real amateur quartet playing is a social as much as a musical event. At its best, it is a conversation among the instruments, and through the instruments, among the players. Really to enjoy amateur quartet playing, you have to like the people you are playing with. In addition, the second violinist, the violist, and the cellist have to be fortunate enough to find a first violinist who is willing to play with them despite being a great deal more proficient than they. The reason is that in the classical literature -- Haydn, Mozart, early and middle Beethoven, Schubert -- the first violin part is much, much harder than the other three. Indeed, in some cases, as for example

in the Haydn opus 20 quartets, the first violin part is really a virtuoso turn with accompaniment from the rest of the quartet. Now, human nature and musical enjoyment being what they are, a violinist good enough to do a creditable job with the first violin part is probably going to want to play with folks who are up to his or her speed, so it is rare indeed to find four amateurs who will stay together and really enjoy playing with one another.

For some reason, with a generosity and patience at which I marvel even now, many years later, Don White and Barbara Greenstein and Barbara Davis chose to put up with my inferior playing as I practiced and practiced to catch up with them. Eventually, I think I did, and I hope that in the end they found it as enjoyable to play with me as I did to play with them.

The turning point came, in my mind at any rate, when we undertook to play Beethoven's Opus 59, Number 3, the third of the three Razumovsky quartets [so called because Beethoven dedicated them to Count Razumovsky]. As good fortune would have it, Susie and I were scheduled to spend a month in our Paris apartment just then, so I took my viola with me and devoted the month to working on my part. I figured -- four movements, four weeks, one week on each movement. Since the apartment is very small, Susie would sit in the little courtyard garden, or maybe go have her hair done, while I sawed away and tried to get myself up to speed. I say "get myself up to speed" advisedly, because the last movement poses some serious challenges. It is written by Beethoven in the form of a fugue, and *mirabile dictu*, the viola starts off. This, I can tell you, is very unusual in the classical quartet literature. I had a recording of the piece by the Emerson Quartet, who are well known for playing at manic speeds, and by my watch, they played the last movement at 165 quarter notes to the minute, a tempo so fast one cannot actually listen to the music. I took that as just another example of their bravado until I

looked at a facsimile of the original and discovered that Beethoven himself had scored it for that speed.

Well, 165 was out of the question, so I started out legato, mastered the fingerings and bowings, and slowly ratcheted up the speed as the week went by. As we prepared to leave for home, I managed to play the entire movement at 100 quarter notes to the minute. Not even two-thirds what Beethoven called for, but not chopped chicken liver either. I hoped my quartet mates would be satisfied. Oh, did I mentioned that it is a simply gorgeous quartet?

When we met and started to play, I soldiered through the first three movements, steeling myself for my big solo in the last movement. The end of the third movement is scored *attaca*, which means that one does not pause, but goes directly from the coda at the end of the third movement into the fugue of the fourth. I plunged in at one hundred quarter notes to the minute, playing my heart out. After about five measures, the others stopped me and said that was too fast for them. I HAD ARRIVED.

Back in '86, when I was living in Watertown the year before Susie and I got married, I had bought myself a three thousand dollar viola, a very big step up from the violin my parents bought for me when I started studying with Mrs. Zacharias. But after I had been studying for three or four years, Loree told me that my instrument really was not capable of producing the sort of sound I was now skillful enough to make. She suggested I might want to look into a new and better viola. As it happened, the royalties from my textbook were piling up in a savings account, so I was in a position to make a move, if I could find the right instrument. I spent several long hours in an upstairs practice room at Stammel's, trying out violas. As you can imagine, that is a rather daunting undertaking for someone of my limited abilities. How could I be sure that an instrument's inferior tone was not simply a result of my incompetence?

Nevertheless, I found a beautiful viola that had been made by Marten Cornellsen, a master luthier who lived in Northampton. This was a serious instrument, fully good enough to be used by a professional performer. It cost \$17,000, and I was quite sure bargaining about the price was not an option.

That left the bow, which I had finally come to realize was quite as important as the viola. Barbara Greenstein agreed to come with me to Stammel to serve as an independent ear. We took a bunch of bows and my new viola upstairs to try them out. The bows ranged in price from twenty-five hundred to five thousand dollars, so this was going to be a major part of the total bill. I tried one bow after another, playing the Prelude to the Second Bach Suite, which I had mastered so that I could perform it as a gift at my sister's seventieth birthday party. [She had told the guests she did not want presents, because she had enough stuff, so I presented her with the performance of the Prelude with the explanation that it had cost me a great deal of effort but would take up no room at all in her apartment.] When I picked up the five thousand dollar bow made by the French bowmaker Benoit Roland, the viola began to sing. At the same moment, Barbara and I nodded. I had found my bow.

I brought my new viola and bow to my next lesson and showed them proudly to Loree. She took them from me, tried them out, and pronounced them excellent. "Now," she remarked dryly, "you have no more excuses."

Which brings me to the subject of excuses and T-shirts. I would work diligently at home on my exercises and my "piece," and then I would come into my lesson to play them for Loree. Quite often, I would flub a passage I had mastered at home. By now I had something of a crush on Loree, and I did not want her to think I had been shirking, so I would say, a bit plaintively, "I played it better at home." Each year Loree would hold a "recital" at which each pupil would play

his or her best piece. Since her private pupils were mostly children, she would give each one of them a little gift at the recital. One year, she presented me with a T-shirt on which was written the message "I Played It Better At Home." This was not too long before I went off to Paris to master the third Razumovsky. When I got home, I ran right out and had a T-Shirt made with the message "I Played It Better In Paris," which I wore to my next lesson. That is the T-shirt that I wear as I take my morning walk here in Chapel Hill, and several fellow joggers and walkers have asked what it is that I played better in Paris.

The annual recitals were a trial for me. At one of the first in which I performed, I found when my turn came that my hand was shaking violently. As you will understand, this is a bit of a disaster for a string player. It always amused me that Loree, who regularly played for paying patrons of the Springfield Symphony, was terrified of speaking in public, something that I did with no qualms or terrors, even if the audience numbered a thousand. When I mentioned my bad experience to my quartet mates, they all said, "Oh, you need to take Indurol. It is a beta blocker." Now, I am no pharmacist, but I knew that beta blockers are serious medications given to patients with irregular heartbeats. My primary care physician at that point was a cardiologist, and I could just see myself asking him for a prescription for a beta blocker so that I could play at a viola recital. But Barbara Greenstein and Don were insistent. "Half the first violin section of the New York Philharmonic take them before a concert," they assured me. So, feeling like a fool, I called Dr. Larkin and explained my problem. "Sure," he said. "My wife takes them all the time." They really worked. Apparently, the shaking is caused by a flow of adrenaline into the blood stream, and the beta blocker interrupts the signal to the adrenal gland. The next time I had to play in public, I took a pill an hour in advance, and my hand was as steady as a rock.

For eight years, my viola was my constant companion. I even took it with me to Kutztown, Pennsylvania when I had a speaking gig there, and practiced in the room in which the University put me up. The world of amateur chamber music is like many other hobbyist worlds, complete with a national organization, the Amateur Chamber Music Players. I joined the ACMP and received their international directory, a publication listing hundreds, indeed thousands, of violinists, violists, cellists, oboists, flautists, pianists and others eager to make connections with fellow enthusiasts and play. There was one obvious problem with the listings. The ACMP members include everyone from beginners barely able to make their way through an early Haydn quartet to performance level musicians and even instructors. Some way is needed to sort these folks out, so that they will not suffer needlessly in a group either too good for them or not good enough. The ACMP solution is a system of self-ratings. When you fill out the form that gets you listed in the annual directory, you are required to rate yourself as an A player or a B- player or a D+ player, and so forth. Well, you can imagine the dangers of that sort of system. Some people regularly exaggerate their abilities, either from a genuine failure of self-understanding or in hopes of being invited to play in a group that is really above them. Others, like me, engage in ritual acts of self-abasement out of a morbid fear of being thought to have gotten above oneself.

The real difficulty for me with the ACMP system is that I did not want to play with people I did not know, people I did not feel at ease with. Professional musicians like Loree have an entirely different attitude, of course. They care only about the technical skill and musicianship of their orchestra or ensemble colleagues. So I shied away from cold-calling people listed in the directory and limited myself to my little quartet and a few other playing opportunities.

My most memorable bit of ensemble playing took place in Barbara Greenstein's living room, but not as part of a quartet. One of Barbara's oldest friends was James Yannatos, a violinist and composer who for forty-five years conducted the Harvard-Radcliffe orchestra. Barbara and Jimmy [as she always called him] had apparently been teen-age students together at the Greenwood Summer Music Camp in the Berkshires, and remained close throughout their lives. One day, Jimmy came out from Cambridge to see Barbara, and our quartet assembled to play Mozart viola quintets with him. For the occasion, Don White switched to viola, and I played second viola. [A viola quintet is a composition for quartet plus an additional viola. It is actually quite astonishing how completely the tonality of the ensemble is altered by the addition of the second viola.] Jimmy, who is a performance class violinist, played first violin, of course, and for the first and only time in my life, I discovered what it is like to be inside a quintet when the first violinist is playing the music as it is meant to be played. The experience was a revelation, not at all diminished [at least for me] by my own mediocre play. I have sometimes thought that if I found myself in possession of vast amounts of money, I would hire a professional quartet -- say, the Borromeo -- to let me sit in and play along with them. But then I reflect that no amount of money could compensate them for the musical pain of playing with me, so I revise my daydream and imagine myself hiring them to play for me while I sip wine and eat exquisite canapés.

In the winter of 2007-8, as I was preparing to retire, Barbara's cancer returned, and this time there seemed little hope that she could beat it. I drove her to Boston several times for her chemotherapy, and she was cheerful, upbeat, greeting the other patients as old friends, telling stories about Greenwood Music Camp. But it was to no avail. Very quickly, she declined, and passed away. I miss her still.

With Barbara's death, something went out of my involvement with the viola. I continued to take lessons that last Spring, and played a few times with one group or another, but somehow it did not seem to make sense to go on practicing. When Susie and I moved to Chapel Hill, I made efforts to find a quartet, without success. It is now more than three years since we packed up that big house and moved into a comfortable condominium in Meadowmont Village, and from that day to this, I have not taken the viola out of its case.

My rediscovery of Susie started with a trip to Dubrovnik, and throughout our marriage, we have traveled as often as we could arrange for me to be away from the university. I was eager to make up for the long stretch of years during which I had stayed close to home because of Cindy's phobias, and Susie loves to travel, for all that it takes her a week to pack for an overnight jaunt. I was making trips to South Africa at least once and often twice a year, and on several of them, Susie flew out to meet me after my USSAS business was done so that we could go on safari. Although my first attempt at a safari had been a comic disaster, I still longed to see the wild animals and birds of the African plains. The easiest and least expensive way to do that in South Africa is to make a driving visit to the Kruger National Park, located in the northeast corner of the country. Kruger is enormous -- two hundred fifty miles from north to south, roughly the distance from Boston to Philadelphia. The park is crisscrossed with roads, and the rules are that you stay on the roads and in your car. Even so, in several days driving slowly this way and that, you can see lions prowling, elephants tearing the tops off trees, hyenas fighting over the remain of a kill, eagles, vultures, Lilac Breasted Rollers, herds of impala and zebra, giraffe, even on occasion an elusive rhinoceros. During one of our several visits, I was driving slowly along a road in the northern part of the park when I came upon a large elephant walking parallel to the road in the brush with her baby beside her. I followed along for a while, but she



grew irritated by my presence and suddenly wheeled into the road in front of me, flaring her ears and making it very clear that she did not want me around. As carefully as I could, I backed up until she lost interest in me and disappeared into the brush. One of our other trips occurred in the early Spring [which is to say, October or November, it being the Southern Hemisphere.] The mothers had recently given birth, and everywhere we looked, we saw baby animals -- elephants, giraffe, impala, wildebeest, even a hyena nursing her young by the side of the road. I am not much for tourist attractions, but safaris actually live up to the travel company hype.

Far and away our best safari -- and, taking all in all, our best trip of any sort -- was ten days in the Okavango Delta in Botswana. This was a real safari -- private camps, crashing through the brush in open Land Rovers, sundowner cocktails by the boot of the truck on the open veldt, lavish dinners at night in our elegantly tented camp. One day, as we were driving across the open plain, we came upon a pride of seven or eight female lions lying lazily on a mound. As we paused, they got up, one after the other, and padded off. We followed, and after a bit they flopped down on another mound maybe half a mile away. Then they were off again, and this time with a serious purpose in mind. In the distance we saw several warthogs grazing -- not much of a meal for seven lions, but apparently they were hungry. As we trailed after the pride, they approached the warthogs slowly from downwind, and very carefully, clearly communicating with one another, began to position themselves in a net around their prey. The lions were low to the ground, using the tall grass to hide them. We sat very still, actually inside the circumference of the net they had created, watching. Suddenly, by a signal we could not hear or see, three of the lions charged simultaneously -- and missed! The warthogs skittered away as fast as their little legs could carry them. The lions gathered together, rubbed noses and heads, and plopped down to rest.

Susie and I returned to Dubrovnik twice more, and spent a lovely time touring northern Italy in a rented car, but somehow we found ourselves coming back again and again to Paris. Our very first Paris trip was in 1987, even before we were married, to visit Patrick and his Isabel. Very quickly, we fixed upon the île St. Louis as a lovely and centrally located *quartier* in which to stay. The first two or three times we went, we stayed at first one and then another little hotel on the main street of the île, but then I stumbled on an advertisement in the back pages of the *New York Review of Books*. A Washington, D. C. psychiatrist, Dr. Eugene Frank, was offering an apartment on a side street of the île St. Louis for short term rentals, and we began going for a week at a time.

Those were happy visits, made memorable by lovely walks, exquisite meals, and even the occasional trip to a museum. On one occasion, we met Marx Wartofsky and Carol Gould, who were spending time in a rented apartment with their new baby son. The four of us had dinner at La Miraville, a one-star restaurant that is unfortunately no longer on the right bank quai. Susie and I returned there for a Christmas Eve dinner several years later and I ordered a *beignet de foie gras* that virtually floated off plate. I can taste it still.

We tried cruises, three in all. The first was a standard tourist excursion around the Hawaiian Islands. Next, we signed up for a Mass Audubon bird watching cruise to Baja, California. Finally, we joined a Harvard/Stanford Alumni/ae tour of the Dalmatian Coast that started at Athens and ended at Venice. All of these cruises suffered from the same problem, in my eyes. We were trapped on a boat for a week or more with people we did not know, whose politics we could only guess. Under the circumstances, the only safe thing to do was to eat, and the only safe things to talk about were grandchildren and previous cruises. Two moments stand out in my memory, both on the Athens-to-Venice cruise. In Athens, before we got on the boat,

we were strolling downtown, checking out the new subway being built for the Olympics. The traffic was pretty heavy, and I noticed a truck stuck in a driveway waiting to get out onto the street. Now, I do not know any Greek, but as a result of a life spent teaching philosophy, I have learned to read the Greek alphabet, so having nothing better to do, I sounded out the word printed on the side of the truck. It was μεταφορος [I hope I have that right], which is to say "metaphoros." In other words, "metaphor." It was a moving van. The scales fell from my eyes, and I realized what the word "metaphor" means. And then it struck me that the word "metaphor" is a metaphor. How cool is that!

The other event was a bit darker. The tour directors had arranged some lectures to amuse us when we tired of eating. One of the speakers was Marvin Kalb, the long-time television news reporter and commentator who was then the director of something called the Shorenstein Center at Harvard. This cruise was in September, 2002, during the run up to America's invasion of Iraq, so Kalb devoted his lecture to a discussion of the pros and cons of the Bush Administration plans. During the question period, I raised my hand and made a comment about America's imperial foreign policy. There was a round of applause when I finished, but Kalb, this literate, educated, sophisticated public intellectual, assured me that America was not an empire, offering as proof the observation that our motives and intentions were always benign and altruistic. I realized that I was in the presence of an idiot, and shut up. Later, on the line at the buffet table at dinner, several people came up to me and very quietly thanked me for speaking up.

On December 31, 2003, Susie and I made our last mortgage payment on our Pelham house and owned it outright. The next April, we rented Dr. Frank's apartment once again and flew to Paris for a one week stay. On the plane, I said to Susie, "This time around, why don't we go into a real estate office and pretend that we are rich Americans looking to buy a  *pied à terre*

in Paris. We will get to see the insides of some apartments, and it will be fun." She was game, so the next day, we went around the corner to a little office on the île St. Louis and made our pitch. They were happy to oblige, and in the next few days we got to see four or five apartments. Spotting us as Jewish right off the bat, they started in the Marais, near *rue des francs bourgeois*, the heart of the old Jewish section, but Susie and I really had our hearts set on the Left Bank. The agent came up with a small rez de chaussée studio in a seventeenth century building that formed part of a *copropriété*, or co-op, on a little one block long street called rue Maître Albert, which runs between *quai de la tournelle* and *Place Maubert*. I was thrilled when I discovered that Maître Albert was actually Albertus Magnus, the great thirteenth century teacher of Thomas Aquinas, but the apartment looked to me to be a disaster -- dark, gloomy, the walls covered with ugly brown grass paper.

We continued looking, but Susie had a vision I lacked, and insisted that we return to the little studio. With her help, I began to see its possibilities, and on Friday, we agreed to buy it. Getting a French mortgage is a complicated undertaking, so we decided to re-mortgage our Pelham house, so recently freed of all encumbrances, and buy the apartment outright. I asked myself, "Which would our four sons prefer to inherit when we die -- a fully paid up house in Pelham that not one of them will ever want to spend the night in, or a house in Pelham mortgaged to the hilt and a fully paid up apartment on the Left Bank in Paris?" The question answered itself.

We found an elegant "interior architect," Victoire de Boissieu, who transformed our gloomy flat into a light, airy, lovely, efficient apartment -- tiny by American standards, but more than adequate for a Parisian couple. To fill the bookshelves Victoire had designed, I brought over my complete forty volume set of the works of Marx and Engels [in German], all of my

books about Immanuel Kant, and one copy of every edition of every book I had written, some sixty or seventy volumes in all. I threw in my small collection of French history from my days at Harvard teaching European history, and we settled in. It was an insane extravagance, and the smartest purchase Susie and I have ever made.

With the new millennium looming, Patrick decided to bring his professional chess career to an end and return to college to finish up his undergraduate degree. In 1995, Viswanathan Anand, the great young Indian Grandmaster, played Gary Kasparov for the world title. Anand hired Patrick as a second, and Patrick spent months training with "Vishy" for the face-off, later publishing a book about the match. Patrick told me that seeing the level at which Anand played, and recognizing what it would take for him to rise to that level and become a genuine contender for the world title, he decided not to continue his professional career as a chess player. After completing his degree at Harvard, Patrick got a job with a business consulting firm. A year or so later, he moved to the West Coast and worked for two little dot com start-ups, neither of which was able to get off the ground.

While Patrick was in Silicon Valley, he decided to try his luck at on-line dating. Wonder of wonders, he met a simply marvelous young woman, Diana Schneider, who was working in San Francisco for a non-profit. Patrick had described himself in his little on-line blurb as a "former United States chess champion." I guess absolute accuracy is not all that common in the on-line dating world, and Diana apparently said to herself, "Yeah, right. Let's see who he really is." I met Diana in 2000 at the seventieth birthday party that my sister threw for herself in Washington, D. C. I was totally taken by her, and was beside myself with delight when Patrick announced some time later that he and Diana would be married.

The couple settled on a Napa Valley winery as the location for the affair, and picked July 14th as the date. I very much wanted to believe that Bastille Day had a political meaning to them, but I am afraid it was just a date that turned out to be convenient for everyone. Susie and I had met Diana's parents, Larry and Elizabeth, on an earlier trip to the West Coast. Just as you do not get to choose your relatives, so you do not, at least in our society, get to choose your in-laws. I had been rather unlucky with Cindy's parents, but Larry and Elizabeth turned out to be charming and *sympatico*. Larry, who has since passed away, was retired from a career as a college teacher, and I did not have to worry about making political remarks.

Patrick and Diana asked Barbara's son, Josh, to preside. Josh is actually a professor of psychology at Alleghany College in Meadville, PA, but he has also had careers as a baritone sax player, a tour guide in Russia, a story teller, and a lay minister. With great foresight, I had spent the previous summer dieting and working out with a personal trainer, so I actually looked pretty svelte in my tux. I danced at my son's wedding, and toasted him with champagne. When you get to be sixty-eight, as I was then, there is not much more you can ask.

During these same years, Tobias went from being a brilliant law student, an appellate court clerk, an Associate at Paul Weiss, and an Assistant Professor of Law at UC Davis to being the leading young Civil Proceduralist in academic law, a powerful voice for gay legal rights, and an important public intellectual. I watched every step of this transformation, and yet it continues to astonish and delight me. Tobias has played an important part in almost every successful legal effort to win marriage rights for same-sex couples in State courts. When Obama accepted the Democratic Party's nomination in Denver, he and I were in the audience [along with a football stadium of other people, of course.] Now, Tobias is a tenured Professor of Law at the University of Pennsylvania, ending, as I write these words, a year spent visiting at Harvard and NYU Law

Schools. He consults regularly with the White House and various branches of the Administration on the Defense of Marriage Act, the Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy [on both of which he has written excoriatingly], and many other issues of public importance. I think it is a fair judgment to say that at the age of forty, he has already had a much larger impact on public policy than have I in a lifetime of writing.

While I was going on cruises and safaris, buying an apartment in Paris, practicing the viola, running the Afro-American Studies doctoral program, and attending Patrick's wedding, I was also working on yet another book. I had not really planned it, but as time went by, I felt the old urge to put pen to paper -- or ones and zeroes in a word processing program's memory, as writing has now become. For the first time in my life, I consulted a literary agent, John "Ike" Williams, a pretty high end operator with offices in Boston. I pitched several ideas to him, and he seized on my suggestion that I write a book growing out of my experience in an Afro-American Studies Department. Thus was conceived *Autobiography of an Ex-White Man*, yet another title taken from a well-known work. [*Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*, by James Weldon Johnson, for those who do not recognize the allusion.]

I began the book with a long narrative account of my transition from Philosophy to Afro-American Studies and the ways in which the experience changed my life. Much of that first chapter has been incorporated into this Memoir. Then I undertook to tell the real story of America, as I had learned it from my colleagues, and to contrast it with the false story embalmed in generations in college American History textbooks. I traced the ways in which those textbooks, edition by edition, slowly altered their narratives to accommodate the pressures generated by the Civil Rights Movement, after which I began again, and told the true story of America as a land of Slavery and Freedom, Bondage and Citizenship.

Ike was very upbeat about the prospects of placing my little book with a commercial publisher, and did his level best to find a home for it, but thirty or more houses turned it down. Hugh van Dusen was still running Harper Torchbooks, and allowed as how my earlier book for him, *In Defense of Anarchism*, had sold 200,000 copies, but even that was not a good enough reason, apparently, for him to publish this new manuscript. Eventually, Ike sent me a letter formally terminating our contractual agreement. I figured when even your agent gives up on you, it is time to move on, so I put the book on the shelf and went back to having fun.

Several years later, Jennifer Jensen-Wallach urged me to try to find a publisher. I got the addresses of thirty or so academic houses from the library and sent out a host of letters. In that crowd of editors was a philosopher, Tim Madigan, who was teaching at St. John Fisher College in Rochester and serving as the Philosophy Editor of the University of Rochester Press. Tim knew *In Defense of Anarchism* and decided to take a chance on my Afro-Am book. In due course, it appeared, with a 2005 publication date. Alas, yet another offspring stillborn. *Autobiography* did only marginally better than *Moneybags*, though it did finally sell enough copies to justify a paperback edition. It is by no means one of my favorites among the books I have written, but it has some good things in it, besides the stories of my departmental adventures. Still and all, if you are going to read only one work of revisionist American history, I would certainly send you to Howard Zinn's *People's History of the United States* rather than to my little effort.

On November 8, 2003, I returned from one of my regular South African trips. It was six weeks before my seventieth birthday, an event that I had decided to memorialize by throwing myself a dinner at Del Rave, an upscale Northampton restaurant that Susie and I particularly liked. My sister, Barbara, would be there, as well as Tobias, Patrick, and Diana.



Something about the prospect of turning seventy triggered in me a feverish, irresistible need to write my memoirs, and without any hesitation, I sat down at my computer and began to type. It was immediately clear to me that my life fell naturally into three major stages: the twenty-seven years of my childhood, youth, and education, ending when I completed my Instructorship at Harvard and moved to the University of Chicago; the twenty-four years that encompassed my marriage to Cindy; and the final years during which I rediscovered my childhood sweetheart, Susie Shaeffer, and persuaded her to marry me.

I was so seized by the desire to get my story onto the page that I even suspended my viola lessons and practicing while I wrote. Although I had no reason to suppose that anyone, even members of my own family, would have much interest in reading the memoir, it seemed desperately important to me that I complete the first part of it before my birthday party. The only person to whom I showed what I was writing was Jennifer Jensen Wallach, who at that very moment was hard at work, under my direction, on a dissertation dealing with literary memoirs of Jim Crow. Jennifer offered some invaluable advice about the writings of memoirs that I incorporated into my manuscript as I churned out the pages. After four weeks of the most intense effort, I had reached the moment in my life when I set out from Cambridge for Chicago, bringing to a close the first part of my story. The manuscript was almost three hundred pages long. Virtually unaltered, it is Part One of this autobiography.

To this day, I have no idea what impelled me to pour my earliest memories onto the page. After I was finished, I made a few half-hearted efforts to find a publisher, but I was neither surprised nor really disheartened when I was told, repeatedly, that there was no market for the memoirs of someone neither famous nor infamous. So it joined my other unpublished books on my shelf -- the early deterrence and military strategy book, the two books about my family. As

has been the case on five or six other occasions, the writing was itself exhilarating and satisfying. I do not even think I mentioned it at the dinner.

And so the years passed, easily and happily. Our periodic trips to Paris became the high points of each year. Somehow it was decided that when we were in Paris, I would do the cooking, so each Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday I would take a large shopping bag to the open air market in Place Maubert and buy several quail or half a rabbit or some *thon* or *espadon*. Then I would wander from stall to stall, gathering up courgettes, *eschallottes*, and champignons, perhaps some real butter [which, miraculously, in Paris does not have either calories or cholesterol], and always two or three kinds of *fromage*. The kitchen of our apartment, although small, is fully equipped, and I have cooked hazelnut encrusted rabbit, quail, *dorade royale*, and even a full scale absolutely authentic *bouef bourguignonne*. Susie and I love to eat out, returning often to little bistros and restaurants within walking distance of our apartment, but I especially enjoy the dinners I have cooked myself. We sit in our Philippe Stark chairs at the tiny two-tiered plexiglas table that serves as our dining table, turn the lights low, put some baroque music on the Bose CD player, and sip wine -- red for me, white for Susie.

All my life, there has been a voice in my head telling me that I am not working hard enough, that I am not doing enough. Each time I finish a book, the voice is momentarily silent, but inexorably it reappears. For reasons that are completely mysterious to me, when I am in Paris that voice is stilled. As I arrive in the fifth *arrondissement*, a great weight falls from me, and I am able simply to enjoy the streets, the shops, and the buildings of Paris. The Cathedral of Notre Dame is our neighborhood church, a block and a half away; the Cluny Museum of the Middle Ages is up the street; and the Jardin du Luxembourg is close enough for the two of us to have a picnic on the grass and watch children sail their boats in the circular pond.

On December 22, 2005, Diana gave birth to Samuel Emerson Wolff, my first grandchild. He was followed, two and a half years later, by his sister, Athena Emily. By this time, Patrick and Diana had moved back to San Francisco, so I am able to see my grandchildren no more than two or three times a year, but when I do visit, I can see that Patrick has grown to be a loving and devoted father, delighted by his son and daughter as I was, so many years ago, by him and his brother.

As I was taking my daily walk this morning, turning over in my mind what I would say in this portion of my memoir, a thought occurred to me that, although banal and commonplace, is nonetheless deeply resonant with meaning for me. Chapter Six of this Part makes it evident that I am intensely aware of my relationship with my father's father, Barnet Wolff. I now find myself standing in the same relationship to Samuel and Athena that Barnet stood to me. We span five generations, with me as the pivot between the late nineteenth century world of immigrant socialists in Lower East Side New York, and the twenty-first century world of San Francisco. My fondest wish is that Samuel and Athena will eventually find in my life something of the inspiration that I found in Barnet's. Perhaps the day will come when they will turn the pages of this Memoir, as I turned the pages of my grandfather's letters to my grandmother, looking for a usable past.

In time, the big house and the harsh New England winters grew too difficult for Susie to handle. Her MS progressed slowly, to be sure. There were long periods when her condition was stable, and yet, inexorably, she suffered some loss of mobility. At the same time, I was beginning to think seriously about retirement. With my characteristic braggadocio, I had told my colleagues and students that I would remain in the department, running the graduate program and the personnel committee and the Scholars program until I was eighty. But the truth is that all of

these tasks, at first so challenging, had become routine. Susie and I puzzled for a bit over where we ought to move. Florida held no charms for either of us, and both of us felt uprooted when we were on the West Coast, even though Jon and Tamara, Susie's son and daughter-in-law and their children live in Seattle, and Patrick and Diana and my grandchildren live in San Francisco.

Susie had spent many years in Chapel Hill -- it was there that I found her after my marriage to Cindy ended -- and Susie's older son, Lawrence, was now living in Cary with his new wife, not far from Chapel Hill and close to his two sons from his first marriage. We decided that we would relocate to the upper South. Since I had dragged Susie to New England for the first twenty-one years of our marriage, it seemed only fair that we should choose for the next chapter of our life together someplace that was her turf.

2007-2008 was a terrible time to sell a house, of course. The economy was collapsing, prices were plummeting, and houses in Amherst were lingering on the market for 350 days and more before selling. We placed our house in the hands of a hotshot agent at the leading firm in town and turned our home into a showcase, ready to be walked through by potential buyers, if indeed there were any. At that point I had a brilliant idea -- I say this without any false modesty. "Put the word out," I said to our agent, Jackie Zuzgo, "that the real estate agent who succeeds in bringing in the buyer will get a free week in our Paris apartment, with money for plane fare as well." That did the trick. Anyone in a three state area who showed the slightest interest in housing of any sort was wheeled through our house by agents eager for a trip to Paris. Within a month, we had sold our house -- at a loss, to be sure, but we sold it -- and we were free to leave.

That still left unanswered the question that was preying on my mind. Ever since 1936, when my parents placed me in the Sunnyside Progressive School as a two year old, I had been in school. Each Fall, for seventy-two years, the world had started anew for me as the next school

year commenced. What on earth was I going to do with myself? Barbara, long retired from the World Bank, told me not to try too hard to make plans, because whatever I decided would be changed within six months after I retired. I thought about starting a career as an educational consultant. I saw myself flying Business Class to campuses across America to advise them on how to recruit and keep minority undergraduates, or perhaps how to restructure the Humanities to fit the Information Age. A little time with Google revealed to me that in the real world, "educational consultant" means "someone who can tell you how to get your son or daughter into an Ivy League college."

Since I had long since been forgotten by the world of academic Philosophy, it seemed unlikely that any universities would be calling with invitations to spend a few comfortable years as a Distinguished Visiting Scholar. [The original Wikipedia entry on me began "Robert Paul Wolff was ..." That did not bode well.]

What to do with myself? I was talking with Patrick about this conundrum one day, when he said: "Why don't you start a blog?" And so I did. I launched The Philosopher's Stone on April 28, 2007, more than a year before I finally retired, but after nineteen posts, I lost interest and suspended it. Then, on June 1, 2008, I returned to the world wide web, posting a steady stream of ruminations, comments on the passing scene, and even the first five chapters of the Memoir I had written four years earlier. In early April 2009, I decided to post the last chapter of my memoir, a segment at a time. Then something remarkable happened.

It came about because Tobias forwarded to me an essay he had read and admired by a University of Chicago Professor of Law and philosopher, Brian Leiter. Leiter, it seemed, runs two blogs, one on law and the other on philosophy, and although I did not know this then, he had become the clearing house for news and information about academic philosophy around the

world. I looked him up on the U of C website, found his email address, and sent him a message telling him how much I had enjoyed his essay. [I do this quite often. It has always seemed a pity to me that people reserve their nicest remarks about someone for the funeral.] Leiter responded in very friendly fashion.

My old student Rita Reynolds had figured out how to put a hit counter on my blog, and I had been keeping tabs of the number of people who visited each day. I was averaging about 150, maybe a few more on a really busy day. Suddenly, in a single day, eleven thousand people visited my blog. Leiter had posted a small note about my blog, and I had gone viral. When things quieted down, I was left with two thousand or so folks visiting my blog regularly and reading my stories about the Harvard Philosophy Department back in the late fifties.

I was thrilled. By the sheerest chance, I had re-entered the public conversation. I decided to continue writing my memoirs, posting a segment each day. Thus began the most extraordinary three and a half months of my writing career. I found myself writing morning, noon, and night, pouring words onto the screen and posting them as fast as I could compose them. As I soldiered on, through the Chicago years, the Columbia years, and into the UMass years, I began hearing from people around the world who were reading my memoirs as I was writing them. This was an experience completely different from any I had ever had as a writer. Always before, I would write quietly and anonymously in my study until a book was finished. Then I would publish it and wait to find out whether it had found a readership. But now, people were making comments on each episode, or contacting me by email, the very day that I had written the words.

I heard from old students, former colleagues, and people I had never known who took the time to send me a message. Charles Parsons, my old classmate, graduate student apartment

mate, and Columbia colleague, wrote several long, fascinating messages in which he corrected all manner of errors in my memory and typos in my writing. It seems that in addition to knowing everything and being super smart, Charlie is also the world's best copy editor. Andrew Levine, the distinguished political philosopher whose dissertation I directed at Columbia, sent several long, fascinating emails about his own experiences in the Academy and his ideas about what I might turn my efforts to once the memoir was finished. Todd Gitlin, whom I still think of as my student, although he is now an important senior voice on the left, checked in with suggestions for getting the memoirs published.

Those months initiated a grand international conversation that continues to the present day. The quality of the comments has been extraordinarily high, and the generosity of those who have commented means more to me than I shall ever be able to say. In all, well over one hundred people from every part of the world have joined the conversation sparked by my memoirs and stories. Here they all are, in the order in which they appeared [and my apologies if I missed anyone]:

Corey McCall, NotHobbes, Ahmed, PhiloDemos, Kenosser, Bob, Ajrosa, Jacob T. Levy, David, mew123, Andrew, Ann Davis, Graeme Wood, Steven, Todd Gitlin, Bryan, Mohan Matthen, Aaron Garrett, Tombo, David Pilavin, Emily, John S. Wilkins, Matt, Benjamin, Brenda, Andrew N. Carpenter, Warren Goldfarb, Jeff Englehardt, Aliyah, Michael Zhou, David Berry, Velicia MacKay, Pranay, Ryan Dischinger, M, Aaron Preston, wj, flying scotsman - Graeme Forbes, Jeff House, David Berry, Roberto Loja, sbrown 07 - Ken Brown Cal Poly, Brian Leiter, Blanca Macelroy 1230, Margaret, The Rooster, Kristina, Buck, John M., raistlin7000, Jim, Brenda, Tobias Wolff, Charles Parsons, Enzo, Meat Sounds, Michael, Adam, a student, Patrick, Interlocuter, Philosophy, Allen Hazen, hilde, Konigsberg Walker [a favorite of mine,

that one], Noumena [another favorite], Laurence B. McCullough, Jonathan, rvincent63, Ian J. Seda Irizarry, Ter@LV - Thomas Ryckman, Bob Unwin, Ionnis, Simon Halliday, Enzo Rossi, Eric Schliesser, Steve\_Strasnick, analyticphilosopher, gwern, Anna, marinus, KWH, Al Cyone, aman, wj, andy, tom, Mr. Lonely, JP (Smits), Pat (Greenspan), Dorothee (Benz), Robert Viennau, Charles, Aleph, Carissa, Steven, Angus, Chad, C, Wade, Awesome, Chris, Oboe 316, andrEw, J. Vlasits, Liviu, Kristina, CW, and Philip Kovacs,

In addition, forty five of you took the time to send me email messages. Here you all are: Charles Parsons, Ann Davis, Patricia Greenspan, Todd Gitlin, Andrew Levine, Warren Goldfarb, William Polk, Boram Lee, David Pilavin, Ernest Sosa, Tobias Wolff, Kenneth Wray, David Kane, Douglas Quine, Kevin Hall, Andrew Flynn, Mack Sullivan, Amato Stuart Nocera, Dick Schmitt, Jerome Doolittle, Alex Rose, Srivatsa Monthi, James Klagge, Andrew Lugg, Kenneth Winkler, Pranay Sanklecha, Roman Bonzon, Rita Moss, Allan Silver, Eddie Goldman, Michael Ruse, JP Smits, Andy Jones, Arthur Danto, Rosa Cao, Chris Byson, Gail Rodney, Rita Reynolds, Andrew Rosa, Jennifer Jensen Wallach, Deborah Haar, Lloren Foster, Barbara Searle, and Kim Leighton.

What is it like to write one's memoirs? I am reminded once again of the episode of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* that aired on June 1, 1992 -- "Planet Kataan" -- the twenty-fifth episode of the fifth season. The Enterprise, you will recall, encounters a beacon in deep space that emits a signal which knocks Captain Picard unconscious. While lying on the floor of the flight deck of the Enterprise, he imagines himself marooned on planet Kataan, which is going to be destroyed by the explosion of its sun. Picard lives an entire life on Kataan, marrying, having children, growing old, having grandchildren, absorbing the culture and history of Kataan. When Dr. Crusher manages to bring him back to consciousness, he finds that he has been out for only



half an hour, but there remain in his mind a lifetime of memories. In those four months, I was in a fugue state, reliving at a frenzied pace the entire seventy-six years of my life. It would not be accurate to say that my life has flashed before my eyes, as is often said to happen when one faces death, for that is a passive experience, something that happens to you. Rather, I have, with a remarkable urgency and intensity, recreated my life in my words.

There is a certain inexorability about writing one's memoirs. As one goes on, one gets closer and closer to the present day until, abruptly, not exactly unexpectedly but certainly with a considerable measure of regret, one runs out of life to write about. At this point, it seems I have only two options: to die, or to get another life. Since I am not yet ready to die, I am afraid I shall have to get a life, for the life I had is now a book.

## **Envoi**