

INVENTING FAMILY

A Life in Search of Community

A memoir by Clemens Christian Beels, MD, MS

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Disclaimer: The information in this account reflects the author's present recollections of experiences over time supplemented with research and consultation for accuracy.

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PREFACE

I grew up in the American Southwest, a member of the White Protestant business class in the heart of the American oil industry at its zenith. The country was just recovering from the Depression, in the midst of which I was born, in 1930. The Second World War, the massive government-spending and mobilization project that pulled us out of the Depression, provided our great national purpose during my years of junior high school in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Commercial opportunities for American enterprises across the world were the prizes of victory in that war, and so, on the rising tide of oil exploration, my father moved from being a land agent for the Carter Oil Company in Tulsa, to being a centurion in the Standard Oil Company's post-war expansion of the American Empire to the Pacific (Borneo, Sumatra) and the Middle East (Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the Gulf States). While working on this promotion, my parents lived first in The Hague, Netherlands, and later in London and I went to boarding school, so my family life was mostly with school and college roommates.

The Second World War confirmed the American Empire's utter confidence in itself, and one of the questions my experience raises is, how does a society with such a wind in its sails ask the necessary questions about its purpose and direction? And who do I think I am, raising such questions? The answers to these questions, especially to the second, grow out of my experience of community.

This memoir is an attempt to understand that experience – how being part of a human group such as a family, school, city, and a profession have affected my life. It is above all a meditation on the advantages and disadvantages of membership in a social class and the outer and inner blindness of privilege. It is also about navigating that privilege in the absence of a traditional family.

At age 14, what took the place of my family was a school. My admission as a scholarship boy from Oklahoma to St. Paul's School in Concord, New Hampshire, introduced me to membership in an upper-class social elite – and I am especially interested in that membership's effect on my subsequent experience, friendships, and work. St. Paul's

was an education for a merchant prince, which is what many of my classmates became, but it helped me to search for other parts to play. That search led me finally to psychiatry. In the antique terms I have adopted here, I suppose a psychiatrist is a kind of priest who has vowed to be neither a merchant nor a prince. But in addition to intimations of nobility, such elite memberships and privileges also conferred on me a peculiar blindness and indifference, which I try to understand here as contributing to the delays and detours I took in my search for a vocation. Upon reflection, St. Paul's filled a void at a crucial moment in my life. It provided me with a supportive community structure that gave me a life-long interest in life-saving institutions, their governance and design.

When I arrived at Harvard College in 1949, I was supposed to be heading for membership in a professional community – medicine. Even then I was more interested in the psychological than the physiological side of that study. And there were two different systems of psychology on hand at Harvard for our use in term papers, arguments over lunch, and reflection on our own troubles and confusions. The easiest of these psychologies to identify was Freudian psychoanalysis, which was then at its peak of academic prestige. Many of us knew someone who was in treatment with an analyst, and if we didn't, we certainly knew the folk figure sitting behind the couch with the foreign accent from jokes and New Yorker cartoons. A college course called "Freud, Marx, and Wagner" identified Freud as one of the intellectual pillars of the previous century. Those great German thinkers were creators of social institutions as well. Each invented a tremendous new form – a psychology, an economics, a world of opera, music, and theater – to confront the profound experiences of conflict, defeat, and disappointment in a world of overblown bourgeois expectations.

The second system of psychology at Harvard was harder to identify than psychoanalysis because it was still under construction, and not so easily connected to an intellectual hero – in fact, it was hardly a "system" at all. But its architectural outlines could be made out clearly. Just three years before I arrived, a group of psychologists, anthropologists, and sociologists had established a department called

Social Relations, where the academic distinctions between personality formation, value orientation, culture, and social organization were deliberately blurred in order to study how they influenced one another, how they might cohere into a field of study. Most of us knew the name Talcott Parsons, the sociologist who was the chairman of the department. Some of us actually majored in Social Relations, and though as a “pre-med” I stayed in Biology, I took courses in that department. One course that introduced me to a new way of thinking was given by Clyde Kluckhohn, an anthropologist who was one of the architects of the bridge between anthropology and psychology.

I was prepared for these connections, partly because I had been reading books by Margaret Mead about sex and temperament in other societies. My mother had read them and shared them with me. Mead’s books, revolutionary field reports on the social plasticity of those supposedly fixed elements of psychology, opened up our conventional ideas about the “innate” in sex and aggression. One of the effects of that remarkable woman’s writing about her field work was to show how conventional and culture-bound Freud’s ideas about sex and aggression were, and in this she was far ahead of her time.

In my previous book, *A Different Story* (2001), I used my career in psychiatry as a framework for describing the development of narrative therapy, a practice that grew up at the end of the last century in an international group of family therapists, social scientists, and community workers. A Freudian expert, to whom I turned for advice about that first book, told me that she couldn’t understand why anyone would write about psychotherapy without mentioning sex and aggression.

My first response was that that’s the genius of narrative work: it doesn’t need all that drive-apparatus to work. But in the decades since, I have meditated on that question, and a more serious response occurs to me. I could write this time about my life within a larger frame than that career in psychiatry and narrative therapy. I could write a memoir examining sex and aggression, among other things, but also addressing how those feelings were transformed by my experience of community – first into digressions and hesitations, but ultimately, through the grace and workings of other communities, into fruitful ambitions. I try here to

push beyond the instincts of sex and aggression to explore instead the social institutions that are moved by love and power.

I am especially interested in the ways the larger culture shaped my experience of the micro-communities of family, neighborhood, and school, and how those intimate environments in turn shaped my ambitions – my sense of what it was important to do. My experience of those social worlds was surely different from Freud's, and consequently I think of culture and community in ways that he did not.

Freud was a member of the brilliant but isolated Jewish intellectual minority in Vienna at the end of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which collapsed into Nazi fascism towards the end of his life. Except for his beloved friend and colleague Wilhelm Fliess, he was isolated in his early professional years. Later, despite his international fame, and his excellent research studies on cocaine, he could not get a professorship in Vienna above the level of "Dozent." Instead of institutional recognition, he depended on the support of a small group of acolytes, "The Wednesday Group," and he urged his most famous associate, Carl Jung, to join and support that inner circle, partly so that the movement of psychoanalysis would not appear to be so predominantly Jewish.

This environment must have affected Freud's ideas about community, as my environment did mine. When he did venture into social analysis, Freud wrote about sex and aggression in the human group using the limited understanding of anthropology in his time. He explored that curiosity- and romance-collecting armchair anthropology to provide anecdotes about "primitive" societies in three books about the origins and effects of social forces: *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*; *Totem and Taboo*; and, above all, his last hurrah, *Civilization and its Discontents*. They were all written before 1930, the year I was born.

So, by the time I came to read those books, I could also read what social scientists had learned from the worldwide study of human societies that flourished after World War Two. I am thinking of the work of Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson, of course, but also Victor Turner, Harold Garfinkle, Bronislaw Malinowski, Clifford Geertz, and many others. They produced a systematic and critical anthropology that

opened our eyes to the variety of ways human families, children, and societies developed.

Beginning with the work of Wolfgang Kohler and C. R. Carpenter, there has also been a series of related investigations of the social lives of our nearest relatives, the great apes. Later, Jane Goodall (on chimpanzees) and Frans de Waal (on bonobos and others) enlarged our understanding of these animal prototypes of our social life. Here are two species of our nearest primate relatives who make very different social uses of sex and aggression. Chimpanzees use to settle challenges of competition between groups, while bonobos use sex to settle competition and other manifestations of aggression. We have come to understand that the great advance of which we are so proud, the human mind, is the evolutionary companion of the primate group's amazing collaborative powers, and inseparable from them.

Narrative work, coming from the practice of family therapy, proposes that love and power are the social manifestations of this interpersonal, transactional mind. Sex and aggression are transformed into love and power by the community's organization of the processes of communication. In this view, the control of that organization is not up to a remote and punishing "civilization" described by Freud. It is, rather, up to "us." "We" are groups whose members are acting in concert. As Margaret Mead famously said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

But what defines such a group and how is it organized? We are constantly trying to learn how to assert our own group's effectiveness, if we can figure out a political way to define who "we" are. Are we families, political parties, chambers of commerce, churches, nations, classes, races, corporations, revolutionary factions, or groups of activists linked through the internet?

In what ways were "We, the People of the United States" a prototype "we" for governments and revolutions ever since? Or on the other hand, in what ways is recent history showing us that this favorite "we" of ours is culture-bound, not as exportable as we thought. We have

also seen in recent years how our national collectivity has become the head of an empire as ruthless and war-like as any that went before. That empire fought two wars against communism, in Korea and Vietnam, in which I found ways of not serving. Both, it seemed to me, were disastrous mistakes.

Much of our work and attention goes into defining our groups, since we know, or hope we know, how powerful they can be, once consciously defined and organized. In my first book, I showed that the narrative version of family therapy is a mobilization and focusing of that power as it operates in the family, helping that group to reorganize, to take control of the damage that has been done to its members. But the years since the publication of that optimistic first book have been full of frightening challenges to the hope that the groups of which I feel myself a member will be powerful, organized, and smart enough to accomplish the goals that we still insist are “up to us.” We have learned that wealth and privilege enable the organization of such powerful communities that almost nothing is left to “us,” if we are not part of that network of power.

On the other hand, against that organization of the power of wealth and privilege is a community of protest whose organization is quite different, often strong enough to find political expression. In a *Guardian* article by Rebecca Solnit (“Why giving up hope is not an option,” March 11, 2017), about that kind of organization, Solnit says that Daniel Ellsberg inspired Edward Snowden, and that British women’s suffrage marchers in London inspired Mohandas Gandhi, Gandhi inspired Martin Luther King, Jr., and King inspired many of us since then, including the Occupy and other protest movements going on right now. These are communities of inspiration that can be as powerful as family and class, and they are remarkable because the connections that hold them together can be reading and education, rather than neighborhood and kinship and class.

Most important for me was the effect of membership in the professional class. That was the membership that began when I opened the Harvard course catalog to find Social Relations, as well as the requirement that we take courses in General Education to broaden any

narrow professional goals we had arrived with – such as mine to prepare for medicine. Harvard General Education, like Social Relations, was an organization of knowledge to make us more thoughtful, not necessarily more powerful.

In one of those General Education courses, Social Science 2, I found that a set of ideas about power wielded by groups came from Karl Marx. Our section man, the leader of our group discussions, was Norman Birnbaum, newly arrived at graduate school. Norman introduced himself as having begun his political education fighting Bundists with broken milk bottles in the shadow of Yankee Stadium. I felt this gave us a solid grounding as we went up into lofty regions, studying not only Marx and Max Weber but also – this being General Education – St. Thomas Aquinas. Birnbaum was certainly an important original figure in my inspirational community.

My companions in those courses and their section meetings were not members of the remote, implacable “Civilization” Freud described. They were people I met at lunch, cocky, well-dressed “Young Republicans,” for example, who at Harvard were preparing to take over the country as far back as 1950. They behaved as if they were ready to do it then, and, in many ways, they have, by using their money and powerful organizations to control nominations and write laws. In college, such encounters with the passions of youth and battle, studying, debating, but also eating and drinking, with such a variety of fellow-students, was an education about power. I was as repelled by political infighting and posturing among the Young Republicans at college as I was attracted by community service at Phillips Brooks House and enthralled by acting in the Theater Group. These experiences had more effect on the vicissitudes of my aggression than my six years on three analytic couches. I learned that aggression in the form of power has an extremely attractive, smooth-shaven face, good clothes and all the charm in the world, far removed from the bodies of its victims.

There has also been in my lifetime an education about sex and love. The varieties of sexual experience have completely come out of the closet they were in when I was a child. The door of that closet was opened by Freud, to be sure, but awareness of, and interest in, the sexual

experience of others has become so common as to be commonplace. I was fortunate, in the middle of my professional training, to be a student of the emerging art of sex therapy that joined with marital and group therapy in the 1970s. Today, the conversation about sexuality has moved beyond professional confines and has become a common topic of consideration, even publicly on the internet.

Now, after two millennia of official suppression, we have almost completed the many sexual revolutions that are the phenomena of my generation. We have learned more than Freud could have guessed about love and sex. There is new research that connects the hormones of sex and birth with the social manifestations of love, so that sex can be seen to work for us as it does for the bonobo community, our closest ape relatives, where it is one of the keys to peace-making, solidarity, and social order. What we have failed to learn is enough about power to save ourselves from mutual destruction.

An important revelation began with studying embryology in college, marveling at the ability of a little community of cells sitting on an egg yolk to signal to each other the instructions for building a baby chick. This picture of message and response as a pattern of systematic regulation or feedback culminated, for me, in the ideas delivered thirty years later by Gregory Bateson, Margaret Mead's husband. Bateson asserted that the mind is social. It is part of biological nature, but the essence of that nature is social. It is interactive, mutually controlling and regulating, part of a vast system of communication – not just of words and gestures, but of other environmental influences, as well – biological systems whose interactions can be studied as a complex living whole. This is a different mind from Freud's, whose uniquely human Ego, like Descartes' soul, reached out of the human body's brain-case through the senses.

The chapters of this account are organized under individual headings, mostly places, jobs, and solo activities that I occupied or undertook as steps through a career. Much of the time, that's how it felt. But in Chapter 14, I emphasize that beside this journey of my own moves from one thing to the next, there runs a sense of being watched

over and taught or partnered by others, especially my wife and my children, but also mentors from my reading and study, including Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson. This chapter, titled Comrades, is an effort to identify the power of this kind of partnership.

In the end, I find myself very sympathetic to Freud, an old man in his 80s, who remembered growing up under the old Emperor Franz Joseph (who referred with affection and without irony to “our Jews”). Freud, of course, was under no illusions about those old days and the consequences of his membership in the Jewish minority. Before he and his daughter Anna fled to London in 1938, he added a last line to the second edition of *Civilization and Its Discontents*, expressing his fears about the fate of the latest Nazi version of German imperial civilization. Certainly at that point he could not imagine that anything was up to him, other than escape and survival. As another old man, now in my 90s, trying to write about sex, aggression, and civilization, and trying to figure out what is up to me (or rather, up to us), I feel closer to Freud than I ever did when I was required to read and admire his works during psychiatric training.

Still, instead of the volumes written by Freud on sex and aggression, I prefer these two sentences about love and power by that other Doctor, Martin Luther King, Jr.: “Power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love.”

Much of this book is about the kind of partnership that is needed to build a working environment so that the mentally ill and their families and friends can have a sense of opportunity that is supported by the real world. Perhaps it is no accident that one of my favorite hymns from my St. Paul’s days is “Jerusalem,” with lyrics taken from a poem by William Blake:

*... I shall not rest from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
'Til we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land.*

As I look back on what I have written, the personal and professional threads of my life intersect in this need to build and understand community, what I think William Blake meant by building Jerusalem. But first, as he says, you have to have a sword. And perhaps, for me, that double-edged sword has been my privilege.

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CHAPTER 1: CHILDHOOD

The first part of my childhood was a long dreaming sleep lit by a handful of short memories – scenes in which I was as wide awake as I have ever been. My mother was proud of having breast-fed me for over a year, and that may also have been part of my contentment. But I think it was more important that I was the only child in a family that moved so often that my mother was my most constant companion.

My earliest memory is about sleep: Standing up in a play-pen with sides so high I couldn't get out, I confront my parents, who want me to go back to sleep. I am wearing pajamas that button over my whole body, and I distinctly remember my father saying to me, "Come on, old man – let's get some sleep." It may be that I remember this because my father was there, as was not always the case. The room was the back sleeping-porch area of a house that never appears again. The bright afternoon light is coming in through large windows looking onto the back yard.

My third and last analyst, Myer Mendelson, compared me to Goncharov's Prince Oblomov, who preferred sleep and gave orders not to be awakened. Certainly as a small child I was content with whatever state I was in. Of my three analysts, Mendelson was successful because, by recognizing that there was no childhood trauma to be uncovered, he got me up off the couch to face him and challenged my complacency.

The next memory is of a different house, probably in Roswell, New Mexico, in the early 1930s, when I was two or three, and it is Christmas, because there is a Christmas tree. I am sick with some childhood illness, and I sit wrapped in a blanket in a large armchair, looking at my father sitting on the floor in front of the lighted tree. He has set up my main Christmas present, a toy train on a circular track, in front of the tree, and every time the train stops, I urge him to wind it up again with the key that has to be inserted into the locomotive. He is trying to be patient with my entreaties, but his thumb is getting sore and numb, and he shakes his hand to restore the circulation.

The reason I think this was Roswell is that I have memorized the

cities we moved to before the second grade, when we came back to where we started in Tulsa, Oklahoma. They were: Roswell, New Mexico; Tulsa; Lansing, Michigan; Tulsa; Mount Pleasant, Michigan – all in about 7 years. My father was a “land man” – an oil company employee whose job was to negotiate drilling rights with landowners, and he was always traveling, mostly in the Midwest. I asked my mother, “Where’s Daddy?” I remember one answer in particular – “Daddy is in Mattoon. Mattoon, Illinois.” I practiced saying “Mattoon.”

The third memory is of traveling with my mother. I am lying awake at night in a very special house – the large log cabin in Gold Hill, Colorado, that had been in my mother’s family ever since her parents bought it as a vacation retreat. We are going home, and she is packing our clothes in the big trunk we take with us on the train. Only one shaded light is on so that she can work while I sleep, but I am awake, watching her packing. She is wearing a blue-and-white patterned bandana to cover her hair, and I feel very secure, happy.

In the next two scenes we must be in Michigan, or maybe the next-to-last return to Tulsa. All I can say confidently is that the houses are again different. The first is a long scene with my mother. She has told me when I must be back home after playing in the neighborhood, and I have again been late, probably very late. I can’t remember the rule – maybe it was “home before dark” – but the difficulty my mother faced was whether and how to punish me. As usual, she was alone with this decision. She called someone on the telephone for advice. Was it my father? I waited for her to make up her mind. After much agonizing, she decided she had to carry out the threatened punishment: a spanking. Neither of us knew how to do this, but at length she told me to expose my bare bottom and submit to a couple of smacks from the kind of shoe-tree that had a springy metal band connecting the two parts – a weapon she had sometimes threatened, but never used. It didn’t hurt much, but what I remember more than the pain was her conflict and hesitation about carrying it off. Neither of us knew how to do conflict, much less punishment, and if I behaved better afterward it was probably to save us both the embarrassment of having to re-enact this scene.

In the final memory from this dream period, we are in another house and there is a new member of the family – a white, wire-haired terrier my mother named Snowboy. She got him for me because she thought I needed a companion. But in fact, he was my mother’s dog, the successor to her earlier pet, a cocker spaniel I can hardly remember, except that her name was Trilby. Snowboy was not interesting to either me or my father, who called him “Snow-burp.” One day, I came upon him asleep on his back in a patch of sunlight on the porch, and I wanted to see what would happen if I touched the tiny white hairs of his black testicles (his only black part except for one eye-patch). Instantly, with a growl, he was awake and had my fingers between his jaws, his black eye fixed on mine, but his teeth barely touching my fingers. Slowly, slowly, we both backed away from the encounter, and life went on with the same occasional pat on the head from me and wagging tail from him. What stayed in my mind was the exquisite accuracy of his angry reflex, its inhibition even more marvelous than its action, a slow, watchful backing away. Snowboy knew how to do punishment, attack, and defense.

An analyst might point out that Snowboy was as close as I got to having a rivalrous sibling. A real brother could have taught me a lot about conflict, but that was not to be, and we moved often enough so that I never developed any fights with neighboring kids on the block.

Before we made our final return to Tulsa, there were several scenes in Mount Pleasant, Michigan, where I seem to have been awake for long periods of time. I must have been between six and seven, going to school on sidewalks with shoveled snow forming over-my-head mounds on either side, I was carrying a rolled up rag rug. These little rugs were unrolled in the afternoon so that we could take naps on the schoolroom floor, but instead of napping I surveyed the underwear of nearby girls for clues to their mysterious anatomy.

Our last year in Mount Pleasant, I was really fully awake during a trip we took with another couple, friends of my parents, to explore the sights of the Great Lakes. We watched the locks of Sault Ste. Marie let freighter ships pass between Lake Superior and Lake Huron with

majestic opening and closing of the huge gates amid a tumult of water. My mother gave me a book to read on this trip. It was called *Rider-to-the-Sea*, a story with colorful pictures about an Indian boy on the shores of Lake Superior who carved a wooden model of a lone adventurer seated in a canoe, his paddle on his knees. The boy painted his little canoe in loving detail and then launched it onto the waters, knowing that the way was open through all the lakes and the St. Lawrence River to the Atlantic. The book followed the Rider in his canoe through the locks, the rapids, the waterfalls, and thunderstorms until, finally, he reached the ocean.

I read it a few times, fascinated by the illustrations of places that I had seen on our trip, Lake Michigan and Sault Ste. Marie. I think my solo life, guided by currents I could not see but whose goal seemed somehow settled, may have been on my mind – at least, as I look back on it now, the lone wooden paddler is me.

The great Book-Cadillac Hotel in Detroit was an important stop on the Great Lakes trip. I remember my parents and their friends sitting in the lobby talking about plans for visiting Detroit. While they talked, I was lying on the big carpet near the entrance, making a drawing of the Cadillac coat of arms, which was woven into the carpet. My mother always kept pencil and paper so I could draw, and I knew this was an important coat of arms, because it was the symbol on the hood of the most prestigious car in the world, named after the noble French family that settled this region. I was trying to get all the little ducks arranged on the bars in the quarterings of the crest, exactly as they were on the carpet. I knew all about quarterings of crests because our family had a quartered coat of arms, and I was allowed to keep the framed picture of it in my room wherever we moved.

At this point in the story, we are about to move back to Tulsa for the last time, and I will be awake there as never before. But before entering that bright world, it seems important here to record two kinds of experience that fed my imagination. The first was the legend of ancestors.

Both of my parents were quite conscious of where they came from.

The coat of arms I just mentioned belonged to my father's Dutch family, the American branch of which began when my grandfather Hermann Hendrick Beels came to this country around 1870 as a young man eager to try his fortune with his degree in engineering from Heidelberg. First, he tried silver prospecting in California, but then got a steady job as a surveyor on the new branch of the Union Pacific Railroad that was being laid from Kansas City to Port Arthur, Texas. There he met and married my grandmother, Mary Lamb, an English schoolteacher whose family had come to Port Arthur from Calcutta. My father was their first child, born in 1899, "the first white child born in Port Arthur," as he liked to say – meaning that he was not Native American, as the surrounding population was when the railroad arrived. My grandfather, the surveyor of the terminus, had just finished laying out the first streets of the town.

This picture of a wilderness inhabited only by Indians is frontier romance, a story that his parents must have told my father as a little boy after they moved back to Kansas City, where my grandfather had a job with the Gallup Map Company. In fact, Port Arthur was a thriving town with a growing white population at the time of its incorporation in 1898, a year before my father's birth. Until I looked up this history, I had thought of visiting Port Arthur to see the streets, my grandfather's handiwork. Now, even though that part of the story about surveying the streets may be true, I have no intention to see Port Arthur. It is a devastated refinery town, a port with huge unemployment, hoping to be revived as the end-point of the infamous Keystone XL pipeline that was proposed for carrying tar sands crude from Alberta, Canada.

Grandfather Hermann Hendrick gave my father all of the names of his three brothers who were still running the Beels Bank back in Amsterdam: Clemens, Christian, and Alexander. So my father was loaded at birth with family history. He acquired the little framed picture of that coat of arms when he visited the Netherlands as a young man to meet his relatives and go sailing on the Zuider Zee. Then, when I was born, I got two of the names, Clemens and Christian, but not Alexander, and so I was spared the burden of all three plus a "Jr." My father had always been "Clem," so I acquired "Chris" – along with the task of explaining that it was not really my first name – for the rest of my life. I

called my parents “Mom” and “Pop.”

Later in life, visiting the Netherlands with my family, I understood the Dutch fondness for titles and genealogy. Having been a Republic since the 17th century, and a very democratic constitutional monarchy, I think they felt short-changed in the nobility department, and made up for it in a democratic fashion by handing out titles and escutcheons in both the male and female lines, so that as many people as possible could have “van” in front of their names or be known as “Heer” of some village. Some of my ancestors, for example, are titled “Heer van Heemstede” – Lord of Homestead.

Our family is recorded back to the 15th century in a volume of the national genealogical registry called Nederlands Patriciaat – literally “Dutch Patricians” with all the American and British expatriates included. My parents had a copy of that book. This family lore was welcome ballast for the drifting balloon of my childhood, and I spent some time drawing coats of arms.

One group I can imagine even more inclined to genealogy than the Dutch would be the Mayflower Americans, and for most of my childhood I took it for granted that being a descendant of John Alden and Priscilla Mullens was the casual matter that my mother made of it. Her middle name was Alden, and she had a blueprint of her family tree that traced us back to that mythical John who came to Priscilla Mullens pleading the courtship of Captain Miles Standish and remained to speak for himself. I grew up with these stories, along with the unspoken rule that talking about family in this way with friends or neighbors in either Michigan or Oklahoma was definitely not done.

Oklahoma was, after all, settled by an utterly egalitarian army of farmers – everyone who could get a buggy and line up at the Kansas state line on that great day in 1907, ready to ride off into Indian Territory and stake a claim when the Army cavalryman blew his bugle. Even in later generations when those Oklahoma farmers (celebrated in the musical) became roustabouts on the oil rigs, nobody was better than anybody else, and don’t you forget it. My parents were above all concerned to show me a model of good manners, and our lineages were rarely talked about, except among ourselves.

Also undiscussed was the union of banking and oil that was the simplest explanation for our family's history of migration. I would never have known about it, except that my mother saved the newspaper clipping on the death of my great-uncle Rufus Holmes, and I read it going through her papers after she died. Rufus and his brother Willard – my grandfather – ran a bank in Winsted, Connecticut, that made loans to local businesses. When the bank failed in 1881, my grandfather moved the family to Kansas City so he could speculate in Midwestern oil leases, pay back the bank's creditors and re-establish the family fortune. My mother remembered going back to the Winsted farm for summers as a child, but I imagine they sold it to buy the cabin in Gold Hill. Rufus and Willard did brilliantly in the oil lease business, and I suppose it may have been through my mother's family that my father got into the oil business. To this day, I receive a small income from the proceeds of those original leases.

After ancestors, a more present source of myth and legend was summer camp. I mentioned the cabin in Gold Hill where my mother's family gathered in the summers. There are pictures of me as a baby barely able to squat, chasing ants on the balcony of that cabin. I got to know my Great-Aunt Bel, an authority on bird calls (and sort of like a little bird herself) and my Uncle Willard and Aunt Peggy, but most important my mother's unmarried oldest sister, Aunt Lucy, a kindergarten teacher who undertook my education in crafts when I was old enough to handle tools. Under her supervision I made my mother a leather cigarette case tooled with her initials, eBh, the big "B" in the middle between "e" for Elizabeth and "h" for Holmes, just like the initials on our silverware. Aunt Lucy taught me linoleum block printing, which I loved, and fishing, which I did not. Under her guidance I found cube-shaped nuggets of fool's gold (which I learned to call iron pyrites) in the rocks and, wearing a big hat, rode a pony when the group went riding on horses from the Double-M Ranch.

We also visited these relatives where they lived the rest of the year, in Kansas City. My parents had met and married in Kansas City, and my father's parents were still living there. But Gold Hill, the magical summer place in the mountains of Colorado, stayed in my mind. It was a

place to return to on long train trips with my mother, sleeping in sleeping cars and eating in dining cars with white damask tablecloths and silver plate that said “Union Pacific,” while the great prairies swept past outside the window.

I must have been seven or eight and back in Tulsa when Gold Hill summers were replaced by the institution of summer camp, first in Michigan and then again in Colorado. Summer camp as an institution was part of my life until I was 14, but it belongs here in this account of childhood myth and ritual, apart from the regular life of school.

My first and most exotic camp was on the shore of Lake Michigan. It was run by the head of the Tulsa Country Day School, Miss Ruloff. Miss Ruloff was definitely into ancestors. She explained to us boys and girls that hers was a Viking name, signifying that one of her forbears had been a steersman, entrusted with handling the great stern oar of a Viking ship.

The life of the camp was organized to transform us all into little Vikings. We made pointed felt helmets (no horns), painted large round pot lids as colorful shields, and had some carefully supervised combat practice with wooden broadswords. Each of us had an old-style attribute, like “Eric the Red” – mine was “Chris the Handy” because I liked to make things. At lunch we sang a song about the personal dragon – the bad habit – we had to slay. At each verse, one of us would describe our efforts to vanquish our dragon.

On the weekends when the Sunday paper arrived, Miss Ruloff stripped the funny papers of all except Prince Valiant and took us to the dunes on the shore of the lake where she read to us (and showed us the pictures) of that story, which she regarded as sufficiently well-drawn and historical – and sufficiently concerned with Vikings, unlike the other comics that were apparently not good for us. On one such trip, she gazed out over the water and suddenly jumped up, crying, “A sail! A sail!” We followed her gaze, and sure enough there was a small boat with a square striped sail just like the ones in the pictures. We were amazed until the invader rowed ashore so that, at last, we could see that it was only the camp’s handyman in a rowboat, but everyone enjoyed and applauded the performance.

Camp was my introduction to the possibilities of an intentional community whose purpose was to give its members new experience – different from school in the sense that it was not a social requirement: it was a joyful gift. At least for me, as an only child, it was a godsend – a celebration of the possibility of order and fairness, talent and difference, all the things I would have learned from brothers and sisters, or classmates in an enduring school.

I once brought home with me from that first camp bunches of a sweet-tasting grass that grew in the sand on the lake shore, only to find when I gave them to my parents that the hearts of the stems had dried out and lost the sweetness that they had when they were pulled up fresh and drawn between my front teeth. I was terribly disappointed.

That was a summer around the fourth grade, and my parents soon started to look for summer camps that offered greater challenges. The first, Camp Carlos, was again in Michigan on a smaller lake, where I failed to become interested in water sports, and almost did not pass the obligatory 25-yard swim test. Failed, but then succeeded, to pass the 50- and 100-yard test, as the director wrote home to my parents. After that, for several summers between ages 10 and 14, I went back to Colorado, to the Cheley Camps in Estes Park, where I was glad that swimming was not on the program.

At Cheley there was serious camping: not only horseback riding, but pack-horse trips to climb Long’s Peak, and, whenever I could get there, a grown-up shop with a good counselor. And at Cheley there was again an emphasis on ritual and performance – the songs sung after lunch in the dining hall, the non-denominational Sunday Chapel in an amphitheater facing a distant blue mountain range. “I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills. From whence cometh my help?” was carved into the front beam. Even the powerhouse had a motto over its door: “Knowledge is Power – Francis Bacon.” The sayings of Frank Cheley, the founder (“The Chief”) were everywhere. The one that most stays in my mind is: “Life is a grindstone. Whether it grinds you down or polishes you up depends on the material you are made of.”

In addition to adventure, outdoor exercise, and moral sentiments, Cheley provided me with mountains that for the rest of my life made

suburban scenery bland by comparison. Summer camp, always a new experience where the rules and rituals were writ large, with counselors and siblings galore, was a great relief from my only-ness. I made my parents presents in the craft shop. One of them was for my mother – a small, hinged metal box made completely out of a tin can.

When I became a family therapist in later life, the independence and self-sufficiency of only children was a great topic, along with other ideas about birth order, such as the way oldest children seem naturally to take leadership and responsibility. Looking at my family this way, my father was the oldest of three boys, while my mother was the youngest (by far) of four mostly girls (their brother Willard was an invalid and retiring in temperament). So my parents' relationship fell naturally into my mother's deference to my father's authority, reinforced by the gender roles of mid-20th-century America. My mother even deferred to me, on intellectual matters, and in the manner of only children, I took her deference as a matter of course.

This shape of our family triangle was reinforced by size. My father, at six feet four inches, inherited his height from his mother, and my mother, at five feet two, was the smallest as well as the youngest of her siblings. From lifelong habit, my mother gave up on arguments much too easily, exclaiming with a sigh that she didn't know how she had managed to raise such a "brain" – such an "absentminded professor." She also chided me for "talking to myself," but who else was I going to talk to?

Not my father. Conversation between my father and me had a core of silence. This does not produce many memories, since it turns off emotion – except sometimes a feeling of disappointment. I remember asking him (this must have been 1937, age seven) about the big headlines in the paper that said the Japanese were invading China. Why were the Japanese doing that? He said very quietly that he didn't know. I was old enough to feel that this was a missed opportunity, to say the least.

I might have been six or seven on the occasion of the most remarkable silence. My mother was in the hospital and my father and I were there to visit her. Nothing had been said about the nature of her

illness, so I was surprised that we were in the maternity ward. We said hello to my mother and made sure she was feeling okay. As we stopped to view the crop of newly arrived babies through the glass window, I asked my father what was going on?

He said, “Well, we tried to have another baby, but I’m afraid it died. It was a little girl.”

I was astonished and said so.

“Didn’t you notice she was pregnant?” More astonishment – “No!” “Well, you have been talking a lot about wanting a sister or a brother, and so we tried to have one.”

I was again amazed to hear I had expressed such a wish. Looking back, I very much hope there was a hug with my father, or some expression of gratitude, or regret, but I doubt it. I think I had also learned to be silent.

Not that there was really an absence of talk. My parents talked a lot to each other, about their friends and their families, with the sort of psychological speculation about motives and life experiences that must have been common in that dawn of the age of therapy. So it’s fair to say that my parents’ conversation at the dinner table could be “psychological” – without being personal – and that I learned this kind of speculation naturally by listening in.

But when I say it wasn’t personal, I mean, for example, that I never raised the subject of how different my life would have been if my little sister had lived. I knew it would have been a painful subject for my parents, and so I followed the rule, which seemed to be “Don’t say anything that will upset anyone else.” But my little sister might have been a real trouble-maker, which would have been interesting.

When I later set out on my psychiatry career, my father told me he had kept up an occasional consultation with a psychiatrist at Menninger’s in Topeka, Kansas, who he said was treating him for depression. The psychiatrist remarked, according to my father, that his dreams never had any people in them. My father’s mind was trained for science – especially chemistry, geology, and mathematics. He made instant calculations in his head, something I could never do. I wondered if those calculations were there in his dreams instead of people.

Much of our life took place in the car, on visits, or looking at houses (a favorite pastime). I was in the back seat reading most of the time my parents were house-looking, but sometimes on longer trips my father and I were in the front seat, where we played etymology games.

Here's an example:

My father would start with a word: "capture."

We took turns coming up with related words – "captain," "chapter," "kaput," "capital." Sometimes we made up sentences, such as "If your captain is captured, you're kaput." And "a chapter in a book begins with a new heading!" We later checked in the dictionary to confirm my father's theory that they all came from *caput*, Latin for "head." We treasured the knowledge that the capital was the city, but the capitol was the building.

Etymology – and our fascination with Latin, Greek, and German roots – was a completely conflict-free area for us, the way some fathers and sons talk about sports.

When we went out to dinner, I was never left with a sitter: my parents took me along after feeding me early, and asked our hosts for a dictionary, so I could sit and read while the drinks and dinner proceeded. I could read the dictionary for hours, checking all the sex words first, and then going from one derivation to another, picking up Greek and Latin roots for the next etymology games with my father.

Driving in the car with my mother was a relaxed experience. She chatted with me easily and when we were stopped for a light, rested her hand on my knee, giving it a pat when she had to move her hand to shift gears. I now realize what a comfortable world of movement my mother lived in – dancing, cooking, playing the piano, driving the car. I loved learning to cook from her and was independently making my lunch and helping with dinner at an early age. Later, when I learned to drive, my father taught me the science of parking, but my mother taught me to drive smoothly, as if I were dancing, so that there were no jerks and jumps for the passengers.

We did finally return to the Oil Capital for a long stay. We moved

back from Michigan to Tulsa in 1938. I arrived in the middle of the second grade at Barnard Elementary School, and went to that school, a bus ride downtown, until I graduated from the sixth grade – except for the year I spent in the fourth grade at Miss Ruloff’s Country Day School, which was in a big house just across a little white bridge over the creek in back of the house that we built and lived in for six whole years!

Our house was, for me, a commitment to staying put in that community – to no more moving – that made a tremendous difference. But what kind of difference I would not have been able to say, because, of course, we didn’t talk about it. I couldn’t have said, for example, how overdue I was to begin making friends, to having a world in common with them to talk about.

CHAPTER 2: TULSA

When we arrived in Tulsa, we rented a house on East 25th Street, only a block from the corner vacant lot we had just bought, where we were planning to build our new house. Afternoons after school, I got off the bus heading south on Yorktown Avenue and watched the workmen digging the foundations, laying the cement slab with its channels for heat ducts and plumbing, and then raising the first-floor timbers. I met with the architect, a handsome blue-eyed man who helped me to plan the wall in my room where I would have closets, a built-in desk with bookshelves and drawers, and a cloth-covered bulletin board for drawings and maps. When grownups asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up, I said, “An architect!”

The house was south of the city in a region called Wildwood. The low hills on the west side of Yorktown were still covered mostly with uncleared copse, and in our neighborhood of houses on the east side we felt fortunate to have all that “nature” nearby. Our corner lot looked across Yorktown at those trees, and the architect had preserved many trees of our own. They cast a dappled shade on the white clapboard first floor, and over the gray shingled sloping roof, set with dormer bedroom windows on the second floor. We moved in in my third grade year, and when I brought friends home from school, I took them on a tour of the house.

The front door opened on a hall between the library to the left and the living room to the right. The library was a small, cozy room. Its shelves and closets were finished in “pickled pine,” light brown against the dark green Chinese-figured wallpaper. One closet in the library was actually a bar, closed off discreetly because Oklahoma was dry, and anything stronger than 3.2% beer had to be bootlegged from Kansas. Nobody we knew had ever been arrested in their own home, but why not be careful, as the architect said.

From the hall, we glanced quickly at the big living room (sea-green with a white marble fireplace) and beyond it at the doors to the screen porch and the dining room. The living room was just for big parties, so we went upstairs to the interesting part. I wanted to show my

friends my room.

But first, we looked at my parents' bedroom, because a lot of important time was spent there. It was as big as the living room directly below it, and it also had a fireplace. My mother insisted on a fireplace in the bedroom, like the ones in the Gold Hill cabin. On Sunday evenings, we gathered on the sofa and easy chairs in front of that bedroom fireplace, with the tomato soup and toasted cheese sandwiches we brought up on a tray from the kitchen, and there we listened to the Sunday radio programs. First came Nelson Eddy and Jeanette McDonald, or Phil Spitalny and his all-girl orchestra, featuring Evelyn and her magic violin. But then came the comedy shows, Jack Benny, Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy, and my father's favorite, Fred Allen of *Allen's Alley*.

The characters Fred visited on the Alley were old friends – Mrs. Nussbaum, with her thick Yiddish accent, was sarcastic, and a lot smarter than the Southern Colonel Throckmorton. And Jack Benny's "houseboy" Rochester, who always said, "Yassuh, Boss!" was cagier and more worldly-wise than Benny himself. All this casual racism now seems a world away.

Next on the tour, I took my friends down the hall to my room. It was as big as the library and kitchen combined, looking out on three sides with two big dormer window alcoves, and my desk wall on the inner side. Besides the work on the desk, I filled the window alcoves with a drafting board for mechanical drawing in one, and an airplane cockpit made out of black clothes boxes in the other. I was definitely considering Airplane Pilot as a close runner-up to Architect.

The bench on the other wall had modeling clay and other construction projects, like the parade of balsa and tissue paper model airplanes that took off and mounted one after another up to the ceiling where they hung by threads in a flight pattern. Those model airplanes and the drafting board were interests I shared with my friends, and we often worked together at each other's houses after school. Mechanical drawing with T-square and triangles was something magical. Using orthographic projection, you made a plan and side elevation, chose a horizon line with vanishing points, and in a moment, there was a perfect perspective rendering of a house, a plane, a statue – anything! We

worked on these projects while listening to the after-school radio shows, *Terry and the Pirates*, *Captain Midnight*, *The Green Hornet*.

But we haven't finished looking at the house.

The maid's room was over the garage. Yes, (I lower my voice here, following my mother's example) we had a maid. Martha was a cheerful, big-boned White girl from the country, who cooked and cleaned up, and also cleaned the house. She wore a maid's uniform with white collar and cuffs and addressed my parents as "Ma'am" and "Sir." Sometimes Martha served the meal that she and my mother prepared.

For these formal meals, the three of us sat in the dining room. Taking care not to spill the water in the brass Chinese finger bowls as we moved them from our plates to the doilies at the upper left corner of our place mats, we waited for Martha to serve from the left and take away from the right. At the end of each course, we dipped in the finger bowls and wiped on our napkins. I realized this ritual was partly for my benefit so that I wouldn't be thrown by finger bowls if I encountered them later in life (I never did), but I was relieved when they disappeared, along with Martha, after we had been in the house a few years. Then we ate more often in the "breakfast room," a cozy passage between the kitchen and dining room, and even if we had dinner guests, which required a show of formality, we served dinner ourselves in the dining room, and I learned how to serve from the left and take from the right.

We often came and went by the back door, which was in the laundry room, between the kitchen and the garage. There, once a week, would be Alice, the African-American laundry woman. We, of course, would not have heard of "African Americans." My parents were careful to say "Negroes" to distinguish themselves from users of the lower-class word, but the later and more political designation, "Black," which suggested some comparability to "White," was never used.

Alice arrived on the bus from the northwest quarter of the city where people of her color lived. She sat on that bus behind a wooden marker in the ceiling that said "WHITE" on one side and "COLORED" on the other. The marker could be moved to accommodate the traffic, but

it was always up there, so that White people could sit in front of it and look the other way. This invisibility of Negroes was ensured also by separate waiting rooms, toilets, movie theater seats (Negroes in the balcony), and above all, separate neighborhoods.

Tulsa was a city of neighborhoods – houses on quarter-acre or half-acre plots, with sidewalks. Children played and neighbors talked with each other. The Black part of town, which Whites never visited, was similarly organized.

In the fifth grade when we studied State History, there was no mention of the fact that the worst race riot in the nation's experience, with thousands killed and most of the Black area of the city burned, had occurred in Tulsa in 1921. About that, we were definitely looking the other way. The newspapers had spread the rumor that a Black elevator operator had made a pass at a White woman, but the real problem for the White community was class. The Black community was becoming too independent, too prosperous, with its own doctors, lawyers, and even a newspaper! When I read about it for the first time in *The New York Times Magazine* decades later, long after leaving Tulsa, I learned that that quadrant of the city was called “Black Wall Street.”

Class tensions in the border states were always played out as race. The Ku Klux Klan, a group of working class farmers and laborers without unions who were not sharing in the industrial and oil prosperity, dramatized keeping Black people down all over the South and Southwest. If a teacher had tried to explain this to me in a class at Barnard Elementary School, she would have been fired, and I wouldn't have known what she was talking about. But I did know that I wasn't supposed to act or sound “stuck up” or smarter than anybody else – about anything. That was the taboo against recognizing class differences between Whites.

But there was plenty of folklore and joking about the natural inferiority of Black people. I learned from my mother an affectionate condescension towards Alice, and amusement at her country accent and folk expressions. But apart from that weekly encounter, I had no real contact with African Americans that I needed to think about at all.

Not until the sixth grade. Every week that year we got a copy of “My Weekly Reader,” a handout that I think must have come from

somewhere outside the Oklahoma educational system, since it dwelt often on unfamiliar topics. One issue gave a complete account of the career of George Washington Carver. Born into slavery, he had graduated from the Tuskegee Institute and had devoted his career in science to the development of agricultural processes that would deliver the Black sharecropper from slavery to the mono-crop of cotton, which was depleting his soil and tying him to the market. Carver taught farmers how to grow peanuts, sweet potatoes, and other crops both for sale and sustenance. I could see that Carver was an inventor of another kind – a combiner of social and technical strategies. None of those words were in my head at the time, but the image of a Black man devoting his science to liberate his people stayed with me. Imagine – a Black scientist!

Indians, far fewer in number, were another matter, since they were part of local history. Tulsa and Oklahoma are both indigenous place names. The manhole covers in downtown Tulsa still said “IT” (for Indian Territory), showing that Indians were part of city life before 1907. All our youthful imaginations were flooded with movies about warriors on horseback riding out of ambush to attack White wagon trains, or by games of “Cowboys and Indians” where everyone took turns at being on each side, and at being shot with imaginary guns, and dying. At the end, by convention, there was usually at least one cowboy left standing – the Wild West ritually reenacted over and over.

In the fifth grade State History course, we were taught to recite the names of the “five civilized tribes” who lived on Oklahoma reservations: Cherokee, Seminole, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Cree. We never asked, “Why civilized?” Now I assume they were the tribes who submitted peacefully to domination.

I also remember in that course a brief reference to the “Trail of Tears,” the march of the starving remnants of the Cherokee Nation, driven from their original grounds in Georgia to Oklahoma by the American Army led by General Andrew Jackson. The course book made it sound as if the Army had been escorting and protecting the Cherokee. I learned the other version of this story just recently from the rock musical *Bloody, Bloody Andrew Jackson* at the Public Theatre in New York.

What I most remember learning about Indians was not the classroom course, but something told by another kid as a funny story: “Some of those Indians are really rich, because oil was found on the reservation. One chief bought himself a hearse and had a chauffeur to drive it, because the back door was big enough to load in his favorite easy chair.” So, even Indians could play the oil money game, just like us. All you needed was a lucky strike – and being a chief, of course.

One day, somewhere in the country with my father, I had a lucky sighting of Indians. I saw a truckload of Indian women standing packed close together, looking dirty, stoic, and miserable. I asked my father where they were going – “They’re digging sugar beets,” he said. I was shocked – they looked like a chain gang.

I got closer to one Indian. Summer times in Tulsa when I was not at camp, my parents made sure that I was busy with something. I took painting and drawing classes at the Philbrook Art Museum, the former mansion of the founder of Phillips 66 Oil Company. Built on one of the few rises in the ground around Tulsa that you could actually call a hill, the terraces of Mr. Phillips’ Italian gardens led majestically down between antique brick walls and statuary to a pond amid willows that is still the setting of many of my dreams.

There was a special shop class at Philbrook conducted by a Native American, Wolfrobe Hunt. From him, I learned to shape and string bows and fletch arrows with feathers. There is a picture of me in the Tulsa paper, working on a bow under Wolfrobe’s direction. He is wearing a full ceremonial feather headdress. I like to think that in this small way I helped the *Tulsa Tribune* acknowledge the First Nation. Wolfrobe would never wear a war bonnet in the shop. That headdress must have been the photographer’s idea – to make him look like a “real” Indian.

To add substance to these pleasant activities at Philbrook, my father got me a job one summer as the assistant mail boy at the Bell Oil and Gas Company, whose offices occupied a floor of a building not far from where he worked at the Carter Oil Company. I think he wanted me to know more about the real world that he worked in. From the regular

mail boy I learned to seal hundreds of envelopes at a time using ingenious maneuvers with a yardstick and a wet sponge, but not much else. Except this: One of the executives asked me to do a rather complicated task – I can't remember what it was – and I couldn't manage it. When I tried and failed and reported to him, he was very angry, but strangely, I felt, not at me. I learned through office gossip, with a wink and a hug from his secretary, that he had been trying to shame her by showing her that even the mail boy could do something she had failed at. This was my first glimpse of human relations in the business world.

There were other lessons about the brute physical side of commerce. Someone's father took a handful of us boys to the country where there was a vast graveyard for wrecked or junked cars. Tractors hauled them into a great shed that had an overhead magnetic traveling crane. The crane picked the cars up and dumped them into a hydraulic press. The press pounded them with a deafening bang into little cubes about the size of an easy chair.

But that wasn't all. As we talked about how neat it would be to have a totally compacted car to sit on, we went to the next building and watched another crane deposit the cubed cars into an enormous electrode furnace. Into the pile of scrap, three carbon electrodes the size of trees came down slowly from the ceiling, their bottom ends glowing red as they heated the cars to molten steel. When the furnace was full of white-hot steel, a port was opened in the bottom and a river of metal poured along a long trench in the floor, white and yellow, too bright to look at, cooling to red and then gray, ready to be cut into ingots, but still so hot we were warned not to go near.

This was the violent forge, the smithy of commerce. What a magnificent, terrifying world! Compared to that trip, I found it rather easy to go with my father to visit an oil well head and watch the roustabouts change a pipe, fitting the next section in the overhead derrick onto the grooved top of the section whose churning into the ground had just been stopped. I wore a watch fob hanging from my belt with a little bronze model drill-bit, a decoration given me one day on a visit to a supply company. It looked like the real thing, two tiers of three

grooved cogwheel cones, meshing together. So I could picture what was doing the boring and grinding, out of sight way down at the bottom of the innermost pipe.

We were proud to be living in “The Oil Capital of the World.” No one was ever surprised to find a pump in the middle of things, its huge donkey-head moving slowly up and down, taking the oil out of the ground and sending it off by pipeline to a tank field or a refinery. There was even a pump working away on the grass terrace of the State Capitol building in Oklahoma City! Sure – why not? And at night the sky was lit by the flares burning off gas. I asked my father if it wasn’t wasting the gas. “There’s lots of gas,” he said. “They’re getting it out of the way to get to the oil.”

My father liked talking about his early days of exploration when he and a geologist would take off in a little bi-plane with a map, to diagram the contours of a limestone dome from the air, and then land with a plan to get to the farmers sitting on top of it before anybody else. Now, of course, he was an executive with a different kind of high-level vision, a point of view he rarely talked about. He did explain that Carter Oil was the Oklahoma fragment of the Standard Oil Company that had been broken into competing companies by the antitrust legislation of the first Roosevelt. He was not as colorful in his condemnation of the two Roosevelts as some of our friends were, but he said quietly that antitrust was a lot of nonsense, because the companies just went on collaborating anyway.

My father took me to a traveling extension of the New York World’s Fair in 1940. I especially remember the General Motors exhibit, where a mechanized panorama of the American countryside celebrated its transformation from farm to town – chunks of farmland flipped over before our very eyes to become city blocks with cars and filling stations – all courtesy of General Motors. That image stayed with me – the urbanization of the prairie as the idea of progress, with me and my father gazing at it silently.

Later in life I learned that General Motors had hastened the triumph of the automobile by destroying the competition. In the early

years of the century, there were electric trolleys and street cars everywhere. You could go from New York to Chicago by getting on and off trolleys. General Motors put people on the boards of the trolley companies, first to get them to yield rights of way to car traffic in cities, and eventually to dissolve most of the trolley companies, selling the tracks as scrap steel. I have thought about this when I have taken trolleys in European cities.

My father and I never seriously talked about the triumph of the internal combustion engine, which was the basis of his livelihood, and indeed of our whole society. And I don't mean to suggest that I had a serious criticism of it prepared in my mind. I do remember him saying once, as we stood in our back yard in Tulsa, "If Americans would just drive more efficient cars, we wouldn't have to do all this overseas oil exploration." I think this stands out in my memory because it was one of those rare moments when I had a glimpse of his views on the social consequences of his work.

My father's contemporary, Upton Sinclair, is famous for saying, "It is difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends on his not understanding it." Considering where my father's salary was coming from, I think it's remarkable that he said anything at all about not doing oil exploration. I only recently got around to reading Sinclair's novel *Oil!*, in which a father tries to raise his only son to take over the drilling business he started. Instead, the son gets a college education and marries a Jewish socialist organizer.

That great muck-raking book about the oil business was published in 1926, when my father was a young man. It was the story for the movie, *There will Be Blood*, but they took all the socialists out of the movie. Now I can imagine my father as a young man reading it, and I wonder if he did. Unemployed in Kansas City, about to marry my mother, trying to sell insurance door-to-door to make some money, a drop-out from graduate school even before the crash of 1929 – he was certainly one of the people Sinclair was trying to reach.

I wonder if he did read it – I would love to have talked with him about it! That would have given us a text for argument. But I don't think texts were the substance of our conversations. I wonder what would

have been the form for me and my father to have a serious, even passionate, exchange?

Here are two stories, one with passion, the other not. The passionate one was this: My father's close friend, the geologist Dale Condit, and his wife and son were visiting our house one afternoon. Condit was the companion with whom my father had done so much exploration when they were young in the business, and I could tell from the grownups' conversation that this was a visit with fond recollections. The son was older than I and strangely off-putting. I couldn't figure out how to talk with him or suggest a game to play, and so after a few attempts I ignored him and went about my own business – maybe I even went up to my room. When they left, I got the only angry dressing-down that I can remember from my father. He said, “When we have friends as guests, I expect you to behave as if they are friends of yours as well!” He said something about the boy having a disability, and I now realize that was my first encounter with someone with a psychiatric disorder.

The second scene was this: I got a chemistry set for Christmas and set it up on an old card table in the laundry room so that if I made a mess it would go on the cement floor. I started working my way through the experiments in the booklet, and one day I found that my father had left a notebook on the table. I couldn't make any sense of the notes or the equations written in my father's extraordinarily neat and legible script, but I did cut a few pages out to use as surfaces on which I could do some of the experiments. We never talked about how I had cut up his college chemistry notes, the subject he majored in at the University of Missouri. The notebook disappeared as silently as it had come. He couldn't say, “Chemistry! That's my favorite subject! Can I play too?” We might have found a way to do that, but the sad thing is, I can't imagine him saying anything like that. And I am still appalled by my indifference to his gesture, his invitation to make contact.

The second story – the one without passion – is the one that moves me to tears now when I remember it.

I listened respectfully to my father's rare work stories, but I knew that I was not interested in the world of business. I really preferred my

mother's world, though it was as exclusively female as my father's was male. Mother's world had a downtown center, the building that housed the Junior League Tea Room in the second floor above Miss Jackson's Shop. Like most of her women friends, my mother was a member of the Junior League and did waitress duty in the Tea Room on a regular schedule. Delicious chicken salad with tomato aspic was served there, and after she finished her stint as a waitress, we could go downstairs to the shop. My mother tried on clothes and chatted with Grace Jenkinson, a part owner and wife of George Jenkinson, one of my father's colleagues. Grace and my mother had special words about clothes – like “very smart” – which Grace pronounced “smaht” because she was from up north somewhere. Grace and George Jenkinson were Northern sophisticates we all got along with.

While my mother shopped, I went up a flight of stairs at the back to visit the workshop of the only male in this world, Jamie Ballard, the milliner. I loved talking with Jamie and watching him make hats, shaping the felt crowns on wooden molds with a jet of steam that he skillfully kept from burning his hands, cutting and pinning veils and feathers, and sometimes sewing a shimmering bit of fabric to balance the design. Jamie had his own version of the gendered division of work: “Never let your seamstress know you can sew!” he warned me, reaching for a magnifying glass to thread his needle. He was quickly sewing the “Jamie Ballard Hats” label into his latest creation because someone was coming for it that afternoon.

Jamie, Wolfrobe, and our architect were my only male examples of the hard life of living by your art, and making it work. Jamie made a living because none of the women we knew would dream of going downtown without a hat and gloves, even in the summer, and hats were a favorite subject of talk at the bridge parties where they entertained each other in the afternoons. My mother had Jamie to dinner often. “He never gets a home-cooked meal,” she said. I learned from him the ritual of arriving with a bouquet and sending a thank-you card the next day. I also watched him work in pastels to produce the only two original art works in our house: a portrait of Snowboy, done from a photograph, which was very good, and a portrait of me, done from life, which was not.

My mother used a kind of code of raised eyebrows and sad, head-shaking smiles to avoid referring directly to the fact that Jamie was gay. I think she would not have known what words to use, and I myself wasn't sure how to talk to grownups about it. My friends and I used words like "fairy" and "faggot" among ourselves, but we also had no language for imagining what that life was like as it was lived by people we knew. It was another invisible society like the Black community north of town.

In those years, I held onto my ideal of architecture and also read books about how to fly airplanes. Some of my friends' fathers had planes and I had been up for a short flight in one – an amazing, heart-pounding adventure.

Most of my other adventures came out of books. In the third grade year at Barnard Elementary School, we had a free period in the library and I spotted a beautiful color-illustrated set of books on the history of the world's great civilizations. The first volume had a chapter on Minoan Crete, where I was amazed to learn that this early civilization worshipped a Mother Goddess. There were pictures of Her priestesses, with flaring skirts and bare breasts, raising their arms in adoration. And there was worship in the form of a ritual sport – naked boys and girls leaping onto the backs of charging bulls. Nakedness as part of religion showed up again in the next chapter on classical Greece, and again, there it was in sport – men competing nude in the Olympic games! I began to think of my own preoccupation with naked bodies in a new light.

My parents were casual about undressed encounters at home, and my father subscribed to *Esquire*, whose centerfolds in the late 1930s invited more of a leer than a religious response. One day, I discovered in one of my father's dresser drawers a book of "art photograph" nudes. Did he and my mother look at it together?

And there was another important discovery – a shaded pencil drawing made by my father, which I at once recognized as a delicate rendering of my mother's breast. When had he done it? How had they talked about doing it? Never mind – it was, I felt, a very sacred icon, and I put it carefully back where I had found it.

I decided to make my own icons and traced the Esquire centerfolds (signed by Varga and Petty) and other photographs onto drawing paper, transformed into my own nudes, carefully rendered views of figures with a direct returning gaze and carefully rendered genitals. By the fifth and sixth grade, I had mounted these on the walls of the maid's room, which, with Martha's departure, had become an extra space for me, a gathering place for a select group of friends and co-religionists from school.

My mother's response to my pictures in this sanctuary was to present me with a copy of Logan Clendenning's *The Human Body*, which she said was one of her favorite books. She had started to read his columns in the *Kansas City Star* as a young woman, and she knew I would like it. It was about everything – not only the practice of medicine, but its history, with heroes like Ambrose Pare, the first battlefield surgeon, and Lister and Pasteur. The chapter on sex and reproduction I read so often I can still recite some of it. Here is the key paragraph from memory:

“As time leaves its tracery on my features, and my figure grows magisterial, patients are wont to send their children to me to learn ‘the facts of life.’ They embarrass me dreadfully, their expressions full of wonder at the arcane wisdom I am about to impart. What can I say about the tremendous experience that will one day be theirs? ‘But Doctor,’ the parents say, ‘If they don’t learn it from you, they will learn it from the gutter!’ To which I reply that the gutter is an excellent school. I myself am a matriculate of the gutter, and I declare the pedagogy practiced on me there to be superior to any in my later experience. It teaches the subject with an unparalleled clarity and attention to detail. Best of all, it teaches it as a joke, which is precisely what it is – a joke so wonderful, so cosmic, that” There, I’m afraid my memory fails, and so perhaps did even Clendenning’s eloquence fall short of the inexpressible. I was completely inspired by his attitude of awe mixed with humor, his hope that a little laughter might help us to face tremendous mystery. I decided I would be a doctor when I grew up.

There were other books that helped. Novels arrived regularly from the Book of the Month Club, and I scoured them quickly for sex scenes. But most of the novels lapsed into asterisks or metaphors at the crucial point. My favorite metaphors were in *How Green Was My Valley* where

Huw and Cynwen go up to the mountain to listen to nightingales:

“... and golden worlds rise to spin forever in a universe of frankincense and myrrh. I had eaten of the tree – Eve was still warm under me. ‘Oh, Huw,’ she said, ‘Oh, glad I am the first is you.’

“Home, in a dream lived backwards, me.”

So love scenes in Welsh dialect and my nude icons and Clendenning’s medical diagrams were all a help. My own experience with the gutter was mixed. My colleagues lacked vocabulary and basic information. We knew we were *not* under any circumstances to use the “F” word, even perhaps talking to each other. On the other hand, “rape” was allowed, because it was a public word, used by the newspapers. So I was revolted, but somehow not surprised, one day in the third grade, to hear my classmate Earl explain to me very seriously, “A man has to grease his dick ’fore he goes to rape a woman.” Ugh! I decided to stick to novels.

Except for novels, in my world so far from ancient Crete, the connection between sex and religion seemed somehow lost, even a contradiction. Strangely enough, by “religion” here I mean Roman Catholic, because that religion was more real than any other in my world. My mother’s claim to be “Congregational” I knew to be a polite reference to her Connecticut forbears. I don’t think she had been in a church on her own account since she was married. My father was frankly an atheist – a “chemist,” he said. His undergraduate degree in that subject was his closest experience of cosmic order.

So my religious experience outside of books was nil, until my parents left a nice neighbor family in charge while they went away for a weekend. “Are you Catholic?” the mother asked, and, sensing adventure, I answered, “Yes.” That Sunday we went to Mass, a beautiful ritual with priests in gold and white robes, the smell of incense, and votive lights burning deep in the dark recesses of chapels where colored statues of the Virgin looked down. And around the same time, my handsome friend and classmate Filipe, whose mother was Mexican, showing me around his house, took me to his older sister’s room to show me her missal. It was a slim book with a white leather cover stamped with a gold cross.

“Every Catholic girl has one of these when she is confirmed,” he explained to me reverently, opening the gilt-edged pages.

This moved me somehow, more deeply than Earl’s technical advice. It put something in place. I continued making icons of naked women. A Catholic girl named Mary, who lived in our neighborhood, learned about my special religion. Mary enjoyed her reputation as a “tomboy” – I think we met playing combat games in the Wildwood forest. We started sharing information about sex and shyly negotiated an exchange, meeting in my room to take turns showing each other our private parts, even allowing respectful touching. Mary said she wished she had a penis, and I at once offered to make her one out of plasticine, which she could wear secretly beneath her underwear. Who knows where this exchange would have gone next, but Mary’s mother found the strange stains made by the brown plasticine, and with a call to my parents she put an end to our meetings. I learned a monkish secrecy from this – that literature and art, pursued in solitude, were to be the form of my devotion, at least for the foreseeable future.

The other, more public religion to which I was exposed was football, the subject of parades, magazine covers, and the incessant drone of the radio on weekend afternoons. In primary school before the seventh grade, I could ignore it, except for the radio. Adults talked about it as the small change of greetings, like the weather, and so I learned that all the local universities, Tulsa U., Oklahoma U., and especially the great favorite, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical (“A and M”) played each other regularly: “Howja like them Aggies?” people would say.

I thought football was incomprehensibly stupid – heavily armored men deliberately running into each other. I was only grudgingly interested in any sports. My father and I did some tennis-ball catch, but baseball, I realized, was alien to both of us. “A bunch of guys with trick reflexes,” my father said. I was happy to have this sense that my father agreed with me – that organized or professional sports were not the key to learning group cooperation, self-sacrifice, “sportsmanlike” control of aggression, or any of the other slogans that were common in the culture.

My father, out of an obligation to my social development, taught me a usable tennis serve, and we volleyed occasionally on the courts of

Cascia Hall, the private school across the avenue. Looking back on it, I think it's too bad we never actually *played* tennis, either keeping score, or having a coaching practice with the aim of my learning more from him. Neither of us suggested it. It would have gotten us into a discussion of aggressive strategies, apparently an experience neither of us were prepared for.

Badminton on our friends' lawns, on the other hand, was a graceful pastime, and because of this cultural support, we all got good enough to be sociable while playing. Badminton married perfectly with two other important rituals, lawn cultivation and outdoor drinking in warm weather, and so moved to the center of polite family and neighborhood society on weekends.

And the ritual with real significance in my pre-adolescence was *touch* football. It was a courtly exercise that even girls, but mostly boys, could do to dispel social anxiety, animal spirits, or whatever. I resigned myself: It was a creative way to manage our awkwardness about meeting each other on any other terms. No one really cared about winning, but we could display skill, speed, and fairness as social graces.

I treasure a group photograph of eleven boys in the fall of the seventh grade, all dressed up for the birthday party of my friend Billy Michaels, who is in the center of the front row, holding the football. Touch football was what made the party possible – otherwise we would not have known what to do besides eating ice cream and cake and watching Billy open his presents. I also notice in the picture something else that hardly occurred to me at the time. I was the tallest in that group, so I must have started my growth spurt early, and that made me relatively unconcerned about physical contests.

The other great ritual observance of combat was the movies, and there, of course, we could really let ourselves go, both while in the throes of watching, and in talking and re-enacting afterward scenes of death-defying violence and adventure. We all had toy guns but I would have preferred to have a sword. I looked forward to historical dramas like *The Mark of Zorro*, *The Three Musketeers*, and *The Man in the Iron Mask*. Sword play seemed much more a test (and a display!) of skill than

gun play of any sort. Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., was my hero – the mysterious Zorro, who in the daytime was a harmless aristocratic fop and by night was the masked and caped avenger, leaving a “Z” scratched on the wall with his sword point after running his opponent through. My mother remembered Fairbanks’ father in silent films and was happy to go with me.

But this was theatre, not real conflict. Billy and I made our own theatre – we spent long afternoons re-enacting the technical and mechanical excitement of movie combat. We had learned the sounds and commands that accompanied diving submarines or flying high-altitude bombers, and once Billy’s mother, delighted with our realistic sound effects, made a sound recording of us at play. We gave it our best performance. Listening to that 78 RPM record years later, I smile at the explosive sounds, and at the earnestness of our high, piping voices, still far from entering manhood.

CHAPTER 3: WORLD WAR

On Sunday morning, December 8, 1941, my parents and I were sitting in the dining room having our special breakfast, pancakes and bacon, instead of the weekday fruit and cereal. We had the radio on because the news the night before had said the President would make an important announcement. I remember staring at the dining room's yellow and white linoleum as the sun slanted across it, trying to understand what it meant to us, to me. I mostly remember Roosevelt's voice, intoning the words, "the hand that held the dagger has struck it into the back of its neighbor," from countless later hearings, as newsreels and patriotic radio programs made the Pearl Harbor speech even more resonant than it was that day.

My parents looked very grave as we cleared away the dishes. My father, who had joined the Army just before the armistice of 1918, had been mustered out after an unheroic quarantine with the measles. He had never gotten over not fighting in that war, and later that day he said, "I wonder if I'm too old." He was over 40, and I was just approaching my 11th birthday. I realized with relief that I was certainly too young.

Nevertheless, even in flat, central, and peaceful Oklahoma, our entry into the World War seemed to change everything. The most important change for me was an awareness of the world outside Tulsa. I tacked a big National Geographic two-hemisphere map onto the bulletin board behind my desk and got a box of colored map pins to follow the action on both fronts. We didn't subscribe to the *National Geographic Magazine*, but some of our friends did, and I had searched it for pictures of societies where nudity was normal. Now I was about to see them as exotic cultures whose Pacific Islands and African jungles our forces were invading.

I was about to finish the fifth grade at Barnard Elementary, and the year after the sixth grade, I would enter high school. My teachers in the fifth grade included Miss Holman, who encouraged my interest in drawing and got me to make a large crayon picture of "a French family."

They were carefully rendered, the father in his beret and blouse, the mother in her apron, the children and dog, all arranged against a background of pointed cypress trees. In another class, Mrs. Frye showed us a map of Central and South America and drilled us in the nations and capitals. She pronounced “Tegucigalpa” and “Honduras” with extra precision until we got them right.

But these brief glimpses of the great world were crowded out the next year by the main subject of the sixth grade, “Transportation” – a “unit” of classroom discussion that celebrated with posters and pamphlets the triumph of the internal combustion engine: ocean liners that reduced Columbus’ voyage to five days at sea, cars and trucks that were the center of both family life and commerce, and of course – everyone’s favorite – the airplane, soaring above all, bringing the other side of the world even closer. It was easy for our teachers to connect all this with the war: we would out-manufacture the enemy, equipping our troops with the best transportation. Above all, we would out-fly them! If someone had suggested that this was the inculcation of a State Religion, they would have been fired for insulting both the state and religion.

The heart of that religion, the internal combustion engine, did not have a single inventor, so it was not a good subject for drama, but other inventors were the heroes of other origin stories. Thomas Edison was the arch-hero, the creator of the electrical world we lived in through his invention of the light bulb and the movie projector. He was the subject of two movies the year before in 1940 – *Young Tom Edison*, with Mickey Rooney, and *Edison the Man*, with Spencer Tracy.

My friends and I talked about the movies. The heroics of the war were paraded before us on the screen in the shorts, “Movietone News” and “The March of Time,” just before the cartoons, Looney Tunes with Porky Pig. And when the feature came on, the hero was Sergeant York – Gary Cooper playing the lone backwoods marksman, single-handedly winning World War One with his virtuous rifle. I asked for a bolt-action toy replica of the Army Rifle for Christmas, so I could be a sniper in the war games my friends and I played in the Wildwood underbrush.

Most of this group of friends were about to be re-assembled next

year as members of the seventh grade class at Cascia Hall, the Catholic Boys' College Preparatory School right across the street from our house. Cascia was a rambling establishment of many brick buildings in that oak forest on the other side of Yorktown, until now a place I had thought of only as the owner of the tennis courts where my father and I practiced. Now we all got ready for "going to Cascia" as one of the social givens of life, like birthday parties and the Cub Scouts.

We gave no thought to the members of the Barnard Elementary School sixth grade who would be going to Central High School in downtown Tulsa, instead of to Cascia Hall. I don't think we realized that we didn't even know them. They were members of the working class, made invisible by the egalitarian manners of the region. That was why, in explaining why we were going to this special school, none of our parents said anything to us about the "College Preparatory" part of Cascia Hall. But they did talk about the "Catholic" part, since that obviously had to be faced and discussed.

They explained that Cascia Hall was founded by Augustinians, a Catholic order. An order of priests? Well, they were priests, because they could celebrate mass and all that, but they called themselves something like "monks," (or maybe "brothers"?). We would have to call them "Father." Anyhow, we should understand that they took education as their mission to the world. Being, or becoming, a Catholic was not required for going to Cascia: in fact, two thirds of the student body was Protestant. One boy in our class, Stanley Borokoff, was Jewish.

Unlike Central High, Cascia charged tuition, but it was worth it because the education was "better." The Catholics also had a girls' school called Monte Cassino in another part of town, and the absence of girls at Cascia was something we would have to accept as part of the "better" education. We supposed that "better" meant that all our friends were there, – I don't remember the subject of "better" colleges coming up, nor any other preparation for the interesting things about social class that I was about to learn at Cascia Hall. The subject was never called by that name, because that would have violated the local taboo against talking about the class relationships of White people.

I can see now that Cascia Hall and Monte Cassino, like St. John's

Hospital, where I was born, were all part of the same system of Catholic philanthropy. Father Driscoll, who retired as headmaster the year I entered, had come from Villanova in 1926, and founded the school with the help of local Catholic businessmen. And so, like the Junior League, which was mostly Protestant but would never have said so, these institutions had been part of our parents' business-class repertory since they had arrived in Tulsa.

I can only imagine the combination of interests, – missionary, commercial, and political – that went into what became an increasingly lucrative foundation. Cascia took some boarders, so that families that lived as far away as Oklahoma City or even further could participate. The school conferred a real advantage in college admission to places beyond the reach of Central High students, who were destined for Tulsa U. or Oklahoma U. Many Cascia graduates went to those universities for social or career reasons of their own. One of my heroes, Robert LaFortune, president of the Cascia senior class of 1944, and later Mayor of Tulsa, went first to Tulsa U., acquiring a local connection before going on to Notre Dame.

Having Irish Catholic priests as teachers eliminated for the rest of my life a prejudice that came so naturally to many of our Protestant friends. Jews were another matter. There was no influential organization that represented them until later in my life.

Cascia Hall, like the rest of Tulsa in the autumn of 1942, had found a way to join the War Effort. It turned itself into a military parade ground. We dressed for school in a sort of junior version of an Army uniform, olive-green wool pants and jackets in winter, cotton khaki shirts and pants in spring, with hats to match. This had the interesting effect of removing dress as a sign of class membership from the life of the school. Seniors wore officer's bars and rated a salute as you walked down the hall. The whole school practiced close-order drill on the football field in the afternoon, under the direction of a retired Army Lieutenant.

I really enjoyed this ritual, so like a square dance, but more manly. It was a war dance, a ritual for realizing the power and spirit of the group. On the command of "Cadence, count!" we roared out, "Hut!

Hut! Hut, two, three, four!” With cut-out wooden rifles, we performed the Arms Drill. At the end of the year on a summer afternoon, the whole school gave a performance of this antique discipline, to the applause of friends and family.

In the classrooms of Cascia Hall, teaching and recitation went on in an even older tradition. The Augustinian fathers were dressed in long black robes with cowls and leather belts looped through iron rings. Their long, loose ends could make an alarming smack on the desk. As predicted, most of the students were Protestants, and were not required to attend the chapel down the hall where the Catholic boys went to pray, “laying up grace,” as they said. Although we understood that the Fathers had taken vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, that did not make them other-worldly to us. On the contrary, as representatives of the great world beyond Tulsa, they had a kind of cosmopolitan sophistication.

Father Cavanaugh lectured to us in social studies class on the evils of communism and explained the difference between the Trotskyites and the Leninists. I remember the derivation he offered for the word “snob.” In the class lists of Renaissance universities, he told us, each student was listed with his title and rank, except for those who had none. Next to their names was written *sine nobilitate*, s.nob. for short. I carried this little etymology of snobbery with me through the many temptations I was soon to experience.

My favorite teacher at Cascia was Father Fogarty, who taught English. Like most of the faculty, he was from the head university of the order, Villanova, in Pennsylvania. He loved reading poetry to us even more than teaching grammar, though he did love grammar and taught it like a game. He had a melodious accent, different from the flat Oklahoma twang I was so used to. For Father Fogarty, I tried to write my best short stories and received serious praise and correction.

Most exotic of all was Father Spielmann, a math teacher and basketball coach who hooked his robe into his belt before he shot baskets. Father Spielmann was from the Bronx!

Like all high schools, we had a football team, and because of my

taller size I was expected to go out for the junior squad. I surveyed the unpleasant choices and decided to play center, if possible. Nobody else wanted it, precisely because of what attracted me. There was the same assignment for each play – snap the ball to whoever and make your block. All you had to remember was who got the ball for each play, because the block was always the same guard on the other side. Fortunately, there were few schools in our league, so actual games were far between. Football was in the fall and basketball was in the spring, I somehow delayed going out for basketball until the eighth grade year, played one game and asked to be excused, much, I think, to the relief of the coach as well as me.

In fact, I played no games of any kind. Why add to life's uncertainties by creating artificial ones, physically real and, in fact, often painful? What I did enjoy was magic! For me, a deck of cards was for card tricks, not a game of gin rummy, and I was fortunate in having fellow enthusiasts. Two Cascia upperclassmen – two grades ahead of me, actually – were already my friends because we shared this interest, and they were happy to have me join them. Bruce Anderson lived two blocks away, and Tommy Keleher was from another neighborhood, so the three of us met either at Bruce's house or mine, and we practiced magic. We did card tricks at first, and then routines requiring more skill and equipment.

We had all grown up with magicians as the special entertainment at birthday parties, and we had all tried simple card tricks on playmates. Magic was our prototype of performance. Three boys rehearsing new tricks with each other was a natural assembly of what I later learned were the elements of theatre: a performer, an audience, and a critic/director. Somehow we fell into a natural turn-taking at these roles and enjoyed getting better without the need for any other audience. This kind of theatre became, for me, a model of group life and performance. It was better than sports because it was a ritual of collaboration, a narrative with a point rather than an uncertain celebration of conflict.

After being on our own for almost a year, Bruce announced that he had discovered a mentor – an automobile mechanic named Wade who had a garage downtown and who in off hours was a magician. He had

shown Bruce the magic shop where the professionals met and exchanged lore, and soon Wade, a quiet, middle-aged man with an alert gaze, joined us about once a month, watching our routines and giving advice. This changed the balance in our relationships, raising the stakes, especially when Wade proposed a contest where each of us would perform and he would be the judge and award a prize.

This made us nervous, but we agreed, and I said we could have the event at my house. Our repertoire had by now progressed to disappearing silk handkerchiefs and big interlocking rings that mysteriously liberated themselves. I remember nothing about that evening except my anxiety that Wade and his colleague from the garage would get black grease from their coveralls on my mother's pale green upholstery, but I think at the end of the evening Wade had a prize for everyone. For me, he also had a book recommendation – Camille Gaultier's *Magic without Apparatus*, translated from the French with the original elegant line illustrations, which demonstrated how to manipulate cards, coins, and balls to produce magic purely through dexterity and directing the audience's attention – pure theater.

I felt I had been invited to make an adult choice – there was a different level I could move to, but it was up to me. I bought the big book (my parents thought it was expensive) and practiced by myself for hours. Meetings of the threesome dwindled as we all got interested in other things, but I perfected my coins and cards, especially the mid-air cascade of cards that was the most dangerous because they could go all over the floor. I had to get it under control, now, without the help of Bruce or Tommy, because there was an invisible French standard described clearly in the book. I was alone with a professional ideal.

Not entirely alone. My parents could be induced to watch a new maneuver, and my father was a particularly tough audience. He was not a magician but he could be a comedian and a performer – my mother reminded me that he had some experience as an actor. Recently, among my mother's papers, I discovered newspaper clippings of their earliest married years in Tulsa, before I was born. There are reviews and pictures of my mother as Dorothy in a Junior League production of *The Wizard of Oz*, and my father as Scrubby, the waiter, in a Little Theater

production of *Outward Bound*. I recognized the names of other people in those plays as friends I knew growing up, and I like to think of my parents as a young married couple in an exciting city, rehearsing and performing. This was the world before I was born, and before the constant moving took over our lives.

Other than the movies, theater was nonexistent in Tulsa, but I was drawn to it. In response to an announcement at Cascia of a play-writing contest on the subject of "A Great American," I wrote a one-act play about the inventor of the telegraph, Samuel Elliot Morse, who had been a distinguished portrait-painter as well. It received only honorable mention, the judge wrote, because of its lack of "spiritual content." I should have expected that from Cascia.

Bruce and I continued to be close friends. He had a plan to confront the absence of girls at Cascia Hall. It was only two years since he and his family had moved to Tulsa from Joplin, Missouri, and he was still officially in love with, and in correspondence with, a former steady girlfriend in his hometown. That friend had a friend, Janet, who, Bruce's mother agreed, would be perfect for me. And so it was arranged that I would accompany the Andersons to Joplin for the big winter High School Dance in 1944. I was excited that Bruce, more than a year older, would trust me to join in this major ritual. I had been to some dance classes, and my mother gave me a refresher exercise, urging me to "lead!" as I memorized the fox-trot pattern, dancing her around our dining room floor.

We drove to Joplin with Bruce's parents in their car, changed into jacket and tie at the friends' house where we were staying, and at the dance, I met Janet. To my relief, she was really pretty, as advertised, and shapely, and not taller. I remembered to dance with all the other girls to whom I was introduced, but most of the evening Janet and I worked out a wordless exchange of erotic encouragements during the slow dances. We parted with what was for me a revelatory kiss goodbye. It probably helped us to carry out this ritual that, like the high priest and priestess of an ancient cult, we had been chosen by the Mothers to enact the mystery and would not see each other again in the daylight world.

Thus began my adventures with real, rather than paper, girls – high time, as my father said, sitting down to have a talk with me. I had been aware before this of my father’s cheerful attitude towards sex. Once, as we walked up Yorktown, we were passed by a young woman energetically cycling in our direction. As she passed, my father smiled at me. “Just like puppies playing under a blanket!” he said, with a wink.

But this time, his mood was very sober. He told me he knew I was aware of the facts of life – no need to go over that. But, he said, I faced a danger more serious than ignorance: getting some girl pregnant. He had had friends whose happiness in life had been ruined by this. “Don’t let some woman get her hooks into you!” he said, explaining that the most important thing was to be straightforward and unromantic about contraception. I solemnly promised to follow his advice.

My mother had little to say on the subject of the hazards of mating, except for a strange story. She had once been very much in love with a man whose only fault was that he had dirt under his fingernails. She had decided that, for that reason alone, she could not marry him. I listened to this with astonishment – apart from the strange thought of a different person in place of my father, it struck me as a really trivial objection to the call of true love. I felt a gathering of the dangers of the adult world.

Ever since reading Clendenning’s *The Human Body*, I thought I wanted to be a doctor, but I really knew nothing about it, beyond the glamor and mystery I picked up from that book and the fact that as a doctor I would have a professional reason for my interest in sexual anatomy. I had none of the experiences of being a patient, or the child of a patient, that impel some people towards an ambition to be a healer. The only external focus for this ambition was a short conversation with my father, which as I recall happened when he and I were walking down a long stairwell in a building somewhere in Tulsa. “Have you given any thought to what you want to do to earn a living?” he asked, as we turned corners in the stairwell. I said, “I think I want to be a doctor.” He replied, “Good – I think you’d be a good one.”

It was over before we got to the bottom of the stairs. And I think we were both relieved. We never discussed my aversion to either

business or the law, which were the occupations of everyone else we knew, and for which an appetite for competition was required. So from the beginning, my father and I talked about my choice of profession in a way that suggests that we wanted to avoid it. And by avoiding it, we were also avoiding the chasm between his life and mine.

I said at the beginning of this chapter that the war changed everything, but as I get nearer the end of it, I am struck with how little the war was present in important ways in our lives. There were war bonds, gasoline rationing, scrap collecting, and “Victory Gardens,” a patriotic movement to raise food on home soil so that there would be more available for troops and refugees overseas. Some friends of ours who lived further south on Yorktown in a much bigger house with a lot of land around it, offered to share a Victory Garden with us. Spring and summer afternoons, we trudged up to their place and tilled, planted, and weeded. There must have been a harvest of some sort, but I don’t remember. What I do remember is the hot afternoon when, to refresh our labors, our host’s butler, in formal dress with striped waistcoat, came down from the big house with a silver tray of martinis.

But despite incongruities like these, we felt united in common purpose because of the war. We knew who the Enemy was, and we knew that We were beating Them. Now it’s possible to look back and see that war submerged other conflicts, between social classes, for example. The war also created full employment, raised wages, allowed the formation of unions, brought women into the labor market, and set the stage for changes that would come later in racial relations. That was all invisible, hidden behind *Time*, *Life*, and *Fortune*’s cover pictures of Hitler and Tojo, on whom we trained our outrage, and especially our triumph.

In the summer of 1945, I went for the last time to Cheley Colorado Camp’s senior campus, Hyaha, and among other new activities began what seemed to me (and to her) a serious relationship with a girl two years older than me, from Beaumont, Texas, who was at the girl’s camp over the hill. That was momentous at the time – my first real girlfriend, and from my point of view, a woman of experience! But looking back at

that summer, I am also struck by this: I had a part in the camp's end-of-summer theatrical event, my first real stage performance.

I thought nothing of the fact that the performance was a minstrel-show comedy with songs and acts in which I played one of the End Men in blackface, clacking my wooden razor and mugging my punchlines, delivered in Stepin Fetchit Negro dialect I learned from the movies. I felt great about it then – we were all just having a good time. Today, I see that a politician's career can be ruined by having been in a minstrel show in blackface in high school years.

And as we packed to go home, and news reached us of V-J Day and the end of the war, one of the counselors, a physics teacher, mused aloud on the problem of explaining the atom bomb to his high school class. For him as a teacher, as for me as an actor, these were merely challenges of giving a good performance within cultural forms, acting and teaching, rather than acts with moral consequences. Would he have talked to his physics class about the devastation of human lives for generations to come caused by this most terrifying of all physics experiments?

I hadn't connected the two experiences until now, but it occurs to me that they both reflect the mood of the country in victory. Victory in 1945 got us hooked on being the world's indispensable nation – something we are only now beginning to appreciate as a great and dangerous seduction – the mixing of military and commercial triumph. Eisenhower warned us about the military-industrial complex, and appointed his commander-in-chief, George Marshall, Secretary of State to make sure the second World War did not end with the same vengeance against the defeated that had marked the end of the first. We learned too late that humiliating Germany and leaving them to suffer had consequences.

In 1945 we were not thinking of ourselves as a new imperial world power. The control of oil exploration and development under the guise of defending the world from "communism" and other dangers had a major effect on my father's subsequent career, and never got named or talked about between us. I think we hardly noticed that the world was becoming more like Tulsa, dominated, naturally, by the oil business, and so Tulsa hardly needed to become more like the world.

I went back home from camp to face something completely different. In the fall of my eighth grade year at Cascia, my father sat me down for a momentous conference. He said he thought I ought to go to a different school for the final four years before college, and he wanted me to look at two school catalogs that he had picked out in consultation with George Jenkinson. Both were boarding schools in the East – Phillips Academy in Exeter, Massachusetts, and St. Paul’s School in Concord, New Hampshire.

I went off to my room to read the catalogs. At first glance there didn’t seem to be much difference in the courses and the descriptions of classes, and the opportunities for development through activities seemed about the same. Both had debating clubs, theater groups, all kinds of special studies. Phillips Exeter, like its brother school, Phillips Andover, were both in the long New England secular tradition of “academies” – college preparatory schools with only minimum requirements of a devotional side to education. St. Paul’s, on the other hand, was an Episcopal Church school, presided over by a Rector who was the head of the Sacred Studies faculty of Episcopal priests. Church attendance and Sacred Studies were the center of school life. I wondered about that. It would require more church participation from an atheist like me than I had found at Cascia.

The Exeter catalogue was a gray, business-like affair. The one from St. Paul’s had pictures – black and white glossy photos of school life, but also a crest on the front and a seal on the back. The crest had a book and a bird on a nest, and a pair of crossed swords like the crossed spears behind our family crest. The seal on the back was St. Paul, the Durer drawing of him as a bald man in robes, holding a book and leaning on a huge sword. Around the outside of the seal ran the school motto, EA DISCAMUS IN TERRIS QUORUM SCIENTIA PERSEVERET IN COELIS. I had no idea what it meant but it reminded me that our family crest also had a Latin motto, NON FUGIMUS TEMPESTATIBUS – “We do not flee before storms.” I always liked the picture it suggested of a stout Dutch family refusing to leave the dyke as the water poured over it.

I went back to my father. “I think I’d like to go to St. Paul’s,” I

said. He said he thought that was a good choice and only mentioned years later that it was George Jenkinson's school. I learned in time that the literal meaning of the St. Paul's Latin motto, from St. Jerome, is "Let us learn those things on earth the knowledge of which perseveres in heaven." It is a lofty sentiment, to which I preferred a poetic paraphrase I learned later after I got there: "To live forever among books – is this not Very Heaven?"

I had no idea how much my father's calculations about our family's next move played a part in his decision that I should go to an Eastern boarding school. After a short stopover in New York City, by the beginning of my tenth grade year at St. Paul's, my parents were living in The Hague, Netherlands, where my father represented the Standard Oil part of an international conglomerate of Royal Dutch Shell and British Petroleum. That was how, on vacations, I got to meet all my Dutch relatives, but The Hague never felt like home to me. The place that did feel most like home was St. Paul's School.

And on the greater stage of the international oil business, what had once been a group of oil and gas companies regulated by the American anti-trust regulations sponsored by the first Roosevelt, had become, under the international leadership of the second Roosevelt, an international collaboration to control more oil production, especially in the Arab World, than either the Russians or the Chinese.

And finally, after returning from camp in August at the end of World War Two, I started packing a suitcase and a trunk for my first trip East to boarding school. In the midst of these preparations, I found that my father had packed two boxes of condoms under the shirts in the corner of my suitcase.

CHAPTER 4: NEW BOY

I arrived at St. Paul's School in Concord, New Hampshire, in 1945, a 14-year-old Third Form (ninth grade) New Boy from Tulsa, Oklahoma, two days and a night away from home by trains that had changed in Chicago and Boston. On the first night in that strange place, all the New Boys gathered in the dark wood-paneled Victorian coziness of the Old Chapel for a candlelight introduction to the ritual life of the school. The service included a hymn, a prayer, and a welcome from the Rector, Dr. Norman Burdett Nash, a tall man in an enveloping white surplice. The church was the center of the school, he said, and I, as a very skeptical outsider to that church, wondered what that could possibly mean for me.

I was attending this initiation ritual in my new clothes: the gray flannel pants, tweed jacket, Oxford cloth button-down shirt and dark tie that my mother and I had just purchased at Brooks Brothers in Boston before taking the train to Concord. Such clothes would be my uniform for the next part of my life, and as I listened to the Rector's prayers, I tried to figure out how to kneel on the padded rail without stretching the crease in my pants. The Rector was saying the School Prayer:

*Grant, O Lord, that in all the joys of life,
we may never forget to be kind.
Help us to be unselfish in friendship,
Thoughtful of those less happy than ourselves,
And eager to bear the burdens of others...
Through Jesus Christ our Savior, Amen.*

"Amen!" responded several voices around me, boys who, although New Boys like me, knew how to do this. As we all rose to walk back out into the night and find the rooms in the dormitories where we had unpacked that afternoon, and said goodbye to our parents, I could imagine feeling part of the life of the school. That prayer in particular, would be repeated so often that it became the unquestioned definition of what that life was all about. It was about the school as a caring community.

The Old Chapel had been there from the earliest days in 1856, when it was the little church of the farming community of Milville, New Hampshire. St. Paul's School then consisted only of the Reverend Henry Augustus Coit, his family, and a few students, all living together in one house. In the daylight of my first morning, walking to breakfast, I could look around and see the expanse of the school today, the result of a century of buying up that farm land, converting old farmhouses into dormitories, and finally, at the height of its success from the Gilded Age to the World Wars, building Victorian schoolhouses, even grander Tudor dormitories and schoolhouses, laboratories, and theaters – until at the time of my arrival it was larger and more beautiful than a small college. There were brick-faced walks between the buildings, along the shores of ponds (frozen for ice hockey rinks in winter!), and dominating all, the New Chapel. Built in the 20th century, it was a huge red-brick cathedral joined to the Old Schoolhouse by a cloistered walkway. The New Chapel's great bell tower tolled the quarter-hours with the same sounds as Big Ben in London. On Sundays, it invited us to morning service with hymn melodies played on its carillon by the school organist and chief musician, Dr. Channing Lefebvre.

We got specially dressed for those Sunday morning services, struggling to put on the detached stiff collars impaled with brass studs fore and aft, still obtainable at Brooks Brothers, where we had also bought our navy blue wool suits. In this dress uniform we walked across the lawns and down the paths on Sunday morning as the bell tower sang the Handel melody:

*Awake my soul, stretch ev'ry nerve, and press with vigor o-on.
A heavenly race demands thy zeal, and an immortal crown!
And an immortal crown!*

Down the cloister and into the vast morning brightness of the New Chapel, all carved oak and stained glass. There Dr. Lefebvre, seated in his white surplice in the organ loft, welcomed us with a Vidor processional on the organ, as we each found our assigned place in the ranks of pews facing each other across the long central aisle. Faculty and Sixth Form (seniors) sitting in the back, highest pew, and then the forms in descending order, fifth, fourth, third (there was my seat!), in the front

row with a few Second and First Formers in the still surviving Lower School.

The Sunday morning service was from the *Prayer Book of the Episcopal Church of the United States*, and *The Hymnal*, much of which from sheer repetition I would soon learn by heart. Sunday service included Holy Communion, of which I did not partake, but also got to know by heart, and a sermon by one of our several priests. Solemn and attentive in our blue suits, we listened to the progress of the sermon from the day's Lesson, through the statement of the problem or the question, to the conclusion, which I prepared to question at the lunch table. Some days, in the interval before lunch, Dr. Lefebvre extended the Recessional into a wonderful concert, for which I always stayed, because there was usually at least one Bach fugue.

In the late afternoon, there was Sunday tea, a gluttonous affair (as if we hadn't already had enough to eat!) at the house of one of the married masters, whose wives were variously famous for the food they supplied with tea. And then, still in our blue suits, we came back to the Chapel for Evensong. This was short – a hymn, a response and some prayers – but the last sung response of the evening service was always the *nunc dimittis*, the Song of Simeon, the High Priest, who, on seeing the infant Christ brought to the Temple, sang out:

*Lord – now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace
According to Thy Word
For mine eyes have seen
Thy Sa-avation
Which Thou hast prepar-ed
Before the face of a-all peoples
To be a light to lighten the Gentiles,
And to be the Glory of thy People Isra-el*

After singing this, we were further blessed and dismissed with this prayer:

O Lord, protect us all the day long of this troublous life, until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then of Thy great mercy, grant us a

safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at the last.

Home to study and bed.

I asked for that prayer at my mother's funeral, more than thirty years later. Nothing so perfectly combines rest, sleep, and reconciliation.

Every work day of the week began with a 15-minute morning Chapel: a hymn, a psalm, and a prayer. What a complete change from my life in Tulsa – three kinds of poetry every morning after breakfast! The Victorian hymns had some good lines, and some were magnificent:

*Rise, crowned with light, imperial Salem, rise!
Exalt thy towering head and lift thine eyes!
See heav'n its sparkling portals wide display,
And burst upon thee in a flood of day!*

*See a long race Thy spacious courts adorn –
See future sons and daughters yet unborn,
In crowding ranks on every side arise,
Demanding life, impatient for the skies!*

That was Alexander Pope – a wake-up call summoning new generations. And it was only one of the hymns about Jerusalem, the ultimate, the ideal city.

After the hymn came a psalm from the Prayer Book, which used the 15th-century translation of the Bible by William Tyndale. Tyndale was a better poet than the committee that later put together the Authorized version of King James – and besides, he was *first strangled and then burned* for publishing the Bible in English when Sir Thomas More wanted to keep it in Latin. This was horrible, because there had been English Bibles for the previous four centuries, from the Venerable Bede to Wycliffe!

We were learning about the Bible in a class called Sacred Studies, which met once a week in all the upper four forms. One of our books had a picture of Thomas More's handsome, implacable face in the Holbein portrait. Here was a man beheaded by Henry VIII for opposing

Henry's making himself head of the Church of England, and so later canonized as a Catholic Saint. But before that, why did he care so much about Tyndale's English translation that he tracked him down in exile and persuaded a local Catholic authority to kill him? Because Tyndale put out that new English Bible with a *printing press* – a challenge to the Church's control over the Word of God. For me at 15, this was exciting stuff.

In the spring of the year came a special Sunday when the Choir sang the School Anthem. Choir was a special group, all dressed in red vestments and white short surplices, following the Crucifix in the procession with the younger boys in front (their voices were still able to reach the top notes) followed by the older boys and masters who sang tenor and bass. We knew they had been rehearsing this special anthem for weeks now, and the hush of anticipation was more intense than usual. It began with a ringing tenor solo, unaccompanied:

*I was glad when they said unto me,
We will go into the House of the Lord.
Our feet shall stand in thy gates
O Jerusalem!*

And the full choir sang:

*O pray for the peace of Jerusalem!
They shall prosper that love Thee!
Peace be within thy walls.
And plenteousness within they palaces!*

A later chorus sang:

*For my brethren and companion's sake
I will wish Thee prosperity –
I will seek to do Thee good!*

The music was beautiful, and the words were one of the poet-king David's many love songs to his City. The School Anthem was performed every year, and I'm not sure which year I realized what its message was. The school was, like Jerusalem, the ideal purpose-built community,

something we should all try to maintain because its purpose – for my brethren and companions’ sakes – was transcendent, for the good of us all.

This idea came home again, especially the morning we sang another hymn about Jerusalem whose words were by William Blake:

*Bring me my bow of burning gold –
Bring me my arrows of desire!
Bring me my spear – O clouds unfold!
Bring me my chariot of fire!*

*I shall not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand.
'Til we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land!*

Mental fight! That was a kind of fight I thought I understood. And after belting that out after breakfast, I was ready for a day of it, upheld in my struggle by the city around me, a community built by the work of my brethren and companions.

Of course there was more poetry in English class, and much of it we memorized. Alexander Pope again, and Grey's *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*, but even better, Coleridge. Our English teacher, Mr. Philbrick, declaimed "Kubla Khan" in his plummy accent:

*A place as holy and enchanted
As ere beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon lover.*

Mr. Philbrick pronounced it "lov-ah!" and rolled his eyes, making us wonder what would a demon lover do to a woman to make her wail for him.

My other classes were Algebra, Latin, Geology/Astronomy and German – German because when the Director of studies asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up, I said, "A doctor, Sir." I had already learned to say "Sir" whenever speaking to a master.

“Well, then, you should take German. A lot of medical science is in German.”

I was later glad for this quaint advice, since it is hard to pick up German except by classroom study. The Latin we were learning in order to read Caesar’s *Gallic Wars* helped me to pick up scraps of French and Spanish from friends in those classes, but German was a secret code known only to a small band of devotees in Herr Gerhard Schade’s class. “Guten Morgen, Meine Herren!” he said as he bustled into the classroom. “Guten Morgen, Herr Lehrer!” we chorused in response. This greeting gave us a chance to practice the rolling gargle of the uvular “R” that was the sign of the expert.

Learning the secret languages and forms of groups was what being a New Boy was all about. I tried to follow the algebra equations that Mr. Clark wrote on the blackboard, but what really interested me was the way he only closed the bottom button of his sport coat, so that the little rectangle of his bow tie rode high over the deep drop of his white shirt-front. When I later described this to my father, he said that sounded “Very Ivy.”

“Ivy” was a label that was not spoken at St. Paul’s, but like many unspoken things, it was certainly present in experience. One day, our Sacred Studies teacher was berating the class for their lack of application – “You boys think that if you just sit here and do nothing you’ll still get into one of the four top colleges!” In the abashed silence, a hand went up – “Please, sir – What’s the fourth?” I am amused to look back on that exchange, realizing that the fourth (presumably after Harvard, Princeton, and Yale) was Columbia University, the venerable institution that dominates the neighborhood where I live now and where my father-in-law chaired the Physics department.

Now it occurs to me that my father, even before I went away to school, had begun to identify himself – sartorially at least – with the Eastern establishment by being the only man in Tulsa who wore three-piece suits from Brooks Brothers. But this is another example of something only spoken of by outsiders. I remember talking about my father with his Aunt Anne-Belle, who was from Texas, who said, “Well,

you know, Clem always was an *intellectual!*” I would not have described him that way myself, but coming from her – with that slightly mocking emphasis – it was revelatory. I would never have thought of him as an outlier, a renegade from the rest of his resolutely not-intellectual family. Our etymology games in the car were our only active celebration of intellectuality.

One reason for not noticing labels is similar to the way fish don’t notice that they are swimming in water. But beyond that, there was another reason at St. Paul’s for not being explicit about labels: Some of them were marks of privilege, and so they were in a sense unmentionable, because to talk about them would be to betray a lack of self-confidence or nonchalance. In fact, many of the most important distinctions were not talked about, because they were marks of privilege, and we were being taught to carry privilege lightly, with diffidence. For example, if a boy was a member of a first team, and so allowed to wear a sweater with the athletic club’s initial woven into it, he learned the right way to wear that badge of athletic distinction was inside-out, as if the wearer did not really want to show it off.

Looking back, I can recognize three other labels in addition to Ivy that were held with this kind of diffidence. They are Eastern, Rich, and WASP.

The one of these labels I could have named at the time was “Eastern” because I knew I was a Scholarship Boy – an outsider. The School had a fund for students from “west of the Mississippi.” And one of my fellow New Boys in the Third Form was Bobby Leatherman, a Southerner, surely, by his speech. At our 50th Reunion, I asked Bobby if he had gotten any of that scholarship fund. “No,” he said, “I was from *Mississippi – east of the River.*”

“Rich” was the subject of some jokes I began to hear. In one story, a master was said to have called out to a newly arrived scion, “Old clothes today, Morgan!” To which the reply was, “But sir, I don’t have any old clothes.”

But “WASP?” What was that? Neither Bobby Leatherman nor I had a clue about the difference between being a White boy from the American hinterland and being a WASP, but we would spend the next

four years learning about it.

I've recently learned that the acronym for White Anglo-Saxon Protestant was coined by a sociologist interested in defining a power elite whose location was distinctly Northeastern America, descending from founding family lines of wealth in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia in the 18th century when most of those families were English and Protestant. And that group, growing larger, and no longer limited to "old money" but expanded to include new money as well, succeeded in holding onto financial and political power in the 19th century as first Irish and then Italian, Polish, Jewish, and other waves of immigrants arrived to form the struggling working classes of the new urban industrial centers. Even though steel was made in Pittsburgh and coal mined in Ohio and West Virginia, the people who made the money still had at least one house in the original colonial capitals. A number of institutions epitomized WASP power in the 19th century: exclusive social clubs in the cities and at the Ivy League universities, summer vacation preserves such as Newport and the coastal islands from Massachusetts to Maine, and upper echelon boarding schools.

There were, on the other hand, group labels that *were* discussed among us with great intensity, because they were the distinctions that we applied to each other. According to these labels, one could be a "brain" (or "grind" if you only got good grades but didn't talk well), a "reg" (for regular fellow, excelling in social ritual and popularity), or a "jock" (sports). Since I liked to write and got good grades, I was a "brain."

There was no such label for acting, the activity that I discovered could absorb most of my energies. I "went out for" the cast of the Thanksgiving Play, to be presented in the Gym/Theater to the School and its visitors on that Fall weekend, and I was cast in one of the lead roles. The play was a wartime drama by John Patrick, *The Hasty Heart*. It was about a group of Allied soldiers in a British Pacific Theatre hospital, and I had the role of the American soldier, Yank. I may have had the advantage of enough of an Oklahoma accent so that I sounded like a generic American, but however that opportunity came upon me, it made my year.

It also made my next three years and college as well. Acting, and later, directing, had a fascination for me that I indulged at every opportunity, and there were many opportunities. At school, besides the Thanksgiving Play, there was a Spring One-Act Play Competition, an acting, casting, and directing opportunity in which my group won the Cup a couple of times. What was it about acting?

Perhaps it was the most glamorous activity available to me, given my utter disdain for sports as a form of self-expression. But more personally, acting was one of the ways I could create some variety in the strict training in comportment and manner that was an unwritten discipline of the school. Instead of being a St. Paul's Boy, I could be *anybody* – I especially enjoyed a serious part as the Girl in *The Flower Shop*, which won the competition – and no one snickered.

I may have begun to experience my life as one long strange, disorienting social enactment. On stage, for a little while, it was at least under artistic control. I was turning myself into somebody else, and as an actor, at least I knew who I should be. I think also that theatre production represented a form of group collaboration that resulted in something positive, unlike the “teamwork” we were supposed to be learning from sports.

Sports four afternoons of the week were obligatory, and I dealt with my old and despised enemy, football, by playing center, as I had done at Cascia. There was an intramural system that divided the whole school into three “clubs,” which played each other at every level in six leagues. In winter, the clubs played hockey on six rinks set on the frozen pond behind the Lower Schoolhouse. I had never learned to skate in Oklahoma, so I played goalie on the third team of my club and did a fair job.

I watched my club's first-team goalie, a Sixth Form star (because he was also the goalie of the School Team) – Nortie Knox. I studied his moves, practiced his way of waiting for just the right moment to hit the ice and cover a loose puck. Being on my own in the goal felt comfortable.

In the spring, the intramural club system gave way to tennis and track and baseball with just enough club teams to make a couple of

baseball leagues. With intense relief, I played low-key singles tennis with a few partners similarly inclined.

I liked to watch track events, and one spring day, I was in the audience sitting on the bleachers as we competed with another school in broad jump and pole vault. The boys from this school looked different, darker somehow, with black hair. I started to experiment with heckling – “Hey, Greaser!” I tried it in basso, in the flat accent of someone from North of Boston: “Greas-ah!” Suddenly I was startled to find Nortie Knox standing in front of me. He had climbed up from the front row. He said, “I’m sitting down here with my parents, and I’m completely embarrassed and ashamed by your behavior. I want you to shut up right now.”

I blushed with shame and hung my head. It was my first rebuke by an older brother, and in an instant it made up for the absences in my life – my father’s silence, the constant moving, the only-ness.

There were other older-brother experiences in my first two years. Two Sixth Formers, Lloyd Gilmour and Michael Coe, both contributed poetry and prose to the literary magazine, *The Horae Scholasticae*, of which they were editors. I read their work with amazement and visited them in the room they shared in The Upper. Coe (who later became a distinguished and art historian of pre-Columbian Mesoamerica) was also a painter, covering canvas boards with abstract shapes in bright colors and adding texture with coffee grounds. One of his poems was about Toulouse-Lautrec:

*The painted faces, the danse macabre
Of the green-shadowed puppets,
The hoarse cackle, and the gaudy bawd’s
Leer. Among these, like a Dante
In the Rings of Hell, the misshapen
Homunculus moved: his cold
Eye recorded the red depths, his brush
Modeled the mauve pleasures of man.*

That struck me as a gem – it still does. It appeared in the second

(November) issue of the *Horae* in my first year, along with a short story by him, and a story by Gilmour. Imagine writing your own poetry! Writing for the *Horae* became a goal for me, and by spring I had an essay accepted. Poems and stories followed, and by the winter of my second year, I was an associate editor, a middle brother, reviewing submissions and making suggestions for other writers.

My experience with housing at St. Paul's started with a single room, as was the custom for Third Formers. I felt great comfort in knowing I had my own space in this new environment. The students elected Inspectors among their peers who made sure you kept your space clean and tidy with inspections every Sunday morning before Chapel. But at the end of that year, students got to choose roommates for the following year – one of the most important expressions of brotherhood at boarding school. Most of the bedrooms in the dormitories outside the Third Form quadrangle were large enough for two beds, so that two desks, plus some ancient easy chairs inherited from previous occupants, could be put in a second room. And even the smaller bedrooms worked for two, with the beds in one room and the desks in the other. So if you had a roommate, you had companionship and extra space.

A few boys preferred to live alone, but most did not, and working out this roommate relationship was the personal event of the first year. Dick Cunningham lived in my dormitory. We both came from cities outside the Boston-Washington corridor – Dick was from Pittsfield, MA. And we both went by names that differentiated us from our same-named fathers – Dick's name was actually Francis Delancey Cunningham, Jr. – something we were constantly having to explain, and a reminder, perhaps, of other problems in that differentiation. And we were both only children!

On a long mountain hike we took one weekend, we discovered enough more in common to propose living together in the second year. This relationship went on through college, where again we roomed together, and after college, when I met my future wife, Margaret, as a member of the wedding party where Dick was marrying her college roommate, Katharine Spalding.

Roommates are what anthropologists call “fictive kin” – alliances of choice that acquire the force of obligation and are sometimes stronger than family relationships because they can be based on a lot of chosen history. The strength of those relationships, it turns out, can also be a crucial factor in nonacademic communities such as those I would be involved in later in my career. As it happens, the Cunninghams and the Beelses now live three blocks apart on West End Avenue, and have done so for over 50 years, looking after each other. Their daughters are our god-daughters.

This relationship became especially important to me because Dick and other school friends soon became more present than my family in Oklahoma. In the middle of my first year at St. Paul’s, my father was posted to New York City, and our life in Tulsa came to an abrupt end. At first, I found this exciting. For a month in summer between the first and second year, I had a quick glimpse of New York City life.

My parents and I lived at the Hotel Adams on East 86th Street when they first arrived, and in 1946 I explored the glittering city, capital of the victorious Allies. Then we sublet an Upper West Side apartment where I had a bedroom that still contained the Barnard diplomas of the daughters of the family we were renting it from. There were books I wanted to read on bookshelves in the hall. Even after my parents found a house to rent in the suburbs, I commuted through Grand Central Station and haunted Rockefeller Center and the Museum of Modern Art, both in the East 50s. For some reason I did not connect Rockefeller Center, with its towers, its brutal statuary and heroic ceiling murals, with the wizened old man John D. Rockefeller whose bronze bust looked down from the lofty molding in the lobby of 26 Broadway, where my father had his New York office. He was now working for Socony Vacuum (an acronym for Standard Oil Company of New York) but I was beginning to realize that these names were legal fictions – it was all the same giant corporation. And, as before, my father didn’t talk about his work.

Before that move to New York, my father visited me at school while on a business trip in the fall of my first year. This visit contained a moment that is in my memory more significant than any direct

discussion about the adult world of work that he and I could have had. We had just had tea with my housemaster, Mr. Bodine, and we were walking towards the dining hall for dinner – a mild fall day with yellow leaves on the ground. He said, in a voice that I can still hear, “These men must lead very satisfying lives.”

It was so rare for him to say something like that. The memory plunges me into imagining what my father found satisfying about his life in the oil business – now the international oil business. Besides the money and what it could buy, there was adventure and travel and a sense of involvement in big movements in the world. I overheard him talking to his friends about some of that, but always in the most modest and distant way. He bought a good camera as soon as we moved to The Hague and recorded with color slides the visits with relatives in beautiful parts of the Netherlands and the trips on business to Borneo and Sumatra.

Whatever the satisfactions, I think it must have been important that this was not what he had planned. His plan was to be a professional scientist and, following his degree in chemistry from the University of Missouri, he started graduate work at the Colorado School of Mines. He liked telling stories about Mines. One final exam included identifying mineral samples in the lab. The professor rubbed fish oil on the samples to keep the students from smelling them instead of using the testing reagents, but some of the old prospectors in the class could do better just by scratching them with a fingernail.

His roommate at Mines, John Bach, whom we knew later in New York, told us what a joker my father was. He was the waiter at table in the boarding house where they lived, and he served soup with a huge syringe he had brought back from the laboratory. I still don't know what financial reversal put a stop to his career as a mining engineer, but those carefree days were interrupted by the need to go home to Kansas City to try to earn a living.

He and my mother met there and married. She was teaching Business English in a business school, and he was trying to sell life insurance door to door. When the opening came in the oil business, they were glad to move to Tulsa. That must have been about 1925 or 1926, and they soon fell into an active life there together.

I'm sure if I had asked my father how he felt about not finishing graduate study at Colorado School of Mines, he would have said he "took it on the chin" – that it was the sort of thing you had to expect and roll with the punches. Nevertheless, at that moment when he and I were musing together on the satisfactions of the schoolmaster's life, there was a flash of understanding the security of monastic retreat from the hazards of commerce.

The schoolmasters at St. Paul's did not wear robes like the Augustinian fathers at Cascia Hall, but defining their experience with a word, one could call it monastic. Much as I complained when I was there about the limitations imposed by a celibate life of rules and structure, there was a connection between that sheltered life of boarding school and the freedom to accomplish personal or social goals.

I read in Sacred Studies, one year of which was church history, that monasteries thrived in the Middle Ages as refuges from the tumult of the outer world. They appealed to those not suited to the military. In the presence of chaos, war, and pillage, oppressed by the rule of primogeniture in both the peasant and noble classes, there was a large population of younger sons with no hope of success through inheritance and marriage. And a large population of talented unmarried daughters, uninterested in spinsterhood, looking for a place in the world and work to do. The safe and concentrated pursuit of a noble purpose, in common with brothers or sisters equally dedicated, equally sheltered from distracting envies and ambitions, made a monastic life, quite literally, a place of salvation. Certainly boarding school had some of these advantages. There was plenty to do, and a lot we didn't have to worry about.

I also learned that the medical and hospital care of the Middle Ages, such as it was, was provided by the brothers and sisters. So did I think of medicine as a monastic calling – a life of service and security? The monastics were the first revolutionary designers of intentional communities, communities with common purpose.

Monasteries provided an alternative to that world of male hierarchy, with its disastrous clashes between elder brothers. Some of them were saints. My favorite scenes from monastic life were in the life of St. Francis – as a young man leaving his rich clothes in the hands of

his father while he, naked to the world, turned to put on the monk's robes. Or later, a scene of him preaching poverty to the astonished Pope.

Unlike monks, my parents rarely stayed put, and I was soon disappointed to learn that we were not about to become New Yorkers, at least not yet, because by the next summer my father was posted to The Hague, where Standard Oil, Royal Dutch Shell, and British Petroleum were preparing to turn the Western Pacific, our prize of war, into an oil field, beginning with Borneo and Sumatra. I flew to the Netherlands for the first Christmas vacation of my second year, and it was exciting to join my parents in this unexpected reunion with our Dutch family. What a lot of new relatives! My great-uncle Clemens, the patriarch and historian of the family, upon hearing that I wanted to be a doctor, produced from the archives a photograph of one of my ancestors' 17th-century medical diploma from the University of Genoa!

But after that I spent vacations with Dick and his family in Pittsfield, and with another close friend and member of our school class, Jim Terry, who was later to be our college roommate. Even on vacations, these school friends were my family, the dependable part of my world.

The miracle, and the paradox, was that spending vacations with the Terry family in Stamford, Connecticut, introduced me to family life in a way I could never have experienced it at home. Jim was the third of the four sons, the oldest of whom, Arthur, was an executive in the same international engineering firm as the father of the family. So Arthur was out of the house, but he was a frequent visitor with his French wife, Perrine.

Peter, the next oldest, lived in New York in an Upper West Side apartment with a roommate. Jim and I visited them and the older woman from whom they rented a bedroom, and I tasted for the first time the city life of working bachelors paying their rent and helping to cook in the big kitchen. Peter, like Jim, was a musician. He was just out of college and trying to earn money from day jobs to support himself.

Jim was concerned about his younger brother, Brad, the fourth in line, who was having more than the usual early adolescent problems – probably learning difficulties as well. We often talked about Brad, and

these conversations were my first experience of family-based therapy strategies. I discovered that Jim was the one in the family who worried about how everyone was getting along – how their struggles could be understood and what he could do to help.

Those struggles increased the summer after our Fourth Form year when Peter brought his new girlfriend, Mary Lou, to live with him in the apartment over the garage. The tension increased between Mary Lou and Jim's mother, Melinda, a tall, beautiful, and, to me, utterly gracious matriarch who had hitherto been the only woman in this house full of handsome men. Melinda presided over cocktail conversation – sometimes light and amusing, sometimes intellectual and political – in a long dressing gown, while Jim's father, Arthur Sr., dispensed martinis from his inexhaustible ice pitcher in the opposite corner. The house seemed filled with international travelers, house guests like me, people who worked in the engineering company, or visitors who, like Jim and Peter, played the grand piano in one corner of the room – all men, interesting men.

Jim and I liked to visit Peter and Mary Lou in their room over the garage, talking about Life until late at night. I remember Mary Lou trying to explain something to me she thought she couldn't say out loud, so she whispered it in my ear. What she said is of course forgotten, but the feeling of her lips touching my ear is still with me.

In the end, the struggle between the two women in the household was resolved in Mary Lou's favor – she and Peter were married. In the years of my being part of this family, I had my first family therapy training, talking with Jim as I helped him dig up rocks around the yard. The main subject of these discussions was Jim's worry about how best to help Brad, but this led to thoughts about how different our families were.

Since Jim's father was the head of an international engineering firm, he could live in Stamford rather than overseas, while my family lived in The Hague because that was where my father was sent as he moved through the management of one of the largest corporations in the world. I marveled at the variety of people in the Terry house, connected either through the company or old friendships, or through music. I began to see that being an only child was just the obvious part of my situation. My family compounded the feeling of isolation in other ways, like

leaving me stranded during vacations. So I was grateful for time spent helping Jim with the yard work – giving me, too, a brother to talk with.

CHAPTER 5: OLD BOY

“Old Boy” may sound like a contradiction in terms, but the phrase really was part of the language and tradition of St. Paul’s. Certain Fifth and Sixth Formers were designated to look after New Boys who needed particular kinds of help – to be their Old Boys. A Fifth Form Old Boy from Oklahoma accompanied me back home to Tulsa on my first Christmas vacation trip. There were Sixth Form Supervisors living in each of the Third and Fourth Form dormitories, older brothers looking out for the quality of the life and friendships in the house and advising the housemasters about problems among the younger boys. At the top of this organization of senior responsibility for the life of the school was the Student Council, chaired by the Sixth Form president, with real advisory powers and regular meetings with the Rector.

This relationship is the subject of A. R. Gurney’s only play specifically about St. Paul’s – “The Old Boy.” Gurney was a year ahead of me and a contributor to the *Horae Scholasticae*. I’ve already described my appointment to the editorial board in the Fourth Form. Becoming an editor admitted me to a long tradition: the editors met in the *Horae* office, a room in the Old Schoolhouse, one wall of which was a bookcase with leather-bound volumes of the publication going back to its 19th-century founding.

Reading those musty archives, with their accounts of cricket matches as well as poetry and essays, reminded me of another experience we had three times a day. As the Fifth and Sixth Forms walked to their dining room in The Upper, they passed down a long cloistered hallway lit by windows on two sides of the great quadrangle of that building where the Sixth Form lived. Engraved on the oak panels of those long halls were the full names of every graduate in every class since the school began – Old Boys, indeed. Institutional history and the responsibility for continuing it provided us with something else to be besides giddy adolescents, another lesson I learned quite without knowing I was learning it.

Dick and I had lived in Conover for our Fourth Form year – a three-story but rather intimate farmhouse converted to a dormitory – and for the Fifth Form we moved to Middle, a rambling old white clapboard structure where we felt very much at home. There were no Supervisors (Fifth Formers were too old for that), but there was a married housemaster, Mr. Mechem, and an unmarried one, Mr. Church, who were just right for the job. Mr. Church was a veteran, willing to talk about the war, and a generous host at weekend “feeds” in his apartment. Mr. Mechem was a thoughtful, pipe-smoking presence on his evening rounds, especially interested in philosophy, which he was planning to make the subject of an elective course. During the year we traded books with him – which he actually read and discussed with us.

Dick started to make oil paintings, a process I watched with fascination. In the fall, I had the lead role, for the last time, in the Thanksgiving Play – Maxwell Anderson’s *High Tor* – and in the spring my friend Dixon Stanton and I made a final entry in the One-Act Play Competition. I knew that, as one of the head editors of the *Horae*, I was going to be too busy to be in a play the next year .

A group of us in the Fourth Form had organized a soccer team and informed the school that we were no longer willing to play football. A summer letter about this had arrived from the Rector containing this astonishing sentence: “You will make few friends if you do not play football,” which confirmed for us the utter idiocy of that institution and its sponsorship. What did the Rector know about our friendships? When we returned in the fall, the school grudgingly marked one of the football fields for playing soccer, and in my last two years I endured the fall term from the position of fullback while we played a few other schools’ soccer teams. In the winter, while the rest of the school played hockey, Dixon and I persuaded the athletic director to let us fence in the gym with some old foils and masks we had found, and that got me safely through to tennis again in the spring.

The most important experience of the Fifth Form year was being a member of J. Carrol McDonald’s American History class. There I

encountered my first experience of a sustained intellectual enterprise, and it introduced me to a mood of concentration that I would seek out for the rest of my life. At the first class of the year, we opened our copies of the five-pound first volume of Morrison and Commager's *Growth of the American Republic* and marked the pages we should be prepared to discuss by the next class. I still have those books, densely underlined, margins scribbled with notes. The first volume had a portrait of Thomas Jefferson for its frontispiece, and the second had one of Franklin Roosevelt – the two intellectual architects of the Republic.

McDonald listened to our responses in class with pursed lips and a frowning gaze, interrupting us to insist on better evidence, clearer argument. He was always questioning, rarely lecturing. Sometimes he read us something funny, such as a magazine article from the 1920s about Jesus Christ as the ideal businessman. After we chuckled with him, he asked us to talk about where such ideas came from.

McDonald assigned essay topics in history and literature for the spring term. We could invent one for ourselves or pick one of his. I chose "Alexis de Tocqueville's Notes on American Civilization compared with Dickens' only American Novel, *Martin Chuzzlewit*." I got a good grade, but McDonald wrote across the title page, "Beels, you are paddling around the periphery – dive in!"

I kept that paper for years, and I still hope I will be able to find it again. It was an introduction to a way of thinking that became more important as I realized how long it had been with me: the perspective of a foreign traveler trying to understand what makes a culture work. I would not then have called it anthropology, but I learned that was its name when I got to college. One idea that came out of the history course has stuck with me: what a peculiar and special group of people those 18th-century British planters were, slave owners and framers of the Constitution, writers of the Federalist Papers (which we read). Nations have modeled governments on that example ever since, and we have waged war in the name of democracy, with sometimes disastrous consequences. Sometimes this results from our failure to understand the differences between our historical origins – our culture – and theirs.

In addition to heading the history department, McDonald was the

faculty advisor to the Cadmean Debating Society, whose intramural opponent was the Propylaeian Debating Society, and these two clubs staged formal debates during the year. I remember one debate in particular – “Resolved: regionalism in American literature has prevented the development of a coherent national style.” Where else, I wondered, were 17-year-olds being asked to confront a question like that?

That final year in the Upper, I lived in a single, across the hall from the palatial apartment assigned to Dick, who had been elected President of the Sixth Form. He needed a special room for his many pressing duties, chairing the student council, meeting with the Rector and student council committees. So while Dick was very busy that year, I got to learn about how he and the Rector negotiated with each other – the beginning of my lifelong interest in systems that build effective communities.

McDonald was the Head of the Upper, and he shared his rooms with a gray velvet cat named Mycroft (after Sherlock Holmes’ smarter brother). I dropped in on him for tea many afternoons. He was a good replacement for my absent father. His three-piece suits were of comfortable tweed, and there was another similarity: Apart from the hours when he was available for tea, his administration of that large dormitory consisted of strolling the floors in the evening and striking up conversations wherever he was welcomed. He never needed to quell a disturbance – he just stared at it and it withered. I learned later, talking with Dick about his father and mine, that this ability was something all three men shared.

But politically, McDonald and my father were at opposite poles. A former section man in history at Harvard, McDonald tried to be open to all opinions, but there was no mistaking his own politics. I was sitting at his table in the Upper dining room in the fall of my last year, the morning after Election Day of the 1948 Dewey-Truman presidential contest. The school was, of course, mostly Republican by family allegiance, and so mostly rejoiced, as we went to bed, that the newspapers had confidently forecast victory for Dewey. In the morning surprise, Truman by a landslide, we appeared for breakfast:

“Who did you vote for, sir?” someone asked.

“Truman!” said McDonald with a triumphant grin, tapping his fingers on the table in a piano-player flourish.

My father heard this story without complaining that I was being turned into “a traitor to my class” like Roosevelt. I think I had hoped he would at least joke about the subversive use to which my tuition was being put, turning me into a “lefty.” No such jokes from my father were forthcoming.

Quite apart from being a vehicle to challenge my father’s politics, studying history carefully would become a necessary ballast to the explorations of science that I took up in college. The grit of history and anthropology, the need for the texture of narrative to counter generalizations, began with that history class.

The professions of editor and cartoonist were the two I got to try out in my Sixth Form year at St. Paul’s. Editing the *Horae Scholasticae* had been the task of three of us the year before, and the senior editorship was now divided between me and George Kelly. George was more intellectual than I was, reading *The New York Times*, which he had delivered every morning. He wrote analytical essays for the *Horae*. We were a good team and worked hard writing editorials and editing submissions.

My cartooning started in Tulsa. We had a wonderful friend there, Alben Butler, who was a cartoonist and made a living out of it. He had published books successfully – I think of him as the Bill Maldin of World War One. A party at his house is one of my clearest memories. Amid the tumult of happily drinking and talking grownups, he summoned me to his drawing desk with a wave of his glass. “C’m’ere, Chris. Let me draw you a picture!” After a little negotiation, we settled on a cowboy. The cowboy was seated on a sprightly horse with a gleam in his eye that matched the big smile of the rider – a cartoon portrait of the artist himself. I marveled that he could draw so well while drunk, dipping his watercolor brush in his scotch.

I still have that drawing. It inspired me to be the cartoonist for every school that had a yearbook – from Cascia Hall through medical school. So as a head editor of the *Horae*, my special undertaking was

converting the staid old school magazine into something as like *The New Yorker* as possible, complete with little line drawings set into the middle margins, which I did myself if there were few submissions. I was happy that this innovation flushed out several other budding cartoonists.

Poets, even more than cartoonists, were my heroes. William Blake, a sort of heavenly cartoonist, was high in both categories, and Robert Frost, a flesh and blood poet, visited the school for a wonderful evening reading his work and talking about it. In the final year of German with Herr Schade, we read Goethe's *Faust*, and in the advanced English class we read all the works of Edward Arlington Robinson, whom our teacher, John Richards, the chairman of the English department, had known personally.

Robinson is best known for short humorous character sketches like "Miniver Cheevy." Thinking of my father, whose ability to do calculations in his head I had always marveled at, I tried this imitation of a Robinson sketch:

*Kalanin, ascetic and serene,
With sinewed face and mirror-gleaming, steel-set
Lenses where his eyes might be, was quick
With quantities. He was the principal
Existent of his cubic universe,
Or so we guessed from the economy
With which he shared himself. And it was strange.
The way he saw such terrible and silent
Beauty in the Constant's curve across
Its ordered lattice-lines. And it
Was even stranger still that he could find
His staple truth between the clean and flawless
Anvil teeth of his micrometer,
To several decimals. And yet it was
The strangest thing of all, considering his
Finished ease with instruments,
That he would waken nightly from well-ventilated
Sleep, to listen, with his blanket tight*

*Beneath his chin, to his alarm clock, smugly
Checking out the seconds as they fled.*

We also studied Robinson's long portraits, like "Mr. Flood's Party" and his great elegies, "Man against the Sky," and "For a Dead Lady."

The poetry I wrote for the *Horae* was mostly serious stuff in that elegiac mood, but there is one more like "Miniver Cheevy" (it even has the same rhyme scheme), which I want to introduce here, to make a point. It is from my junior year when I was struggling with my attitude towards a generic type of boarding-school girl that we all met on vacation or asked to come to a school dance. Here is the beginning and two later stanzas:

*My love is not a red, red rose.
As metaphor, I might propose
Two medium gardenias,
Tinseled and dewy in their box,
Or gracing her perfumed locks
My fourteenth-storey Venus.*

.. . . .

*In Christmastime or city Spring,
My love and I go partying
Where taxi-rivers flow,
Eroding sequined towers from under.
Where the muffled subways thunder
In the catacombs below.*

*Beneath the street-wise strips of stars,
Crowded, dim-lit little bars
Dispense maturity.
Almost carefully at ease,
We talk of other gaieties
'Til witching-hour at three.*

Today, re-reading the poem, I paused at the line, "almost carefully at ease." We affected ease to disguise anxiety – here about being on a

date in a bar. (We're underage – will we be served? What does she think of me? What about the kiss on the doorstep when I take her home? Will she ask me up?) As Woody Allen has made an art form of Jewish anxiety, I am making a poem here about WASP elite nonchalance.

I recently read a book about this that I found explicit and illuminating. Shamus Rahman Khan has written an ethnography of St. Paul's (*Privilege – The Making of an Adolescent Elite at St. Paul's School*) in which he describes the acquisition of this attitude, this way of expressing feelings, as one of the principal contributions the school makes to the development of an elite.

His word for it is “ease.” That is, as our education progressed, we learned to be at ease with the elite culture and its ways. I mentioned before that as a New Boy I had to learn a diffident manner, and that bragging about accomplishments was *not* done. Letter sweaters were worn inside-out as an expression of *not* bragging. We learned to act as if our accomplishment was unnoticeable – as if we were saying, “but of course – why not?” Castiglione in *The Courtier* calls this “sprezzatura,” an aristocratic way of behaving *effortlessly*, as if no thought or intention were involved – certainly no strain.

To be sure, nonchalance is not only a behavior of elites. More recently, this attitude is often called “cool,” and in business courses on the art of negotiation, there is the saying “Never let them see you sweat.” Perhaps these are more conscious strategies than what I am talking about here – and the danger of long-practiced “ease” is that it passes out of awareness, and I don't even know that I am failing to respond to someone's distress – I am responding with “ease.”

I think the disconnection at the heart of this embodiment of class membership has unexpected psychological consequences. The most dramatic one for me was an out-of-body experience during graduation. Before driving away in my parents' car after that June day, there was a service in the chapel where I watched the other members of my form take their last Holy Communion together, and as I turned to join them and march with my class out of Chapel for the last time, I left my body to rise up into the top of the belfry and look down to see the whole scene far below. I did not come back down into my marching self until we

were all out in the sunshine and I was brushing tears out my eyes. “I’m fine,” I said – “just fine, thanks.”

Now, for me, graduation was leaving *home*. St. Paul’s was home, for me, in the sense that I belonged there more than the places my parents lived during my eight years of school and college: The Hague; Bedford Village, NY; The Hague again. I knew this in my head, and even said so. But did I feel it?

And what was the effect of my dismissive, nonchalant way of expressing it? I was not capable of summoning, of expressing, the feelings that the occasion called for, nor was anybody else. Embracing, crying on each other’s shoulders, was something no one did – and so there were surprising, unacknowledged tears and even more surprising out-of-body dissociation.

The commencement address to my St. Paul’s School graduating class of 1949 was given by Vaughan Merrick, a distinguished alumnus and a member of an old Philadelphia family. He said to us, “You are all going to go out of here to good colleges and after you graduate most of you are going to make a lot of money. I recommend to you that a good way of giving some of it back is to go into local government.” This wonderfully clear advice has stayed with me, partly, I suppose, because of the momentous occasion, but probably more because it articulated something deep in the community’s culture that had never been said clearly before. It said that making money as a member of the upper class is an extractive industry that depletes as well as enriches, and at any rate, if it enriches you greatly, you are obliged to replace some of what you’ve taken out, through service. It was a WASP view of class conflict and what to do about it – an American version of *noblesse oblige*.

Much later in life I found out that there is a level between just paying your taxes and running for elective office. The hard work of making things work is actually carried out by a network of voluntary associations, boards of trustees, professional associations, (epitomized in my experience by the Friends and Allies of the Mentally Ill) that step in where they are needed and serve for free.

I was aware that my father was a centurion in the legions of a truly extractive industry, and that money derived from Standard Oil had sent me to St. Paul's. What kind of obligation did that place on me? None, really, because I had no capital and no commercial ambitions. Merrick's advice, based on "making a lot of money," was not addressed to me. So why was I paying such careful attention? I think it was because, outside of McDonald's history class, it was the first explicit mention of economic class I had heard in four years. And here it was, at the exit, important, but until now, unmentionable.

CHAPTER 6: SUBURBS AND SAILING

In my last two years at St. Paul's, I added the New York suburbs to the places I have called "home," separate from school and stranger to me than any of the places I had lived so far. I entered this world because my parents came back from The Hague. My father's new office was in New York, and so for three summers and all the Christmas and Spring vacations in between, I returned from school to exurban New York, visiting my family in the first place we called home since we left Tulsa in 1946.

My parents bought a house in Bedford Village, New York, that had once been a hostel and post stop for a change of horses and a night's stay when its street was a Post Road, so there was a former horse barn that served us as a garage. The house itself was a charming antique. It had wide adze-hewn floorboards with round nail heads, and a large bow window seat looking on the garden. It was the perfect setting for the furniture that had been in storage, combined with the things they had collected in Europe. Home decorating was certainly what kept up my mother's morale during these years, and she was very good at it. Moving back and forth across the Atlantic had taken a toll on her, but she did not complain. She pitched into covering the furniture of the new house with the same serene, pale sea-green covers that we had in Tulsa.

I didn't complain either, and in fact, when I read the letters I wrote during these years (my mother saved all my letters from earliest camp through school and college), I am impressed with the sincerity of my looking forward to coming home to Bedford Village. But I also remember being mystified by life there, where no one talked about work, since the point of living there was to appear free of the working world. I wondered, what do these people *do* here? What interests them? I took the train to the city as often as I decently could.

But in order to get to the train, someone had to drive me in the car. And this did not get much simpler when, later in this period, I got my own driver's license, since there was still only the one car. My father car-pooled or took a taxi at 7 AM to the Stamford station, where he took

the train to New York City and the subway to 26 Broadway, world headquarters of Standard Oil, returning the same way by 7 PM. This left my mother as the driver of the black Chevrolet convertible that was our family car, a romantic conveyance whose steering wheel my tiny mother could barely see over, even sitting on the big cushion she kept in the driver's seat. Figuring out her shopping schedule, social appointments – hers and mine – and keeping up the appearance of a life of leisure, was no easy task.

When I took the train down the coast from Stamford to the city, I could see that the exurbs have many wooded areas where the most well-off commuters live on large parcels of land as if they are country squires. Some of them also keep sailboats in yacht clubs along the shore, so that between country clubs, where golf links and tennis courts occupy the rolling hills, and yacht clubs, with their forests of masts and rigging, you could imagine that you still lived in the 19th century. Except, of course, that the automobile was required to make it all possible, and there were acres of parking lots next to the train stations, shopping malls, and yacht and country clubs, filled with the cars in which these commuters – especially the busy mothers of the families – made their complex rounds.

The summers were long – almost three months – and though summer was the peak play-time of the year, I did also begin to think about the mysterious world of work. My parents wanted me to get a job that would give me something to do, so I applied to the local weekly paper, *The Bedford Village Villager*, as a part-time reporter.

At first this really meant being assistant to the editor, Raymond Hartley. He wore a fedora on the back of his head, a dark suit and tie and a white shirt, even on hot days in the summer, and carried his bundles of typewritten copy in an overflowing leather briefcase – plus more paper under the arm that was not carrying the briefcase. Some of this he handed to me before we got into his little two-door coupe to make our rounds, picking up copy from correspondents in all the smaller villages that were the paper's distribution.

He pulled the car up to a house and said, “OK, Chris, nip in there and get the pages from Mrs. Whatsis.” When I returned, he said, “I was

thinking about the word ‘nip.’ If you were older, I would never tell you to ‘nip’ anywhere. It’s for young nippers.”

We arrived at the press, a deafening factory building full of Linotype machines which we entered as Hartley roared, “everything’s going to be a-a-a-a-all right!” Amid the din, I read and corrected proof columns of print and queried – sometimes argued with – Hartley about style. After he got to trust me, Hartley sent me to review plays at the summer theaters. “Always start with the praise. Mention all the actors and put the negatives in the second to last paragraph. Take it easy – they’re advertisers.”

My favorite assignment was an interview. Hartley told me to call up a Hollywood actor who was famous for playing Axis officers in war movies and who had a house in one of our towns. When I got the invitation to come to his house for lunch, Hartley coached me in detail about how to show I was a well-prepared professional. We sat down on the actor’s porch looking over his back lawn and trees, and the young Black man who had prepared the lunch sat down with us. They joked together as I got out my pieces of notepaper, folded them carefully down the center, put them next to my plate with my pencil and tried to remember my first question.

The actor was a pink man with a shiny bald head. I remembered from pictures that his eyes could take many shapes behind thick glasses depending on whether he was playing a German or Japanese officer, and I was thinking of asking him about that, when he said, “My, you certainly are the most regimented young man I have encountered in a very long time.” The two of them chuckled in a way that led me to suspect that they were a couple. Well, I wasn’t going to ask about that, but I did regain my confidence, if not control of the interview – which was clearly going to be in the hands of the actor himself. He told me some good stories about Hollywood and gave me a glossy photo of himself as a German general.

Hartley and the actor were both new encounters for me – men working without corporate positions or fancy educations. So besides education or training there must be something like “talent,” an essential ingredient of grown-up success. I recognized this from my school

experience as an editor and an actor – the pleasure of skill. I could tell Hartley liked his work because of the way he joked about it, the pleasure with which he found mistakes, and came up with ideas for stories.

But how did talent get recognized? And how did all the people without such a gift find their places in the world of work? It was a question very much on my mind.

The warmest part of our social life in Bedford Village was our connection to the Bachs and the Kohns. John Bach had been my father's roommate at Colorado School of Mines. He was the son of Stella Bach, a member of the Bache family that owned the securities firm of that name in New York. My father remembered when they were at Mines being visited at intervals by Stella, who arrived on the train from New York in a large floral Queen Mother hat, bringing hampers full of food to supply the deficiencies of provisioning in Colorado.

John's sister Kay was married to Paul Kohns, and when Paul and Kay bought a mansion in Rye, New York, John and his English wife Kit moved into the servants' apartment over the garage. John had also dropped out of Mines after a year, but not because of running out of money. John was free to follow his restless curiosity, which included many business and consulting ventures. At the start of the Second World War, he volunteered to fly planes for the Royal Canadian Air Force and met Kit while stationed in England.

Now in that mansion in Rye, the Kohns and the Bachs ate meals together, mostly in the kitchen, and that is where we ate with them when we went there. I thought then that Paul and Kay must have bought the house with a very different style of entertainment in mind. There were rooms upstairs for the three children, Gail (a year younger than me), Lee, and Suzie – my courtesy cousins, according to the roommate rule. But this extended family of nine never ventured into the drawing rooms, the billiard room, or the other rooms of the mansion intended for grand events. After drinks in the cozy wood-paneled library, we got the meal together in the kitchen, sometimes carrying our plates to the dining room. This was my parents' extended family, and by agreement it was always easier for us to go there than for them to come to us.

Paul Kohns was on Wall Street, but like my father, he didn't like to

talk about work. He preferred history and politics and other intellectual matters, including antisemitic prejudice, of which he had had his first experience as an undergraduate at Williams. He had chosen that college in hopes of broadening the protected Manhattan life in which he had grown up as a member of the Straus family, owners of Macy's, and he was bitterly disappointed by the ways in which he was shunned at Williams because he was Jewish. He kept a large engraving of Benjamin Disraeli on the library wall, toasting him as the Great Victorian who had become Prime Minister by "climbing to the top of the slippery pole." My father was loosened and stimulated by this atmosphere, especially when he and John and Paul were arguing. I listened to this talk with fascination – John and Paul provided a place for my father to talk about the two subjects forbidden by the rules of business in Oklahoma: religion and politics.

I think it is no accident that a roommate connection produced another close friendship of mine during those years. The summer of 1946, after my first year at St. Paul's, I had to catch up to my classmates by studying Latin and Algebra in summer school. My parents located a nice camp in Wolfeboro, New Hampshire, that provided these classes. My first tentmate at that camp was someone I couldn't stand, and I asked for a change so that I could share a tent with a boy I had become friends with. That boy was Henry Lauterstein, a year older than me and a student at Milton Academy, who also had school credits to make up. As a roommate relationship, this was brief, but effective. There is something about living with someone that mobilizes fairness, reciprocity, and concern. Maybe that is how roommates become kin.

Henry was all urban sophistication. He knew how to pick up girls at neighboring canoe landings on the shore of Lake Winnepesaukee and persuade them to drive us in their family cars to secluded retreats. Henry liked to sing – he had an impressive Noel Coward repertoire – and he knew satirical songs about Jewish life on the Upper West Side. I still remember this one:

*She's the last of the Fleur-de-Levys,
Though her petals are in decline,*

*She once was the Empress of
A hundred and fifth and West End Avenue!*

It rings in my head now that we live at a 102nd and West End Avenue, near Straus Park, in that neighborhood no longer a Jewish enclave because antisemitism in real estate, as in so many things, is finally over.

Another thing I found fascinating was that Henry was in psychotherapy with a Harvard psychologist who was vacationing nearby, and who twice a week drove to the gate of the camp in his car to pick Henry up and drive off for a session, sitting in the front seat of the car for an hour. I was awed by these meetings, the first acquaintance I made with the world of psychotherapy. It added to Henry's already considerable aura.

Henry's father was Leon Lauterstein, general counsel of the Metropolitan Opera, Macy's, and other corporations of the city, both public and commercial. I stayed many weekends at their house in Stamford, where his mother and his aunt, from whom Henry got a lot of his jokes, introduced me to the funny-painful way of looking at Jewish life. Henry's older sister, Janet, a singer who changed her name to Janet Lauren and kept it that way after she became a musicians' agent, had a darker, droller version of the same humor. I had never known a family that got each other laughing so much, and I quickly enlarged my own store of jokes, Jewish and otherwise.

This friendship with Henry lasted a long time. I kept in touch with him when we were both at Harvard, was best man at his wedding to Kitty Belle Meban in Knoxville, Tennessee, almost a caricature of a Deep South WASP community. Margaret and I were later close friends with Janet during our early years in New York before she died.

I do notice that all these Jewish friends were of the same class. Even as they were excluded from some institutions, Jews had a parallel system of class, some of the markers of which I've suggested. This was touched on in a famous movie, *Gentleman's Agreement*, which in 1947, in the middle of my St. Paul's years, blew the subject of upper-class antisemitism in real estate wide open, and earned Darryl Zanuck and his cast Oscars from the grateful Hollywood community.

It was not one of the movies shown on Saturday nights at St. Paul's. That institution continued to deal with the possibility of antisemitism by behaving as if it didn't exist, and indeed as if Jews didn't exist. I could guess, from appearance and surnames, which of my schoolmates was Jewish, and one, Sam Insull, was named for his infamous grandfather, the star figure of the holding companies scandal of the 1930s. That was in the history book, so no question about *him*. But as for the others, we were just not going to talk about it.

One social compartment in the suburbs where WASPS could be completely undisturbed by Others was sailing. This was a strenuous and expensive summer activity, the epitome of which, for me, was a yacht club sail for two weeks from South Norwalk, Connecticut, to Manchester, Massachusetts, and back. My St. Paul's friend Dixon Stanton invited me to join him and his parents on a 25-foot sloop that slept four, with me and Dixon bunking in the fo'c'sle. We cast off shortly after I arrived with my house present – carefully selected by my mother – a wheel of Camembert cheese. Mrs. Stanton, who was in charge of the galley, thanked me effusively, and Mr. Stanton made a joke about towing it behind in the dingy.

The trip was a week's sail to Manchester, and then a week back, stopping every evening to anchor and have cocktails. Then we either had dinner on board or rowed ashore in the dingy to find a restaurant. Mr. Stanton was captain, navigator, and a good teacher of seamanship. He was a stockbroker and explained to me the intricacies of his firm, an "odd lots" house that specialized in small lots of shares. He was the first man I had met who was happy to talk about his work, and he seemed quite at ease with the fact that it was not nearly as much fun as sailing, and, so he said, not as demanding of skill and expertise.

Dixon was destined to follow his older brother Louis to Yale and a law career, and I learned a little about the language and conduct of those worlds. Going to Yale was a family tradition, and Harvard for Law was, of course, because it was the best. This would ensure his entry into one of the "better" law firms such as White and Case or Lord Day and Lord, where he would have a chance to make partner.

At the Manchester end of the loop, all the boats rafted together for a mass cocktail party that crawled back and forth across the decks and then moved up to the Yacht Club house. There I sat down on a bench next to an attractive older woman who, I discovered, was Dick Cunningham's godmother, Polly Starr. We talked all the way through dinner, an unforgettable encounter for me. I knew that Dick had first learned painting from this godmother, who was a member of a famous group of Boston women painters in the 1920s and 30s. All his life, Dick was encouraged by his godmother, whom he talked to, often weekly, on the phone. What was she doing in this flotilla? Her husband, a Boston lawyer, was a passionate yachtsman.

During the week we took to sail back down the coast to Norwalk, we stopped for dinner at a few yacht clubs because the mooring was easy and dinner near at hand. Mr. Stanton observed that when he had Jewish guests on the boat, he had to remember which clubs would welcome them.

All this talk about law school, and my encounter with Dick's godmother, was material for my reflections on how someone might gather the confidence to enter a profession. Dick was really lucky to have an actual famous painter for a godmother, and I knew from overhearing his conversations with her on the phone that she was giving him lots of encouragement, in addition to her practical advice.

Maybe lawyers didn't need so much encouragement – Dixon certainly didn't seem worried, at least in the way that Dick was, about whether his profession would make him a living. I don't think I really understood at the time that Dixon would probably not have to worry about money in any case, with a law degree and family connections – and inheritance.

But I knew from other conversations that entering law school was not necessarily a commitment to practice law. Most of the lawyers my family knew were corporate lawyers in the oil business, and their job was to keep the company *out* of court. This was what Henry's father did as general counsel for Macy's and the Opera.

Avoiding lawsuits didn't seem like a very interesting career to me. What else did lawyers do? They did wills, trusts, and estates, and a few

actually appeared in court like Perry Mason. I knew friends at school were already talking about going to law school after college because they *didn't* know what they wanted to do. Only one career was much discussed at school – working for the State Department. Everyone said that to get there it was important to go to Yale.

And then there was finance – banking and stocks and bonds. Many of my friends' fathers did that, but they were even more unwilling to talk about it – which is why I quizzed Mr. Stanton on exactly what his firm did on Wall Street.

Dixon and I had our own conversation about finance. We summed it up by designing a sermon on the mysterious and puzzling saying of Jesus, “For to him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not shall be taken away, even that which he hath.” Finance was about making sure that people who had money were able to make more of it. It didn't appear to be a difficult line of work, mostly being sociable and reliable, like Mr. Stanton.

Dixon and I exchanged these thoughts in the forward cabin of the sloop where he was intent on smoking cigarettes and reading Virginia Woolf. From time to time, he would have to haul himself up to the hatch overhead to look at the interesting ship his father was pointing out on the horizon, but then he sank back into the smoke-filled cabin and we resumed our discussion of the mysteries of the adult world. Neither of us realized we were limited in our understanding by the class bubble, invisible to us, that we floated in through that world of summer.

I learned enough about sailing to be a responsible crew member for the many day-sails and longer Caribbean trips that came my way later in life. Sailing was an adventure, both physical and mythical, but some time in my 40s I finally excused myself from having anything to do with the danger, social confinement, and physical discomfort of life on the water. As many painters and writers have found, a sea voyage is a metaphor for life best explored on dry land in the comfort of a library or a studio.

Dixon Stanton, did go to Yale and married Barbara Hadley (a

Brearley School friend of my wife Margaret's) just before they moved to Cambridge where Dixon, as expected, attended Harvard Law and then was drafted into the Army. They spent a very happy service tour in Paris where, as a member of the Judge Advocate General Corps, Dixon defended enlisted men brought before courts martial, his most satisfying legal work, as he often said. Between trials, he and Barbara toured Europe, following one of their many shared passions, church architecture. At the end of the tour, they came back to New York, and Dixon did indeed enter White and Case as an associate hoping to make partner.

Margaret and I saw the Cunninghams and the Stantons frequently as we all started our professional lives in New York. Dixon and I had two exchanges of professional favors. He helped me write up a car accident report during my internship year, and two years later I did a rather bad job of trying to talk with him about his alcohol addiction, telling him how worried all his friends were. Later, I learned that the right way to do this was to convene all those friends, and Barbara as well, in a serious intervention to get him into a program. But I was a second year psychiatry resident and had never heard of interventions.

Dixon found the law boring, depressing work, and his dependence on cigarettes and alcohol increased, unconsolated by afternoons playing backgammon in the Union League Club. With Barbara's support, he made an effort to escape by applying for a position as General Counsel to the Metropolitan Art Museum, but he didn't make it.

I think of Dixon often, wondering how he might have gotten control over his life, how we might have helped him. Our friendship with Barbara is something wonderful to have salvaged from the early loss of Dixon. She is trained as a city planner, but at this time in her life she is most interested in how boards of trustees work. She is on several such boards and consults to others, but what she and I and Margaret like to talk about is the strange families we grew up in.

I asked Barbara recently if Dixon had ever considered working for Legal Aid or the Attorney General, which would have offered satisfactions more like his work for JAG. She said, no – both Dixon and his brother Louis were destined by the family to try for law partner at White and Case or, in Louis' case, Davis Polk. Louis became a judge.

But, Barbara reminded me, Dixon did move to a law firm that specialized in art sales and contracts, and he got a master's degree in Fine Arts. He died early of throat cancer, the first such sad experience for most of us.

I finally understand the perils Dixon faced in trying to make partner in an upper-class law firm. Skill in law practice is not what leads to that promotion – it is being a rain-maker, using social position and influence to bring business to the firm. It was precisely to avoid that class arena that the other lawyers I know chose different paths. Jim Terry followed a similar path, until he could retire and be the music director of the Tavern Club in Boston. He might have had the family connections for an upper-class firm but chose not to enter that game, and instead headed for a comfortable retirement and the joy of arts and letters.

My other college roommate, Eric Rosenfeld, became a labor lawyer, first on the union and then on the management side. He enjoyed the tactical play of labor negotiations and the new challenges each situation presented. One of his daughters, Katie, is a public-interest lawyer. Eric retired to concentrate on the quality of life in our neighborhood, especially housing for the homeless on the block where he and his wife Gillian had their brownstone. For Jim, and Eric, careful navigation, away from the sea-lanes of power, brought them into a safe harbor in later life.

For me, the most important encounter that resulted from our living in Bedford Village was that Henry Lauterstein had introduced me to Ann Valentine, also at Milton Academy, and I had invited her to the Spring Dance at school. Her family lived a short walk down the road from us in Bedford Village, and by that second summer we were spending lots of time together. Ann introduced me to the novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald, which we spent many hours discussing, and we both were poetry enthusiasts: Yeats, of course, but especially e. e. cummings. It was my first chance to be with a woman whose mind I really enjoyed and to see that it was easy to move back and forth between talk and dalliance with what seemed in those summers like all the time in the world.

We spent some evenings at dances at the Waccabuc Country Club,

and some afternoons swimming in the branch of the Mianus River that flowed through the woods behind the Valentines' house. One sunny afternoon we were floating in the river, kissing as a waterfall poured over our shoulders, and I looked up to see Ann's younger sister staring at us intently from the riverbank. I froze, and Ann dived out of sight under the water. The scene is lit in my mind like the Corot painting of Diana surprised at her bath by Actaeon, every leaf and branch of the trees painted vivid and bright as the day it happened.

Ann and I got out of touch when my family went back to The Hague and we went our separate ways to college, she to Barnard in New York and I to Harvard. But fifty years later on a trip to Cambridge, I dropped in to the Signet Society for lunch, where I found myself next to a lively companion named Jack Cobb. I wrote him an enthusiastic letter addressed to "Professor Cobb." He wrote back that he was not a professor, but "I have a higher distinction. I am married to Ann Valentine." In this way we discovered that Ann and Jack Cobb, a lawyer, live in a beautiful old house in Cambridge on Avon Hill Street, the same street where Margaret lived when she was a girl, riding her bicycle all over that neighborhood during the War while her father was working on the development of radar.

Reminiscing about Cambridge reminds me that it is time now to get back to my own story, at the point where I entered that magical world as a freshman in Harvard Yard, in Cambridge. What distinguishes it from the suburbs is that Cambridge is a town with a university, a community where most of its inhabitants like to talk about their work, or are able to work at what they like to talk about, in exchange for the conscious choice of professor, student, consultant, or amateur status.

I went to college with my medical ambition still intact, which is remarkable, I think, since, in all those explorations before college of work in the world of grown-ups, I never met anyone who was a doctor – not one.

This experience of living in a separate class bubble from the one I intended to enter by becoming a doctor had consequences I could not

have predicted at the time, because no one wanted to talk about inhabiting a different class from doctors. It was a secret, because everyone agreed it was important to have a good doctor, one you could depend on when needed. Only later did I learn more about doctors as a separate social class.

CHAPTER 7: HARVARD MAN

The transition from St. Paul's to Harvard College was curiously lacking in surprises – my own nonchalance again, perhaps, but also a striking similarity of institutions. My arrival had been arranged by a handshake the year before with the Harvard admissions man, who visited the school (no interview). I was established in one of the freshman dormitories of Harvard Yard with two roommates from school – Dick Cunningham and Jim Terry. The three of us got along with the two others in our suite, who were from the Taft School, and so in terms of class and background, there was hardly a ripple.

When it came time to move from the Yard to the Houses on the Charles where the upper-classmen lived, we added Eric Rosenfeld to our threesome. Eric had grown up in Pittsfield with Dick and had gone to Deerfield Academy. So we were a group of preppies looking for a four-bed suite.

John Finley, the Master of Eliot House, responded to our request by saying he did not have a four, but he did have two threes together at the end of a hall, and if we joined with a pair of applicants he had in mind, we could put the two spaces together in a congenial way for six. This was how we came to live for three years with Tony Morss and Nick Brown, graduates of Groton, a pedigree that Master Finley must have assumed would certainly be acceptable to us. A great classics scholar, Finley likely thought of the House as sort of a boarding school. “Outside,” he liked to say, “is the world – Olympos! Here is Eliot House – Arkadia!”

I volunteered to be the one of us four to go across the hall and share a bedroom with Nick Brown, which proved to be a very nice bedroom indeed, furnished with beds from his home in Providence where the Brown family had been governors, university founders, and philanthropists for generations. Nick was named for one of the brothers in the original slave-trading Brown family of the Providence Plantations, an origin story we never discussed since so many generations of

abundant philanthropy stood between those days and the present.

Tony was a music major headed for a career as a conductor, and so he had the single room because he needed a place to practice on his piano and clarinet. We all got along very well, and I made myself at home in the living rooms of both suites. It would have been easy there to live a life completely untroubled by intimations that other styles or groups existed.

Except, of course, for classes. These were “section meetings” where five to ten members of the large lecture courses met for discussion with the graduate students who read and graded our papers. Here, all of a sudden, was a stage that had starring roles for the two groups that had been either missing or obscured at St. Paul’s – women and Jews! Both were in the center of the action in class, thoroughly enjoying their contribution to the liveliness of the discussion. Radcliffe students made the college essentially co-educational. Arguing in class and sometimes flirting afterwards, my experience of school took on a whole new dimension.

My social science section man, newly arrived at graduate school, was Norman Birnbaum, who began the discussion in our first meeting by saying that he thought we should understand where he was coming from. His political education had begun in the Bronx, in the shadow of Yankee Stadium, battling Bundists with broken milk bottles. We went on from there to discuss the social theories of writers from St. Thomas Aquinas to Karl Marx and Max Weber. I loved writing papers for Norman and received trenchant comments. On the back of one paper he wrote, “I am of the opinion that you can do more than teach in a secondary boarding school.”

So that reminds me that I was talking about being a schoolmaster as an alternative to being a doctor even in the second year at Harvard. Norman’s comment was an invitation to consider something more, something he was undertaking, serious professional work of a more intellectual kind. After the course finished, we often had lunch together and met for theater evenings in New York. Since then, I have read his columns in *The Nation* with special pleasure, and I reflect that encounters like this are what a Harvard education is really about.

The Eliot House dining hall where we had three meals a day was another place to meet and talk to fellow residents who were full of surprises. One that sticks in my mind was a classmate from New York City whose parents were devotees of Wilhelm Reich, the apostate younger member of Freud's circle. Reichians believed that the orgasm was the central energy of psychic life, not because, as Freud said, it was an expression of libido, but because it came from the Orgone, the anti-entropy force of the universe. Orgones were blue – in fact, they were the blue of the sky. His parents had in their apartment, he said, a small “Orgone box,” which was able to accumulate Orgones from the atmosphere. We both laughed at the idea but then he confided that he had tried the box one day and he did feel heat when he focused it on the palm of his hand.

Why, out of hundreds of dining hall conversations, does this one stay with me? I remembered it years later when two of my fellow psychiatric residents turned out to be Reichians. And I could appreciate it as a cosmological response to the grim message of the physicists that entropy was the fate of the universe, which would eventually become “dark, motionless, and cold.” The Orgone was anti-entropy, a life force of renewal, healing, and regeneration. But I think more likely, it reminds me of my earliest and favorite camp song:

*O tell me why
The stars do shine
O tell me why
The Ivy twines
O tell me why
The sky's so BLUE
And I will tell you
Why I love you.*

The next verse says, “Because God made” all these things, including you, that's why “I love you.” I never found that second verse satisfactory. The thrill of the idea of sky-blue Orgones echoed my search for explanations in science, psychology, biology – and poetry. But explanations of what? I couldn't have told you – some kind of thematic

thread, some pattern that ran through it all.

In the many spaces of extracurricular college life there were friends and collaborators, professors, and section leaders who shared a sense of humor, an exultation, a wit, that I felt newly a part of. My fellow actors in the Harvard Theatre Group, in particular, were a delight. Harold Stone, our director, was a classmate, and so directed and focused on the job that his friends and roommates helped him pass the courses he was neglecting as we put on two productions a year. Stone was a model of concentration and patience with all of us.

Meeting men and women in the context of producing a play was a complete change from flirting and debating in class. When I was King Priam in Giradoux' *The Trojan War Will Not Take Place*, my relationships with the women who played Queen Hecuba and my daughter Andromache were set by the excitement of bringing a performance out of our hard work together.

After a freshman year of trial flirtations and dates, I found a serious girlfriend, an attractive Radcliffe girl that I could both talk and joke with, and she and I were dating "steady." She was part of a group of girls that had gone to boarding school together, rather like my group of boys, and she derived from this an air of self-assurance similar to mine. She had lived in Cambridge all her life and gave me a novel about Harvard undergraduates of an earlier generation – *Not to Eat, Not for Love* by Joseph Weller – inscribed "for Chris, whose education is not quite complete." I recognized this as the way my class expressed affection, with a little mock-patronizing touch.

She majored in History and Literature, eventually just English lit. Although she lived in a college dormitory, she also had another home in the neighborhood, because she was the daughter of a retired member of the English department. The house was on a shady street in that romantic old part of Cambridge bounded by Mt. Auburn and Brattle Streets, between the Divinity School and the Longfellow House, and though I would have rejected the idea at the time, I think I was as much in love with the house as with the girl.

There was a little dark painting by Turner in its large comfortable

library where the professor dozed of an afternoon, and the girl and I could go upstairs to her bedroom and make out. There was no risk of pregnancy because we didn't go that far – perhaps my father's warning had the effect of barring the way. It is painful to recall how all this dalliance led to a proposal of marriage, but it did. I think the proposal held until I returned from The Hague the last summer of college with an engagement ring, but as my senior year began, I was quite sure I couldn't spend the rest of my life talking with the woman this girl would become. I broke it off, amid much anguish and recrimination from her friends and family.

Now I want to emphasize that the breakup was not her fault. I understood myself and my motivations so little that it did not occur to me how much homelessness was the real motive for my wanting to get married. I did not figure that out until much later in life. All I knew then was that I was intensely relieved and spent the rest of the senior year in a happy and easier relationship with another Radcliffe girl which lasted until graduation. My parents came back from their second stint in The Hague and bought a house in Connecticut just in time for coming to graduation, so that technically I was homeless no longer, but I don't think that had really begun to make a difference. Most of the year, I had no plan for what to do after graduation.

Some of my friends dealt with the uprootedness of their college experience by joining the institutions at Harvard called Final Clubs, which were fraternities without actual living and sleeping arrangements. They were eating and partying establishments that existed solely for the purpose of asserting WASP upper-class exclusivity, of Jews certainly, but also of other Others. I had no intention of joining any Final Club, but out of curiosity I went to a Porcellian picnic for possible pledges. I chuckled to myself when I found that the principal activity was – yes! – touch football. So I went to sit on the grass near a group of older women (were they mothers?) who were watching the play and knitting.

“Is that the young Belmont? The one who just ran with the ball?”

Women watching from the walls of Troy, I thought. I had just read the scene in *Troilus and Cressida* where the women stand on the wall to get a good view of Ajax. The next year when I played Priam, wearing a

nice curly Jovian beard, I thought, with relief – better to play a nobleman than try to be one. I also played the Old Man in Yeats' *At the Hawk's Well*. Since I didn't know what I wanted to be, I was relieved to enact mythical Old Men on the stage.

My roommates Dick and Jim had a brief encounter with the world of Final Clubs – they joined the “AD” but soon resigned. We all felt that these institutions were more confining than liberating.

In my second year, I became aware of some other curious group differences. I had enrolled as a biology major, my vague medical ambition still intact, and noticed that no one else I “knew” was pre-medical or majoring in any other hard science. My friends were all in classics, or English, or History, or in the most prestigious group, History and Literature. Only Dick was in Art History – understandable: he was a painter, a seriously committed one at this point. This divide between what C. P. Snow would later call “the two cultures” of science and humanities was, at least at Harvard, a class divide. All the prep school boys, and all the literati, were having a good time in the worlds of literature or history, while planning to go to law school or straight into business – maybe publishing or academia – where they expected to find a place waiting. I compared them with my lab mates in organic chemistry and realized that science was too much like work for these gentleman intellectuals. Besides, you couldn't chat about it, dropping names and *bons mots* at lunch. And medical school? That really *would* be work.

This became especially clear when, late in the second year, I joined the Signet Society, an eating club for interesting conversation (*not* a final club). My main awareness of being apart from the others because I was a science major was that on days when I had an afternoon chemistry laboratory I had to refuse a second martini. Someone on the Program Committee said, “You know, we don't have many *scientists* in the Signet. Beels – you're a scientist – what do you think of having some science professors at one of the dinners?”

I said I would see what I could do. I invited two professors in the Biology Department – men whose answers to questions in class I found fascinating, and whose subject matter was potentially philosophical.

George Wald specialized in the biochemistry and physiology of vision, and Carroll Williams had mapped out the ground plan of the Cecropia moth's metamorphosis from larva to pupa to butterfly – an enduring biochemical system of regulators – the essence of individuality surviving through change. Each man was a witty talker, in addition to his professional accomplishments.

For intellectual exchange between disciplines, the evening was a complete flop. No one in the Signet Society had any questions to ask, but the professors graciously entertained us with stories of their European travels. You actually have to know something to start a conversation about science. Interestingly, this is a point made later by my father-in-law, I. I. Rabi, in a very helpful book, a response to C. P. Snow, called *Science, the Center of Culture*.

So I lived, not very comfortably, in two worlds, taking history and literature courses for fun and social as well as intellectual enhancement, and fulfilling the distribution requirements of my biology major. I survived the traditional pre-med rites of passage, Organic Chemistry and Comparative Anatomy of the Vertebrates. I was thrilled to find a course in History of Science, taught by I. B. Cohen, that brought the two worlds together.

And of course, majoring in biology was not all drudgery. I was required to take at least one advanced course in both botany and zoology. For zoology I took a course in Mammals from a wonderfully enthusiastic man whose specialty was hibernation. He took sleeping field mice out of the refrigerator in his lab where they had been induced to believe it was deep winter, but as soon as they began to twitch from the warmth of our hands, he put them back. I thought of those mice later when I learned in psychiatry the connection between mammalian hibernation and the primate phenomenon of depression – each an abnormality of sleep and alertness. And, of course, the primates were the mammals I was most interested in.

My paper for that Mammals course was “The Social Life of the Sub-Human Primates.” Here, my search for a fundamental explanation “of it all” came, not to an end, but certainly to a hovering pause. I still remembered from my reading for that paper one of the comments of

Wolfgang Kohler: Humans and the great apes differ from most other mammals, and even from some other primates, in having no seasonal regulation of estrus, or “heat,” the female readiness to mate. Like rodents, their females have a regular and continuing cycle of ovulation. So the group of twenty or thirty apes traveling and foraging together had among them adult females who would at any time be showing vivid physical and behavioral signs of sexual interest – and both males and other females were alert to these signs. This consciousness of sexual readiness energized their complex proto-language of grooming and gestures, including the mirror-imitating behavior so familiar we call it “aping.” Mating pairs among apes form feeding partnerships, as do many same-sex partnerships of group leaders (the leader and his or her main ally). These pairings influence the keen sense of hierarchy and dominance among both males and females. Reading about this on a college campus, I felt an immediate sense of recognition.

That paper introduced me to the idea that the basis of human communication – of Mind of all sorts – is both rooted in the biology of the brain, and also larger than what goes on in the brain of an individual. I quoted Freud on sex and aggression in that paper, but the research suggested to me that there was something missing in the “brain-centered” account of Mind that my psychology courses were presenting.

My botany course choice was Non-Vascular Plants: “Yeasts, Smuts, Rusts, Slime Molds and other Fungi” taught by William “Cap” Weston, whose specialty was the amoeba-like slime molds. These behaved really like gangs of one-celled animals in their feeding phase as they crept voraciously along the forest floor. But when it came time for their reproductive or fruiting phase, they suddenly headed for a central gathering spot, stuck together into a pedestal of protoplasm, sent up a quivering central stalk and crowned it with a fruiting body, a capsule that after much internal activity sent spores flying through the air to become the feeding phase again. How did they know where to go to make that stalk? What was the signal? Weston had discovered it, a chemical pheromone-like perfume that organized the dash to make the fruiting tower, but many questions about inter-cellular communication like this – “the language of plants” – remained.

My area of concentration as a biology major was embryology, where mysteries similar to the moth metamorphosis and the slime mold unfolded beneath the microscope. Here was architecture, all right, but it was almost metaphysical. Where were the plans? What were the tools? How an egg makes itself into a person, or even in this case into a frog or a chick, is full of so many mysteries that it was hard to choose. I alighted on the mystery of asymmetry, the best examples of which are in the animal rather than the plant world, although it exists in both.

A fertilized egg has a front end, the point where the sperm entered, and a top and bottom, determined in the frog egg by gravity, so there are somewhat mechanical determinants of the head-to-tail and back-to-belly dimensions that are required to map an organism that swims or crawls. But there is still a decision required about the third dimension, right-left, because organs that are packed tightly in space, like the heart or the gut, have to twist in order to fit in, and they always twist the same way, heart on the left, liver on the right, and so on.

What controls this regularity? Is there, as one writer put it, “a screw in nature” – a “righty-tighty-lefty-loosey” law that governs asymmetry from the molecular or even atomic level? Is it like the electrical law of the direction of a magnetic field? Or is it related to the great discovery of Pasteur, who showed that micro-organisms that produce organic compounds with asymmetric shapes make them only one way – grapes make left-sugars (levulose) rather than right-sugars (dextrose) for example. Maybe it is connected to the regularity of the spiral twist of chromosomes in the genes.

On the other hand, there are situations where asymmetry is not anchored in deep structure. You can change it. You can reverse asymmetry not only in some simple animals, but in parts of complex ones, by interfering with the field of development, creating right legs in frogs that are the shape of left legs. You can do this by making a surgical cut that acts like a mirror as it heals and the limb continues to grow. These experiments make it clear that shape and form are the result of influence from neighboring cells, and this influence can be changed by cutting the communication from cell to cell.

Building an animal is a social undertaking by a group of cells, a

collective that, as soon as they are two cells rather than one, work with one another in a system of communication. Now, if I had been a more scholarly embryologist, I would have known that the mirror-development of asymmetry on either side of incised frog-embryo limbs was known as “Bateson’s Rule,” named after the great British embryologist William Bateson, who published papers about it and discussed the extra-cellular communication that it demonstrated. His son, Gregory Bateson, the anthropologist, was also interested in interactive systems of communication, and twenty years later I would listen to him give an unforgettable lecture on what he called “the Ecology of Mind.”

Gregory Bateson located Mind in the relationships between communicating forms, between animals, external to individuals. It includes the environment. “Think of the blind man,” he said. “He sees with his stick. He goes tap, tap, and listens. Then he walks and taps again. Where is his mind located? In his brain? Half-way up his stick? Think of the woodcutter – every stroke of his axe is a careful advance of the cut that went before. Where is his design for cutting down the tree? Is it only in his head, or is it in his shoulders, his hands, his eyes, the edge of his axe, the wood of the tree? The buffalo and the prairie grass evolve together, keep each other in check. Where is the creative process of their evolution located? In their genes or in the changes in their relationship?”

I think it was in my second year, just after I had moved into Elliot House, that my father detoured from a business trip to the States to pay me a visit. I still have the picture he took of me in the house quad, in a tweedy three-piece suit and a bow tie. Some time after that visit, he wrote me a letter suggesting that we read a book together and discuss it. He asked me to suggest the book.

I recognized this as an unprecedented opportunity, and I flubbed it. Instead of spending serious time and maybe discussion with friends on what to suggest, I chose a book way over both our heads – something about international cultural-historical world-wide trends – and I was not surprised that the proposal led nowhere, and neither of us bought the book or talked about such a project again. What was I afraid of? Another

question that never came up in three analyses.

After taking the basic embryology course with Professor Hoadley, I spent the fall term of my senior year in a graduate seminar that met at his rooms in Dudley House where he was the master, and I wrote for that seminar a serious paper about asymmetry as an instance of the hidden language of cell groups signaling each other in developing embryos. The others in the seminar were mostly graduate students. I felt a little over my head in the dark-paneled room where the group met – a sensation that sometimes induced drowsiness. So I was startled when Hoadley told me that he had secured a Fulbright scholarship for me to study the asymmetry of snails the following year at the University of Utrecht.

Alarm bells went off – Fulbright? Utrecht? Snails? I had not even thought about applying to medical school yet, and here was a choice that had to be made about spending a year as a real biologist. Immediately a decision fell into place that had been in the back of my mind for most of the time at college. I was going to teach biology at a boarding school.

The biology that I had been learning at Harvard was so much more exciting, so much more intellectually challenging, than the course I had had at St. Paul's with Mr. MacConnell – a pleasant man who had seemed to me barely interested in the subject. I would find a job at a boarding school and show what a course in biology could be! I would not shy away from talking about sex, as MacConnell had. Indeed, the tenth grade was just the time to do that right. I would include some of the history of science that I had learned in I. B. Cohen's course, because many of my professors (especially George Wald) had shown with historical anecdotes how science came about in the context of culture.

I turned down the Fulbright and looked around for a boarding school where I could teach my biology course.

Nobody in my immediate circle of friends actually said, "What's wrong with you?" I had been talking with them about this choice in a desultory way for years, and they were probably glad I had finally made up my mind. It was a time of uncertainty for all of us because the end of college meant deciding on military service. Dick and Jim were headed for Quantico, Virginia, to train as reserve Marine lieutenants. Eric was joining the Army to get it over with. I was a "weekend warrior" in the

Naval Reserve, every other weekend and two weeks in summer. No one really had a long-term plan.

And I was happy to have my family back in Connecticut where I could visit them on vacations. The year of my graduation from Harvard was 1953, and though I followed the dramatic story that year of the CIA's attacking the newly elected president of Iran, Mohammad Mossadegh, and dragging him out of his residence in the middle of the night, I did not guess that this would have a significant effect on my life.

The allied oil powers found a puppet with hereditary claims to the throne of Iran. It took a couple of years before Shah Reza Pahlevi could get sufficient control over the nationalist political elements that wanted to run the oil business in Iran for the benefit of the people, as Mossadegh had proposed. British Petroleum, Royal Dutch Shell, and Standard Oil were the same companies that ran the international oil business from The Hague. And they were ready to take over its operation in the Persian Gulf, beginning with Iran, whenever the coast was clear. We didn't talk about it very much, but I had the distinct impression that my father and his colleagues thought the Western companies were doing the Arabs a great favor by managing their oil production for them.

This was what was going on as my father again commuted from our suburban home in Southport to Standard Oil headquarters at 26 Broadway and I went off to find a boarding school that needed a biology teacher.

Both of these changes were temporary. I would not have been able to tell you at the time that the most significant event of my Harvard senior year was the long late fall weekend when all the friends and family of my roommate Dick Cunningham gathered to celebrate his engagement to Kitty Spalding. This large and momentous event took place in an enormous summer retreat belonging to a Spalding relative, with dancing and parlor games (spelling bees!). Margaret Rabi was Kitty's roommate, we took this house party as an opportunity to get to know each other.

I learned that her father, I. I. Rabi, the chairman of the department of physics at Columbia had worked on radar in Cambridge, MA, during the war, making it small enough for fighter planes. That was how

Margaret got to spend the war years riding her bike around Harvard. Although Rabi had not worked directly on the atomic bomb during the war, he was close to that group of physicists. After the war, he was on a committee chaired by Einstein to persuade Truman to join other world leaders in forming a commission to make control of nuclear projects international – not just hand the bomb over to the generals, which of course is what Truman immediately did.

Margaret and I didn't talk at great length about our fathers' roles in the great world at that party. Mostly, we danced and played the parlor games. We were each at different jumping-off places. She had a final year of college and I had applied for a job elsewhere. It was not an easy way to get acquainted, or once acquainted, to conduct a courtship. But that's what we did, in spite of the unpredictable roadblocks that I put in our way.

CHAPTER 8: SCHOOLMASTER

The job I had applied for after college was an open position for a biology teacher at St. George's School in Newport, Rhode Island, that I had found about through my roommate Nick Brown's family. I was hired to fill it, along with an invitation to teach as well at the school's summer session, which was devoted to remedial studies for students with work to make up. So the summer after graduating from college I showed up at the beautiful headland over the Atlantic where St. George's sits, amid playing fields and forest, smaller than St. Paul's but also with an Episcopal chapel the size of a small cathedral. The Rector, the Reverend William Buell, was on vacation, and the summer session was being run by a senior classics master, Jim Vermillion, my first boss.

The second night of the summer session, I was assigned to duty in the evening study hall. The twenty or so boys sitting at their desks included a few who wanted to see what they could get away with in the form of subversive disturbance, and they discovered that they could get away with a lot – I had not anticipated this problem at all. At the end of the hour and a half, I was quite shaken and embarrassed to see the figure of Jim Vermillion appearing at the door, producing instant silence. As we followed the boys out of the hall and turned out the lights, he said, "How about a drink?" Sitting in his apartment and gratefully sipping a glass of scotch, I found him smiling at me. "Chris, what you need is to be 33, and to have been doing this ever since the age of 23, which you are now." I felt very relieved and understood. On the other hand, I desperately did not want to be young and inexperienced, and ten years seemed like an eternity.

The thing I most enjoyed about that summer was the result of a happy accident. One of the boys approached Vermillion and asked if there was a way he could get to a synagogue on Saturdays because he was an orthodox Jew. When Vermillion asked around, I volunteered to accompany him into Newport, where we discovered that the Touro Synagogue was a beautiful building, one of the first built in any of the original colonies by a group of Spanish Sephardim in the early 1800s.

Every Saturday I sat gazing at the plain but graceful dignity of that interior while the ancient rituals and readings went on around us. I got to know that boy pretty well, and at the end of the summer his family took me out to dinner to thank me. They apologized for all the Yiddish punchlines in the stories they were telling, and I privately resolved to learn that language, so close to the German I wasn't using at all. Except to go to the bus station, those bus trips to the synagogue were the only ones I made to Newport in all my two years at St. George's.

The Biology course I taught for both of my years there was pretty good – I would give it a B overall. Some of the lab demonstrations and the finale – chalk-illustrated lectures on the eye and the ear as embryological/evolutionary derivatives of cranial nerves – I would say B-plus. I was not a naturalist, and so was a disappointment to boys in the biology class who were already collecting field specimens. I was a dramatic but somewhat careless teacher – the smarter boys enjoyed catching me in my mistakes.

My performance as master of the “Green” Third Form dormitory (named after the color of the curtains over the boys' sleeping alcoves) was definitely a barely passing C. I also had to teach Geometry to some of the same Fourth Formers that I had in Biology – a B-minus, given how easy Geometry is to teach, if you like to draw. Calculating and posting grades for the whole school (a job assigned to the “Math department” which consisted of only me and the head, Lyall Dean), C-minus.

Those grades are not only for performance, but also for my satisfaction with parts of life at the school. Newport was isolated, literally Land's End, and there was little or no time off. I tried to get away some weekends, but the Rector, who himself had been “Master of the Green” when he started teaching, recalled sternly that he had never gone far away, and that a faculty presence is the essence of the family atmosphere of a boarding school.

Intellectual companionship was limited. Jim Vermillion had disappeared. There was no McDonald in the faculty common room where we spent recess time watching the Army-McCarthy hearings on television. The hearings gave me occasion to reflect that there was no

one at all like their hero, Joseph Welch, at the school either. Intellectually, it was a desert.

St. George's was too small to have the depth of faculty I remembered at St. Paul's, where, in departments like history, in addition to McDonald there were men like Charles Buell, who required his history classes to read *The New York Times*, looking for parallels. St. Paul's had many masters who could have been teaching at college but had reasons to prefer the life of the school.

The assignment at St. George's for which I would give myself an A was the one for which I immediately volunteered – Drama Coach. We produced for that fall weekend a performance of *The Hasty Heart* almost as good as the one I had been in at St. Paul's.

The following year, we staged the new Harry Levin translation for the stage of Melville's *Billy Budd*. That was a new adventure for me. With the help of the shop teacher and a crew of boys, we built the main deck of the *HMS Indomitable* on the stage. I cast this ambitious production very carefully, but I also had uncommon luck. An English boy who was visiting for an extra senior year, had the gravity to play Captain Vere. The two protagonists of good and evil happened to be young men each in search of a different side of himself. Billy, the fair-haired hero, was played by the boy in the most disciplinary trouble in the school – I had to get him special dispensation to remain in the cast. And Claggart, the evil Master-at-Arms, was played by a senior going on to a career in Divinity.

It was very exciting, mounting a whole new production. But at the same time in that second year, the Rector summoned me to his office and said that he was going to have to ask me to add coaching a sports team to my duties. A couple of masters serving as coaches deserved a year off, and it was my turn. I was appalled. I managed to plead incompetence at football but had to admit I had played soccer. My one-season career as the St. George's soccer coach was a disaster – D-minus, possibly F. Fortunately there was a Korean boy at the school, the son of a Bishop, who was such a good soccer player – and assistant coach – that we did not lose every game.

I was hard up for people to talk to. My colleagues on the science faculty, teachers of physics and chemistry, were married men busy building model railroads and raising their small children. Two of the other single dormitory masters – both English teachers – were good drinking companions in the middle of the night. My best friend at St. George's was the organist and choirmaster Alistair Kenneth Cassels-Brown, a Cambridge graduate with whom I often had a long talkative Sunday breakfast in his rooms. Alistair was depressed, too, but he stuck it out – on his bathroom mirror he had taped a message to himself : “Today is New Life.”

The last straw in my tolerance for life at St. George's came some time early in the second year. The new head of Sacred Studies, a former Army chaplain, preached the Sunday sermon on the subject of the Conversion of the Jews – the idea from the early church that this would somehow have to be accomplished before the coming of the Kingdom of God and the Final Resurrection. It sounded like he was all for it.

I tried to control myself as I doled out servings of soup at my table after the service, and achieving the necessary calm, asked the boys at my end, “What did you think of the sermon?” Most of them shrugged or tried to find a noncommittal reply.

Trying to formulate a better question, I put down my big spoon and asked, loud enough to get everyone's attention, “Do *any* of you actually *know* any Jews?” I was met by uncomprehending stares and embarrassed shaking of heads. I decided it was too much to ask the boys to bear the burden of challenging the Sunday Sermon, and I knew there would not be a ripple from anywhere else.

Somehow that summed it all up. Nothing had changed in the years since I encountered the same silence about antisemitism at St. Paul's, at least it hadn't changed here. I felt all at once that I was in the wrong place. The school was an attractive place, sort of like an educational suburb, with two, maybe three people that I enjoyed talking with between classes. One of them, Norrie Hoyt, the head of the English Department, was witty and funny, but I learned what was really important to him when we spent an afternoon on John Brown's Americas

Cup yacht, *Bolero*. Norrie had been crew in a recent race, and that was clearly more important than anything we might have talked about.

My only visitor from the world of civilization was Margaret Rabi, with whom I had been in love ever since our two college roommates' wedding the previous summer. In addition to our vacation dates in New York, she spent a few weekends at the school – some master's wives kindly provided us hospitality – and I remember one weekend she had to finish a paper about James' *Portrait of a Lady*. I enjoyed helping her with that more than anything I had done in a long time. Margaret's question about St. George's was something along the lines of "What's a nice boy like you doing in a place like this?"

I had no idea how to answer that.

I had never lost my interest in psychology, and that interest was shared by Margaret. In her first year at Radcliffe, she was a member of a group that visited patients at Boston State Hospital and then met to discuss the experience with a psychology graduate student. After this, her second year, she switched her major from History and Literature to Social Relations.

As I said in the Preface, besides psychoanalysis, there was a second system of psychology at Harvard. Just three years before I arrived, a group of psychologists, anthropologists, and sociologists had established the department of Social Relations where the academic distinctions between personality formation, value orientation, culture, and social organization were deliberately blurred in order to study how they influenced one another, how they might cohere into a field of study.

Some of us – like Margaret – actually majored in Social Relations, and though as a "pre-med" I stayed in Biology, I took courses in that department. The one that introduced me to a new way of thinking was given by Clyde Kluckhohn, an anthropologist who was one of the architects of the bridge between anthropology and psychology.

What Social Relations lacked was academic prestige. Almost everyone in Margaret's circle of friends regarded her change from History and Lit to Social Relations as an incomprehensible come-down. But I understood it. I had taken a few Social Relations courses and could

see them as an effort to unite disciplines for the study of human behavior in a way that overcame their methodological differences and the artificial distinction between the psychological and the social.

I had also been reading Freud in college and used Freudian ideas to write a paper about *King Lear* in Humanities 1. Margaret and I talked about our friends who were planning to be psychoanalysts. Margaret knew more than I did – in particular, she was close to the Kris family – Marianne and Ernst, who had achieved prominence in the Viennese analytic world before escaping to this country and prominence in the world of Boston psychoanalysis. They were also both outstanding examples of analysts practicing without a medical degree.

I decided that the way to leave St. George's was to finally pursue a psychiatric career. Becoming an analyst seemed like a very heavy project. At the time, a medical degree followed by psychiatric residency training – eight years – was a prerequisite for starting analytic training, and that could go on indefinitely. On the other hand, the working conditions – taking notes while someone lies on your office couch talking – were very similar to my favorite undergraduate activity, analyzing poetry. I fancied that analyzing a patient's free associations might be like the poetry course I had taken with Professor Honig, who required that we condense our analysis of a poem onto a three-by-five card. As a work assignment, that would definitely be preferable to soccer coach or dormitory master.

Margaret and I had both had experience with the extraordinary prestige Freudian ideas enjoyed in the world of social and literary criticism in the 1950s, especially in places like New York City. And we were both dealing with our suspicions about it – one of many bonds between us. Another bond was surely a kinship through roommate connections. Since Margaret was in this sense Kitty Spalding's sister and I was Dick Cunningham's brother, their marriage made us in kinship terms what anthropologists call parallel cousins, and in some Pacific societies we would be expected to marry, because of the concentration of family solidarity. We have joked about this over the years.

Something we didn't joke about was the fact that Margaret was by

real kinship part of a scientific elite. In fact her father was not just a prominent physicist. He had won the 1944 Nobel Prize in Physics. Some would have said, because of the leadership of Einstein and Oppenheimer, that this was also a Jewish elite, but it wasn't – look at all the physicists and Nobelists from other ethnicities. But it was an idea that was common enough that it requires an answer in the negative. Margaret's parents were proud of being from poor or working class immigrant Jewish families the way others – like my family – were proud of our origins.

But the scientific elite of physics was resolutely opposed to the idea that in their world any merit or power came from social class. Rabi himself was proud of being a poor boy from Brooklyn, an infant immigrant from a family of hereditary tailors, and a graduate of Manual Training High School rather than the more elite Boy's High. He loved to tell the story about Julian Schwinger, a scholarship boy at City College, whose job it was to wash up and clean the offices of the college's physics department. Instead of washing the blackboards, he completed the equations and left them to be found solved in the morning. Margaret's father found out who he was and arranged to have him transfer to Columbia to become a physicist.

By Christmas I decided to apply to medical school for the first step towards becoming a psychoanalyst. My father agreed to the needed financial support – I think he was relieved. I gave notice of my intentions to the Rector and started to plan my departure from St. George's. My closest colleagues all offered congratulations.

A lot of articles were being written about the effects of absent fathers and the importance of a male figure stepping into that role. They were mostly about Black boys in the slums, but I could apply that analysis to myself and to many boys at the school, from one of whom I later learned to my surprise that he thought of me the way I had thought of McDonald, as a replacement for his absent father. Was that how I came to take the detour into school teaching?

That is a rather psychoanalytic explanation, and in retrospect I like

the following analysis better: As I packed up to leave St. George's, I realized that my attachment to boarding school also had to do with some invisible traces of social class. On my last day at St. George's the two aging housemaids – Irish maiden sisters – who had been cleaning my room every week since I arrived, stood in my doorway. I looked up amid the packing boxes and asked them what I should do with the raffia carpet I had proudly bought and stitched together in two-foot squares to cover my floor.

“Ah, that old heap of straw!” the older one said. “We’ll take it out and burn it! Mister Beels,” she said, with pent up indignation, “that rug is not a proper rug for a gentleman of renown to have upon his parlor floor!”

I realized in an instant that at St. George's, as at Harvard, my rooms had been cleaned and my meals served to me by a servant class whose function was to make me, and all of us, faculty and students, feel, indeed, like gentlemen of renown, and that that life was over.

The influence of class was hard to locate because it was everywhere around me. If you are part of the winning team, the dominant group, you take a lot for granted. I had been brought up to think and behave as if class didn't exist, or at least as if I was not personally making myself an expression of it.

After taking Clyde Kluckhohn's introductory Cultural Anthropology at college, I did think anthropology was the one discipline that offered a serious challenge to my complacent experience. I actually thought about becoming an anthropologist – and rejected it for a reason that is relevant here. I couldn't see myself going to live alone in an alien culture, learning the language, living for so long without ... without what? Without housemaids and dining hall with steam table?

And I could not see a way to get closer to home in the sense of family life. My parents had just two years before come back to Connecticut from their second tour in The Hague. Even in their house I would be away from home, the home with servants to clean and three meals a day that I had lived in for so many years. I think an anthropologist would say that I was living in a class bubble – a cultural niche so specialized that if the bubble burst I would not be able to

breathe in the larger atmosphere.

The schoolmaster detour from the goal of being a doctor came to a comfortable end because I was able to imagine a different detour into another class bubble – the hermetic world of psychoanalysis – an enclosure in some ways similar to the one I had been living in. Schoolmasters at college preparatory boarding schools and psychoanalysts have something in common – they are both caretakers of the privileged class.

So I was giving myself a promotion that would move me from the country to the city and improve my income. Certainly, listening to the free-association of analysands – people in their outer circumstances similar to me – was much pleasanter work than coaching soccer. On the other hand, I had to pass through the long purgatory of medical school and then psychiatric residency before I could land safely in that chair behind the couch.

I had two pieces of good fortune. One was that, as a biology major at college, I had almost all the academic chips I needed to start the game with medical school. The second was that I had no notion how different the air of medical school was going to be, or what breathing problems I was about to encounter there, in a world that was, in new ways, not a bubble at all.

CHAPTER 9: MEDICAL STUDENT

March was too late to find a place for next year in most medical schools, but there were still openings at Rochester and also at Chicago, which had quarterly enrollment. I decided Rochester was the nearest of the possibilities. I didn't want to be as far from New York as Chicago. But how to get from Newport to Rochester for an interview? I asked the admissions office for advice and received a letter from the Dean, Leonard Fenninger, saying that he and his wife would be attending the ballet at City Center in New York, and if I would meet them at a Japanese restaurant nearby, he would conduct an admissions interview.

How civilized! In the cozy atmosphere of the restaurant, I sat opposite Dr. and Mrs. Fenninger and said, yes, I would like a martini. As soon as we were comfortable with our drinks, Dr. Fenninger said "So you want to be a psychiatrist, and you are interested in the theater. What do you think – was Lear mad?"

I thought for a moment and said, "No – he was an old man in an impossible situation. Certainly he created it for himself, but he was the King, and with his authority he cut himself off from all possibilities. He isolated himself. I wouldn't call that a psychosis."

"Right," Fenninger said, "Normal grief response to the loss of everything he was counting on."

That was the interview. We went on chatting about life at St. George's and life in Rochester, and the following week I received my letter of acceptance. I later learned that Fenninger thought older oddballs like me – people who had done something besides college – were good for the medical school.

That summer was a real vacation. My parents had bought a lovely house in Fairfield, Connecticut, where I enjoyed my double status of adult child with a nice bedroom and good meals. My acceptance at medical school was conditioned on my completing one missing credit – a half year of chemistry, which I did by commuting from Fairfield to summer school at NYU. There I studied Qualitative Analysis and got to know my lab partner, Chaim Cohen, a rabbi about my age who had

decided to go to medical school for reasons similar to mine. “I got tired of always having strangers in my living room,” he said.

While both of us tried not to breathe too much hydrogen sulfide in the lab, I told him about my romance with Margaret, and that I didn’t know anything about Judaism. He suggested I read *What Jews Believe* by Rabbi Philip Bernstein and he would discuss it with me, which led to some interesting lunches in the cafeteria.

All that summer of being suspended between two worlds, I still wondered – why am I doing this? Why medical school? How was an MD really necessary for being an analyst? In spite of being already committed to Rochester, I decided to talk to some non-doctors. I made an appointment at Silver Hill, an asylum in Connecticut near our house, which I knew was psychoanalytic in its approach. The secretary was puzzled at my specific request to see a psychologist, and I explained my situation and my question about medical school. The man who sat down with me wore a white coat but affirmed that he was a psychologist.

“Do you think medical training is needed to do psychoanalysis?”

He was strangely evasive, asking me questions about my background, and then, firing me a question that contained the word “syphilis!” he leaned forward to observe my reaction. Realizing that he thought I was a potential patient in disguise, I decided the interview was a mistake, said so, and took my leave. Next week I got a bill from Silver Hill for \$50, which I ignored.

Eventually I found a psychologist in the city who was willing to talk with me about the real politics involved. He said, “European institutes don’t require a medical degree, but it got set up this way in the U.S. by the first analysts, who were all neurologists and psychiatrists. Since then, it’s become a guild. Analysis is very lucrative in this country, so it’s a matter of power and money. If you get the medical degree, you’ll have more opportunities, whatever you do. The doctors are in charge.”

I understood that it would be useful to have power and went off to Rochester in the fall with resignation, hoping at least to learn some interesting biology while acquiring my ticket to power. Certainly biological science in the first two (“pre-clinical”) years at Rochester was

a great intellectual experience, often better than the best courses that Harvard had to offer. But the most profound experiences were not in the lecture hall.

Gross anatomy, on the first day of medical school, meeting with the corpse and three other students, the four of us standing at foot and head like mourning angels with lab aprons covering our folded wings – that was an initiation into the medical fellowship that lasted until mid-year. The four of us talked and got to know each other as well as the strange body in our midst, puzzling over manuals and diagrams, calling in our sometimes equally puzzled guides, the graduate students of the Anatomy Department, who were recruited from their modern research labs to teach this ancient art. I did have the sense there of being part of something bordering on the sacred.

It was a feeling I had again the next year in the pathology morgue. On the dark wall behind the glaring overhead light, we could read: “*Hic locus est ubi mors gaudet vitam succurrere.*” I translated the medieval dog-Latin for our lunch group – “This is the place where death rejoices to rescue life.” Dr. Lowell Orbison, the pathology professor, was grave and priestly in his white, blood-smeared apron as he lifted the organs from the white enamel pans and showed us what to look for. I kept this motto in my heart years later as an intern, asking families to allow a post-mortem examination of their departed loved ones.

Otherwise, study in the first two years was an impersonal and melancholy obligation, learning mountains of science I would never use again to pass exams and quizzes I was glad to see the last of. I was truly grateful for the occasional brilliant lecture.

My one hope was in psychiatry, where I expected to revive my interest in study. The anchor for that hope was George Engel, the intellectual star of the psychiatry department, who taught the first-year lecture course. He was famous for announcing to the field a “bio-psycho-social” approach. Alas, there was much bio, even more psycho in the form of psychoanalysis, and from my viewpoint, very little social. An anthropologist would say the course was culture-bound.

I slowly realized that the Rochester psychiatry department was engaged in a political campaign on two fronts. One was the tremendous investment in psychoanalytic training, which many of the junior members of the department were undertaking, commuting by air to Chicago or New York on alternate weekends for supervision and training in analysis. Most of the men in the department – and all of them were men – were either licensed analysts already, or journeyman apprentices in the guild. The apprentices on the faculty had to find a big-city institute for training before promotion to independent status as analysts. I realized with foreboding that this could be my life if I held onto my ambition to be an analyst.

The second front for the department was building respectability in the medical establishment, where the new science of psychosomatic medicine was the principal project. Careers in the department were built on measurement of gastric secretions and ulcers, asthma attacks, ulcerative colitis, lupus, and other diseases of the immune system, and patients were referred for psychoanalysis for all these conditions, on what seemed to me very speculative grounds.

Engel's lectures and interview demonstrations were witty, clear, and without adventure beyond the confines of current practice. I told him one day after a lecture that I heard that a psychologist on the University campus had completed a large, well-designed field study of the effectiveness of psychotherapy. He gazed at me, smiled, and turned to talk to someone else.

The second-year lectures, mostly by other members of the department, were disappointing, except for one clinician, Paul Dewald, who had some curiosity about the world. He told us one day that homosexual men have difficulty identifying each other in public, but there is a ritual communication in public toilets – a shifting of the feet – that can be read as an invitation by the man in the next stall. I seized on this as the first statement I had heard so far in the department about a public ritual as a solution to a communication problem in a group. Dewald was smart and worldly, and curious – he seemed to listen when he did an interview.

All these lecturers wore long white coats, the insignia of their

medical faculty status, even while interviewing the humblest of citizens behind the one-way mirror that fronted the classroom. One senior professor had a reputation as a brilliant interviewer. He would ask the class – “OK – what do you want to see? Hostility? Grief?” – and would produce the desired affect within minutes of sitting down with the subject. My classmates marveled at his almost surgical dexterity. I shuddered – what was the point of that demonstration? That psychiatrists could operate like surgeons?

In the meantime, I was living the social life of a medical student in Rochester, New York, in a part of town isolated even from the graduate and undergraduate life of the River Campus of the University, two bus rides and a river bridge away. The medical school and the Strong Memorial Hospital were in a working-class residential neighborhood where, for the first year, I rented an attic bedroom in a house occupied on the first two floors by Hazel and George, with whom I shared a second floor bathroom. George was a retired factory worker, and most of our communication was about the maintenance of the bathroom. The hospital and medical school were a block away, and when I didn't eat at the staff cafeteria there, I ate at a diner on the nearest avenue. I sat at the counter and chatted with the Bulgarian cook and owner, who put bay leaf in the gravy and liked to talk about cooking, as well as his family troubles.

My single classmates lived in similar lodgings. Most of the married students – some with small children – lived in the large family housing complex for graduate students. They brought brown bags of lunch to the cafeteria, which they, or perhaps their wives, had prepared in their kitchens. Food was the *lingua franca* through which we felt out each other's experience and tastes. For the first time in my life no one cared about my education or where I came from. I learned to keep my history out of sight, a fancy-dress costume folded away in a closet.

There was a growing intimacy among the four partners in Gross Anatomy, as we joked about our dreadful task. The other three men were all old friends from Hamilton College in upstate New York. They were two cheerful Protestant fraternity boys and a proudly non-fraternity Jew,

Ira Rochelle. He was especially amused by the story about his family at his admission interview for Hamilton: asked why he wanted his son to go to that college, his father had said “You have the highest admission rate for medical school.”

Ira probed me about my strange life before arriving here, especially when, to pick up courage for our work, I burst out with a verse from the Hymnal:

“From strength to strength go ON!
WRESTLE and FI-IGHT and PRAY!
Te dum te DUM, WE shall o’erCOME,
And win the well-fought DAY!”

“Wrestle?” said Ira, “Wrestle with who?”

“With nobody – a spiritual exercise.”

His eyebrows flashed with mock amazement.

“Wrestle?” he said again. I looked at him –

“Like Jacob wrestling with the angel.”

“Ah – ”

I knew he was teasing – Ira was actually interested in my explorations of Jewish life and thought and added stories from his own experience. I told him I had read *What Jews Believe*, and one day he told me with some excitement, that Rabbi Bernstein would be talking at a synagogue downtown. We went to hear the talk and afterwards went to meet the speaker. Ira went first, introducing himself.

“And this is my friend, Chris Beels.” he said.

“Hello, Cliff.” said Rabbi Bernstein.

I mumbled something about having enjoyed reading his book, and we made way for the next in line. As we left, Ira chuckled.

“Cliff!” he said – “Funny, you don’t look Jewish!”

We laughed, and I realized I had become a chameleon in every environment since coming to Rochester. The trip to hear a lecture in a synagogue, and an occasional concert at The Eastman School of Music, were my only experiences of the part of Rochester that corresponded in social class to my previous life, and I acquired no lasting color from these forays.

As the first year ended, I decided to do something about my spartan life. A graduating senior was leaving a ground-floor apartment in a house near the school, and I decided to take it for the next year. It had a little kitchen alcove, so at least I could try cooking and an occasional dinner party to cheer myself up. And that spring, I got a letter from a friend of a friend, Richard Defendini, a history and literature section man at Harvard, who was leaving that life to come to medical school the following year. Would I like to pool our resources? He was bringing part of his library. I wrote back that I had already signed for the apartment, but there were others in the same building, and this is how a group of friends and neighbors began to take shape for the second year.

Living in my little apartment, cooking for myself and occasional guests, taking classes and labs in clinical science – bacteriology, hematology, endocrinology – all seemed a lonely business brightened mainly by Defendini and another new arrival who was living with him, Irvin Emanuel. As the year went on, we made plans to find a house together for the next year.

There were other bright spots. The great neuroanatomist Wilbur Smith introduced us to the structure and function of the brain, and I felt I was getting closer to something I wanted – needed – to know about. I cheered up when our class marked the end of the pre-clinical years by giving a satirical musical-comedy sketch with original music and lyrics by our classmate, Bob Blum. I played a character satirizing George Engel. And that summer – 1957 – I flew to London to visit my parents there.

They had moved to London in the winter of my first year in Rochester, because my father was to represent Standard Oil in a management partnership with British Petroleum and Royal Dutch Shell, to run the Abadan refinery and other aspects of the oil business in Iran. In fact, I was not thinking much about politics at all in medical school, and my thoughts about my parents were mostly worries about how they were doing. I found them with some of their Fairfield furniture installed in a beautiful second-story flat in Eaton Square, with another company executive in the floor above, and a talkative Cockney housekeeper bustling around several days a week. My father went every day into the

City to a very grand office with an efficient secretary who, among other duties, ordered canned food goods for the kitchen, since, he said, my mother had not yet gotten the hang of provisioning in London.

My mother had a lot on her mind. She hated the housekeeper but had not been able to summon the resolve to fire her. I offered to do that for her, and help her find a replacement, which seemed to relieve some of her worries. But more important, she said, my father had had some medical problems – swelling of the ankles, especially on long plane flights, and since I was now a doctor, she wanted me to look into this. My father agreed – he would like me to talk to a consultant he had seen – the Queen’s Physician.

I had a short, clear talk with this knighted gentleman in his dark little office in Harley Street. “Yes, Mr. Beels, I’m afraid your father is not a well man. The principal reason for the red cells in his urine is glomerulonephritis, a response to a streptococcal infection he had as a young man. He is now entering a nephrotic phase with edema, and we can keep him comfortable and active with diuretics and diet for a year or so, but his time is limited.” I shook his hand, thanked him, and went back to Eaton Square.

I looked at my father as we settled down that evening for drinks, and I could see that he looked a little pale and puffy. “The doctor says you have to be very careful about avoiding salt in your food,” I began. “And he recommended having a good time traveling. I think we should plan a great vacation next summer.” I had a more explicit talk with my mother after firing the housekeeper, and we spent the rest of the summer enjoying the company of my parents’ good friends in England, with visits to the Cotswolds and Oxford.

My father went to bed early and slept with head raised on a couple of pillows to ease his breathing. And before he went to sleep, I spent some time talking with him, both of us knowing, I think, that these were precious occasions.

Back in Rochester to start the third year, there were four of us living together in the second floor apartment of a large house on Mt. Hope Avenue, in a nice middle class neighborhood (trees, lawns, back yards) but far enough from the hospital to require the owning and

sharing of cars. My roommates were men who, like me, had worked at something else before choosing medicine, and this was an intense relief, because there was a world elsewhere to talk about. In addition to me and Richard Defendini (who had been the head section man of one of my favorite professors at Harvard), there was Irvin Emanuel, a physical anthropologist from Antioch in Yellow Springs, OH, and Chuck Baker, a Canadian psychologist.

Irvin was the oldest and had certainly had the most interesting career – he was an expert on space design for the human body, co-author of “The Space Requirements of the Seated Operator.” He and his fellow-author (a married student in the same class at Rochester) had designed fighter-pilot cockpits. He was, of course, a wizard at applied statistics, and during the summers he worked for Maidenform Bras to figure out their complex sizing problems.

Irv had been left at a young age the sole support of his five younger siblings, and so had to work for a living before getting his own education. Of the four of us, Irv was the most blunt and forthright in talking about class differences, a frequent topic. Richard had learned to cover his experience of being a Puerto Rican immigrant as a child in Michigan by adopting an aristocratic manner, some of it learned at Harvard. But all three of these roommates had what was for me an unaccustomed candidness in talking about the manners and tactics of power.

Chuck Baker, with whom I shared a bedroom, had had enough of a clinical career in psychology to make the same decision I made, but on the basis of real experience doing psychotherapy. He was an amused observer of the psychiatry department: it was he who explained about the psychoanalytic candidacy of the junior members. When we finally packed up to leave, he gave me his complete collection of the works of Freud.

None of us wanted to talk about medicine. We were interested in politics, especially the politics of workplaces, and we were interested in food. The other three were all better, more experienced cooks than I. They taught me how to prepare a casserole that would feed the whole house for much of a week, so that we had an efficient and various

kitchen routine. Negotiating shopping and cooking for four drew me into a level of communal and communicative attention totally different from my previous steam-table life.

And discussion of the care of our ailing automobiles led to clinical conferences of far greater urgency than the ones in the classroom. My 1950 Dodge sedan (affectionately called the lima bean because that was exactly its shape and color) was the subject of clinical conferences with a couple of local mechanics that I found more absorbing than those at the hospital.

Some weekends we gave parties to which we invited the graduate students we had met in classes and laboratories. Once again, roommates, fictive brothers, were my salvation, and each of these men had dealt in a separate way with experiences of education and social class. Richard and Irvin especially had crossed barriers of immigration and economic struggle that were a revelation to me. Their experiences put in perspective the protected environment I had lived in for the last ten years. I felt that, in addition to medicine, I was learning about how the world worked, how institutions shaped and limited people.

Most of my happy memories of the next few years are of travel – actual travel, or excursions of the imagination. I was always leaving The University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry for somewhere else in the real or imaginary world. Three of these excursions were provided by the psychiatry department.

The first was the clinical clerkship of the third year. Medical students of that year – the clinical clerks – are issued short white coats to signify that they are not real doctors, but students permitted to participate in care for their education. They perform extra interviews and physical exams, repeating the work of the resident, who checks their reports, and they usually do the laboratory work – especially the blood work for which they collect the samples. We wore the rubber tourniquets, the tools of our office, knotted in the buttonhole of our white jackets.

But when we got to the psychiatry service, we discovered that the chairman, John Romano, had decided lab work done by the clerks was a bad experience both for them and the patients. He had the lab work done

by professionals and encouraged the clerks to interview the patients for the complete histories that were presented at weekly conferences. Romano presided over these conferences and cut short the lengthy explorations of the patient's unconscious interior that sometimes interested the residents. Unlike most department chairs of that era, he was not an analyst. He wanted to know about the patient's family and life in the world. "What can we do for this unfortunate person?" was his question. He ended by talking at length with the social worker on the case, the one who could answer most of his questions about the life that would be lived by the patient after leaving the hospital.

Once every two weeks Romano made a personal trip to the local state mental hospital out in the country, and he took a car-full of medical students with him. On the way out, he got to know us, and on the way home, he quizzed us about the experience of the hospital, which he thought it was important for us to know about. The tubs with canvas tops from which only the patient's head was kept from sinking into the tepid water where they stayed for hours, and the other "water treatment" firehose-like water guns of hot and cold that were played over the patients' bodies – all seemed like a throwback to the Middle Ages.

I also learned that Romano was one of the first practical psychiatric epidemiologists – he organized a treatment case register for Monroe County, which was a model for other registers elsewhere in the country. It acknowledged that mental illness is a public health problem, about which much can be learned by asking statistical questions.

The second excursion in the psychiatry department was the result of pressure from a group of us to see what an interview with a normal person would be like. George Engel agreed to find one, and it turned out to be a 70-year-old Black man from Mississippi, the grandfather and patriarch of a large family. He was in good health, he said, but he had begun to realize that if he got sick, his children would have a hard time providing for his care. Everybody in his part of Mississippi knew that the medical and welfare services of Monroe County in upstate New York were among the best in the country, so without telling anyone his plans, he got on a bus for Rochester. Once he found a room in a boarding house, he wrote his family, and they have visited him here. He has made

friends. And no, he has not been sick. This is his first meeting with a doctor.

The discussion we had after this interview focused on the man's generosity and consideration for his family, a character trait of active interest in others that had not come up in discussions of other patients. To me, the interview was an anthropological excursion into the lives of the Southern Black people I encountered in the clinics and wards of the hospital. Many were not so fortunate as that grandfather in his boarding house. They were refugees from southern segregation who found that indeed Rochester offered services, but for most there were neither jobs nor housing. And so, in my last year there, Rochester was the site of the first "race riot" for which Governor Rockefeller had to call out the troops.

This was my first introduction to the social problems of the Black under-class, and my understanding became clearer as I actually started to care for patients in the wards and clinics in the third and fourth years. I was getting an education in the medical consequences of living next to, or in, poverty. Medical school was providing the first opening in my class bubble.

The third excursion was a fourth-year elective in a rat laboratory run by a brilliant psychologist, Robert Ader, newly arrived in the psychiatry department to study the relationship between stress and illness. Here at last was psychosomatic medicine without psychoanalysis, and since Ader was careful to include his assistants as authors of publications, my first scientific papers, published in 1960, were "Gastric erosions in the rat" (published in *Psychosomatic Medicine*) and "Social factors affecting emotionality and resistance to disease in animals: I. Age of separation from the mother and susceptibility to gastric ulcers in the rat" (published in the *Journal of Comparative and Physiological Psychology*) – both written by R. Ader, R. Tatum, and C. C. Beels. This was an adventure into the world of real empirical science – real psychology.

Ader was a young man then, but already making important contributions to understanding of trauma and illness, and he offered a rare hand of friendship. He had me and Ron Tatum to dinner at his house

with his wife and small children, and I found a little relief from my bachelor apartment.

Another good friend was my faculty adviser, Franz Reichsman, a psychiatrist from Zagreb who, with his wife Mary (the first social worker I got to know well), invited me and my roommates to dinner with their children. In addition to talk about the outside world, Reichsman gave me the best piece of psychiatric advice on how to deal with my depression. It was: “Listen to the late quartets of Beethoven.” I did a lot of that and found a world of emotion that was a dependable refuge from daytime experiences that sometimes seemed interminable and pointless.

I got to talk about science and psychology with an enthusiastic and critical friend, Michael Sporn. Michael was an intern at the time, had been a tuberculosis patient (a hazard for medical students), and during his year “in the san” he had read widely, including Ross Ashby’s *Design for a Brain*. He and his wife Kitty (the head nurse of the infancy ward) fed me many happy dinners while we talked about politics and the similarities between the immune system and the nervous system. Michael and Kitty also regaled me with their experiences of inter-faith marriage. One of Kitty’s uncles was a Monsignor who would not talk to her after she married Michael.

I expected no such conflict if some day Margaret and I should marry, and indeed we were keeping up a steady exchange of letters. We agreed there was no reason for Margaret to share my exile in Rochester, and that during these years we would try out other relationships – we would not be “waiting for” each other. Between the ups and downs of those other relationships, however, we had joyful reunions, for which I traveled three hours down the New York Thruway in the Lima Bean, arriving in the middle of the night to sleep on a cot in a dormitory on the top floor of the Harvard Club for \$6 a night. In spite of these camping conditions, I looked forward to the great liberation of weekends in New York with Margaret whenever we were both free. Those were joyful excursions.

But apart from trips within, and out of, Rochester, I did actually

learn some things in medical school. The school and its hospital were after all large institutions and I was alert to ways of thinking that went on in hierarchies of power. Probably for this reason, I stood for student council representative (a position for which I was unopposed). This gave me some chances to observe styles of leadership, such as the way the top administrator, Dean Anderson, on the occasion of my keeping an appointment to discuss a matter that had been raised by the council, concentrated the whole time on reaming and cleaning his collection of pipes.

By contrast, I was having lunch one day in the hospital cafeteria sitting opposite Leonard Fenninger, the dean of admissions, who had given me such a welcoming interview. I asked him if aptitude tests had ever been used in medical school admissions. “We tried them,” he said, “and they showed that candidates who later have the most outstanding records have a strong aptitude to be carpenters. I can’t make any sense out of it, except that Jesus was a carpenter.”

He looked up towards the serving line of the cafeteria where a row of uniformed women were dishing out the food from the steam table.

“You know,” he said after watching them for a moment, “some of those women are old enough to have urinary frequency. I wonder where the nearest Ladies’ Room is.” This struck me as the sort of environmental health concern that was missing from the curriculum.

I also thought that Fenninger’s response about aptitude tests was missing a point because it was so deep in his own outlook that he didn’t articulate it. Good carpenters and good doctors have a lot in common – both are professions where you bring your bag of tools and your experience to a problem to see what can be done.

Dean Fenninger was also responsible for recruiting a visiting lecturer in epidemiology – a very good speaker who brought the news to the medical school that laboratory science and clinical procedures, like psychoanalysis, were not the only ways to do research. You could produce science even if you did not have a theory or a model of the illness – just by counting cases and keeping careful records. You could also measure the effectiveness of treatments, like the study of psychotherapy that I had tried to tell George Engel about.

I can't recover the name of the lecturer in epidemiology, but I do remember the hobby that he liked to talk about at lunch – he was building his own harpsichord. This struck me as completely in tune with his profession. Building a machine in the real world that would express the mathematical harmonies of music struck me as exactly like what epidemiologists do – building mathematical models of illness and cure so that they can understand the realities of the work of medicine.

I was determined to learn more about epidemiology, and when I took a year out between my third and fourth years, I found the only place in the school that taught it – the Atomic Energy Commission had a radiation toxicology department in a wing of the medical school building. Fortunately, the situation has improved, and now Rochester, like every other medical school, has a distinguished epidemiology department that investigates problems in psychiatry, among other medical disciplines.

And finally, the greatest opportunity to learn about the politics of hierarchy in the medical school came when Richard Defendini and Lucy Frank Squire, a professor of radiology, began to have a serious romance. They had to wait until he graduated to marry, but for more than two years, all the roommates enjoyed the hospitality of Lucy's beautiful house, and gossiping with her about the politics and intrigues of the radiology department was an education in itself. Lucy hosted theater parties that included Margaret, for which we all traveled to Stratford Ontario's Shakespeare Festival.

I think the most significant learning experience I had with any one faculty member was the demonstration course in physical diagnosis taught by Gene Cook at the beginning of the third year. Cook was the medical faculty's only Black professor, handsome, charming, and near enough to us in age so that we shared a fund of humor. I can still picture a half-dozen of us gathering around in the curtained privacy of a hospital bed listening to Cook put the patient at ease with a reassuring review of his medical situation, explaining exactly what the purpose of our visit was, resting a hand on the patient's shoulder, asking permission to percuss his back in just the right way, asking him, "Can you hear the difference? I just want to let these other doctors see if they can hear it,

OK?” And finally, after we had each thumped and listened, “Now before you go home, that’s going to sound just like it does on this side. That’s the plan.”

Cook was a model of equanimity, the famous medical virtue. Watching him put us all at ease, I thought about what a difference it would have made if more of my teachers had been African-American – not only in medical school, but all the way back to Tulsa, where a Black teacher of White students would have been both revolutionary and curative.

Physical diagnosis provided me with the only occasion in fifty years of psychiatric practice to be grateful for my medical education. I was seeing a couple for their marital problems on my New York private practice, and we had decided to convene some close friends and neighbors in an unusual advisory meeting – an “intervention” of sorts. All were assembled except for the husband, Pedro, who was late. I was turning the agenda over in my mind – I don’t do many interventions like this – when, finally, Pedro entered and I noticed as I opened the door for him that he had one eye closed.

“Pedro!” I said, “What happens if you open both eyes?”

“I see double,” he said, blinking and closing the eye again.

“Did you hit your head?”

“Oh, a week ago. But it’s OK now.”

“Thank you all for coming,” I said to the assembled group. “But we can’t have our meeting today. I have to find Pedro a neurologist right away.” I was quite relieved to have the job of confirming my diagnosis of subdural hematoma, rather than running an intervention. And for a couple of hours, I was glad I had the medical training.

Still, even from that much later perspective, the most important effect of medical school was meeting a large community of professionals who were providing public service to a community, without the interference of commerce or class. And since the people they were providing it for were all from the middle to the poorest classes, my own class bubble gradually collapsed. Nothing I learned in Rochester required the pretense of nonchalance. I was breathing the open air at last. And more important, I was also being, in the words of the St. Paul’s

School Prayer, “thoughtful of those less happy than ourselves, and eager to bear the burdens of others.”

Walking rounds on a service in my fourth year, I had one startling encounter that I found quite personal, since it brought home my own class participation in the consequences of Power. We were making rounds, a large group of house officers in whites, and as we went down the hall I got into conversation with a resident walking with the group. He had an accent, and I asked where he was from. He said he was Iranian.

“Oh,” I said, “my father is in the London office of the Abadan refinery.”

He stopped and stared at me. Looking in my eyes he said, “You obviously don’t realize...” Then he said, evenly, “Your father is stealing our country’s oil.” He stayed away from me for the rest of the group’s tour. I certainly didn’t know what to say to him, because I knew he was right, and I was appalled to see how momentarily unaware I had been of my family’s true position in the larger world. The Iranian revolution in 1979 that showed how well Iran can run not only an oil business but a nuclear power business was then many years away.

Could it be that I forgot all this because the Iranian resident and I were both wearing the same white uniform of our professional class? Engaged in an activity that erased our differences? Maybe an explanation, but not an excuse.

The summer after my third year in Rochester, I made an important excursion – I flew to London, from which my parents and I toured the Tyrol and the Italian Lakes – a whole week at Lago di Garda, another in Venice, and return by way of Vienna, where we stayed in the Sacher Hotel. Breakfasts were bright morning feasts at which my father tried to stay away from the delicious little sausages, but we compared all the different coffees and *Torten*. A morning trip somewhere was good, too, but by afternoon my father was tired and put his feet up while my

mother and I went to see a church or a museum. We came back early to tell him our adventures, talking in bed for a while, and then on to the next day. It was indeed a Grand Tour.

That fall after the trip, my parents returned to New York on the *Queen Elizabeth 2*, their favorite way of crossing, and a day or so later my father was in the hospital for the management of his nephrotic fluid problems. He died within a week, in the middle of the night. My mother and I had been visiting him and staying in a nearby hotel, but got the news by telephone. I am not proud of the ways I avoided this last encounter with him, nor of the fact that I followed exactly his instructions, which he had given years before: no funeral, no burial. It was Pope's "steal from the world and not a stone tell where I lie," I thought, and indeed solitude had been one of his ideals.

The other was extreme modesty. He liked to summarize his career by saying he started negotiating oil rights with kaffir-corn farmers in the fields of Oklahoma and ended doing the same thing with the Imam of Oman. As if there was really not much difference. The people who carried out his instructions for anonymous burial were kind enough to tell me that on the way back from the crematorium in New Jersey, they poured his ashes in the Hudson, which today I think about every time I walk along Riverside Park.

My mother went back to London to pack up their household for the return to Fairfield, and I went back to Rochester to resume the fellowship I had taken in statistics, in order to provide an extra year for the psychoanalysis I had undertaken with Paul Dewald. My recollection is that Dewald expressed condolence for my father's death at our next session – almost his only conversational initiative in the three years of our meeting together. The experience of psychoanalysis, which began after a consultation sometime late in the second year, was such a strange disembodied one, that it needs a chapter all its own.

CHAPTER 10: ANALYSAND

The experience of psychoanalysis was certainly a pivotal development of the medical school years. I've said before that I had three analysts, one in medical school, one during internship, and one in residency – and it was the third one that finally got something right. Or so it seemed at the time, but I will try to remind you of all the other things that were acting to change the way I thought about my experience.

The simple story is that in my second year in Rochester, living alone and cooking in that little apartment, I repeated a painful episode – similar to one in my third year at college: I asked a woman in my close friendship circle to marry me, became engaged, realized I had made a mistake, and backed out of the engagement. The remorse I felt for inflicting needless pain a second time moved me to seek psychiatric consultation.

Now, looking at these mistaken proposals as symptoms of something else going on, the first thing that strikes me is how little they had to do with sex. Looking back on the ten years from age 15 to 25, my experiences with women were remarkably stereotyped, considering the great variety of the women themselves, and it is that sameness that interests me.

I was rather unreflectively participating in the common ritual of middle- and upper-class juvenile sexual experience in the 1950s, called “necking.” This ritual was maintained by intense, separate discussion and advice between boys and between girls. After such an introduction from friends, I practiced the ritual in adolescence, as did everyone I knew, by cautious experiment with girls who established the rules of safety and restraint by signals and gestures, rarely with frank negotiation. Boys appeared to take the initiative in necking, and girls the defense, although sometimes the roles were reversed to the great excitement of the boys. Girls hoped for secrecy about this, lest they acquire a reputation for being “fast” or “free.”

It was called “necking” because of the rules that boys had invented, terms borrowed from baseball, which framed it as a contest or

game: first base = above the neck; second base = below the neck; third base = arousal by external contact, sometimes masturbation; and home run = conventional intercourse. Good form seemed to require that this game be played while seated on a couch or in the back seat of a car, and without the removal of any but the most necessary clothing, as an expression of guileless unpreparedness. This maintained the essential dramatic contradiction of the ritual, a struggle between restraint and release. Though it was supposed to be a proxy, or a rehearsal, for adult sex, it also expressed the myth that we were innocent and unprepared – certainly unprepared to practice contraception.

My father, as I've said, regarded this as dangerous nonsense. His conversation with me about contraception at age 14 was a sobering experience, certainly the most explicit communication with him that I remember – about any matter. He understood that necking required a romantic mood for mutual reassurance, and the encouragement of whatever fantasies either participant found helpful. This was inconsistent with straight talk about contraception, and my father wanted to prepare me with an unromantic script for thinking ahead – a well-rehearsed alternative. In his experience the marriages that followed pregnancy were disastrous to the later happiness of both parties – he had some stories of close friends who had suffered the consequences of this mistake for the rest of their lives. The result of that discussion was that I put a packaged condom in my wallet and never used it, postponing sexual experience beyond necking until medical school.

In the gender-segregated worlds of prep school and college, necking was embedded in other social rituals – dating, dancing, and listening to music. Because of being at boarding school, those occurred entirely during vacation time, and required elaborate planning and transportation arrangements, uncertain privacy, and other complications. The whole experience had nothing to do with exploring compatibility in a relationship, and frank talk with actual or potential partners was rare.

By the time I got to medical school, several sexual norms in my life had changed: the '50s had not quite turned into the '60s, but attitudes towards sex were headed in that direction. I was 25 rather than 18, living in an apartment rather than a dormitory, and I think most

important, I lived in a postgraduate medical-school culture that assumed we were all worldly and experienced about sex. That culture included graduate students and even undergraduates from the River Campus who ventured into our world. So for the first time there was a social endorsement of real sex rather than necking, the main restriction being that it should be with one partner at a time.

Here is the puzzle: In this libertine environment, why did I find myself proposing marriage to a fellow medical student, one of two women in my class? And why were we necking in my apartment rather than living together and enjoying sex to see what that was like?

The answer I think is that this relationship had nothing to do with sexual or any other kind of compatibility. It was about something else. That little apartment, with its generous kitchen alcove inside and its side porch where you could sit and enjoy the view of the back yard and garage, was a home. I had taken it because I was homesick, and what it needed was a wife, a central character in the cure of my homesickness.

It took me much less time – about a month – to back out of that engagement, but I was mortified, and realized there was something about myself I didn't understand. I consulted the young psychiatrist who was in charge of student mental health, and he, after listening to me for about twenty minutes, suggested psychoanalysis. I remember sitting in his office with a mixture of emotions.

There was a sense of fate – of inevitability – about this recommendation, but also of relief, of opportunity to find out what psychoanalysis was like. I had been reading about it for years now, telling everyone it was what I planned to do. Here was a chance to see what it was, in action. Certainly, I would learn something nearer to my goals in life than medical courses like bacteriology. I told the consultant psychiatrist that of all my teachers I especially admired Paul Dewald, and I understood that he was an analyst. What about a consultation with him?

Yes, said the consultant, give him a call. I was dimly aware at the time that this consultation was shaped by many cultural and institutional hedges. I was a candidate for analysis because of my social class, my

interests, and the location and prestige of the practice within the medical school. What else could my consultant have said? Not entirely a rhetorical question: I hope to get back to it.

At my first meeting with Dewald, I really did expect a sort of professional disclosure and discussion of the plan, of the contract. I suggested we talk a bit before beginning free association on the couch. But he said that it would be best to begin with that classical procedure, and I didn't feel I had standing to insist – nor did we analyze that feeling. We just assumed he was in charge. After all, this might be, among other things, my introduction to a fraternity.

What did we analyze? At this distance, I remember almost nothing, but I do remember that it made very little sense to me at the time. The original problems didn't come up again, since, as time passed, I accepted the boredom of having to get a medical degree to be a psychiatrist, and I had learned not to go around asking people to marry me.

Medical school did bring me into living and working relationships with some very interesting, and very non-Harvard, people, and that, as I hope to make clear in a later chapter, was an education in itself. Margaret and I went through close encounters with other partners, wrote each other long letters about them, got together for reunions in New York, and even lived together for a summer in Rochester.

What really upset me during those years was the fact that on the other side of the world my father was dying of a chronic kidney disease, and there was nothing I could do about it. For some reason, neither Dewald nor I had much to say about that. I did pass out one day on rounds as we stood at the bedside of a man my age who was dying of nephrotic kidney disease, but the cause of that symptom didn't seem too hard to figure out. At the next session with Dewald I remarked on my identification with my father's plight and received a silent assent from behind the couch. Medical students are always short of sleep, the sessions were in the afternoon, and I slept a lot. Apparently, the rules prevented him from waking me.

We did talk about whether we were getting anywhere and agreed that I should take an extra year – a fellowship “year out” (in biostatistics, for which I have always been grateful) to lengthen the time for the

analysis. The possibility of doing my internship in Rochester to add yet another year was also discussed.

As the end of medical school approached, we had already been at this for two years, and an internship in Rochester would have lengthened it to three. In my final year, I told Dewald we were stopping the analysis now, because Margaret and I had decided to get married and I would intern in New York. He accepted this ending as silently as he had begun three years before.

What in the world were Dewald and I doing? Perhaps I was just getting my ticket punched and going through the motions. I notice from his obituary that Dewald got his certificate in psychoanalysis from Downstate in New York in 1960, the year of my graduation, so I'm pretty sure he was not hanging on to me because I was a "control case" – a supervised treatment he needed to finish in order to graduate (that was Chuck Baker's theory). No – I think the tedium and inflexibility of it was the result of his being a beginner in a guild that requires strict orthodoxy from its novices. I talked, he listened, and occasionally said something. I remember feeling bored and antagonistic.

A few years later, when Dewald moved to St. Louis, he became a leader in the movement to adapt the theories of analysis to a looser "dynamic psychotherapy." In fact, he published a book in 1964, *Psychotherapy, A Dynamic Approach*, about this kind of therapy, so I know he was thinking about brief, focused therapy in the early 1960s just after we parted. It is infuriating to see that he describes in that book exactly the kind of discussion of the working relationship, evaluation of the problem, and focus on resolution I was hoping for when I first walked into his office.

Could I have sat up at some point and said, "This is getting nowhere – let's talk!"? Apparently not. Dewald and I were trapped inside a formality. I needed a *different* kind of analysis where I would have been encouraged to do that. The work Dewald describes in his book is hardly like the narrative therapy conversations I describe in my book *A Different Story*, or like my third and finally effective analysis, but it is moving in that direction. Those conversations involved frank mutual exchanges, frank encouragement, more like sex than necking.

It has been in the back of my mind, writing about sexual and psychotherapeutic rituals in the same chapter, that classical analysis has some similarities with necking. They are both ritual arrangements for very controlled communication in emotional situations where too much open and mutual encouragement is seen as a threat to the defined outcome.

Seriously, I think the lessons of life began to overtake the long waiting for insights from analysis. Most important of these experiences was the summer Margaret and I played house in a borrowed apartment in Rochester. She got a job with an advertising agency downtown. I was completing my “year out” studying medical statistics while taking care of Robert Ader’s rats. We had time to be a couple, appearing at picnics of the statistics faculty, and having dinner with Richard Defendini and Lucy Squire – an engaged couple! – at Lucy’s house. We learned enough from living, loving, and talking in that apartment, and from our experience of being a couple among couples, to decide to get married as soon as I got my degree. Our engagement felt, and was, completely different from my two symptomatic false starts, which had been efforts to recruit a candidate for a role.

Writing this chapter, I began to look for a different way of understanding my state of mind during the years before the analysis. My mother kept all the letters I wrote to them in The Hague, where they were living during the middle years at St. Paul’s and again during most of the years at Harvard, and so I was able to re-read them. They are all addressed “Dear Folks” and are full of good cheer, enthusiasm, and chat, as if we were about to meet again soon. Many of them were very long, single-spaced, and typewritten for several pages. I was putting a lot of work into feeling part of the family, and keeping my parents apprised of my emotions, as if we were living together.

There is no mention in any of these letters of any goal after graduation. My parents did in fact come back from The Hague about a month before the Harvard graduation day – there are pictures of us all together at the picnic we four roommates had on the banks of the Charles. It is a beautiful June day and we are all there, including my

final college girlfriend, Penelope. Her name is important, because I wrote a poem that was inspired by having a girlfriend with that name. I never showed it to anyone – it was written just for me, and I saved it.

During the last two years of college, we all had to face the prospect of military service, and this led to another kind of dislocation. As I said, I was in the Naval Reserve, which required a summer cruise as crew of a destroyer escort.

The ship left Boston, went up to the mouth of the St. Lawrence, and then we had a week of gunnery and other drills as we went down through the Canadian countryside to Montreal. Prepared for one night of shore leave in Montreal, we stood at attention while the petty officer went down the line, being sure we all knew where we were going. I had been given the name of a good restaurant, and when I said it, the officer said, “Enlisted men don’t go to that restaurant.” I went anyway, and in spite of my bell-bottom whites, was served a very good meal at a table by myself in the back. A few days later, headed back up the river to Boston, we were again at attention on deck, and I had a completely unexpected and uncontrollable crying jag. I was overwhelmed by a mysterious sadness. The petty officer ordered me below to the pharmacy where the mate gave me enough phenobarbital to put me out for the rest of the day and night. I returned to duty and managed not to think about this episode until decades later, writing this.

The following summer, as a schoolmaster in Newport, Rhode Island, when it came time for my two weeks in the Navy, I did choose to train as a pharmacist’s mate at Chelsea Naval Hospital in Boston, and apart from fainting as we observed a delivery in the obstetrical suite, I had no more emotional misadventures. Of course, I also had no more summer months as an enlisted man. I think the absence of the surroundings and clothes that reassured me of my class membership also made me more vulnerable.

I was soon to decide on a medical career for reasons completely unrelated to medicine itself – psychiatric residency was a requirement for analytic training, and I had decided to be an analyst. Despite three analyses, I had no idea what ailed me during the years I am now

describing until I sat down to write this chapter. Then I remembered the poem I'd written about Penelope.

*Well-wrought upon its ways, a sure ship
With young and careful years for building it.
The Fisher-kings, to counsel and equip
Had shored and stored from narrow stem to sprit
With salt and pemmican and raw thin wine.
But then in after years the fires of Ilium lit
No homeward beacon, and the kings would dine
In discontent, while rumor bit by bit
Came home of lonely Circe and the god
Who had a great but single-sided eye.
One night a storm arose that flayed and flawed
The docks and drove the driven piles awry –
And in the morning of Sicilian sun,
There was the ship at easy anchor breathing,
In for stores from home and waiting one
Among her women weaving and unweaving.*

The interpretation is pretty straightforward. I am the ship, McDonald (my history teacher from St. Paul's) is Polyphemus, the giant with one eye, the girl of the first mistaken proposal is Circe. I borrowed the Fisher Kings from T. S. Eliot and the myth of the Grail, of which they are custodians. They are my parents, but in the poem, *they* stay home, waiting. In real life, they had come back from their second tour in The Hague just in time to be at my college graduation. I wrote this poem as if I had been at sea all that time, suffering the trials of Ulysses, having so much trouble getting home. And home meant marriage, security – a mooring for my ship. That was the reason for those proposals. My parents were out of the country during each of those proposal episodes. I remember telling them about the engagements – both of them – by trans-Atlantic telephone.

Comparing my travails with those of Ulysses, I have him coming home to Sicily rather than Ithaca, but that's because it sounds better in the poem.

The really interesting question, I think, is this: Why would I keep these feelings about homelessness under wraps, and express them in such a dissociated, symptomatic way? I think the deal with my parents, and everyone else, was that since my father's promotions and new assignments were all for the good of the family – we would never refer to them as hardships. And also, I learned at St. Paul's, and perhaps even earlier, not to complain about the discomforts of privilege. These unspoken agreements in families and other close groups – even whole social classes – have a powerful dissociating effect. If you learn to behave as if nothing bothers you, you begin to feel and think as if nothing bothers you.

There were other reasons. As a practical matter, the denial was easy – I was living such a cosseted life, in dormitories or on vacation visits with roommates, everything arranged, no money worries; I didn't even have to cook or take care of myself until medical school. Plenty of company. What could I possibly have complained about?

The most severe symptoms occurred when I was on duty as a Navy enlisted man, completely cut off from any surrounding reassurance about social class – another homeless experience. The poem is about the *idea* of home, or maybe even the *ideal* – the mythical Penelope, the ideal at-home wife. Twice, I went searching for her in an altered state, a sort of trance. Then I woke up to realize neither of those women I had adopted for that role was right for me to spend my life with.

I think both my mother and I suffered without being aware of it on account of this luxurious way of life. The dissociated homeless feeling was especially strong when they were overseas – hence the timing of the proposals.

And why did this never come up in the analysis with Dewald? Maybe one reason is that homelessness is not part of the psychoanalytic canon. Classical analysts see the pain of dislocation as a derivative of an earlier childhood separation experience, like interruption of contact with mother, which is in turn a derivative of frustration of oral satisfaction, the breast, all that. So the analyst lurks in wait for a connection to something ever more primitive, and the real social experience doesn't get examined.

Thinking about my other dissociated experience, the out-of-body episode in the chapel at St. Paul's graduation, I remember that, as a graduating senior, wishing I could stay in school was definitely not allowed by the ceremonial rejoicing, and so it stayed out of awareness until after I actually went back "home" by signing up as a teacher at St. George's. Being a schoolmaster for two years instead of getting on with my life was a very long-drawn-out symptom, a way of not facing my real choices.

I am not surprised that none of this came up in the analysis with Dewald. But then I can't think what we *were* talking about – or rather what I was talking about, since I did all the talking. It does occur to me that his analytic silence was like the silence of my father. I think that's the real interpretation of my negative reactions, my "negative transference."

But it never came up because we both knew he was *supposed* to be silent. My father also had a "supposed" cultural frame for his silence – the much admired "strong, silent" type from the American Southwest. So, given those expectations, what was there to interpret, in either relationship? We would only have found out by breaking the rules and *talking about it*. That finally happened in my analysis with Myer Mendelson.

Mendelson was interested in my aristocratic identifications (coats of arms continued to appear in my dreams). At least, Ulysses himself would have been an *active* aristocrat, a ship captain, battle leader, crafty plotter – not just the passive vessel of the ship. But Mendelson's most pointed description of me was as a personification of another aristocrat, the Russian Prince Oblomov, who left orders that he not be disturbed so that he could stay in bed and sleep. Mendelson tried to get me to read the novel by Goncharov, but I quit after a chapter. "Too bad," he said – "It's a minor classic." He had lots of opinions.

The way I got to Mendelson is interesting: When I started internship in New York, I knew I wanted a non-Freudian kind of therapy, and I got Janet Rioch's name out of a book on Sullivanian approaches.

She saw me for more than a year, and then when she left New York for Washington to get married, she said, “I’m going to refer you to someone who will really crack the whip.”

I was startled by the idea that I needed whip-cracking. Mendelson was a supervisor in the clinic at Bronx Municipal where I was a resident, and I knew he had a reputation as a “tough” and challenging supervisor. At the end of our first consultation, he told me that I hadn’t presented anything that was worth starting an analysis for, and I should go away and think about it. He would be willing to see me again. The idea that the problems I described were not worth the effort was a jolt.

But maybe I had described them in a way that made them sound not worth the effort – nonchalance again, I think. I had presented myself at first with too much preppy “ease.” I don’t remember what I changed when I went back for that second interview, but I had done some serious thinking, apparently to his satisfaction. He referred me for psychological testing to a colleague at the William Alanson White Institute, where he was on the faculty, and told me to bring in “my first dream.” We were sitting face to face, and it was a completely different experience from the supine relationships with Dewald and Rioch. The dream was subjected to detailed inquiry and minute analysis, plenty of discussion, and I was left with the impression that, indeed, he was “tough” – rigorous in a way that was new to me. I liked it.

And I often thought he was critical of me. When I finally said so, he replied, “Critical! You call that criticism? Your problem is you don’t know anything about it – you don’t know how to deal with criticism! If you don’t believe me, listen to this.”

He got up and pulled my psychological test report out of a file cabinet and read it to me. “Avoids themes of conflict,” it said among other things. We came back many times to this, and he used our conversation as a model of frank confrontation, training me in conflict. When I talked about arguments I was having with Margaret, he took her point of view, and challenged me to respond – stop complaining and think about it! Talk about it! When I complained about the residency training, he said, “What can you do to change that? You have something to contribute.” We stopped after two years of this. “You seem to be ready to take up your joyful burden.” he said as we shook hands. I think we

decided he had finally shaken Oblomov awake.

So the relationship was an active, and in a way, staged, reflection of the problem, especially my problem with facing open conflict. It is a bit like family or even Gestalt therapy in the sense that there is a corrective enactment, a staged rehearsal of the problem that leads to different action, a different outcome. That kind of analysis was right for someone like me, because I had no traumas to uncover, but I did have something some would have called a character problem – an avoidant personality. I had developed a complacent defense against the hazards of sharp encounter – perhaps because my parents let me get away with it. I certainly couldn't learn about conflict from watching them or reviewing their conflicts with me. There weren't any to be seen. This absence was repeated in the relationship with Dewald – he never said, “Why don't you sit up and challenge me?” And my real problem, lack of a home, was never addressed. It was not part of the Freudian canon, beside the fact that it was common among my unmarried classmates.

Now, about the referral to Dewald in the first place – the consultation with the Student Health psychiatrist who so readily agreed that I should apply to him. Since so many of my classmates were taking a “year out” for research fellowships – my own fellowship in statistics at Rochester was paid for by a federal program that could have paid for work-study anywhere – I imagine another consultant saying, “You really need time out from medical school here. Nothing in our kind of psychiatry interests you. All your close connections are in New York. Why don't you see if you can get a fellowship there?” But he couldn't have said that. He was so inside the system himself that he couldn't even have thought it, especially the part about “our kind of psychiatry.” Everybody thought their kind of psychiatry was the best, maybe even the only.

I had no idea that there actually *was* another kind of psychiatry, very much the kind that I had been looking for, until I got to Yeshiva University's Albert Einstein College of Medicine in the Bronx in New York.

My move from Rochester to New York for the next chapter in my evolving plan seems in ways quite similar to Dewald's move to St. Louis. Dewald was just getting his ticket as a trained psychoanalyst, and I was just getting my ticket as an MD. Both of us were looking beyond these entry tickets. Dewald likely had a clear goal when he moved to St. Louis as Chairman, but I did not yet know that I was going to discover my next career step by learning family work at Israel Zwerling's Day Hospital in the Bronx. Certainly both these institutional moves were more significant to each of us than anything we might have said to each other in the analysis.

CHAPTER 11: PSYCHIATRIST

At last, I had my power ticket, the medical degree, but before I could present it for analytic training, I had to get it stamped for a year of internship and punched for three years of residency in psychiatry. Margaret and I were married in New York in her family's apartment on the weekend of medical graduation in Rochester, so I had my diploma mailed, and never got to wear the hood and cap and gown. More important to us was taking off in the Chevrolet Impala convertible we borrowed from my mother, to drive to Yellow Springs, Ohio, where Irv Emanuel was getting married a few days later.

If my junior high school was Irish Catholic and my boarding schools (both for learning and for teaching) were WASP Episcopalian, then my graduate medical and psychiatric education was Jewish. I interned at Montefiore Hospital, founded in the Bronx in 1898 and named after Sir Moses Montefiore, a distinguished British philanthropist. It was originally a charitable foundation "for incurable diseases,"—a place where people could go to die with proper care before the day of scientific medicine. But in 1960, when no one any longer spoke of diseases as incurable, an air of charity and public responsibility still prevailed at Montefiore. Martin Cherkasky, the director, informed us on our first day that a new medical contract for city employees had been negotiated by the unions, and not only would they get their services paid for, but they would have their lab tests and X-rays read first. City employees were first-class citizens, and they would go to the front of the line.

And another special group, mostly older men, as they rolled up their sleeves to have blood drawn, showed us the blue numbers tattooed to their forearms in Nazi concentration camps. We felt a special responsibility to them. I was one of two non-Jewish interns on the new house staff, and, following up a long-standing interest, I made a special effort to improve my Yiddish, cobbled together from German and Dutch, plus jokes told me by my new in-laws. As I assisted at surgical operations, holding the retractors gave me lots of time for listening to the surgeons and residents exchanging Yiddish epithets.

Practicing Yiddish was certainly the most enjoyable part of the year at Montefiore. I spent days and nights at home catching up on lost sleep. My main concern was not to do any harm as a result of being the first doctor on call. I noticed that my medical rotations placed me mostly under the supervision of one medical resident, Jack Goldberg. I sat down with him at lunch the first week and offered him a deal: I would be happy to do all the physical work, the procedures, spinal taps, electrocardiographs, changing dressings, whatever. I was good at that. I even liked to take out sutures. He could stay home at night, and I would be his hands and eyes – as long as we had an agreement that I could call him any time to double-check my medical decisions before writing orders in the chart at the nursing station. That way I would get through the year without injuring anybody. He agreed to review my orders on the telephone at any hour.

Intensely relieved, I put my head down and plowed through a half year of medicine and two months each of my “rotations” – urology, pediatrics, and neurology – finding on each service a mentor like Jack who understood my purgatorial condition.

The main career business of the internship year was getting accepted for a psychiatric residency. At Rochester, I had learned that there were “medical” residencies, like Bellevue in Manhattan, where you learned mostly diagnosis and drug management; there were other residencies, like NYU and Cornell, where everyone was waiting to enter an analytic institute; and there were also residencies, like Einstein in the Bronx, where there was a glimmer of interest in the social aspects of psychiatry. I also learned that John Romano, the chairman at Rochester whom I so much admired, had organized periodic meetings of the leaders of those community-minded departments. It was called “The Stagecoach Group” because Romano insisted on showing his favorite movie, *Stagecoach*, at each meeting. Case Western Reserve in Cleveland, Ohio, was part of the Stagecoach group, and a senior member of that faculty, Milton Rosenbaum, was recruited to be chair of psychiatry when Albert Einstein Medical College of Yeshiva University was founded in the Bronx, in 1950.

Einstein was something new – a Jewish medical school, started by

a group of professors who wanted to break through the antisemitism still prominent in American university politics. At around the same time, New York City adopted a new organization of its City Hospitals, with each one administered as a teaching hospital by a medical school whose professors were the responsible physicians. In this way, Einstein became the medical school of Bronx Municipal Hospital, two shiny new institutions in a system that contained some very old and dingy ones, such as Bellevue in Manhattan. The Einstein medical school and the Jacobi hospital were located near each other in Morrisania, a prosperous area of the Bronx full of single-family houses on little grass plots, not far from the Workman's Circle retirement home where Margaret's maternal grandmother, Rose Newmark, lived, together with, as she said, "a bunch of has-beens."

Rose had grown up in Russia as a member of an agrarian socialist group of young people who did not believe in bourgeois institutions like marriage, but to raise her children in America she adopted her husband's name because that was the local custom. She also brought cakes to bake sales at the local church because she could see this was a way to make friends.

With all this Jewish *geselligkeit* (cozy sociability) in the Bronx, I had high hopes for a *lebendige welt* (a lively world) at the Einstein department of psychiatry. But I could see from my admission interview with the director of training, Jose Barchilon, that the analysts were in charge. "Tell me what you like to read," he began, fixing me with the concentration of his large, brown eyes. The only book I could think of after a long pause was George Santayana's *The Last Puritan*. "Tell me what interested you," said Barchilon. I told him the opening – Oliver (named after Cromwell?) is a boy whose mother is dead and whose father is constantly traveling. He is educated by his grandfather and by a group of Catholic monks who try unsuccessfully to convert him. He remains true to his Puritan forbears, represented by his grandfather.

"Are you a Last Puritan?" Barchilon asked.

Immediately I saw the parallels with my experience, which I told him, and in a few days was accepted to the residency. I had demonstrated my ability to accept an interpretation.

When I met my fellow residents the following July, I could guess how each of us had passed through Barchilon's filter. Six men and four women, we were all analysts-to-be, intensely ready for self-revelation, and quick to respond with gratuitous interpretations. I noticed that most of the women were strikingly attractive, perhaps another grain of Barchilon's filter. Most of my colleagues were proud and excited to be headed for analysis as a career, and I, too, having waited so long, looked forward to what was clearly to be a serious look at the literature and thinking that psychoanalysis had to offer the practice of psychiatry.

Barchilon himself was a master practitioner and teacher of this lore, extracting illustrations of it from case presentations of our patients. These were a motley group of citizens, all hospitalized as our inpatients, mostly psychotic and therefore rather unlike the hysterical and neurotic Viennese ladies and gentlemen who had made up Freud's cases. But for Barchilon their common humanity consisted in the same childhood traumas and repressions, traces of which he taught us to search out in the sketchy accounts we presented, or which he could uncover in his own interview while we watched.

And though Barchilon pitched his teaching to future analysts, there were occasional case conferences conducted by Chairman Rosenbaum, which reflected a wider range of interest. Rosenbaum always carried a reflex hammer in the pocket of his long white coat, and though we never saw him use it, it signified his interest in the medical-neurological aspects of the case, which he wanted to hear about. His questions were practical and focused on the social problems the patient faced at discharge, much as Romano's had been in Rochester.

At least one day and night a week, two of us were on duty in the Emergency Room, the portal through which families or police brought their charges. Those accompanied by police arrived by city ambulance. The police stayed with their "psycho" cases until we had made our decision and signed their papers. Sometimes people came in by themselves, knowing from experience or from advice that it was time to look for shelter. Many of these had been in hospital before and knew they needed the respite and safety of the ward. For others, it was their first step into a lockup, a confinement in a place clean and medical

enough, but for many, full of terrors almost as upsetting as the hallucinations of psychosis itself.

Our job as the gatekeepers was to admit them or recommend an alternative. Under supervision of a second-year resident who for the first half-year checked our work and taught us the ropes, we learned this most awesome of psychiatric powers, to confine or let go. We learned to take time to talk with the patient and whoever was with him or her, as well as whoever could be reached by telephone, not only to get needed information, but also to go over the reasoning and implications of the decision, because even though we could make our decision without doing this, we owed it to them to frame the beginning of an agreement about the common purpose, the hoped-for outcome of such a big decision.

I never got used to it. Each of us carried the massive, four-inch iron key that opened the doors of all the wards in all the hospitals of the city and state. I called mine “the Pinel Key” (after the French physician who opened all the wards of the Paris Bicetre to free the citizens locked up there before the Revolution). Suicide, violence, or other terrible consequences of escape were always the possibilities on our minds, but after a little experience, we understood that other concerns were operating.

Some patients were being admitted because they were “interesting,” which meant that they were people with whom we could practice our nascent psychotherapy skills while they were – too briefly, alas – guests of the City, living on the ward. I admitted to my own care a strikingly beautiful blond woman in her first year of marriage, accompanied to the emergency room by her husband, whose complaint was being unable to walk because of a mysterious paralysis of her legs. She had been examined by a neurologist, who found no physical cause. I was determined that this case of hysterical paralysis, so classically Freudian, was to be my introduction to the mysterium. While she did not get better under my care, she did improve after I referred her to a senior resident for couples therapy toward the end of the year.

Some of these “interesting” candidates for psychotherapy who arrived later in the year, we referred to ourselves in the clinic where we would take up outpatient practice in the second year. I realized that most

of my colleagues were looking forward to the second year because that was when their outpatient office practices would most clearly resemble the analytic practice they were headed for. But I was less and less sure that this was what I wanted to do. Whatever that was, I had not seen it yet.

Not in the “interesting” category were most of the more serious candidates for our help – people with beginning or recurring symptoms of severe depression, manic-depressive disease, or our greatest challenge, schizophrenia. The first two, the affective disorders, were soon referred to the clinic for drug treatment (rather undeveloped in 1960) and the young people with schizophrenic symptoms were given phenothiazine drugs in an effort to blunt their hallucinations. If they improved a little after admission, the younger and more “interesting” ones were referred to the clinic. But even on these drugs, the older ones who had been through this many times before were held for the next ambulance-bus to Harlem Valley State Hospital in Wingdale, New York. This bus left twice a week, and the traffic between acute hospitals like ours in the city and the long-term State Hospitals in the country gave rise to the description of the system as a “revolving door.”

These long-term schizophrenic patients were the ones who had been – with great fanfare – “freed” from the State Hospitals in large numbers, beginning with the introduction of phenothiazine drugs in 1955. But in fact, five years later, no effective management had been set up for them in the communities to which they were discharged, so back many of them went to the same places they came from, only to be discharged again as their symptoms – but not their hopes – improved with more hospital care and medication. Hearing this story over and over in the emergency room was depressing, and scheduling the ones admitted for the next bus to Wingdale, as the only responsible discharge plan, was even more so.

There was one thing going on in the emergency room that was *not* part of this selection of interesting cases – the system of random admissions to the Day Hospital. If we decided a patient needed admission but was not in immediate danger of harm to self or others, a

research assistant picked a card from a deck of random numbers and told us whether we had to offer the patient and family admission to the Day Hospital. In that case, a special team would appear and tell the assembled stake-holders about this opportunity, and if they agreed, work out an appointment the following weekday. They would take over the case. If the number on the card said we should admit the patient, that case became a member of the control population that was to be compared to Day Hospital Treatment.

This was part of a study of the Day Hospital as an effective alternative to regular hospital admission – a study being conducted by Israel Zwerling, the Director of the Day Hospital and head of the Division of Social and Community Psychiatry. It was the first I had heard of that organization.

I talked about the Day Hospital with my fellow resident Grace Gabe, and we decided we wanted to be part of this experiment. Not only was it the first bit of experimental epidemiological science we had encountered, but it sounded like an opportunity to learn something new. The Day Hospital had two resident slots available for the second half year, and after participating in a Christmas-party song-and-dance parody of life on the inpatient ward, Grace and I said goodbye to our colleagues (except for seeing them in the literature seminars) and went off to the Westchester Square neighborhood to find the Day Hospital.

It was on one of those side streets in New York that have all the municipal services lined up together – the police station, the fire station, sometimes the library branch, and in this case a dental clinic. On the second and third floors above the dental clinic were suites of large rooms with big, bright windows, some of which looked onto a tree-lined garden in the rear. There was no reception desk, but people looked up from their activities to say hello and give directions.

The first people we met were the nurses in charge of the groups to which we were assigned as doctors, and each of us went off with our nurse to have the workings of the place explained. Mine was a cheerful, motherly woman named Carmen Cabrera who chatted affectionately in Spanish with some of the patients as we went down the hall to her office. Like everyone else, she was dressed in casual work clothes (no whites anywhere) and for the first time in six years I had no way of identifying

who was a patient and who was what kind of professional.

Carmen poured a couple of cups of coffee in the kitchen and we closed the door to her office. “I am very glad to meet you,” she said, “We always have wonderful doctors who really want to be here. Now, the main job that you and I share together is we run the morning group. There is a staff meeting at 8:30, a lot of other business and planning gets done between 9 and 10, and the patients arrive at 10. We start our group as soon after 10 as possible, and whatever else comes up for discussion, we try to plan our activities for the day by 11 o’clock.”

“What kind of activities?” I asked.

“This time of year, it’s too cold to be outside, so we do things like repair the furniture and sometimes they bring things from home that need to be fixed. In the spring we start a garden out there in the back.” she said, nodding towards the window. “And sometimes, if everyone is up for it, we take a trip.”

“A trip!”

“Yes – that’s special and takes planning. We have to practice with easy ones like, we go the Square to shop at Woolworth’s. But don’t worry about that, this week we’ll probably mend some more chairs and tables, right here in our home room.”

“The most important activity of the day is fixing lunch in the kitchen,” she went on, “both for yourself and sometimes making something like a dessert for everyone. But it takes a lot of planning and cooperation because sometimes there are twenty people or more. Not counting the staff.”

“The staff eats the same lunch?”

“Well, you and I do because we are the group leaders. We share a lot of things, but especially lunch.” She smiled at my surprise. “The food is quite good – most of it’s supplied by the people at the hospital. We have to heat it up, and there are salad fixings. Or we can make sandwiches. But some days,” she added, keeping me in her gaze, “people bring really wonderful things from home – like lasagna!”

We laughed again at my uncertainty about this new role. “Are you ready to meet the group?” she asked. I followed her down the hall to a large room where a handful of men and women were sanding the top of a coffee table and discussing how to prepare a chair leg for doweling and

gluing.

“This is our new doctor, Dr. Beels,” she said as everyone looked up from their work. I shook hands as we went around the room and tried to remember all the first names. Carmen used her first name, too – I was the only one with a handle.

“Now I think you have another meeting,” she said. “I’ll save you some lunch today, but tomorrow first thing we’ll talk about how to do the morning meeting, and you can join in the lunch preparation after that.”

Carmen was not the only Latina staff member – there were many aides who also formed a connection to Spanish-speaking patients. But the fact that she was the clinical director of one group, and that another nurse, Rachel Robinson (wife of Jackie!), was the director of the other, set an atmosphere of community engagement and power balance quite different from the service Grace and I had come from. Strong Black and Latina leadership was an important part of Zwering’s design for the Day Hospital.

My next meeting was with my supervisor, Marilyn Glickman, a social worker who would be in charge of teaching me family therapy. Years later, when we were close friends and colleagues, Marilyn teased me about missing supervisory appointments with her at the Day Hospital. There was so much family work going on with Carmen and other front-line people that I rarely stopped to talk about it. Learning how to interview families was the most important new skill for all of us, because regular attendance was the key to success, and that only happened if the families of the patients, as well as the patients themselves, thought we were being helpful. The main way we all learned family work was by watching it as it was conducted on the other side of the one-way mirror.

Israel Zwering, the Day Hospital director, was the most frequent demonstrator of this art. He undertook to interview the most difficult families and show us ways of breaking through what often seemed to us an impossible degree of confusion, opposition, and craziness. At one meeting he brought order and trust out of chaos by joining the young patient in the family in singing “Moon River.”

I will have a great deal to say about Israel Zwerling, who then and later was my model of what a psychiatrist could be. He was a compact, energetic, cheerful man with a psychology PhD as well as an MD. Before Rosenbaum asked him to come to Einstein, his job was director of an alcoholism clinic in Brooklyn. So administration, public health, group and family therapy, and an embrace of the realities of the street, rather than the quiet of the analytic couch, were all part of his experience.

I spent more regular time with my assigned supervisor, another senior psychiatrist, Harris Peck. He slipped into a teasing mode with little notice, so I always had to watch his expression carefully to be sure he was serious, which ensured a level of attention unusual in my experience of supervision meetings.

Peck was quite serious, however, in our discussion of one man that I was worried about because he hadn't come to the Day Hospital in several days, and calls to his home where he lived with his mother had not been returned. She would only say that she would give him my message.

"Do you think he's in danger?" Peck asked.

"Hard to say. He hasn't been suicidal, but his pattern has been to stop taking medication and slip into inactivity and neglect until his mother gets worried and calls the ambulance. That could be starting again."

"What about making a home visit?"

I saw that this was a serious suggestion, and together we planned the scenario.

I went to the police station in the neighborhood and got the sergeant to let me arrive in a patrol car, which parked where it could be seen, and then I rang the front doorbell of the ground-floor apartment. My patient's mother appeared and let me in, and I found him sitting peacefully in the living room, neatly dressed as usual. He was one of the few men in our group who wore a suit with his open-neck shirt. After greetings, I said, "I've been worried about how you were doing – and when you didn't call back, I decided I had to come myself. We need to talk about how we are going to keep you from getting back into the

hospital again. I know you don't want that."

He nodded.

"And you and your mother need to agree on a plan. But I think that meeting should happen after you've been back on your medicine for a day or so. What do you think?" Both of them agreed to that. "So the Day Hospital is the best place to do all this – I'm sorry I won't be able to make visits like this every day." They understood.

"I've got some transportation here if you need it." He looked outside at the patrol car and quickly shook his head. "No," he said, "I will be there first thing tomorrow morning. I promise!"

We shook hands and agreed on a date for his mother to come for a meeting, and I went outside and thanked the men in the patrol car. He was there punctually the next morning, took his medication, and said at our first meeting, "I didn't know you cared that much." I took some responsibility for neglecting our relationship, and said I was glad we were back on track. It turned out he didn't like all the bustle of the Day Hospital, and with a little research, I was ready at the meeting with his mother with some more low-key programs that he might prefer. I also learned that he liked a kind of philosophical discussion group better than the activities we favored, and that recommendation went into the transfer plan.

The biggest problem at the Day Hospital was, in fact, finding good long-term transitional programs that would support the community tenure of the people we had rescued from the revolving door of City Hospital to State Hospital and back again. What knowledge we did have of programs for discharge came from the systematic follow-up research that was done by the psychologists on the service. Three or four women with psychology degrees sat in a back office and went out on field interviews, completing the Day Hospital's statistical evaluation program.

Unlike the psychologists on the inpatient service, who did projective testing, these specialists evaluated the level of successful living our patients enjoyed after leaving our care for other programs. They compared these outcomes with those of the patients who had been admitted to the inpatient wards. That was how, years later, we knew that our patients did as well or better than the inpatient group. It was also how the psychologists found out which long-term care programs

worked.

This was 1962 – early in the history of the development of community programs, and as a first-year resident, I had little sense of the way they were just beginning all over the country. The Westchester Square Day Hospital was the second of its kind in the U.S. The first, in Brooklyn, was started by a psychiatrist, Joe Winn, who had been trained in Prague. The next year, 1963, President Kennedy, citing his own family's experience with mental illness, announced the launching of Community Mental Health Centers as a federal grant program.

I wanted to be part of this kind of psychiatry. It actually made creative use of the two powers that my profession did have – control over the patient's environment and medication. Here my medical degree was not just a ticket to an analytic institute. And community psychiatry had everything I was looking for. The intellectual part of the practice was learning what influenced change in groups large and small – families, therapy groups, communities – a kind of practical anthropology. Certainly, I was also drawn to family therapy as practical improvisational theater. The atmosphere of the Day Hospital had much in common with summer camp. It was a school about life for people who had great difficulty learning from ordinary experience because they had an illness that specifically interfered with that kind of learning, leading to a failure of trust and confidence. For the first time, I saw a fit between this work and my abilities and interests, as well as a fit between the work and the needs of these particular patients.

So it was that the following July I had more mixed feelings than my fellows about graduating to our second-year assignment, outpatient psychiatry in the hospital clinic. For the others, it was a step closer to private office practice. For all of us, it was our big chance to have a little space of our own, which each of us decorated carefully. No couches, yet. Mine had two comfortable camp chairs on either side of a table in the center of which was a large stone ash tray that could stand up to my knocking my pipe out in it.

I had stopped smoking cigarettes with the first Surgeon General's

Report (1955) but I still found that the rituals of pipe smoking gave me calming pauses between thoughts. And everyone said they liked the smell of the Balkan Sobranie tobacco, which I kept in an Art Deco brown glass humidor that must have been the latest thing when my father bought it as a young man. *His* father's humidor was a Victorian porcelain beauty with classical maidens dancing in an orange grove, much too precious to leave our apartment, where it sat on a bookshelf. I'm sure my grandfather used it to keep the cigars that gave the house in Kansas City its unforgettable smell. I filled it with my home stock of Balkan Sobranie.

Fortified with pipe tobacco and once-a-week supervision by some wise and experienced professors, I tackled my list of patients. This was it – psychoanalytically-informed psychotherapy. To help us feel at home in our adopted pursuit, Jose Barchilon, our closest mentor from the first year, appeared in the second year as our host for a celebration of the Freudian canon. He invited us once every month or so to come out on a Friday evening to his beautiful suburban home for dinner, after which, over cigars for the men and brandy for all, we discussed a 19th-century novel as if all the characters in it were cases for psycho-dynamic formulation.

It was a privilege, really, and great fun. But I found it hardly surprising that novelists drawing on the European culture that produced the *Bildungsroman*, the “growing-up novel,” should have plot lines and emotional themes in agreement with Freud's case studies. We read Turgenev, Tolstoy, Balzac, Flaubert. We even went as far back as Jane Austen to find an author who could not have shared a culture with or been influenced by Freud, and who, the women pointed out, was not as mystified as Freud was by his question, “What does woman want?” So I enjoyed these after-dinner discussions and kept my contrarian readings and thoughts to myself. I did suggest that we read *King Lear*, one of my favorites in college, but Barchilon was not interested in difficulties that arose at that end of life.

On a more formal level, in literature seminars we read the classic papers and commentaries under the supervision of senior men from the New York Psychoanalytic Association, and here there was little to argue

with, since it was such a splendid, internally consistent intellectual edifice. What it had to do with the problems of the people I saw in my office was another matter, which I tried to work out with my supervisors, many of whom agreed that we should try to support them in facing the more immediate problems they had with their families and work situations. My own models of psychotherapy were my work with Mendelson and the experience of family therapy that I had actually watched at the Day Hospital. Talk supervision, I found, was not the way to learn psychotherapy.

By mid-year, I had given up on the idea of psychoanalytic training. It was clear that analysis was part of a private-practice fee-for-service model of psychiatry over which the doctors were even now losing their monopoly, as they began to admit psychologists to their most exclusive institutes. So even in America the medical training requirement was now exposed as unnecessary – as it had long been in Europe. And if the analysts were private entrepreneurs, I could see that, on the consumer side, only people with a certain level of income and control over their work schedule could afford to attend the (at least) twice-a-week sessions that distinguished “real” analytic treatment from merely “supportive” work. Frequent sessions (five a week in the most orthodox model) were regarded as necessary for the “regression in the transference” that was one of the criteria of fidelity to the brand. It had the familiar outlines of an upper-class institution, fine for those who could afford it. And while I was on the whole glad to have been one of that privileged clientele, it had nothing to do with the public health problems that we had obviously failed to address in our first year work, from the emergency room onwards. The Day Hospital was only a glimpse of the possibilities in that direction.

Paul Dewald acknowledges the class bias of psychoanalysis when he includes a famous quote from Freud on the opening page of his book *Psychotherapy: A Dynamic Approach*: “It is very probable, too, that the large-scale application of our therapy will compel it to alloy the pure gold of analysis freely with the copper of direct suggestion, and hypnotic suggestion, too, might find a place in it again, as it has in the treatment

of war neuroses. But whatever form this psychotherapy *for the people* [my emphasis] may take ... its most important ingredients ... will remain those borrowed from psychoanalysis.”

One of the points I made in writing my first book, *A Different Story*, was that both Dewald and Freud were mistaken about the continuing need for psychoanalytic theory in developing new therapies. Family, narrative, and group work made their progress without it.

I was named one of the chief residents for my third year, which meant that I did the administration and most of the day-to-day teaching on one of the inpatient wards, coaching that year’s class of first-year residents. I enjoyed that responsibility and learned things that came in handy for the rest of my career. One of the privileges of that position was supervision once a week with Rosenbaum himself, which was inspiring in that I got a sense of what experience and broad-mindedness in our profession could be. My other supervisor was a visiting professor from San Francisco, Norman Reider, chairman of the Berkeley department and a prominent psychoanalyst in that city of so many eminent Jungians and Eriksonians (including, at that time, Eric Erikson himself). Talking with Reider was a window on another world.

I presented to him a case that had been assigned to me on the ward because it might require court testimony. This tall, strikingly handsome, married father of a 7-year-old daughter was admitted for psychiatric evaluation, as an alternative to being arrested, for exposing himself at his apartment window. He was deeply ashamed, though not overwhelmed, and very worried about the effect on his daughter if she should find out the whole story. Reider asked many questions but was particularly interested in what sex was like between him and his wife. When I reported that it was infrequent, and a cause for anxiety, because neither wanted to take responsibility for contraception, Reider said, “Let’s see what we can do about that. Help them both to do their part.” This struck me as such an active, un-psychoanalytic approach, and of course it put my work with the couple on a footing different from the guilt and shame that the episode began with.

Meeting Norman Reider improved my opinion of the profession of psychoanalysis, but not enough to revive my interest in it as a career. I

managed to get some supervision in work with families in that final year, and as chief resident, I coached some residents to try meeting with family members, but I could tell that I would have to wait for serious work in that kind of psychiatry.

I later learned that Reider had written a paper about spontaneous remission of psychiatric symptoms without benefit of psychotherapy or analysis, which it seemed to me raised an important scientific issue, the question that should be on the minds of all doctors: is the treatment more effective than doing nothing? That is the epidemiological question, and only the social treatments such as the Day Hospital seemed to really be interested in answering it. I was again grateful for my “year out” in statistics in medical school, which had fortified my inquisitive nature, which was not encouraged in medical school.

Maybe I myself had had a sort of three-year placebo experience with Dewald, and when I got to working with Mendelson, it was as if I had suddenly been switched to the active medication. But was Mendelson’s active treatment during the early years of residency the only variable contributing to the change? No – I had entered for the first time into relationships that I took seriously, that were a source of pride and commitment – marriage, fatherhood, the chief residency, even being part of the New York City Hospital system was an active source of pride, since it was in those days a working example of social medicine.

What that meant was that if you could not afford to pay for medical treatment in New York City, you could be admitted to a City Hospital or clinic to be treated free by the house staff under the supervision of the department professor. Private health insurance was not yet the dominant player it later became, and we were all proud of being part of a truly caring system.

I think these intense primary group memberships were contributing something to “spontaneous remission” in my case. They replaced the class bubble with something immediate and real, something I felt good about belonging to. Being a psychiatrist in the New York City Hospital system – especially the months in Zwering’s Day Hospital – was a model of thinking outside the individual case and looking for the shape of social institutions, an approach that stayed with me.

CHAPTER 12: CLINICAL ASSOCIATE

Early in the third year of residency, I had to think about the fact that ending this training would also end my deferment from military service. If I did nothing, I would be called up as an Army doctor, since the Korean War was still on. An alternative that some of us were considering was the Public Health Service, which, as a uniformed branch of the military (like the Coast Guard), met the obligation and avoided the combat. I had almost waited out the Korean War in the Naval Reserve, but the Vietnam War was looming. Most of us were even more strongly against that one, since we thought warfare was not the way to settle the competition between economic systems, but few of us had the courage to be conscientious objectors.

I learned that Lyman Wynne, the director of the Intramural Branch of the National Institute of Mental Health in Bethesda, Maryland, was looking for psychiatrists with a competence in family work. Being a Clinical Associate with the NIMH was the Public Health Service job to shoot for, since the alternative was taking care of an Indian reservation in the Southwest. My letters of recommendation to Wynne secured me the two-year assignment at the NIMH. That is how our little family came to move from Manhattan to Bethesda in the summer of 1964. Margaret and I were 30 and 34, and our daughter Jessica, born the night before Kennedy was shot, was just nine months old.

It was a good time to try life in Bethesda, a suburb of Washington, DC, if, with our prejudices, there was ever a good time to be in any suburb. We rented a little “ranch” house in a neighborhood of other little houses with lawns and bushes in front and back yards. I commuted by car to the enormous parking lot of the enormous NIH complex, including the Clinical Center (“the largest red brick building in the world”) where the laboratories and hospital wards of the government’s in-house medical research nestled in the rolling Maryland hills. After a few months, I found it was easier to walk to that building than to sit in the traffic jam on Rockville Pike waiting to get to the parking lot. We stuck it out for the year of the lease on the house, and I tried to mow the

lawn, while Margaret tried to make play dates with other mothers in their back yards. But we could see we were not cut out for this life – we needed to be in the city.

With a loan from the NIH credit union, we bought a rowhouse in Glover Park, a dense neighborhood of rowhouses near the National Cathedral in Washington, DC. I could walk to Wisconsin Avenue and take the bus out to the NIH, along with all the Black women who were commuting to the Maryland suburbs to work as “help.” The nation’s capital was no longer as segregated as other Southern cities – but the message of the previous summer of 1964, the “freedom summer,” had not really arrived in Lyndon Johnson’s Washington. Glover Park was as White as other areas of the capital were Black, but we had Black friends who lived where they pleased, and indeed racial integration and the Vietnam War were the exciting topics of the dinner parties of those years. I was happy to see that the women with whom I shared that bus to Bethesda did not have to sit in the back.

Our years in Washington were a pause for some adventures into ordinary life. The rowhouse on 38th St., NW, was the only house we ever owned, with a back yard where we planted a crab-apple tree, built a hopeful arbor for grape vines, and trained flowering vines along the fence. I could mow the lawn in twenty minutes. We looked out at the back yard from the big row of kitchen windows while we cooked dinner or talked on the phone. Margaret remembers vividly the day she first appreciated Jessica’s artistic ability – at age three, she had mounted a broccoli floret in each of the ten holes of the telephone dial.

Our son Alexander was born the winter after we moved in, so now there were two children in the bedroom next to ours on the second floor. We joined in the weekend round of neighborhood parties with food and small children and talk and jug wine. We were having such a good time with our house and our children and friends that I extended my two-year stint of duty with an extra year as a Senior Clinical Associate at the NIMH. Even though, not long after that decision, an invitation to return to the Bronx and work for Israel Zwerling put a period to our Washington idyll, I still look back on it as an especially carefree time. Margaret, to whom I remarked on this recently, said, “Speak for yourself – I had two small children!”

We share memories of work on houses and travel, as well as children. Several snapshots come to mind.

Here are Margaret and I (in what looks like a Navy lieutenant-commander's uniform) about to board a plane with one-year-old Jessica. The uniform is from the Public Health Service, a suit and officer's hat that five of us clinical associates shared for airplane travel so we could get the military rate, and we are about to take the plane to visit Margaret's sister Nancy in San Francisco. Nancy and her husband, Immanuel, a mining engineer, lived in Berkeley in a beautiful Maybeck house with their three children. Alexander was conceived in the lofty upper room of that house during that visit, which included trips to Big Sur Hot Springs in Carmel and sightings of seals and walruses on the ocean beach far below.

Months later, in the late summer, Margaret stands with Jessica on her hip and Alexander evident in utero. We are standing in the field behind The Barn, which Dick and Kitty Cunningham have had a team of barn movers truck from another location in Massachusetts and rebuild on their land in Sheffield. The rebuilt barn included a suite of bedrooms under a studio loft balcony with north light where Dick can paint large canvases in the long summer months the family stays there. The Barn is surrounded by an apple orchard and other landscapes that will appear for the next 50 years in Dick's paintings. Here is another snapshot from that visit— one of my favorites – of Dick and Kitty's daughters (our god-daughters) Sasha and Katharine, dancing in a ring with Jessica.

Oh, and speaking of summer retreats, here is a picture of Lost Lake, our summer place. Not long after we were married, we visited friends in what was then farm country – Putnam County, an hour out of Manhattan. Our friends had a cabin by a lake. We shared that cabin for the first summer and watched as the last of the 28 cabins around the lake was completed by Harold Kline, the founder, architect, and builder – both of the cabins and of the dam that made the lake. A former Herald Tribune reporter, Kline furnished the cabins with pump water and outhouses, so they could qualify as a summer camp and be easily closed in winter. He rented them for \$500 a season to writers and their friends. After borrowing and sharing cabins during the year before we moved to Washington, we rented one when we came back to New York.

I go into all this reminiscence about cheap, easy, long, and beautiful summers in the country (or in the Caribbean or the South of France) to underline the ease of leisure that we took quite for granted at the time. Not only psychiatrists but other specialist or academic doctors, lawyers, writers, and publishers – Ivy graduates envious of the long summer vacations of the “real” academics – all had this kind of life. It never occurred to us that we were in a lucky trough between economic tidal waves. Nor did I reflect at the time that our advantages were hereditary, in the sense that our parents had enough money to send us to the schools and colleges that provided these easy advantages. No – I naively thought everyone would live the way we did, if they had the *savoir faire*.

Back in Washington from our summer visit to the Cunningham’s barn in Sheffield, I finished the basement of the rowhouse for an office where I saw couples and families one evening a week, more for the experience of serious practice of psychotherapy than for the very low fees. Other than that, my work was nine to five at the Clinical Center a forty-minute bus ride away. There was occasional night call for which I had to sleep there, but the work at the Clinical Center was almost absurdly easy, compared to the hustle of Bronx Municipal Hospital. The patients we were responsible for were all there as part of some experimental program, and there were no hard decisions to make. Admission, discharge, even most of the medication, was up to the head of the project. It was the most artificial environment imaginable for being a psychiatrist.

My first year, I worked on a ward that housed only rapid-cycling bipolar patients – a very strange place indeed. The second and third years were spent working for Lyman Wynne on his ward, which housed patients with schizophrenia, and this was in some ways even stranger. There were about twenty patients living on a spacious and extraordinarily well staffed and well equipped hospital ward with a large day room. The windows of the nurses’ station looked out on it all. Since the patients were both non-paying guests of the NIMH (and in that sense privileged) but also experimental guinea pigs (and in that sense exploited) the program washed out this ambiguity with an immersion in

every possible kind of therapy.

There were interview rooms with large adjacent observation rooms behind one-way glass where every professional transaction – group therapy, family therapy, art therapy, behavior therapy, psychological testing – could be observed and videotaped. All these were written up and discussed at frequent staff conferences, recorded in nurse's and other staff notes. And what a motley group the patients were! About half of them were the psychotic member of a pair of identical twins whose other member had no symptoms of schizophrenia, and these pairs were being studied to illuminate the heredity/environment aspects of the disease. And then there was a group admitted for psychological testing of the communication patterns of the family, waiting for discharge to the place that had referred them. And a few were there because we had become attached to them, and because we knew that our care was the only alternative to indefinite state custodial care.

One of the last group, a 17-year-old girl, was assigned to me because I was the family therapy expert. I worked with her and her parents, as well as seeing her once a week by herself. The special relationship with this family was partly the result of the sad fact that this attractive only daughter of a nice middle-class Washington couple – I will call her Lottie – had for four years now been the most unremittingly psychotic victim of schizophrenia anyone had ever seen. Lottie's every waking minute was spent in total misperception of her experience, sometimes actively protesting against it, otherwise watching in resigned disbelief. According to the nurse who accompanied her, the only time she was not actively crazy was during her semi-annual trip to the dentist for a checkup in another part of the hospital. I suggested that if she could make herself sane for the dentist, perhaps her celebrity among us on the ward was making her worse, but of course since we had no ordinary life to offer her, other than the dental checkup, that did not lead to a plan.

Lottie and her family were furnished not only with everything the ward had to offer, but also a bi-weekly meeting of the family with both Lyman Wynne himself and our visiting Chestnut Lodge consultant Harold Searles, a meeting we all watched through the one-way mirror. Wynne was internationally famous for his investigation of the connection between family communication style and thought disorder in

schizophrenia, and Searles was the most famous – and most widely read – psychoanalyst at Chestnut Lodge. “The Lodge,” a sister-institution just a little further north on Rockville Pike, was a private asylum (famous for their former patient, Hannah Green, author of *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden*) where, in spite of several negative studies, they still believed that analysis was helpful with schizophrenic patients. I felt that the meeting with Lottie was a little like a town meeting conducted by Churchill and Kissinger. It was also a product of the period in the history of family therapy when co-therapy was in vogue, and the synergy between the two therapists was supposed to help in difficult cases.

The two men were in fact often on different tracks, Wynne pragmatic, Searles speculative, intuitive. I often found the point of their work elusive, to say the least. I thought I was succeeding in keeping my thoughts about these celebrated spectacles to myself, until one day Searles encountered me in a hallway alone. With an affectionate smile, he grabbed my lapels and said, “Listen, I just want to tell you that I know some day you guys are going to decide that we are all full of shit.” He gave my arm a squeeze and walked on. It was one of those confrontational insights for which he was famous, and his collected papers, which I bought and tried to read, are full of such scenes in which he uses his own intuitions to read the emotions of others.

There was also a parade of international experts visiting us at NIMH, the most glamorous of whom during my years was Ronald Laing, a Scottish psychiatrist who wrote *Knots*, a “deep,” poetic book about misunderstanding and contradiction. The particular part of the Zeitgeist that Laing thought was responsible for the “schizophrenogenic” influence of parents on their psychotic children was “mystification” – which he thought of as an especially middle-class evasiveness that parents used to obfuscate the frank resolution of emotional issues in the family. I wondered how he would explain the larger prevalence of the illness in the lower classes, but I realized Laing was not interested in questions of epidemiology – he mainly wanted to present himself as being liberated from his own middle-class upbringing.

Of course, nothing would do but Laing should also interview Lottie while we all watched through the one-way screen. I sat on the

same side with the two of them to provide poor Lottie with some support. It was a terrible interview – Laing’s saturnine outlook was much in evidence – but Lottie managed to frustrate him at every turn. In the discussion afterward, the great man said that the Scots have an expression, “A kite in the loch,” meaning a boxing of the ears – and this was the treatment he would recommend. Certainly we understood that that was what Laing wanted to do to Lottie after she had frustrated him for an hour. I later learned that Laing often came up with folksy ideas about treatment, such as that a psychotic young man at Philadelphia House, his retreat in London, just needed to get laid.

The blaming of parents for schizophrenia took many forms, of which Laing’s was only a colorful variant of the literary fashion to attack middle-class mores in general. Neither Searles nor Wynne was to blame for the world-wide psychiatric view that prevailed between 1950 and 1970 that the families, especially the parents and, oh, most especially the mothers, of these patients were responsible for their schizophrenic illness. Much ingenuity was spent on investigating just how this tragic subversion took place. Wynne’s own research on communication style was in fact less damning than that of all the other great men and women (Silvano Arieti, Gregory Bateson, Maria Selvini-Palazzoli, Theodore Lidz, Murray Bowen – a psychiatric Who’s Who) who worked on versions of this idea. And Searles’ paper “On the Effort to Drive the Other Person Crazy,” based on his years of analytic work with patients at the Lodge, identified this interaction as more common among patients and non-patients alike, than is commonly supposed, and not a peculiarity of parents of psychotic patients.

The idea of parents ruining their children was somehow part of the Zeitgeist. It went back at least to Philip Wylie’s attack on “Mom” in *A Generation of Vipers* (1943) which I had read before I left Tulsa. It fit in neatly with the analytic interest in “trauma” as the source of trouble in psychological development. You could see that, from a psychoanalytic perspective, if early childhood experiences such as the Oedipus Complex are responsible for the neuroses, then the psychoses must be the result of some experience even earlier and more fundamentally devastating, such as the disruption of a secure sense of consensual

meaning in the connection between speech, action, and intention, acquired in the trusting relationship of parent and infant, and the key parent in that earliest experience is of course, the mother.

Freud himself, because of the nature of his practice, never saw patients with schizophrenia, but he did offer an analysis of “A Case of Dementia Paranoides” based on the memoirs of a famous patient named Schreber, a German judge who late in his life was hospitalized with delusions. Since it was the only paper by Freud on anything remotely resembling schizophrenia, we all had to read it, as well as the research on Schreber’s father, an educator who had been famous for forcing children to sit up straight by putting them in braces. Well, *that* would certainly drive anyone crazy!

In addition to Schreber’s father, we were surrounded by other, more scientific-seeming stories. It was on one of our wards at the NIMH that Murray Bowen, as a young researcher, had persuaded the government to hospitalize *whole families* – parents and siblings as well, so that the staff could observe and record their interactions, searching for ideas about how the illness is caused by family interaction. This expensive undertaking led to the idea that it was not just these two generations that were the cause – something about the grandparents as well led Bowen to his “three-generation hypothesis” of schizophrenia.

At lunch the clinical associates talked about all these theories – about Laing’s “mystification,” Bateson’s “double bind.” Wynne’s “rubber fence,” Bowen’s “three-generation hypothesis.” We tried to think of ways to get patients and their families to communicate more clearly. All this elegant research and commentary about families causing schizophrenia made a good story, but it only made trouble for the later design of an effective family therapy, in which parents are necessary allies. Not only is the family not the cause of the malady – they are, with help and support, an important part of its cure.

By 1980, Carol Anderson and Gerald Hogarty, a couple of social workers at the Pittsburgh Western Pennsylvania Psychiatric Institute, had demonstrated and tested a method of helping parents and their schizophrenic children, including siblings, to work together against the devastation of the disease by forming groups of families that met

together under the guidance of counselors experienced in its management. These were called Multi-Family Groups and began to be tried elsewhere.

After I left Washington and Wynne went on from there to be Chairman at my old department in Rochester, the two of us worked together in the American Family Therapy Association to promote Anderson and Hogarty's well-documented program. My admiration for Wynne increased even further when he left family communication analysis behind and joined in the distinguished Finnish adoption studies that focused on both the positive and negative aspects of family influence, genetic as well as relational. Finland had a large enough case registry to find all the cases of babies adopted from mothers with schizophrenia, compare them with a matched sample of other adoptees, and interview everyone involved. The study showed that genetic inheritance makes a heavy contribution to schizophrenia, but that even in the presence of unfavorable genes, good parenting can change the illness for the better.

Wynne's devotion to the problems of the families of schizophrenic patients was rooted in his own family's experience with his sister. He was in a position to reflect on family life with this illness from a sympathetic perspective. Wynne and his wife Adele established The Wynne Center at Rochester which today does both training and research in family work. My own efforts in this area are one subject of the next chapter.

After a decade of elegant theorizing, the facts about schizophrenia that came out of careful work in neuropathology and epidemiology could be summarized:

- This is a disease with both genetic and environmental influences, some of the latter a result of experience with parents, but the effect of a "good" adopting parent in overcoming genetic vulnerability is far greater than the influences of adopting parents with psychopathology on children, whether genetically vulnerable or not.
- Schizophrenia is largely a neurological disease of late adolescence

and early adulthood characterized by misperceptions in many sensory modalities and a failure to organize and integrate experience. Its onset at this time is more the result of brain development than of earlier childhood experiences, and in this it is like other neurological diseases of childhood and youth, such as childhood seizures. The onset at this crucial point in youth when new social and intellectual learning is paramount, leads to a crisis in identity formation to which the patient and family respond with natural disorganization and dismay.

- The patient and family can respond most effectively with the help of education about the illness, and support – both from professionals and other families – in creating an alternative environment, even an alternative subculture, so that the years of recovery and slower development can be endured with hope.
- The recovery rate in later adult life is fairly good (60–75% in many studies) if the aspirations are managed carefully, and it is even better in places like Vermont or Italy, where the people in charge make concerted effort to provide support for significant parts of a lifetime.
- The course of the illness is actually worse in advanced industrialized societies, where individual performance in the youthful establishment of a career path to class promotion by education or marriage is so important, and so uncertain. These hazards arise during precisely those youthful years when schizophrenia makes its first appearance, and so young people with the diagnosis face a double challenge. They are supposed to look smart, keen, interested, and desirable while under attack from an illness that removes all those personal qualities. That is why the World Health Organization's comparative studies have found that recovery from schizophrenia is better in agricultural village societies where the local group's support of adult function and status is more conventional and predictable.

I put this summary of what is now known about schizophrenia here

rather than later to show how far off course those fascinating mid-century ideas about parental influence were leading us. It was a blueprint for the public health campaign in support of families, especially parents, of people with the illness, that later became one focus of my professional life. I didn't find my own place in that campaign until I got to work in a State Hospital system where the social realities that patients and families are up against had to be faced.

The other historical change that caught up with me later, for which I will always be grateful, was that families of young people with schizophrenia got organized. They realized that their ranks included many politically experienced and influential people, and not a few doctors of various psychological disciplines. Organized as Friends and Allies of the Mentally Ill, and the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, these political and professional groups of family members sought out psychiatry professors with experience like mine, and together we waged a publication and conference campaign that changed the public's understanding and the funding of programs.

I think the most important lesson of the NIMH years was the harm that can be done by a really plausible, interesting, and incorrect theory. This harm is magnified by the institutional fact that the funding of large programs requires the presentation of interesting theories, and the era I have been describing promoted them. They made fascinating reading and led to bad results.

What did I actually learn while doing my time at the NIMH? It was as close to corporate life as hospital psychiatry gets, and that provided an educational advantage which I grasped only later, when I was trying to understand the emotional pressures on patients who consulted me about the difficulties they faced as the creatures of corporations. Corporate organization can produce a deadly combination of boredom and hierarchic discipline that leads either to total cynicism or to impulsive seizures of petty power, rationalized as brilliant innovation. Here is how this happened to me.

At the start of my second year, Wynne asked me to run the ward where the schizophrenia studies patients lived, applying my experience as chief resident at Bronx Municipal. I took this as a distinction, a

promotion of sorts, and of course I accepted. If I'd had any sense, I would have changed nothing until I ran into a real problem that needed solving. But I underestimated my own boredom, and we were constantly being told about new ideas, at lunch, in the literature, at conferences. A popular new idea from the British literature was the "therapeutic community," the organization of the hospital environment to promote positive experience of agency rather than dependency and oppression. The Day Hospital had certainly been a therapeutic community.

To make a dismal story short, I proposed to establish a therapeutic community in that place where nothing but the research agenda affected any outcome in the lives of the patients. Everyone thought it was a Good Idea. Nobody but the head nurse said it was just a hobby of mine, in which she had neither interest nor competence. I am ashamed to say I got the head nurse replaced with my own protege who was enthusiastic about my Good Idea (bringing down on my head the resentment of the nursing department, a significant handicap in my new position as ward administrator). My new head nurse and I tried to have community meetings where something got decided, but we were faced with the massive indifference of the patients, the citizens of the community, who understood the irrelevance of it all much better than we did.

Looking back on it, I reassure myself that this kind of wasteful innovation must happen in many large bureaucratic structures, whether of corporations or government, because in such places the connection between effort or invention and outcome is unclear, and executive power is often a matter of hierarchy rather than objective strategy. Most workers in these corporate organizations learn to accept the disconnect between their work and its real or eventual result, and so they turn their attention to enterprises that seem more immediate: their families, their hobbies, their houses, their vacations, even their lawns. And sports – the sports pages are at the back of the business pages of *The New York Times* so that businessmen can turn at once to a world of real, even heroic, consequences.

I recovered from my folly mainly because my friend Andrew Ferber, whom I had known when he was a senior fellow at the Day Hospital in the Bronx, invited me to join him at Bronx State Hospital

working for Israel Zwerling, who had just become the new director. Ferber and I already knew each other and had been writing a paper about family therapy together all during my years in Washington. My travels to California and my acquaintance with visiting experts at the NIMH and the Washington area, combined with Andy's New York experience and position as an editor of *Family Process*, the main journal in the field, allowed us to interview enough people to co-author a survey – a presumptuous enterprise for two people as young as we were.

In fact, our lives had crossed paths a few times earlier. Margaret knew him first, as a fellow member of a recorder-playing group when she was in college and he was a resident. Later, on our first anniversary, Margaret and I went around to see what was happening at the Women's Faculty Club at Columbia, where we had had our wedding party, and there were Andy Ferber and Jane Schwartzberg getting married exactly a year later.

So, when Andy and I ended up at the Day Hospital together, the synchronicity made the prospect of going back to New York and work with Andy feel like a cosmic event brought about by the slow realignment of the planets. At last, it was time to take my place in the new enterprise of family therapy.

As I packed up my papers at the Clinical Center, there was a survey questionnaire for all the departing Clinical Associates, asking us what ideas we had for the Intramural Program. Assuming that no one pays any attention to these surveys, I tried for some attention by making an impossible proposal. How about an extramural program? Mental health services for the people of Washington were abysmally organized (except, oddly, psychoanalysis, for which federal employee's health insurance paid generously). I proposed that the NIMH should provide free, advanced, and imaginative psychiatric services to the entire population of Washington, DC, rich, poor, Black, White, government and non-government. The epidemiologists at the Intramural Branch should build into the program a comparison between the health results of well-designed free care for the District, compared with another similar city with a large Black population and good universities – say,

Baltimore. I had no idea how close this proposal for a real-world experiment was to the enterprise I was about to join in the Bronx.

CHAPTER 13: FAMILY THERAPIST

Shortly before we moved from Washington back to New York in 1968, Margaret spent a weekend finding our new apartment on West End Avenue, three blocks north of the Cunninghams and 14 blocks south of her parents, and we began to turn our space into something new. Designed and built in 1926 for a family of four plus their cook-servant, we have been in the same place for fifty years. We welcomed a series of young women who lived with us in our maid's room, some of whom helped us raise our children, and we redesigned the space as the children grew older.

A similar redesign of old space was going on at Bronx State Hospital when I arrived to take up my duties as a staff psychiatrist. Our offices were in a four-story building near the entrance to the hospital grounds that had been built as a nurses' residence. When State Hospitals were big places out in the country, they needed a nurses' residence so that three shifts of nurses and on-call doctors could live nearby. But since this State Hospital had been built near the medical school and hospital in the heart of the borough it served (a new idea) it didn't need the nurses' residence. We were fortunate that, like the maid's room in our apartment, this architectural relic remained, because we put the space to good use. The rooms were good offices, the bathrooms generous, and the lounges would be good meeting rooms for our new Family Studies Section, when we got requests.

The large ground floor lounge, which even had a kitchen, was given over to a project typical of the new community-related administration of the hospital. It was equipped as a nursery-play room where mothers who were hospitalized as patients on the wards could spend supervised time with their children – mostly toddlers – so that they didn't get out of touch, and incidentally could learn some alternative ways of mothering if the staff thought they could use some help.

The chief architect of all this redesign was Israel Zwerling, who

had arrived two years before as the new director. His appointment had required some administrative renovation. Since the 19th century, state hospital directors had been a guild of specialist administrators with their own experience and training requirements, and of course by that standard Zwerling was not qualified. The state mental health commissioner, Alan Miller, got a special law passed by the legislature to allow Zwerling to become director of Bronx State Hospital on the basis of his academic distinction as a professor of psychiatry, and this made all the rest possible. Because a state hospital director was still a kind of absolute monarch, the hospital's large spaces and budget could be quickly repurposed for uses other than housing the mentally ill in dormitory wards.

All our experiments in the community application of family work were possible under Zwerling's leadership because he himself was a family therapist. He understood the ways in which the family in American custom and ritual – the site for child-rearing, social learning, and adult loving in marriage – is for most people the location of a special form of power. It is our functional unit for coping with change, rather than the clan, tribe, church, village, or whatever group would be convened for healing ceremonies in another culture.

One of the training videos we used in our seminars was made when Zwerling made a grant-evaluation visit to a neighborhood clinic in Detroit. He agreed to do a consultation in their new videotape studio. The African-American family he met with was a father struggling to bring up three sons while working the night shift in the Post Office. I think the mother couldn't be there because she was working the day shift. The problem was the oldest son's repeatedly dropping out of college at the University of Detroit. Zwerling asked him to come up from the far end of the table and sit beside him, opposite his father. I remember especially his re-framing of the problem, saying to the father, "A young man who keeps dropping out of college, and then keeps applying and trying again – *wants* to go to college!"

So Zwerling, like the other innovators of his time, was a clinical practitioner of his art, as well as a strategic administrator-innovator. The Bronx may seem a strange place to build a new Jerusalem, but it was no

stranger than all the other places where models of community psychiatry were being constructed by leaders like Zwerling, as demonstrations of what could be done.

Leonard Stein and Mary Ann Test in Madison, WI, organized a special city agency that kept track of long-term patients, finding housing, meeting them in court when they were arrested, keeping up with their movements. Their method, called Assertive Community Treatment (ACT), was one of the earliest models described in the literature, and it was read and adopted by workers all over the country.

Paul Polack in Northwest Denver persuaded the city to experiment with housing patients as guests in family homes that had a spare room for a patient and an attendant. As patients recovered from the acute episode, they lived in group homes and worked in factories paid for by transferring the city's budget for psychiatric hospital wards in that quarter of Denver.

At the Palo Alto Veterans Hospital in California, George Fairweather persuaded the administration to rent houses for patients who had met as members of therapy groups in the hospital. He demonstrated that, once securely housed, they naturally looked after each other, with little supervision.

And finally – the largest experiment – Superintendent George Brooks of Vermont State Hospital gradually sent its entire hospital population, accompanied by its staff, out to live in boarding houses and other community accommodations wherever they found them. They were able to do this after a period of practicing the skills of food preparation, laundry, and other collaborative maintenance projects on the hospital grounds, meeting in groups to discuss their experience.

The Vermont experiment was the largest example of a point made in one of Zwerling's papers on the importance of "catchment areas" in defining the responsibility of psychiatric services. It said, among other things, that the test of a program of treatment is to see how it applies to all the patients who live in the area assigned to you. This test, consistently applied, will ensure that you are not just selecting the patients whose problems you find interesting or profitable.

These were all places where one or two skilled practitioners like

Zwerling, with particular kinds of knowledge of group and family work, and community support, succeeded in capturing a local source of public money and administrative power, so that they could set up an experimental program of service and organization in the communities where recovering patients lived their lives. Like all those experiments, Bronx State Hospital under Zwerling could make its own rules about hiring, training, and promotion, something the federal government never achieved with its Community Mental Health Centers, announced by President Kennedy in 1963. Those were funded by grants to the states, and the states mostly used the money to make the least possible change in the familiar office practice, with therapists waiting for patients to show up for scheduled individual appointments, and if they appeared, doling out medication and encouragement.

A cultural environment was gathering around us, reinforcing all these inventions, making us feel buoyant on a sea of new ideas. The years 1965–75 were exciting times for this kind of work. Two generations of social psychiatrists had passed since the discovery by British Army psychiatrists in World War One that drugs, rest, and relief were not enough to cure the “shell shock” of soldiers returning from the front. What they needed was membership in groups where they could commune with other soldiers who had been through the same experience. That was the beginning of the idea of systematic social support as therapy.

The time sheet I signed to get paid at Bronx State showed me arriving and departing with the 8-to-4 shift as if I were indeed the staff psychiatrist of a hospital ward. But our lives were nothing like that – early and late we made our own time. In the beginning, there were three of us, Andy Ferber, Marilyn Glickman (later Mendelsohn), and me. We were the Family Studies Section, whose job it was to design family therapy training for any part of the Einstein Psychiatry Department that asked for it. And since this was such a new idea that nobody was yet ready to ask, in those first months we had a lot of time on our hands.

I mentioned in the last chapter that Andy and I had already written a paper for *Family Process* based on interviews with the leading experts

in the field, which concluded that there were many theoretical points of view advanced by many local practitioners of family therapy. So we were in no hurry to announce a didactic program. We waited to see who besides us would be available – how much of this variety we could capture.

Just down the hall from us in the nurses' residence was the office of Albert Scheflen, a research psychiatrist Zwerling had recruited from Philadelphia's Eastern Pennsylvania Psychiatric Institute where he had been making movies of family therapy meetings. Scheflen used these films with a stop-motion projector to analyze the synchronies and symmetries of movement and gesture that he thought expressed the alliances and antagonisms among the participants in the therapy, as if they were performing a dance.

This seemed to us such a great idea – an unconsciously or unintentionally performed enactment of relationships, detectable only in slow motion – that we wanted to join in studying it. Scheflen showed us a set of four films he had made during a conference in Philadelphia that had been attended by the four leading family therapists of that time. Don Jackson, Murray Bowen, Carl Whitaker, and Nathan Ackerman each interviewed the same family a day or so apart, and each one after his consultation advised the resident who was the family's regular therapist.

The short films that came out of this (called The Hillcrest Series) were a gold mine of training and demonstration – we used them for years to teach family therapy beginners. The fact that each of these great originators found a different scene of family drama to address and comment upon, and each came up with different suggestions in the briefing afterward, showed that family therapy had none of the orthodoxy that psychoanalysis was striving for. Quite the opposite: except for making the films in this project, these originators had little to do with each other.

Nathan Ackerman, at the Institute in New York that bore his name, was a foxy Jewish grandpa, using his experience as a child psychiatrist to playfully tease people out of their defenses. Carl Whitaker was a challenging analyst, full of speculative personal questions and self-revelation. Murray Bowen was a small-town Southerner from Georgia

who liked to hear family stories so that he could take a high-altitude view of the geometry of family relations, mapping triangles and coalitions, before zooming in with strategic choices. And Don Jackson, a suave, relaxed, speculative plotter, came up with challenging schemes of “what would happen if....”

If family therapy was not a procedure with a consistent theory and practice, what was it? The question drove us back to the original purpose for which Scheflen had the films made. If family therapists have different theories of change and use schemes for intervention different in style and content, is there any way in which they cohere? If its ideas and principles are so diverse, is it, as Scheflen suspected, a group of ritual dances in which the therapist leads the members to re-enact and change their relationships? Does it depend on the dance and the music rather than the words and explanations offered by the leaders of the ceremony? If so, that would not surprise an anthropologist from another culture watching these movies, especially if his own culture’s healing ceremonies included some trance-inducing dance and beating drums.

Jane Ferber (Andy’s wife, also a psychiatrist) and another colleague, John Schoonbeck, and I carried out a Scheflen-style analysis of the movement patterns in the family interview conducted by Don Jackson, and sure enough, there were the synchronies and symmetries of movement and gesture that Scheflen had predicted, similar in form but not exactly the same as the ones in his work with other interviews. As Scheflen said, there is no “dictionary.” The therapist is the leader of the dance, but its figures are renegotiated by each group for each enactment.

While Jane, John, and I finished this study and made a film about our findings, Andy joined with Scheflen’s colleague Adam Kendon – another communication researcher in an office on the same floor. Kendon had done fundamental work on turn-taking and interruption in speech, filming conversations in a British pub. He and Andy filmed a birthday party of one of Andy and Jane’s children, to study the regularities of greeting behavior. We were trying to become experts in the way people interact, and film – soon to be replaced by videotape – was a key to watching carefully.

At the beginning, there was very little that the three of us (Andy, Marilyn, and I) could see of changes that were being planned in other parts of the hospital. Then one day, we were summoned to a staff meeting that included people we had barely met yet, where Zwerling said, “I am very glad all of you have found interesting and important things to do. I have just heard from Albany that now it is time to get back to the work of serving the State Hospital’s regular customers, the seriously mentally ill in the community. I am eager to hear proposals.”

I was involved in two of the new programs. One was a change in residency training. We had resident training lines, but they were not filled because State Hospital work had very low prestige. We proposed to begin resident training with community work instead of with patients admitted to the hospital, and we proposed to set it in an impoverished community in the South Bronx, called Tremont, where residents would experience community work from the beginning, instead of graduating to it in their final year, if at all. Ed Hornick, a dramatic character of many talents, was the director, and I volunteered to be in charge of the training curriculum. Somehow, to our relief, enough graduating medical students heard about us, and we started the year in July with a class of five. We set up shop in an abandoned Post Office, where we did group, family, and crisis intervention, meeting our clients in clusters of chairs far enough apart for privacy.

A group of colleagues approached me with a second plan. The relatively middle-class area northeast of the hospital was enlarging as people moved into “Co-Op City” – a union-sponsored housing complex which was likely to be populated by intact middle-class families. This would be an opportunity to serve that catchment area with a new kind of mental hospital plan organized around multi-family groups and outpatient services. It was assigned two State Hospital wards, but with the expected greater efficiency of the service, one ward could be a day hospital. We could call it The Family Service.

I felt surrounded by enthusiasm and competence and agreed to be the director of the service. So now suddenly I had two jobs and what seemed like a very crowded schedule of meetings and classes.

It is time to make clear the technical assumptions behind the challenges of these two types of therapy – individual and family – and I will do that here by comparing the theoretical and tactical assumptions of psychoanalysis and family work. Psychoanalysis assumes a traumatic or otherwise formative experience in the patient’s past and seeks to uncover it – to bring it into consciousness – by investigating the patient’s dreams, fantasies, memories, and especially by the “analysis of the transference.” This focuses attention on the ways the patient projects upon the therapist the expectation of playing a parental part in the drama of the therapy. In order for it to work, the analyst must be as much of a “blank screen” for the patient’s projection as possible. Sitting behind the patient so that there can be no non-verbal cues of the analyst’s reaction, the analyst listens for re-enactments of the vulnerable childhood past, and makes interpretations when the evidence, collected from dreams, fantasies, and acting-out in the transference, has become persuasive that the patient experiences the therapist as a parental figure.

The theory Freud invented for this process is the famous description of the “mental apparatus” in which the Ego, the thinking and deciding part of the mind, is connected through the senses to the outside world, while it deals internally with the Superego, the agent of punishing memories especially from childhood, and the Id, the source of instinctual demands, especially sex and aggression. The process of the therapy involves enlightening the ego, through interpretations of dreams and other unconscious manifestations, so that the ego becomes able to recognize and choose realistic responses to the challenges of life, which Freud called Love and Work.

With its emphasis on the past and on irrational projection, this could not be more different from the assumptions of family therapy, which relies upon discussion of reasonable expectations in the foreseeable future. Since all the family members present have had different childhoods, dreams and conflicts, the place to start is with what they agree on – a common definition of a problem that needs to be solved. The skill of the therapist consists of taking a leadership role in the discussion, dealing sympathetically and skillfully with differences

and power struggles as they arise, and getting agreement as soon as possible in the first session, on a common goal – emphasizing the alliances that can be discovered in the room. Sometimes this common goal is only an agreement to collaborate on a single project or discussion.

Another difference between psychoanalysis and family therapy was in the transparency of the training process. The less the analytic patient knows about the analyst's supervision, the better – it would interfere with the mystique of the transference. Family therapists on the other hand found ingenious ways for the training to become a part of the therapy. Since the families knew that the trainers were sitting just on the other side of the one-way mirror, a number of ways evolved for bringing the teachers and the group of trainees into the process.

There were videotape replays of sessions, for example, in which family members got to watch themselves in a previous session and talk about ways they would prefer the session to have gone. Peggy Papp wrote a paper about regarding the trainees as a “Greek Chorus” whose questions and reactions could be transmitted to the working side of the mirror.

The most elaborate involvement of trainees was originated by Michael White – the “Outsider Witness” process. In this, after the initial session, the family and the trainees traded places, so that the family got to sit in the observation room, and the trainees took turns responding empathically to the experiences of different members. The session was then finally closed with a meeting of the entire group, a method of training and therapy that has acquired a whole tradition of its own.

As the rest of the Family Studies Section began to collect, and we finally got some requests to teach family therapy in other parts of the department, we were constantly making videotapes of our work, and of the students' work, as well as showing the Hillcrest films to introduce basic ideas. We taught family therapy seminars mainly by watching sessions through a one-way window, coaching each other as well as the students. Part of the excitement was that no one knew exactly what was going to happen.

Instead of instructing our students with precepts, we asked them to watch family sessions and tell us what they saw. Salvador Minuchin once observed that a family therapist is a drama director, rehearsing the cast in a scene that does not go right until some essential changes are made. “Go out of the room and come in again – and this time try to do it differently” is a standard way to get a couple to change a “stuck” pattern of interaction. I was happy to be back in the theater after a long absence.

The foreseeable future, not the traumatic past, was the focus of both the therapy with the family and the discussions in the training group. So words like “witness,” “contract,” and “support” occurred frequently. Looking forward – in the training group, looking forward to becoming more skillful and experienced – that was the prevailing attitude. And looking forward was both easier and more adventurous with the support of the rest of the seminar as a group.

The other place where we studied family therapy in those years was at the large once-a-year conventions where family therapists from different training centers came together. This began in special sections of national therapy conventions such as the American Orthopsychiatric Association and became more concentrated after the formation of the American Family Therapy Association in 1978, with its large annual meetings. All professional titles and degrees were laid aside at these meetings, and we enjoyed referring to ourselves in public as family therapists rather than by our titles. Some of the best work we watched on videotape was done by social workers, mostly women, with the fewest years of post-graduate training, but the most professional familiarity with challenging family situations.

Even though that first cohort of family therapists, including all of the Hillcrest Four, were male psychiatrists with some connection to psychoanalysis, the cohort that followed were mostly women, none of them analysts, and all of them star teachers. Virginia Satir, Kitty LaPerriere, Peggy Papp, Olga Silverstein, Betty Carter, Monica McGoldrick, Rachel Hare-Mustin, Evan Imber-Black, and so many others were the featured speakers and teachers at workshops where we went to learn from each other. They carried the strong message that the old professional and gender order, the dominance of White male doctors,

is not only a thing of the past, but also contrary to what we are trying to do as psychiatric professionals. And this continues to be a problem that our larger society is trying to solve.

Women leaders were far from uniform in their approaches. Mara Selvini-Palozzoli was the head of a group of Italian disciples of the Palo Alto Mental Research Institute who espoused a “paradoxical” approach to the problems of families with a schizophrenic member, essentially blaming the family members for driving the person crazy. This was a very clever kind of analysis that attracted international attention until Carol Anderson, one of the group in Western Pennsylvania Psychiatric Institute Pittsburgh, led a well-documented attack on it. Anderson, already editor of *Family Process*, became a president of AFTA. I was very proud that she had invited me to be her partner in setting up an AFTA “interest group” on schizophrenia and family therapy that met for many years.

There was something about the atmosphere of those big conferences that was like a large tribal group inventing its rituals – less orgiastic than Woodstock (though there were dances on the last night). We were eager to talk, at the final-day feedback assembly, about how the form of the conference could be improved for next year. We always tried to find speakers from outside the usual academic concerns of psychotherapy disciplines. An expert on primate behavior, Frans de Waal, was one who was invited a second time.

His first talk was on the observation of family dynamics in the behavior of a colony of Macaque monkeys he had been observing at a zoo in Aarnhem. He studied behavior symptoms of depression, noting how other animals responded, and even tried putting antidepressants in the feed. He noticed that some influential monkeys encouraged depressed, isolated individuals to rejoin the group. That was interesting enough, but in his return talk he told us about the behavior of bonobo apes, as closely related to humans as chimpanzees.

Chimpanzees were the ape ancestors we had all been following through the work of Jane Goodall. Her central African chimpanzee colonies were male-dominated, fiercely hierarchic, and even at times systematic wagers of tribal war, wiping out competitor clans. The fact of

chimp warfare led us to fear that these characteristics might be hard-wired in our own heredity.

But de Waal's bonobos were not warlike. They were female-dominated, and the senior mothers of the group specialized in conciliation, often achieved through the offer of food or sexual or grooming favors, soothing the aggressor, bringing the alienated and offended back into the group. Since both these kindred apes had evolved from our common ancestor at the same time, the bonobo alternative gave us hope that we might have a choice about which "nature" we chose to develop in ourselves.

I had been thinking about "The Social Behavior of the Sub-Human Primates" ever since I wrote the paper with that title in college. And here I was reminded of the patterns of grouping and leadership in apes that had stirred such a sense of recognition when I did the research in college.

Hearing about it again as a family therapist in the 1970s, there were many more complex reasons to connect sexual and communicative behavior. Schefflen, for example, made an explicit comparison between the movement synchronies and symmetries he described and the dances of courtship and sexual rivalry. And since the revelatory studies of Masters and Johnson on human sexual behavior and response were now 15 years old, a whole generation was casting a curious and clinical eye on such subjects as female orgasm and homosexual sex. There was a well-documented (on videotape) subspecialty of sex therapy alongside the practice of the more "psychological" kinds of couples therapy; there were groups where women examined their genitals with mirrors and encouraged each other to practice masturbation to achieve the now fully proclaimed orgasm; and later there was kindly "Dr. Ruth" Westheimer, a universal grandmother, to tell us on TV and radio that it was all an old story – nothing to be shocked about.

Here at last I found an alternative to the ideas that psychoanalysts took for granted. It is not that we are animals and therefore bring only beastly energies to our loftiest intentions. It is that we are members of a primate group whose communications provide the model for the way our

minds work. Gregory Bateson would say the communication of the group *is* the way our minds work, that what we think of as “our minds” is an extension, or a part, of the group’s feedback loops of communication patterns. What we are conscious of is the experience of group-based emotions such as shame and pride, and the powerful responses we have to one another’s approval, and to the experience of trust, which is really the confidence we feel in being able to predict social behavior.

Starting from my college paper about the social organization of primates, I asked myself how humans have succeeded in marshaling the energies of drives for the larger ends of the societies that they have created? How, specifically, have *groups* of primates of a certain size organized themselves, and how have instincts provided the energy for that primate phenomenon, intentional collaboration? This has taken me on a long reading journey into the worlds of our two most immediate relatives.

Whether males are in charge, as in chimpanzees, or females are in charge, as in bonobos, these tribe-like groups of 25 to 100 are models of the way we think and plan and work together. They are organized as maternal family groups with children, with different patterns of relations with the group’s senior males or females. Those children are learning the ways of the group during uniquely protracted years of dependency.

Among the apes, childcare is shared, mothers with infants and young children are still part of the frequent exchange of sexual favors, so that mothers often have more than one child, and, over time, many different male consorts. Male and female partnerships regulate food supplies. Dominant animals punish defiance with blows, cajole with favors, and soothe with caresses. Hierarchy, alliance, and group politics are everywhere, and constantly on everyone’s mind, the subject of an intense exchange of gestures and performance of rituals, and in the case of chimpanzees, the waging of war, arguably a collaborative activity.

There has been a great scholarly argument about whether activities like this are really like human group organization and planning. For me, this argument is blown away by the experience of the Great Ape Trust in

Des Moines, where three generations of bonobos have learned to undertake complex projects with humans and each other using touch-screen computers. And the ultimate testimony to ape collaboration in the wild was the story, which I think I got from de Waal, of a woman whose field work required collecting feces from a group of bonobos. The apes, noticing this curious interest on the part of the human visitor, started bringing her droppings whenever they found them.

In order to think about what interactions in primate society might have to do with sex, we have to broaden our curiosity so that “sex” includes things like friendship and group identification. There is a large body of brain/hormone/behavior research collecting around this subject. Consider a fairly recent finding by investigators (Crockford et al., 2013) of the pituitary hormone oxytocin, which in male and female mammals peaks during orgasm, and in females it is powerful in childbirth, helping to make the pain bearable.

The urine of chimpanzees shows a high level of oxytocin after a friendly grooming session with a close friend of either sex, but not after a similar encounter with an unrelated animal. In human terms, a hug from a good friend is strongly comforting, more so than the same attention from someone you are tolerating politely.

And what about aggression? Ape life is full of threats, attacks, biting, and buffeting, even murder. It is clearly an instrument of hierarchy in the tribal group. Jane Goodall has a wonderful movie of an old silverback male breaking off a tree branch and charging through the middle of his group, screaming and flailing with it, sending all the others climbing up the trees to get out of the way. He was showing them who was boss. Later, he appropriated some of Goodall’s empty petrol cans to bang together, making a much more effective display. I’ve always thought of this as the prototype of “shock and awe,” of the royal fanfare and the military parade, an expression of Power by the leader of the group. Goodall is good at describing the political problems faced by this kind of old leader – the “bachelors,” the younger males, some from other groups, who are always a threat to his leadership.

I want to emphasize that the beauty of family work is the way experience and observation comes first and theory a distant second, if at all. In this way, it is like primatology and anthropology. It is also like medicine – what you want in a doctor is experience, not theory. Above all you should avoid doctors who are in love with a particular theory, as Margaret and I state in our article “The Misuse and Use of Science in Family Therapy.”

The literature of family work is illuminated, like the literature of medicine, mainly by writing focused on experience working on specific problems, or the effectiveness of certain procedures. I am thinking of *Family Secrets* by Evan Imber-Black; *Rituals in Families and Family Therapy* by Imber-Black and Janine Roberts; *The Psychoeducational Family Treatment of Schizophrenia* by Carol Anderson, Gerald Hogarty, and Douglas Reiss; and *The Dance of Anger* by Harriet G. Lerner, to name some books I have used myself.

But more than medicine, what family therapy resembles most is a family therapy training group – a group of concerned and committed students gathered together under the guidance of one or two leaders to achieve an agreed-upon outcome, an improvement in their ability to take over with a sense of direction. There is a *camaraderie* in these groups that is unique in my experience – and is the subject of the next chapter. What is important to understand about it here is that recruiting reliable help and support in the near future is the essence of both the therapy and the training for it.

CHAPTER 14: COMRADES

All forms of family therapy have this in common – they recruit a renewal of comradely support from family members for each other’s next steps in developing relationships, especially relationships with each other. It should be clear from the last chapter that a similar recruitment of comrades is taking place in the family therapy training seminars. And after the formal training is over, the same kind of mutual help and support can continue informally.

Margaret and I were lucky in having two kinds of comrades – far and near – to help us learn family therapy. In the “far” category, we connected with Cheryl and Michael White through an international conference of the editors of *Family Process*. These meetings brought together the leaders in family therapy’s development all over the English-speaking world and were paid for by the profit from subscriptions for the journal. The atmosphere was exciting, and because of the free food and housing in beautiful places, a holiday mood prevailed.

Michael and Cheryl were Australian social workers who operated the Dulwich Center in Adelaide, with a faculty of mostly non-psychiatric teachers of family therapy. We all knew about Michael because he and his New Zealand colleague, David Epston, had written a book, *Literate Means to Therapeutic Ends*, about how to add letter-writing to the tool-kit of family therapy.

Michael and David were also the leading proponents of narrative therapy, an outgrowth of family work, which defined the goal of therapy as helping the family (or the individual) to reimagine the direction in which they wanted to take their life story, designing the next chapter, or the next page, together, with the consultants’ encouragement and the support of family, friends, and other witnesses. In their work it became very clear that family therapy was about recruiting comrades, from either within or outside the family, who could help to move forward and take the next steps.

Cheryl and Michael also began to organize a new type of international conference on “Narrative and Community Work,” which met sometimes in Australia but often in other places such as New Zealand, Oaxaca (Mexico), and Atlanta (Georgia).

After a few years of meeting Cheryl and Michael this way, Margaret and I toured Australian and New Zealand cities, hosted by the Whites and Epstons (David’s wife, Ann, was also prominent in this work), where we presented our work with families afflicted by psychosis. When the Whites and the Epstons came to New York, they stayed with us, and we stayed with them when we came to their countries.

But different from adventures far afield like these, there is a more local and steady kind of comradeship that nourishes our work, which needs to be easily arranged near home, so that it becomes a reliable part of our experience. The career stories of three good friends illustrate the ways in which our work in family therapy was bound up with group life – both institutional and informal. It is hard to see how we could have managed without it.

My first and most important comrade is Margaret. Even before she went to social work graduate school at Adelphi University, Margaret volunteered as a member of one of the crisis teams that worked with the families of the Family Service, dealing with recurrent psychosis. As the director of the Family Service, I taught a seminar in family work for anyone interested, and so Margaret was a student in my seminar for almost a year.

I remember one of the exercises was to present a generational diagram of your own family (called a “genogram”). This exercise had two purposes other than the self-knowledge that its preparation generated. One was to teach students what a sensitive experience talking about your own family is, and so understand the ways that the language you find to express it is carefully chosen. And for the rest of the class, listening and responding to a colleague’s description of his or her family, there is learning how to make inquiries in the discussion that frame the speaker’s experience in a sympathetic way. I stayed in the background

for Margaret's presentation, partly because I was moved to tears by some of the stories she told about her grandmother.

Margaret had other Family Studies Section seminars with Andy Ferber, with Harry Mendelsohn, Marilyn's husband, and with me and Marilyn. She told me what she liked about that last experience was that we always directed the discussion to what each individual student would imagine doing with the case, and which of several different "school" explanations or theories would support that choice. Theory helps to give you ideas, but then you have to make your own move and see what happens.

Margaret earned her clinical spurs making home visits with the Family Service crisis team, and then spent two years getting her MSW, with major study under the supervision of Adelphi University's excellent Public Policy division. That division had a contract to find and interview a large sample of patients discharged from State Hospitals in New Jersey and working on this gave her practical community experience as well as a background in epidemiological analysis. Schools of Social Work tended to be divided into two groups of teachers and students: on the one hand, those interested in individual psychodynamic therapy – the students preparing to open a solo private practice, often with study at a psychoanalytic institute – and on the other hand, the teachers and students interested in public policy and the design of better services.

Margaret has always been glad she chose the latter – the "social" social workers. It prepared her for two jobs she found absorbing for many years. One was working for Vivian Garrison, then an anthropologist at University Medical and Dental School of New Jersey, interviewing families and patients being treated by spiritist healers. The other was a group organized by Bill McFarlane at Columbia, training and supervising workers in the multi-family therapy approach to families with a schizophrenic member. This was an elegantly designed program with teaching and supervision by videotape, followed by statistical comparison of outcomes with non-treated controls – a public health masterpiece. I will come back to this program at the end of the chapter.

For five years, Margaret worked in the outpatient clinic of the Psychiatry Department at St. Luke's Hospital in our neighborhood,

where she was famous as the social worker who was happy to work with families of patients with psychosis and other serious problems. She trained many students, including psychiatric residents, in this art. After hours, Margaret and I shared an office where we saw families in private practice until both our practices got so big that we needed two separate offices, which we had on the first floor of our apartment house for many years. Giving each other advice about difficult cases was a natural part of our comradeship.

The second of these comrades was Nina Evans. I met her first in a family therapy seminar I led in the mid-1970s for a group that was mostly concerned with child problems. Nina was beginning a child psychiatry fellowship, having interrupted her career after completing adult psychiatry residency in order to devote time to the two children she and her husband Richard were raising. Richard was a senior psychiatrist at the Child division of Bronx State Hospital, and also attended the seminar. One thing everyone agreed about was that you couldn't treat children's problems without working with their families, but not every "child therapist" agreed that the therapist should actually meet with the parents. Some, in order to maintain "confidentiality" of the relationship, actually got a colleague – usually a social worker – to see parents – especially "the Mother."

I disagreed with his quaint survival of classical child analysis, but apart from that I had a lot to learn about children and child psychiatry, and Nina recalls that I started the seminar presenting some of the difficulties I was having with my son. But in addition to problems of child-rearing, we dealt in that seminar with whatever cases the members presented.

After Nina finished the fellowship, she and Richard had several different child and adult psychiatry jobs at hospitals and clinical services near where they lived in Irvington, New York. The part of their lives that interests me here is the "supervision groups" we formed together in order to keep learning from each other after the formal seminars were over. Margaret and I joined a group that met with the Evanses at their house. It varied from five to ten colleagues with different family therapy backgrounds who wanted to continue to meet and talk about cases we

needed help with.

There was no leader and no preparation. We pitched in on cases we thought we recognized from our experience and listened and learned about the others. We met on weekends over breakfast, and happily mixed business with leisure. We continued to call it “supervision” – the name of the monitoring by a senior clinician that in an ideal professional world all therapists are supposed to have. But in fact, we all looked after each other’s work with no consistent hierarchy.

Richard had a varied experience in institutional and medical psychiatry as well as an interest in hypnosis. The group continued to meet for years. It waxed and waned, and finally, when I retired from my professorship at Columbia in 1986, Nina and Richard and Kitty LaPerriere and I formed a foursome that helped us to deal with the changes in our professional lives for two more years. We met almost monthly, and one of us took notes to be distributed at the next meeting. Looking over those notes, I see that we mostly talked about the couples we were seeing in private practice – perhaps because this was the most isolated work we were doing, and so the most in need of review and support.

Kitty LaPerriere had started her career as one of the psychologists who did the clinical teaching at the Ackerman Family Therapy Institute, and she wrote one of the first texts in the field with the Ackerman’s second director, Don Block. I got to know her best during the years she was married to Al Scheflen, just before his death, and so you can see that this foursome was made up of old friends who had many connections, as well as respecting each other as clinicians.

I asked Nina to write something about her experience during those years – here is what she wrote:

“At the end of the 70s I became first Chief of Child Psychiatry and then, after the two positions were combined, until I retired in 2001, Medical Director at Westchester Jewish Community Services. This was the heyday of the ‘invisible university,’ where I became immersed in Neurolinguistic Programming and Ericksonian hypnotherapy. It was then I learned the simple overarching ideas (in addition to the earlier one of the importance of evaluation/intervention at multiple

levels) which since have informed my teaching, clinical practice, and personal life:

“Parts work: Whether it’s parts of a person or of a larger system. This idea makes multilevel work vastly easier; once you can name the parts that are in communication with each other – or that are not and need to be – it makes it possible to combine individual and systemic work. One can work, for instance, with a couple both of whom have traumatic histories, so that they learn about each other’s dissociated parts.

“Criteria, or essential values: If you name and understand the values that people live by, it is easier to develop and maintain rapport and work towards outcomes with which all parts of a system agree.

“Reframing: Finding positive meaning in behavior, including translating the negative language which battling parts of a system produce, when attacking the other parts’ behavior.”

I quote Nina at length here to show the interesting way in which this work leads to guiding ideas, rather than proceeding from them. I recognize “parts work” and “reframing” as inspired by Milton Erickson, but Nina’s use of “criteria” – values expressed in words that lead to agreement – is something I especially learned from her. It reminds me now of what I later learned from narrative work about defining common goals, either in talking with families or in beginning work with an individual.

The third comrade is Andy Ferber, the director of the Family Studies Section at Bronx State, and so, formally, my boss. Before telling Andy’s story, it is important to note a change in the outside world. Zwerling had been urging us to innovate quickly because, he said cryptically, “the money will run out.” The pressures on the health care system from returning vets at end of the Vietnam War and the policies of the Nixon and Reagan presidencies contributed to a shift of support away from social psychiatry towards drugs, and health insurance made its ugly appearance as a way to organize medical treatment for the profit and control of the insurance industry. Zwerling was a candidate for the chairmanship of the department to succeed Rosenbaum, but in New

York, as in Washington, enthusiasm for our approach weakened.

There was talk of a bio-medical research candidate being recruited for the chairmanship. As it turned out, Zwerling had been negotiating a fallback position for himself – the chairmanship of psychiatry at Hahnemann Medical College in Philadelphia – but before we knew this, he asked me if I wanted to apply for the vacant position of Assistant Director of Bronx Psychiatric Center, as Bronx State Hospital was now called. I realized that this would make me a likely candidate for Director when he retired or moved on.

This was indeed an emotional crossroads, an invitation by my mentor to step into his place. I told him how honored I was to be considered, but my years of running the Family Service had taught me, among other things, what a careless, even sometimes unwilling, administrator I was. The secretaries of the service joked among themselves – and with Margaret – about it. And in the Tremont residency training program, I had learned that teaching and supervising – director of *training* rather than director of anything else – was my real talent.

Zwerling said he understood my response. The position remained vacant, and by 1975 he was in Philadelphia and most of us in the Family Studies Section were looking for other jobs. The new director of Bronx State Hospital, Hugh Butts, was chosen by a search committee because he was a Black man from Jamaica who had written a biography of Frantz Fanon, so the committee thought his politics and interests must be like ours. But he was a conventional psychoanalyst who understood nothing of what we had been trying to do, and as Zwerling had predicted, the money for new programs, no longer simply under the control of the hospital director, was going elsewhere. When Zwerling left the Bronx, we all realized we needed to leave as well.

The exodus from what had seemed like a promised land was difficult, and different for everyone. I will tell the story of my own transition in the next chapter, titled Public Psychiatrist. But here, at the end of this one, looking at the effects of the end of that community, is the place for Andy's story. If Zwerling was a founding father to both of us, then in a very real sense, Andy is my brother, a kind of relationship I had never had before.

As the leader of the Family Studies Section, Andy inspired us all by his daring, his willingness to lead by example, to go first. He valued my position as second-in-command because, as he said, I was his “No” man. In this way, we balanced each other, and our teamwork was part of the success of the Section. Beyond family therapy, Andy had many social and philosophical interests. His concern about the larger issues of human survival on this crowded planet began in his work with Harold Lasswell on The Limits to Growth movement in the 1960s. This led to Andy’s book on that subject, *Balancing Man on Finite Earth*. We are only now finding out how true it is that there are too many people on this planet.

Later, when he was working as a *locum tenens* at the Veterans Administration, Andy was one of the first to develop a group treatment for war trauma based on the realization that soldiers are shocked not only physically and psychologically but also morally by their experience. They are traumatized in their experience in the human group to which they belong and need to be healed by its forgiving understanding – something only their comrades in arms can provide. The deep shock of modern war is the recognition that it is inter-personally, morally, wrong – that is the basis of the “post-traumatic stress disorder” that the Veteran’s Administration was so slow to recognize, since recognizing it undermines the whole idea of modern warfare, especially the terrorizing of civilians. Andy wrote a treatment manual on addressing these problems, emphasizing that the comrades who can best understand traumatized veterans are other traumatized veterans. He has a strong appetite for large issues.

The part of Andy’s story that interests me here is that he had a religious conversion, which made him part of a different kind of continuous-study group. He became a disciple, and I am interested in the ways this is similar to – or different from – the kinds of comradeship I have been describing for me and Margaret and Nina and the others.

The year Zwerling left the Bronx, 1975, Andy and Jane first moved – with their State salaries, and in the company of many Bronx colleagues – to an outpatient clinic on Huguenot Street in New Rochelle, just across the county border in Westchester. There they established for the State’s patients and their families as much of a community-clinic culture as

possible, with the blessing of the Westchester County State Hospital director, who saw their arrival as an injection of life into his system. But the move meant that Andy and I no longer had any work connection. We stayed connected as friends and brothers, especially by a telephone call every Christmas to sing “God rest ye merry gentlemen.”

Whenever I run into people I knew in the Bronx, they ask me, “Do you hear anything from Andy?” They know he has disappeared from the writing-and-meeting buzz of the family therapy scene, and that if anyone has been in touch with him, it would be me. I am happy to tell them that Andy has finally arrived just where he hoped to be – after many travels, he is living near a swimming beach in Florida with his second wife Carolyn, working as the family therapy and general spiritual consultant to a large child psychiatry establishment nearby. He sees hundreds of families in consultation and is much sought after as a teacher.

The journey to that safe harbor has been adventurous. Following the meditative current in his yoga practice, around the time he left the Bronx, Andy became a disciple of Bagwan Sri Rajneesh, an Indian guru who taught, among other things, that the Western form of the family was the heart of the problem of community – that instead of families, the children should be raised by the community, and adults should be free to couple in many different ways – a sort of primate group with a spiritual master in charge.

The disciples of Rajneesh actually set up just such a group, at “The Ranch” in Oregon, and lived that way. Andy and I almost lost touch after we both left the Bronx, he to follow Rajneesh to Oregon, where the cult took over the government of a small town, whose original citizens they far outnumbered, to the alarm of local authorities. Eventually the federal government got involved and the disciples were expelled, not only from Oregon, but from the country, because they looked too much like a foreign takeover.

Jane Ferber had tried to keep her marriage and family together by joining the Rajneesh Sanyasins in their Oregon community, but it was a step too far for her. After Jane and Andy split, she went on to a career as director of a service rather like the Family Service, but this time at Elmhurst Psychiatric Center in Queens. I traveled there to do

consultation and teaching over the years of this diaspora, staying in touch with Jane and other old friends.

Rajneesh and his community had to move back to their original home in Poona, in the Indian Himalayan foothills of Uttar Pradesh. There, Andy, now Swami Anand Boddhichita, and his new wife Carolyn, now Ma Carolyn (the honorific address of women leaders) prepared to take on the assignment given Andy by Rajneesh, which was to bring the Bardo teachings to the modern world. This is the part of Buddhism and Hinduism that has been called The Art of Dying, popularly described in the Tibetan Book of the Dead. It is the conscious and earthly part of the cycle of Reincarnation. Even though Rajneesh has “left his body” and is no longer here to guide his disciples towards enlightenment, Andy continues to return to Poona for guidance from another spiritual master in the same tradition.

When I showed Andy what I have written about him so far, he surprised me by saying that I had missed the most important point. He told me the story of meeting Rajneesh the first time. The guru said: “Psychotherapists, people who study the Mind and psychology, develop a thirst that only I can satisfy.” What he meant by that was that they begin a journey to the discovery that “The Mind is the Problem” – that only through meditation and going beyond consciousness towards enlightenment can we free ourselves from its constraints.

I have been taught never to argue with anyone – especially my brother – about religion, and indeed there is nothing to argue about. Andy and I were both recovering from the loss of the fatherly love and encouragement that Zwerling had provided – a whole institution that encouraged us to be as encouraging to others as we ourselves could be, making our efforts somehow effortless. I went a while before finding that again in my own life, but I think Andy found it almost at once in the discipleship of Bagwan Rajneesh. Clearly, having a divine master is even more reassuring than having a theory. I mainly rejoice these days that Andy continues to be curious about the way things work, and we trade books to read about the history of human development.

But to return to the subject of comrades, whenever Andy came back from Poona to spend some time in this country, earning extra money as a *locum tenens* psychiatrist, and even more so after he and Carolyn moved back to the United States because of her health, we got together and compared experiences. One thing we noticed was that wherever Andy worked, the setting aside of time and resources for training was regarded as an “extra.”

Now the insurance companies have turned psychiatrists and other workers into wage slaves, and training, if it happens at all, is not an important part of the enterprise – not on company time. When the insurance companies found a way of taking over medicine for their own profit, they turned clinics and hospitals into streamlined factories where efficiency, money, and accurate documentation – bookkeeping – are the measure of outcome. Everything has to be charged to someone, a patient or to something who can pay – to support a “managed care” or insurance company, for example, to maximize the flow of money. This atmosphere began to affect even city and state government agencies, where a narrow view of “cost” showed up in the making of decisions. Social workers in state clinics now spend time on the phone haggling with insurance representatives over fees!

In this atmosphere, the connection between being part of a learning group and having a comradely, collegial, sense of your work – evaporates. The state license requirement of “continuing education” credits for the professions is an empty formality that has no resemblance to what we have lost. We have lost the sense of learning together as part of helping people – the sense that they are the same, that they reinforce each other, that they provide opportunities to learn in the company of comrades. Medical health insurance has destroyed that.

Sometimes when I look at the sorry state the care of the mentally ill has gotten into, with patients in prison instead of in community programs, I ask, what happened? I thought we had this all figured out in 1975. One thing that happened was that the commitment rules were changed by a well-meaning civil rights campaign, without at the same time establishing community programs for those no longer committed to hospitals but left to whatever could be found. And since the agents of

this work are now often the police, what is found is jail and prison.

Those community programs could have been based on the demonstration models we had established in the Bronx, as well as those in Denver, Madison, Palo Alto, and the state of Vermont. Doing community mental health right could have required money and hard work, training community workers for state and city governments to work with the mentally ill in their homes and workplaces. It might have meant there would be even more people on the public payroll doing community work than there are now working for the jails and prisons, where we are driving the mentally ill madder by locking them in solitary confinement. We have reinvented something much worse than the old asylums, and we have made it harder to find comrades in a difficult line of work that needs them.

When I talk about this with my son Alex, he says “You sound like someone who works for the government but has never had to get elected.” I think that is true of both Andy and me. Without the leadership of Zwerling, neither of us knew how to do real politics.

In addition to flesh and blood comrades, the feeling of being understood – and understanding – depended, for me, on figures in the literature, and among these, the most significant was Gregory Bateson. I think I was in medical school when someone gave me a copy of his papers, collected as “Steps to an Ecology of Mind.” I pored over it, reminding myself that there is a science and discipline that does not depend on medical psychiatry. Bateson was Margaret Mead’s third husband, an anthropologist colleague she met in Papua New Guinea. They had a few years of working together there, making movies of baby-bathing as a comparative cultural activity, just before Pearl Harbor made it necessary for them to return to the U.S.

Bateson was the son of the great British embryologist William Bateson, who in 1906 named and founded the field of “genetics,” based on the pioneering work of Gregor Mendel, after whom Gregory was named. William Bateson had also described a form of communication between cells in the developing embryo. It was called “Bateson’s Rule,” and it explained the development of healing form in an embryo’s limb bud after it had been experimentally cut along its axis. The cut rudiment

regenerated as two limbs on either side of the cut that were mirror images of each other – the two halves somehow influencing each other to take that shape by communicating across the wound – a chemical action at a distance, perhaps, or a communication about reorganization.

Gregory Bateson, in an essay about his father's discovery, points out that the nature of the communication across the cut in the limb bud is even more interesting from a "system" point of view than the picture of active "chemical communication" I suggested. It is actually the *absence of the expected* communication that caused this different form of development. Absence of the expected is just as important in a "cybernetic" (error-regulated or feedback-controlled) system as an unexpected presence would be.

This applies to social groups as well as embryos and nervous systems. In these sensitive systems, there is a pattern of expectations, and we can study how they respond to things that they are prepared for, or unprepared for. Information arrives in social groups or families the way impulses arrive at the synapses of neurons, in regular or irregular ways, and we can study these regularities.

An example of this was the problem Bateson was working on when he had to leave his field work in the South Pacific: Why do conflicts in Bali never result in an open fight? What is it in Balinese culture that requires some other ceremonial or artistic resolution to take place? Bateson was talking here about the absence of a response that would be the expected one in another culture.

I did actually meet Bateson in the flesh shortly before he died in 1980. The editor of one of our field's publications heard that he was giving a talk in New York and asked if I would interview him. In the introduction to the talk, this towering figure of a man (he was well over six feet tall, like my father) leaned into the microphone and said, in an intimate tone, that he had been recently given a diagnosis of lung cancer, and he noticed that people were asking him if he felt he was living "on borrowed time." "No" – he said, "I would say I am on prime time."

The lecture was indeed one of his best, and the interview he graciously gave me, which started in the elevator going back up to his

hotel room, was about the “double bind” theory of schizophrenia, about which he now had many reservations, given the way it had been taken up by the family-blaming specialists of the schizophrenia business. I later heard that he had retired to a Zen monastery in California, where he died, I imagine, very peacefully and consciously.

I am glad I got to meet him in person, but in his writings, he was the kind of comrade it was very important to have – a sort of saint from a distant monastery whose letters reached ours from time to time.

I will end this chapter with the story of the most well-documented study of the effect of comradeship on therapeutic outcome: the work of William McFarlane. Some of this work was actually done during the 1970s and 80s, when he and I were working together at the Psychiatric Institute – the subject of the next chapter. I put it here because it is such an outstanding example of the effect of comradeship on therapeutic outcome – the fellow-feeling of families dealing with an episode of schizophrenia. The parents of a young person having a first experience of psychosis are totally without comrades – no one they know has dealt with this strange problem before. The multi-family group treatment introduces them to people in exactly their position and provides an optimal way for them to learn from each other’s experience, by meeting together with expert consultants.

I first met Bill McFarlane in 1968, when he was a fellow in community psychiatry at Bronx State, and both of us had just arrived there. We worked on several projects together, and when I went to the State Psychiatric Institute, I recruited him and Steve Rosenheck to join me in establishing the Public Psychiatry Fellowship. Running that program was only a half-time job for each of us, so while I continued to teach at the Community Service, Bill secured a research contract from New York State. Its purpose was to test the effectiveness of multi-family groups as a primary treatment for schizophrenia.

Carol Anderson’s group in Pittsburgh had demonstrated the effectiveness of gathering together the families of patients on a psychiatry ward who were all suffering an episode of schizophrenia. The process of these groups was to gather together the parents for an educational discussion of the illness and its effects. Later, by the time the

patients were ready for discharge from the ward and for inclusion in the group, the other family members had gotten to know some information about the illness and had developed a comradely acquaintance with other families in the group run by a team of two therapists. When the patients were all ready for discharge and became part of the group, it continued to meet every two or three weeks with the leaders (always at least two) for as long as necessary. In the original experimental design, they met for at least two years.

The format of the meetings was very practical and supportive. After some social “joining” and greeting, the leaders invited a family that had presented a problem at a previous meeting to describe how it was going. Problem-solving continued to be the theme as another family brought another problem, and for each a discussion was led by the leaders, planning experiments to try out solutions, suggesting ways in which knowledge about the illness could be applied, and looking forward to hearing later how the experiments worked out. The effect was to provide a group of people who began with the feeling that no one could possibly understand how strange and difficult the problems were that they had to face with the comradely experience of sympathy and knowledge arising out of shared experience.

Two things have always stood out for me about these groups. One was the experimental measure of outcome: compared to matched control group of untreated families, the relapse rate (a recurrence of psychosis) in the multi-family groups was half that of the controls. The treatment was strikingly effective. The second was a tribute to comradeship. Many of these groups were established on services that were subject to changes in personnel – the leaders were often graduate students whose careers moved on. In one case, the service was reorganized beyond recognition. What struck me was the many cases in which the multi-family groups went on meeting with their original leader-trainees, without pay or credit, just because everyone felt they were important.

Margaret was a key member of the original research group of supervisors working under Bill’s direction, and they carried out the videotape supervision of the multi-family groups. She was also a member of the team that in later years went on the road to present the

technique to departments in states that had heard that the multi-family groups were officially designated “best practice” by New York State. The road trip went extremely well, but the fascinating – and distressing – result over the years has been that almost nowhere has the treatment been adopted.

Why not? Administrators don’t like it – it means finding two hours of meeting time in a large room in the evening, and it is complicated to charge for. Medical insurance doesn’t cover it. Directors of training don’t like it because it does not advance any of their professional agendas, and graduate students often do not see it as leading to a profitable career move. Add to that a continuing prejudice against the parents of patients with schizophrenia – the idea that they are partly the cause of the illness – and you have a fatal accumulation of prejudice.

Bill wrote a book about this treatment to which I contributed a chapter, and after he left the New York State Psychiatric Institute shortly before I did, he went to Portland, Maine, to head the psychiatry department of the principal hospital there. He was able to convince the city of Portland to pilot an even more radical plan and a research design. Instead of organizing the group around hospital admission, patients were recruited by schoolteachers and counselors who were concerned about students who came to their attention. Start the multi-family groups early, under a sponsorship different from the hospital, and run them as a community public health measure, again with an untreated group of controls for comparison.

This program, replicated as far away as Los Angeles County, and elsewhere across the country, has been so successful that it was written up in *The New York Times* by Jane Brody. You can look it up: “Interventions to prevent psychosis” Personal Health, New York Times, September 2, 2019. With this program, Bill had succeeded in establishing a non-medical, almost non-psychiatric, environment where comradeship flourished, especially among parents, leading to hope, and patience, and an alternative vision of recovery from schizophrenia, beginning with comrades assembled before disabling symptoms begin.

Jane Brody does not mention this, but in my own reading of Bill’s group’s report of the Portland comparison, I noticed a bit of experimental daring. Usually in population studies of this kind, the

comparison sample is selected at random, so that the experimental and control groups are as alike as possible. Instead, here the non-treatment group was selected from those with the least severe symptoms, so that the treatment's comparative success was all the more impressive. All it lacks is for some state government to take it seriously and fund it.

I will end this chapter on comrades with a comparison of Bateson and McFarlane that is important enough to apply to others – the power of political position and income source. Bateson was, for most of his American career, an itinerant anthropologist who went from grant to grant and from affiliation to affiliation. For many years he worked with the Palo Alto group led by Jay Haley and Don Jackson that was investigating the “double bind” hypothesis in the etiology of schizophrenia – the idea that the illness was caused by a peculiar mystification in the way parents of schizophrenics communicated with their vulnerable children. This resulted in some brilliant papers but no treatment plan, and no demonstration of effectiveness, since that was not what the Palo Alto group was interested in. Carlos Sluzki later wrote a book, *The Double Bind as a Universal Pathogenic Situation*, which argued convincingly that what the group was describing applied to communication in family problems in general, not just schizophrenia.

I think Bateson was relieved to move on to another grant where he was able to study the communication of dolphins instead of the problems of families coping with schizophrenia. This is particularly evident in a later paper, “Double Bind 1969.” His appreciation of the healing power of comradeship, and the effectiveness of a correct epidemiological theory, is again evident in his paper on Alcoholics Anonymous, “The Cybernetics of ‘Self’: A Theory of Alcoholism.” I have checked that account with several knowledgeable AA patients.

Bill McFarlane had a very different kind of career. He has experience as a psychiatrist comfortable with the responsibilities of that profession's institutions. In 1992, the State of Maine's public psychiatric institutions were in such disrepair that many institutions were leaderless. A group of New York psychiatrists took the opportunity to move to Portland and rescue the situation. Stephen Katz became commissioner,

David Moltz became the director of several different outpatient programs, and Bill McFarlane became the chairman of the psychiatry department at the principal hospital. This put him in the position to make appointments, organize research, and get grants. The research skills he had developed in New York were combined with this kind of institutional power, with the result that cities as large and far away as Los Angeles were interested in replicating the experiment. Here at last was a preventive “early intervention” approach to schizophrenia that made a measurable difference. The programs facilitated comradeship by providing skillful counseling and offering the opportunity for social interaction.

CHAPTER 15 : PUBLIC PSYCHIATRIST

The job I found after leaving the Bronx was a half-time teaching position in the Community Service at The New York State Psychiatric Institute – “PI” for short. Located in the northern end of Manhattan, you have seen its towers if you have come down the West Side Highway just after passing under the George Washington Bridge. They look very much like a castle – a Watch Tower on the Rhine – and approaching them from the land-side dwellings of Washington Heights is not more welcoming. From the Broadway subway station, you go down 168th Street between the buildings of the Columbia Presbyterian medical school and hospital on one side and the enormous Armory, which now houses the city’s homeless men, to stand finally at the granite doorway of what, when I arrived in 1975, was the building of The New York State Psychiatric Institute. On my first day, it felt like “Childe Roland to the Dark Tower came.”

The Columbia-Presbyterian Hospital and Medical Center was built in the 1930s, as Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons joined Presbyterian Hospital and moved its medical and research services to what was then the pleasant suburb of Washington Heights. The architecture of the medical complex will be familiar to St. Paul’s and Yale graduates because it was given by Edward Harkness, the donor of the Tudor buildings of those institutions. Harkness, the son of a major shareholder of Standard Oil, was at first opposed to the idea of including a psychiatric institute, a department of the state government, in his medical campus. He feared political interference in the school and hospital’s management. But he was finally persuaded that the State Psychiatric Institute, a collection of laboratories and research offices, could be moved from its home in an abandoned bakery on Ward’s Island in the middle of the East River (where Manhattan State Hospital had recently been established to keep the city’s “lunatics” at a safe distance) to become one with the Columbia-Presbyterian Department of Psychiatry.

It was a very good deal for all involved. The newly named State Department of Mental Hygiene would pay all the salaries – state lines

with pensions – and the Columbia medical school would supply academic titles and prestige, so that PI staff would have the best of both worlds, and “good people” would want to work there. What almost got lost in the deal was the heart of the Institute’s charter, established by its second director, Adolf Meyer, in 1905: that research and teaching on the care and management of the state’s charges, the seriously mentally ill, would be high on its list of projects.

Instead, there was a built-in psychoanalytic institute and clinic, established in 1945, so that the staff didn’t even have to leave the building to have their supervision and classes and see their analytic patients. And over the years, there were special clinics and services for every other big idea and sub-specialty that came along. The good people did come, and long before the establishment of other psychiatric institutes in Pennsylvania, and even later the founding of the NIMH itself, PI was amazing the psychiatric world with scientific discoveries.

The chairman when I arrived, Lawrence Kolb, had been in that post since 1954. Both Washington Heights and the attitude towards seriously mentally ill in the community had changed. The dense urban neighborhood was now Black and Dominican, and the policy interest – finally – was in dealing with deinstitutionalization of the severely mentally ill. Kolb was actively interested in community psychiatry – in fact he had visited and consulted at Zwerling’s Day Hospital in the Bronx. Under his leadership, a PI chief resident, Alan Meznikoff, had started a Community Service, offering free inpatient and outpatient care to the citizens in a catchment area around the hospital.

There was even a sort of Day Hospital of returning patients who met on the same ward, sharing their experience of discharge and their recovery of a place in the community. Some lived in a halfway house run by one of the nurses. The most interesting Meznikoff idea I found when I arrived was “open report.” Instead of having their morning review of the previous day in the privacy of the nurse’s station, the staff met with the patients in the day room and discussed the events and problems, and introduced the new patients, giving them a chance to speak for themselves. This led to speaking in a common, sympathetic language.

Meznikoff had gone on to be director of South Beach Psychiatric Center in Brooklyn, and the director of the Community Service who hired me was Marvin Hertz. He and Steve Reibel, who had recently come from St. Luke's to run the Service's outpatient clinic, met with me periodically, and the three of us planned the next move, taking everything except the inpatient ward out into the community. Apart from working on these plans, my job was to conduct staff meetings, often beginning with an interview with a patient and family, but sometimes just talking about problems and questions on everyone's mind.

The staff meetings were attended by the residents but not necessarily by the staff – with one exception. Kim Hopper was a graduate student of anthropology who was spending a year as an attendant on the ward as his “field placement” for his graduate degree in anthropology. He came to the meetings regularly and often followed up with questions he wanted to talk about in more detail. This was the beginning of a comrade relationship that has continued and strengthened to this day.

Kim and Margaret and I have had many adventures, including the design consultations on an ill-fated effort to plant an active family-based intervention agency in all the boroughs of the city. The enterprise collapsed into the waiting arms of a “managed care” company, but not until we had had a serious effort to organize what was clearly needed.

Between those staff meetings and supervising the residents who were rotating through the service, I had a very easy and satisfying half-time job.

Except that I had no place to sit or hang my coat. Office space was one of the things in short supply. I ran into an old friend from the Bronx, Elmer (“Moose”) Struening and as we caught up with each other over lunch, he offered me a desk in his suite at 100 Haven Avenue, one of the office towers that rose over the Hudson, housing living quarters as well as medical departments.

Moose's special interest was in the mentally ill homeless population, a major scandal of those years in New York and elsewhere. The Armory just across the street from PI was one of the main holding

tanks for the men, and the Upper West Side neighborhood where our family lived was full of single-room-occupancy buildings where St. Luke's was running programs for the mentally ill. One of Moose's discoveries was that 25% of the homeless men were veterans.

Moose was head of a part of the Epidemiology Department of the School of Public Health, and he suggested that with my other half time I could get a master's degree in psychiatric epidemiology. His warm welcome reminded me of the Bronx, and I liked the idea of being an epidemiologist with formal training. It had been on my mind ever since, as a resident, I learned from Norman Reider to ask, "What is the rate of spontaneous recovery?"

Epidemiology is the science of counting cases to analyze causes and making statistical models of treatment to learn what works. It also searches out and makes models of accident, to learn what is making a difference that you hadn't expected. I had taken the basic statistics and theory during my year out in medical school, but I didn't know how to read critically or design studies or experiments. It was exactly what was missing from my education, and this was the right time to acquire it. So over the next four years I took courses in Bruce Dohrenwend's Psychiatric Epidemiology Training Program. I wrote papers, designed interviews, and even taught my fellow graduate students their course in psychopathology, which was fun.

One of my teachers was David Rush, a college friend of Margaret's who had been a pediatric resident at Rochester. He was a great teacher and he and his wife Kitty are good friends. David is an epidemiology hero. He discovered the fetal alcohol syndrome, and because of that discovery there are signs in bars and on liquor bottles warning pregnant women not to drink. When David turned his attention to nutrition, poverty, and other factors, it turned out that there were senators who did not want the government saying that the malnutrition of poverty was a public health problem, and he began to lose grants. He moved to Tufts to study the less political problems of aging.

Under Moose's supervision I wrote my master's essay on the measurement of social support in schizophrenia – and got my

Epidemiology Master of Science degree in 1980. Epidemiologists are often passionate campaigners, and I have especially enjoyed the company of those who not only study but teach and lead the design of programs – Courtenay Harding, Alan Rosen, Kim Hopper, and Phyllis Vine are still old friends– but all that is another story. I did get to help design housing and services for the mentally ill homeless in New York as a member of the board of Project Renewal, under the ingenious leadership of Ed Geffner, a lawyer by training. Ed understood that the problem is more about money and real estate than psychiatry. There are plenty of psychiatrists – just not enough buildings where people with mental illness can live while they get their lives together.

There were many lessons in the exercise of power that came out of the years at PI. When I first told my Einstein colleague Peter Dunn that I was going to work there, he said, “Oh – you are going to suffer an acute withdrawal of Jewish people!” I don’t think the difference of ethnicity was statistically significant, judging by the last names of the directors and heads of department, but even Jews at PI had acquired a certain Presbyterian aloofness, which I think was what Peter was talking about. The acute withdrawal that I did suffer was not being sheltered by Zwering’s fatherly love for us all, and for what we were trying to do. PI was a place of superficially polite but deadly struggles for space, curriculum, time, money, and other scarcities.

Clearly, I needed a plan for survival in this jungle. In time left over from epidemiology and my Community Service duties, I set out to capitalize on my specialization. To my amazement, I was the only family therapist in the whole psychiatric faculty, and aside from being good for referrals to my afternoon and evening private practice, this provided some natural alliances. The obvious one was child psychiatry, whose new head, David Schaffer, had just arrived. As Nina Evans had previously provided the only family therapy training for the Child Fellows, and was now busy in Westchester, I recruited Kitty LaPerriere to give demonstration interviews for his fellows. David and the others were fascinated by Kitty’s work, and we had interesting discussions with David and the fellows. I went to David’s lectures to study his teaching methods and learned much from him. I treasure his reflection on my

preppy “ease.” “Beels!” he said, “Does *nothing* surprise you?”

At a faculty meeting, I asked if there was any interest in teaching the residents about the social context of their work, and when this drew a complete blank, Don Kornfeld, the head of consultation/liason said he had long been aware of this gap in the curriculum, and he would support a half-year course in the first year. Kornfeld had influence, and I had a course ready to teach. With my new friend Winslow Hunt (an analyst), I presented a version of the Bronx Tremont residency course in the history and sociology of mental health. I really enjoyed this – all my favorite readings and questions had been tested in the Bronx and started some satisfying debates in the class at PI. This was the only place in the curriculum where the psychiatric effects of race, class, poverty, and immigration were taken up. Discussing “Tally’s Corner” with all-White PI residents was even more interesting than it had been in the Bronx – it was news to them.

The weekly departmental lecture by a distinguished visitor or faculty member was still called “Grand Rounds,” after the old tradition of asking the visitor to walk around the wards and interview patients. I asked social-research questions at Grand Rounds presentations and was eventually asked to give one myself. I chose an epidemiology subject, which I called “The Invisible Village.”

What can we learn, it began, from the World Health Organization’s finding that the course of schizophrenia is measurably better in cultures with an agricultural village economy than it is in the urban industrial West? The answer has something to do with the way the agricultural village finds support for even the craziest people to participate in some way in the work life of house and garden and field. They do this for many reasons, not the least of which is that there is no psychiatric hospital to send the patient off to. In our industrialized and class-bound society on the other hand, the schizophrenic crisis arrives in the middle of schooling designed to prepare the young person for an expected or at least hoped-for class promotion – an upward career move – that either from education, employment, or marriage, or all three, will set the person’s adult course. A psychotic break in the midst of this preparation

has a devastating effect on these expectations, and we consign the patient to a life of treatment as a current or former asylum resident.

But in addition to a lesson in epidemiology, there is also a lesson here in the design of treatment. Social psychiatry, using devices such as the Day Hospital, Housing First, family support programs, and supported-employment training, seeks to surround the patient with an Invisible Village that preserves adult role performance and relationships as much as possible during a gradual career of recovery.

The loss of that prospect for class promotion is the main hazard of the illness. The cure is the focus on the long-term process of Recovery, promoted by the example of others – fellow patients further along in their life experience, who might be roommates or fellow workers in supported employment. This replaces the standard story of graduation, job, marriage, children that the culture enjoins.

My own experience as a New Boy at St. Paul's helped me empathize with patients who were helped by programs such as Housing First that provided membership and stability in the form of housing and a supportive community.

One of my goals in this talk was to say that you can actually learn something from cross-cultural epidemiology. Another was to emphasize the importance of class as a stressor that affects the course of illness. Only the most privileged, who have enough money to spend on long stays at elite institutions such as Chestnut Lodge, could re-enter the class contest at their leisure – and somewhat on their own terms – escaped the penalty. And even they had lives quite different from what they and their wealthy families expected.

My Grand Rounds lecture did not change my workday at the Institute, so I started to recruit a volunteer family therapy faculty to teach in the outpatient clinics. This led to some very enjoyable faculty meetings, but we had to disband after a year because space requirements and record-keeping problems made us intruders in the peaceful one-on-one worlds of the Institute's clinics.

In 1978, Marvin Hertz left to be the chairman at Buffalo, and I was

acting head of the Community Service while they searched for his replacement. I had an office at last, and I also had some instructive encounters with Power. Before he left, Hertz appointed the wife of a friend as the director of the outpatient department to replace Reibel, who was also leaving. I quickly got to know her well enough to be quite sure she had no distinction as a supervisor, a teacher, or for that matter as an administrator. She was a rather dull psychiatrist with no other interests that I could discover. I protested to Hertz that this was a waste of an important place in the leadership on the eve of a big move, but he was adamant, and the administration of course backed him. I told her she could keep the office, but I was going to ignore her, and I hoped – indeed I was sure – she would find some place to work where she was welcome and needed. She left within the year, and I replaced her with a carefully prepared choice, Pellegrino Sarti, a resident Margaret had trained in family work during his residency at St. Luke's.

My next encounter was with the chairman, Ed Sachar, and Don Klein, the head of pharmacology programs. They wanted to use our outpatient department to pilot some double-blind medication studies. I said I would have to talk to my staff. As I expected, everyone was outraged that they would be asked to give patients difficult enough to manage in the first place, medications that might be blank placebos – and then explain that this was for the greater good of science that would benefit others. I went back and told Klein that I understood his problem, but I couldn't help him without facing mass revolt, and he didn't want that complicating his study. He retreated.

This was not the last attempt over the years to exploit the Community Service for the benefit of the careers and projects of professors and chairmen interested in pharmacological research. The bloodiest battles occurred after I retired, and all I could do was write letters of protest.

But back to 1978 and the beginning of my acting directorship: I had been packing the staff with family therapists from the Bronx and elsewhere, and we seized the moment to move the Community Service out into the community, leaving the inpatient ward in the expert hands of

Francine Cournos. We found ample quarters on the second floor of a building on a corner of Broadway that had a McDonald's on the ground floor. Patients who didn't want to be seen coming to the clinic could be interviewed over a cup of coffee downstairs.

I designed some changes in the work environment. The only person with a private office was the new director, Pellegrino Sarti. Pel had great talent as a director and supervisor. Everyone else was on a neighborhood team and had to share a desk in a large room with other teams and their desks. Talk and cooperation became unavoidable. Patients and families gathered in a large waiting room furnished for conversation, with a counter big enough for several clerical staff sitting at the window in front of the records. They learned to chat with the families while they waited. Interviews and team meetings took place in purpose-built rooms, two with one-way screens for observation and live supervision. The whole sunny, rear area was – of course – a Day Hospital, with a kitchen and enough light to grow vegetables.

All this was in place by the time a year later when the new Director, Manuel Trujillo, was chosen, and I happily turned the Service over to him. Within a month a fire at McDonald's destroyed our outpatient department (and our records) but we had gotten the habit of working this way, and almost identical space was found and furnished a few blocks away. Trujillo left in a couple of years for a larger position at NYU, but as he left, he persuaded Chairman Sachar to appoint Francine Cournos the new Director of the Community Service. My life as the Professor continued happily working for Fran, a colleague now for five years, and a brilliant builder of public institutions. But it was still only a half-time job.

I spent some of my time serving on committees, and one was the search committee for a new director of residency training – a person I wanted to help choose because in important respects he would be my boss. The man we chose, Ron Rieder, had been in all the same places I had been – Harvard College, Einstein psychiatric residency, NIMH – so we had a lot in common, perhaps social class as much as anything. He was a very smart administrator whose field of specialization was genetics. I liked the fact that this put him in a neutral position with

respect to all the warring ideologies, and he had plenty of energy, curiosity, and a sense of humor. He knew that I could be helpful in shaping the curriculum and recruiting teachers, so we spent time together. Ron was alert to new sources of funding, and one day he called me to say that there was a new Request for Proposal from Albany inviting applications for training in Social and Community Psychiatry. I took a copy home to read and realized I would need to proceed very carefully to grasp this opportunity.

It was a fellowship design – a “year out” – that could apply to any level from medical students to graduated residents, with a salary for recipients and some money for faculty and administration. So it was like the “year out” in statistics I had taken in Rochester, which had been paid for by a federal program. I pointed out to Ron that these fellowships often ended up providing slave labor for faculty, with the recipients hoping to learn something while working on their supervisor’s projects.

It’s possible that slave labor would have been alright with Ron, but he deferred to me when I said that the crucial time for learning about Social Psychiatry was in the breathing space *after* residency. That’s when graduates realize how little they know about the world of possible jobs, since they have only worked in the places their departments made available. For this kind of experience, I insisted, fellows needed to be able to work *anywhere*.

Ron said I should call Michael Kipp, the man in Albany who wrote the request and see what I could find out. He knew exactly what I was talking about, and I came away with his tentative agreement to consider a program of five post-residency lines – a fifth year of training – plus two faculty positions, besides mine, with mine raised to full-time: a total of eight full-time psychiatrists and a social worker. I could have it administrated from the education office in Albany rather than through PI, and I could call it what I wanted.

I was excited, partly because I felt a connection to my hero Adolf Meyer, the Swiss pathologist who in 1905 had defined the work of the Psychiatric Institute as a place for teaching the community care of the State’s charges. Once again, we were going back to fundamentals. Meyer had arrived to direct PI after being a close colleague of John Dewey and Jane Addams (of Hull House) in Chicago – he was a

colleague of William James, and as the director of the hospital in Worcester, which was one of the first with formal academic psychiatric training and research, he had defined the connection between the course of illness and the patient's life experience as the most important area of research and practice. We could have called the fellowship the Adolf Meyer program.

What to call it was critical – it had to be something else besides “Social and Community Psychiatry” – a phrase that had been used during the 1960s to describe a loose collection of efforts to improve psychiatric outcomes by making small changes in organization or making social “conditions” better and starting neighborhood clinics for psychotherapy. That movement had gotten into a liberal muddle of causes and campaigns, and often had not addressed specific living problems of the seriously ill. I decided to call it “Public Psychiatry” – the clear *opposite* of private fee-for-service practice of all kinds, especially sit-down office appointments for psychotherapy. It should mean work performed in state-budget public agencies for populations that could not organize care for themselves: the psychotic, poor, addicted, homeless, or aged who need free government care. That seemed a plain enough label for psychiatry out where it was needed.

Ron put my proposal towards the bottom of a pile of things he wanted Sachar to sign off on, and Sachar said “What's this? Do we want this?” Ron said, “Yes, we want that – that's a good program.” So the proposal for the Fellowship went back to Albany with the chairman's approval. Sachar was distracted by many problems at this time and was soon to leave the chairmanship to an interim caretaker, Sidney Malitz, who, because he had no agenda, was easy to deal with.

It took more than a year to find the new chairman, Herbert Pardes, and sometime after he arrived, he asked to see me. I was eager to invite him to talk to the fellows, since Pardes was a public psychiatrist *par excellence*. Pardes began by saying he was impressed with the fellowship, and then fixed me with his gaze: “But don't you *ever* do that to me!” By which he meant, don't ever set up a program outside the chairman's control, with an administrator in Albany. I took that as a

warning and a sort of compliment.

Starting in the summer of 1980, we had a year to set up the fellowship. I gathered two colleagues from the Bronx, Bill McFarlane, whom I introduced in the last chapter, and Steve Rosenheck, a social worker who was ABD in American History, and specialized in mental health innovations. Both were experienced teachers interested in “how things really work” – McFarlane from the process-analysis method he studied at the Columbia Business School, and Rosenheck from political and institutional history, about which he had published papers. Apart from his exceptional knowledge, I felt it was important to have a non-psychiatrist teaching in the program, to make the point that the title does not carry a patent on expertise.

We had the luxury of spending a year designing a curriculum for the fellowship while we interviewed candidates for the five positions the following July. Our only misfortune was that, again, there was no office. We found a subterranean space in a sort of large windowless closet where the old Psychiatric Institute building foundations abutted the rocky hillside. It did have a table and some chairs. As we read papers and designed a public psychiatry curriculum, a trickle of water sometimes ran over the bare stone. Beside our table stood a full-body radiation counter surrounded by a wall of lead bricks on which we could organize our files. We were definitely getting down to fundamentals.

In the spring of 1981, we celebrated by hosting an international conference on Family Therapy and Public Psychiatry, just before the opening of the Fellowship. We had managed to find five newly graduated residents, two women and three men, who wanted to spend a year with us, and each of them found a service somewhere in the city that had a use for a free half-time psychiatrist. The fellows worked three long days, sometimes overtime, on the service and in exchange got an hour a week with the director of the service to be supervised and raise any questions they wanted to. The other two days they met in seminars and individual supervision with the three of us. We all sat in on the seminars so that we could learn from each other, and the exchanges were intense and revelatory, especially the first time around.

By this time, I had persuaded Malitz that we really needed offices,

and the spring before the arrival of the first fellows we got three adjoining spaces on the second floor. Family therapy training and supervision was part of the program, so I installed video equipment linking two of the spaces. This made it possible to interview a family in one office while all of us watched sitting in the large room that was my office. This was furnished by my desk and a long L-shaped settee around two walls that I enjoyed making and upholstering myself. All eight of us could sit and talk and watch interviews on the TV monitor in the facing wall cabinet. I liked the relaxed conversational shape of this couch for meeting with families, supervising residents – and I could take a nap. I had long felt that the main value of an analytic couch would be the possibility of taking a nap between appointments.

The room was too cramped for the seminars, which met in a regular classroom with a big table and a blackboard, on which we diagrammed the organizations where each of the fellows worked. Starting with the residencies they had all just completed, we tried to understand them as case studies in organization, productivity, and communication problems. Then we did the same kind of analysis for the places where the fellows were working, and developed questions to ask, for example, what would you do or what would you change if you were in charge? Some of these questions actually got asked, with interesting answers from the service directors. And we had visiting speakers from all over, including Pardes, who talked about working for the federal government and making policy at that level.

I taught some epidemiology, Bill some business organization, Steve some history of service organization and regulation in New York State, as well as the history of de-institutionalization. By the end of the year, all the fellows had jobs, and we analyzed and strategized about those administrative challenges, using the methods we had practiced.

By the time I retired from the Psychiatric Institute in 1986 and turned the program over to Bill and Steve, we had added geriatric services to our repertoire. We succeeded, I think, in establishing a definition of a kind of career, with a basis in practice and a literature. Many of our graduates were African-American and Latino, determined to take their knowledge back to their communities.

After Bill moved on to join other New York psychiatrists in reforming services in the State of Maine, my old colleague from Tremont, Jules Ranz, took over as director and applied his exceptional administrative imagination to it. The faculty had been enlarged to include three psychiatrists, all women: Sara Kellermann, a former city commissioner; Sue Deakins, a family therapist who was also an expert in addiction services and community care; and Stephanie Lemelle, an African-American woman who had been Francine Cournos' associate during her brief tour as acting commissioner.

Ranz doubled the number of fellows to ten by asking the placements to pay half their salaries, which with the expanding reputation of the program they were happy to do. He, Stephanie Lemelle, and Hunter McQuiston, a former fellow and director of outpatient hospital services at St. Luke's Roosevelt, have written a textbook of Public Psychiatry. The fellowship has served as the pattern for other programs all over the country.

I was delighted to go up there once a year to join Steve and Julie and the others in a talk with the fellows about the history of all this. There are huge reunions every five or ten years where we find out that the graduates of the Fellowship have indeed gone out into the world to work in public services – often, to direct them.

When I retired in 1986, there was a small Festspiel, a Grand Rounds given by John Talbot, the editor of *Psychiatric Services*, a man whose work in our field I admired greatly. Chairman Pardes thanked me for setting up the Fellowship and I thanked him for his support, and then I gave the following valedictory:

“Some of you know that my background has included a lot of opportunity to listen to sermons, and I grew to appreciate that art form. So with your indulgence, I want to take this opportunity to give a short sermon. The text is from the famous 13th chapter of St. Paul's epistle to the Corinthians, in which he says, ‘Now abideth these three, faith, hope and love, but the greatest of these is love.’ Many sermons have been preached on what Paul meant by those words, but today I want to suggest what they mean for psychiatric education and research, the

business of the Psychiatric Institute. In particular I am thinking of the mission of the parts of it where I have been closely involved, the Community Service and the Public Psychiatry Fellowship.

“Our medical version of Faith is scientific research. That is what gives us confidence to go ahead and do the right thing, the effective thing, when fashion or tradition or professional vanity would counsel otherwise. Certainly, the contributions of the Psychiatric Institute to that kind of research are its principal claim to achievement. Research lets us do what Paul would have described as “seeing through a glass darkly” with confidence that someday we will have the answers face to face.

“Our Hope is based on sound and reliable administration, which gives us confidence that we will be able to carry out the promised tasks. Hope in institutions is based on keeping promises, and I think when things are going well, we forget to give the administration credit for it.

“But all the brilliant research and supportive administration in the world are, as Paul said, ‘a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal’ without the Love of psychiatric care and service, which is the effective point of it all. Both the Community Service and the Public Psychiatry Fellowship are places where I was able to join in work with colleagues and students, providing Love in the form of service, backed by science and a hopeful administration. So ‘now abideth these three – Faith, Hope and Love, but the greatest of these is Love.’”

CHAPTER 16: OLD MAN PAINTER

I went on to do primarily private practice after leaving the Psychiatric Institute in 1986, contributing to publications and consulting. Things wound down slowly, leading eventually to full retirement. So now I turn my account to focus more on my family and the recent chapter of my life that had been developing all along – my fascination with painting and the communities and connections that fulfilling pursuit has brought me over the years. As my life moves away from professional work and makes room for more painting and socializing, it also turns more introspective. One of the results of that introspection, of course, is this memoir. The illustrations in this chapter are, unless otherwise noted, artwork I have created over the many years I have spent honing my painting skills.

As I grow old, I take pleasure in listening to my children, and now my grandchildren, talk about their lives in a transforming world – hearing how they are discovering and creating new possibilities out of changes I can barely comprehend.



My daughter, Jessica, is a sculptor and craftsperson who has moved from beadweaving to paper sculpture to creating mixed media work with recycled materials. Her exploration of the shapes of viruses and large as well as microscopic sea creatures in these materials reminds me of my fascination with embryology, but she has taken it to a much further realization, working where science and art meet.

She and her husband Charles Burg, an environmentalist (and birder), have both worked for various nonprofit organizations, including Sustainable Fisheries Partnership, an NGO that monitors and gives advice about global fisheries. They lived a train ride away in Washington, DC, for 37 years and moved to Louisville, Kentucky, in 2022.

My son, Alexander, returned to New York in his 40s after ten years in China where, among other roles, he worked as site staff for the reconstruction of a pavilion in the Forbidden City. The years before he came back, though, he was freelancing as a translator and consultant – a time he refers to as “taking retirement early.”



Finally, he came home to build a more stable career. On his first visit back from China, when he had not seen Margaret and me for some time, he exclaimed, “You are old!” To our surprise, we discovered that he might be right.

Alex now works for the IT division of Bloomberg. Writing code is something he has always done, especially after his graduate studies in Chinese History led to the realization that academic life was not for him and he decided to try coding for a living.

It is wonderful to have our children so close. Holidays, birthdays, and other rituals are celebrated with cooking dinners and talking. Jessica's children, Anika and Max, both now college graduates living in Chicago and Washington, DC, respectively, are part of the serious talk (and serious cooking) and their worlds are also full of news. Having Alexander in New York instead of China, engrossed in an economy and technology I am struggling to comprehend, is some kind of special providence. Jessica visits frequently and is helping us organize our old age, with its mounting disorganization.

One reason this seems miraculous to me is that my own childhood had almost no contact between the generations. My mother's parents died when I was an infant, and the only grandparents I had a glimpse of were my father's parents. They lived in a dark, cavernous house in Kansas City, Missouri. My one visit, when I was perhaps seven, was memorable for that darkness and the pervasive smell of my grandfather's cigars, plus the singular rosy smell of my grandmother's bath powder, which I breathed as she folded me in her large embrace. She was very tall – indeed large in all dimensions – and it was from her that my father got his height. At 6 feet 4 inches, he was the shortest of her three sons.

My grandfather looked small beside her, partly because of his paunch and bald head. He stood very importantly in the middle of the living room, reading glasses on the end of his nose just above his white walrus mustache, one hand behind his back and the other holding a letter, saying to us all – in a voice that sounded even more pompous because of his Dutch accent – “I want to read to you a letter I have received from my brother Clemens!”

The letter went on for several pages, none of which I understood or remember, but at the end he folded it and said, “I would give my entire collection of National Geographic Magazines to have written that letter!” My eyes widened as I looked across the dark living room to see the shelves of yellow bindings that stretched from the far corners of the room to the fireplace in two unbroken lines.

I imagine that my grandfather was quite a blowhard, and this may have contributed to the taciturnity of his sons. My father told me that he and his next-oldest brother, Tom, ran away from home for most of a day and a night to escape his tyranny.

Apart from that visit, I have no recollection of those grandparents. They died in their 90s when we lived in Tulsa, he first, and she years later after a widowhood in that house consoled mainly by the attentions of visiting bond and insurance salesmen whose schemes my father had to travel to Kansas City to undo. He went alone on those trips as well as to her funeral. I was old enough to decide that on his return from that final trip I should tell him I was sorry, which he received with a nod and a smile.

Contact with my mother's family in Kansas City was equally limited, except for the few summers when we all met in the house on a lake near Gold Hill, Colorado. Excursions on horseback are the part I remember. My mother's oldest sister, Lucy, tried to get me interested in fishing off the dock, but I resisted. Perhaps I sensed that, like other activities having to do with water, this would not be a part of my life.

Communication and ritual in our family is as different from this as Margaret and I can make it, although I am certainly not talented or attentive in this area. Our children take very good care of it. Visiting Margaret's parents in New York was easy because we moved into their neighborhood, and both of them died at home, after long and difficult care and attention from Margaret during their final illnesses.

My own mother was a different problem, both to visit and to care for. Some weekends we piled into our Volkswagen station wagon to drive up and stay with her in the Fairfield, Connecticut, house that she meticulously maintained, with all its decorations and paintings and empty silver cigarette boxes. She told me often how 3-year-old Alexander had demanded of her, "Grandma! Don't you have a grandpa for me?"

My mother dwelt on her widowhood, and her isolation, and dealt with it by as much activity with the local garden club as she could manage, plus a daily ritual of more than one glass of white Dubonnet before dinner. She insisted that this was not as stiff as the cocktail (red Dubonnet and gin) that my father used to make. She knew that, whenever he came home from the office and said, "Elizabeth, how'd you like a Dubonnet cocktail?" he was going to tell her we had to move

again.

A few friends from the overseas oil community drove from other suburbs to visit her in Fairfield. She went down to Rye frequently to visit Kay and Paul Kohns, and every summer she got herself onto the *Queen Elizabeth II* to London, where she spent almost a month in a rented apartment in Dolphin Square that had meals and service. From there she visited her English friends, her last intact community.

We flew over one summer to share that vacation with her, staying in another apartment in Dolphin Square. Breakfast arrived on a tray at the door with a shout of “Tea!” and the children played with dogs they met on the big central lawn of the establishment. It was fine to visit friends in London and the Cotswolds, but sad to think that my mother’s world was so divided.

I was increasingly worried that she could not keep this up, and after seeing her onto the boat one summer, sure enough, I got a call from London Hospital. “Dr. Beels,” the cheery voice of the social worker said, “We have your mother here. She collapsed on arriving in her room and is in hospital because she is still quite disoriented, I’m afraid. Would you like us to place her?” For a moment, I imagined my mother living in an English nursing home on National Health, but I said, “No – I’ll come and get her.”

Once she was settled in a Connecticut nursing home, her dementia increased even without the daily Dubonnet, and she needed a lot of attention from the staff to keep her from escaping to destinations known only to her. Certainly, she wanted to escape the inevitable. “I don’t want to die!” she wailed, while I tried to comfort her. And when she did die, after a stroke, I looked back over her years of displacement with great sadness.

My mother was much more clearly a victim of our wandering life than I was. There is a Western saying that frontier life is hell on women – but frontier women such as the mothers in Willa Cather’s novels are at least recognized and praised for their toughness and determination, which came partly from sticking together to civilize that farming and herding economy the men had created.

Because of the uncertainty of their moves around the world, oil

company executives' wives have nothing like that solidarity, though many of my mother's friends tried to stay in touch. They live in an affluence and privilege that is supposed to compensate them for the lack of the one thing they need, and that frontier women had – a group of women, friends and allies they could count on. For my mother, this lack of support dealt a final blow to her already small self-confidence. She couldn't take the lead, but her life in Tulsa showed she could be good company and a loyal friend, and for her sake I wish she could have stayed there, perhaps acting in community theater productions as both of my parents had in the years before I was born.

I did not make the same mistake with my mother's death as I made with my father's. I learned from the emptiness of that first experience that the rituals are for the survivors, not to be dictated by the departed. I had a service for her with as many friends as we could collect in Trinity Episcopal Church in Southport. And a year later we took her ashes to the Holmes family plot under a tree on a hillside in Kansas City where, with the help of a cousin I hadn't talked to in years, we buried her. Then the four of us (the children were 10 and 12) went to stay with my boyhood friend Bill Michaels in Tulsa to see where I grew up.

Tulsa seemed even more like another planet than I had expected. Bill was a stockbroker with Paine Webber, and as he and his second wife settled down to drinks with us, he gazed at me and said, "A psychiatrist who works in a State Hospital in New York must be some kind of liberal."

This was an invitation to take our differences as interesting, which I appreciated. I said, "You got that right, Bill."

In a similar mood, Bill's daughters took Alex and Jessica out for a spin in the convertible and asked cheerfully, "You think we're hicks, don't you?" I feel a little regret about never going back there again, to experience that easy candor and plain talk, but I needed to move on.

Yes – what I need to turn to now, speaking of death and the importance of community for facing it, is a look at my own community and facing my own death. But in order to make that step into a final liminal community, I needed first to go through leaving the working

world I was still part of – to really retire. Looking back on it, I can see that drawing and painting – especially oil painting – was the saving grace of my retirement, and that is the illustrated subject of this chapter.

After leaving PI with my state pension and medical insurance, I transitioned to private practice and, for a couple of years, continued the foursome supervision group with the Evanses and Kitty LaPerriere. After that, Margaret and I continued to support each other, talking about patients and family therapy as we had always had, and we consulted to organizations that needed our help. We acted as reviewing editors for *Family Process* and I started work on a book tracing the rise of narrative in psychotherapy. I helped out at the Ackerman Institute for the Family, then directed by Peter Steinglass, whom I had introduced to family therapy when he was a medical student at Einstein.

At last, at the turn of the millennium and my own turning 70, I transferred most of the patients in my practice to a colleague, finally published the book with the title *A Different Story*, and decided to spend as much time painting as I could. This final chapter is about how that shift changed our lives, especially my life. Painting was a community and an activity of a different kind, depending not on talking, words, or ideas, but on the wordless connection of looking and seeing. It was a new way of addressing the transience of life – a little stay of execution. And perhaps, framed on someone’s wall, a legacy.

Drawing had been in the background since my cartooning days at school. Here is a charcoal drawing I did of Margaret (from a photograph) while I was still teaching at St. George’s.

Then during the residency years, Margaret and I and Margaret’s mother (an artist since her youth) had taken charcoal tonal drawing classes from Dick Cunningham.



After we came back from Washington, I joined a sketch group that Dick conducted in his living room – a group of artists that met every other Tuesday evening. One member worked in silverpoint, but most of us made pencil and charcoal drawings of the nude models that posed for the group, a different woman each time. A favorite among these models was Mimi, the aging chorine who was the subject of the first oil painting Margaret and I bought from Dick. It hangs now in our living room, a meditation on the autumn of the body.

Here it is, along with a drawing of her made in our sketch group that hung in our dining room wall for many years.



Dick watched my sketching progress and, as summer approached, he said “It’s time for you to learn oil painting.” He summoned me to the barn in Sheffield, MA, where he and I held bachelor quarters for ten days. After a lesson in oil color mixing with the Impressionist palette, Dick took me with him to an open field where he was working and I painted a different corner each morning. At intervals he tramped over from his spot to mine – “The tree is darker – it’s against the light. It’s the darkest thing you can see!”

Afternoons I was left alone with a still life, which received criticism on Dick’s return from his afternoon landscape, and we made dinner and talked. I still have both paintings – for years my little landscape hung next to his big one in my office.

I have continued to paint landscapes and still lifes, mostly on my own. Still life painting, in particular, is a good way to compensate for loss. After my mother died, when I went to pick up her things at the nursing home, I discovered that one of our favorite paintings that I had hung in her room, of a basket full of leeks, had been stolen. I painted a basket of leeks, not once but twice, to help settle me down after that discovery. Here is one of those paintings.



Later, I grouped a collection of my mother's favorite things around an old dark wood pendulum clock, and after painting that, I felt better.



Most of my landscapes depict the area around our house in the country on a small lake near Brewster, New York. This staircase of tree roots led up from our cabin to the field above. I treasure it because those roots have since been built over with stairs and railings that are more secure for our old feet – nothing like what is recorded in this painting.



In this painting of Jessica in the cabin, I tried to capture the presence of the outdoors and the lake even in the cabin's interior.



I have also been drawn to capture urban scenes, especially those in my Upper West Side neighborhood. I have documented the architecture, perhaps to stay the encroaching modern upgrades. Here is the corner of our building on West End Avenue looking down 102nd Street on the day in summer when the sun sets over the Hudson just at the other end of the street.



Two blocks south on Riverside Drive is the Fireman's Monument. There, on a fine spring day once a year, the city's firemen with their marching bands and bagpipe brigades, gather in dress uniform to salute those who have died in action the previous year.

In Chapter 9, I mentioned my father's anonymous burial in the Hudson River. I think of the river as my father's only headstone and painted a watercolor of the Hudson River as seen from the Fireman's Memorial with this in mind.

Here is that painting of the north end.



The name of the model for the woman on whose lap the dead fireman is stretched out is Audrey Munson. And she was also the model for the mother talking to the fireman's children at the other end of the monument, included in this painting of that view of the monument.



Munson was a remarkable figure of early 20th-century New York. She also posed for the mourning figure in Strauss Park, on 106th Street. It is dedicated to Isidore and Ida Strauss, the family that owned Macy's, who decided together to go down with the Titanic rather than decide which one should have a place in the lifeboats.



Some years after I received Dick's incalculable gift of the immersive time in Sheffield – years when I struggled to find time to paint – Dick started an art school in an abandoned schoolhouse in Brooklyn, which soon moved to Laight Street in lower Manhattan, changing its name from The New Brooklyn School of Drawing, Painting, and Sculpture to, eventually, The New York Academy of Art.

I was a student in his first class, in 1980, taking eight months of Sundays to paint a life-size nude, the model keeping the same standing pose while we worked slowly and carefully, getting the color spots right to Dick's exacting standard.

I studied painting at that school for four years. The philosophy in all its classes was based on painting the nude. The technical assumption was that if you could paint those colors and proportions right, you could paint anything.



The philosophical assumption was more personal – that the painter in the presence of the nude model is creating in permanence an expression of a human relationship experienced in transience. The body in the painting is still, but it is seen and felt as capable of movement. It is celebrated in a personal way as a fellow human, one of *us* – singled out for close regard, for mutual respect and candor.

My attachment to female nudes began in adolescence, and looking back on that, it's easy to see it as sexual, especially at that time of my life. But studying another person's body and painting it with your own interest and emphasis is not just sexual in the way that I thought of it when I was fifteen. Jung thought *eros* was the vehicle of all relationships, and I have come to appreciate that as I've gotten more accustomed to participating in sketch groups with a nude model, male or female.

I have joined classes in many art institutions of the city – The Art Students League, for one, where I studied watercolor with Tim Clark and oil painting with Sig Abeles – and those classes create one kind of community. But the atmosphere – the ethos – of the sketch group is something quite unique. An attentive, almost worshipful, hush falls over the room, and time passes in a trance of concentration. Usually in the sketch group there is no teacher – only a monitor to set the time and the light, and the model in the middle of the intent circle of devotees.

Dick was watching me accumulate watercolors and pastels from sketch groups, and one day asked me to bring them over to his studio where he had cleared a wall. We put them all up and rearranged them until they seemed to float together in a harmonious space. “Take a good picture of the whole wall,” Dick said. “It's your Sistine Chapel ceiling.” I laughed, but I felt the serious connection, and I have thought about this comment again many times. There was something about the massing together of nudes in space and color that evokes wonder, just what Michelangelo had in mind when he surrounded the magnificent figures of God the Creator touching life into Adam's finger, while all around the walls are pillared up by those amazing *ignuti*, male and female nudes framing the whole history of the Bible, of humankind as he knew it.

I think the beauty of a painting or a drawing of a nude figure is that it does not have to have historical or philosophical sense – doesn't have to be explained or connected to anything else. Once it's done, it stays the same forever, long after the painter and the model are gone, and it is itself as much resurrection and eternal life as we can be sure of.

When I joined the Century Association in 1989, it further solidified and broadened my network of friends and expanded my artistic outlets.

The Century Association is unique among the clubs of New York City in having been started by a sketch group. A few of the friends of William Cullen Bryant, poet and editor of the *New York Post*, were painters who also liked to talk. In 1847, they moved their regular sketch group, meeting since 1829, into rooms on lower Broadway, together with other gentlemen who liked to talk about books and ideas and look at paintings. The sketch group was the heart of the organization, and the painters paid half dues, in recognition of their importance and the uncertainty of their income.

It was called the Century because the founders invited hundred members. Today, The Century Association inhabits a McKim Mead and White building on 43rd Street in Manhattan and has many times that original number. Dick Cunningham and Peter Judd (a friend from the Harvard Signet Society) proposed me for membership and, because of my school and professional connections, I had no trouble mustering the required ten letters of support.

Between joining the Century's sketch group and submitting work for the annual amateur exhibition, my focus on drawing and painting increased – it was time to set up a studio.

At first, I used my family therapy office with its big maroon couch for a studio. This had the disadvantage that the only source of light – tungsten floor lamps – made paintings a little claustrophobic, with their limited color range.





It was a monotonous space without good light, but I didn't mind. I was having such a good time. I even used the spare bedroom upstairs in our apartment, but there was always the limitation of the light from south windows.





Then, almost by accident, I discovered that the afternoon light of a western window fell on the radiator cover to produce this much better result. I determined to find a studio where this was available most of the time, the famous north light that painters depend on.

Eventually I found a share in a studio near home that had large north light windows, and that made a big difference.



It was around this time that I discovered the extra interest provided by a white silk nightgown. It made the challenge of painting much more interesting, and I noticed that women friends were more inclined to buy the paintings with this bit of clothing adding its sensuous touch to the design.



Friends at the Century also provided encouragement and entree to other groups. This included a weekly gathering called The Painting Group, taught by David Levine and Aaron Shikler, with a model in one pose for the whole evening.



Both The Painting Group and the Century provided the opportunity to work with models. The bright north light in my new studio corner inspired new projects, including this one, which I titled Danae after the legendary princess locked up in a tower by the king. She was nevertheless visited by Zeus in the form of a shaft of light.



The Century was, above all, the setting for my new friendship with Steve Chinlund. Steve was a very active member of the Century, serving on admissions and governance committees. An enthusiastic member of the traditional sketch group, which met on occasional Saturdays, he started another one, a small but devoted group that met every Thursday, all day, and was open to guests who were not members. He was a deft hand at bending the Century's exclusivity.

Steve and I recognized each other as kindred spirits and started to meet for lunch. Sure enough, we found that we were two years apart at Harvard. He was an Episcopal priest, and at the time we met he was the director of Episcopal Social Services, which, like its Catholic and Jewish counterparts, runs services for the poor and underserved in the city. His was a public ministry, very much like my public psychiatry, and it also mainly involved ways of organizing groups.

Steve's groups were inside high-security prisons, where he had gone early in his ministry to track down the men that were the missing part of the community he was serving as the Director of Reality House, a drug rehabilitation service. Once inside, he decided that there must be a way of changing the experience of life in the cell block of a prison. The group meetings he invented, once they became popular among the inmates, gradually provided an alternative to the informal organization of dominance, rape, drug sales, and exploitation of fellow inmates that make life inside even more hellish than the confinement itself. As the groups became popular, with even some of the guards attending, the exploiters asked to be transferred to other blocks where it was easier to exert their illicit control.

Steve's work in prisons drew high-level attention, and after the Attica riots mobilized public attention, he became the chair of The Commission of Correction, a citizen committee that helped organize Governor Carey's reforms. He organized community supports so that, when released on parole, inmates who had been group members could join similar groups waiting for them in the community, often the only help former inmates found. He wrote a book about his experience, *Prison Transformations*, in which he compared the hidden possibilities of prison life with those of monastic life. I felt I had found a missing brother.

Planning retirement was the other thing Steve and I had in common. He was about to leave his position at ESS and needed a place to use as an office for continuing to promote his prison work, telephoning and writing fund-raising letters. But he wanted it to be a studio as well. When he invited me to move from my tiny, shared corner of a studio uptown, and join him in such a space, something fell into place in both our lives. I found a large north-lit room in a building of studios on West 39th Street and organized one quarter of it for kitchen and storage. Steve moved his furniture, telephone, and books into another quarter, and in the remaining half next to the windows, we painted, sometimes with the same model (a sketch group of two) for nine years.

Steve and I celebrated our move into the new studio by inviting Dick Cunningham's favorite model, to pose for us one afternoon. Here is my watercolor done on that occasion.



Part of our plan was to do portraits of each other. Here is mine of Steve.

Shortly after we moved in, I thought I had finished painting the single nude figures that had occupied me for so many years. I made an e-book of them on my computer, published it on my website, and closed

its cover with a sense of satisfaction. It is called “Painting the Nude” and is still available on my website (<http://www.christianbeels.com>).

And then I began to think – what if these figures were not sitting, each one alone, in the studio? To continue the thought started so many years ago when Dick compiled my “Sistine Chapel,” what if they were grouped together? What if they were all outdoors dancing with each other, like the Maenads of Dionysus? The project of the god and the women dancing in a clearing near a mountain took over my painting life for two years. I didn’t know until I began to read about him that Dionysus is also one of the gods of the Dead, in Greek and Roman religion.

This omission may be because when I first encountered this deity in 1969 at a performance of “Dionysus ’69” staged by Richard Schechner, death was not the focus of the performance. We arrived at a warehouse theater and were shown to seats on the floor and on platforms by the friendly actors, who then took off their clothes and began to perform the drama in the nude.

Dionysus had come to Thebes to establish the rites of his religion, which was strongly opposed by Pentheus, the king, because Dionysus and his Maenads, the wild women who came following the strange god, were disruptive of social order. They enticed the women of the city to leave cradle and spindle to go up and dance with them on the mountain. Not only did this disrupt public order, but it disrespected the official religion of Thebes, the sky-pantheon ruled by Olympian Zeus.

That evening stayed in my mind, especially after we had a talk with Schechner and his wife the actress Joan MacIntosh, who were interested in the similarity between their kind of theater and group and family therapy – all rituals for establishing a new personal or social reality. In classical Greece, Dionysus was the god of theater, among many other things I have learned about him over the years.

My first encounter with Dionysus was as a god of nudity and defiance, and of theater, nothing to do with death. Schechner’s play was about establishing your rites – your theater – in defiance of authority, a theme resonant with the times in 1969. That was when we were all in our 40s and immortal. A few years later, I saw a performance of *The Bacchae* of Euripides, on which the Schechner performance was based,

and learned more of the story.

King Pentheus was the grandson of Cadmus, the founder of Thebes, who had raised its first army by sowing the teeth of a dragon he had slain. He represented the police-and-army kind of Power. Pentheus discovered that it was not possible to arrest Dionysus and lock him up – the chains fell off. Then Pentheus made his fatal mistake. Charmed and curious, he accepted the god's invitation to dress like a woman (no men allowed) and accompany him to the mountain to spy on the Theban women who were dancing with the Maenads. There, stepping out from the mad throng, Pentheus' own mother, Agave, in an ecstatic trance, tore him to pieces. She returned triumphantly to Thebes with his head on a pole, and, awakening, ended the play with a horrendous recognition scene.

Pentheus did not know – and I did not know until I started reading further – that Zeus himself was the father of Dionysus, begotten in a stormy visit to Pentheus' virgin aunt, Semele. Semele died giving birth to the god, but Zeus arrived at the moment of this virgin birth just in time to sew the premature baby into his thigh, to be delivered later (“twice-born”) and raised by nymphs on the Island of Nyssa, from which he took his name.

Also on the island was an old man, some say an old satyr, the young god's teacher, Silenus. It may have been Silenus who taught him to make wine from grapes. Dionysus is most famous as the god of wine, just as Silenus became the patron of drunkenness, another kind of ecstasy. The slender Roman god, Bacchus, and the fat old drunk, Silenus, are often conflated.

But the immortal Olympians were not interested in the human problem of death – that interest was taken up later by the gods of the common people of the Roman Empire, Dionysus and Mithras and Christ. They became popular, especially, among the lower classes, as their number and misery increased with the expansion of the empire. Mithras was the savior god of soldiers in the Roman army – all three of those gods were concerned with facing death.

When I started the large painting of the Maenads on the mountain, I made a blog about it (labeled “the blog” on the Christian Beels Gallery

website), and in the process I did some more reading about the Greek Dionysos (different from the Roman god in more than just the spelling).

It took me back to the world of Minoan Crete that I had found in the third grade picture book in the library at Barnard Elementary School in Tulsa. However, as I found from this reading, this god, whatever his name, was even older than Crete. He was as old as, and probably one with, Osiris, whose sister-consort Isis resurrected his dismembered body in an Egyptian myth going back to the beginning of recorded history.

Death and Dissolution, and Resurrection, and virgin birth, especially birth as the son of God the Father, are all very ancient pre-Christian ideas. And then, by Greek and Roman times, they have become early ideas about biology as well as religion. You can see in carvings on Roman sarcophagi that Dionysus is Lord of the Dead, especially in the winter when the vines are bare. Like Orpheus, he returns from the Underworld in the resurrection of the spring and summer and the fermentation of autumn. That's another mystery of life, a transformation both of wine and spirit. In ancient Athens, the return of the leaves in Spring marked his other rite, the festival contest of theater performances.

As I worked on the large 6 ft x4 ft painting – thirteen dancing women plus the god – Steve and I talked about these similarities between Christian iconography and ritual, and the myths and rituals of Dionysus.



. The ancients saw the fermenting and drinking of wine, (as well as the rising, baking, and eating of bread) as reflection of the force of life. All these processes were mysterious transformations of organic matter, caused by agencies that they could not see. Perhaps they held them in awe because, unlike their mortal bodies, the processes of rising, baking, and fermenting were eternal and perpetual as well as invisible. It was what the Greeks called *zoe*, the life force, separate from *bios*, the story of the life of an individual. That is the subject of biography, which as a biographer I knew once said, “always ends the same way,” with death.

Those years in the studio with Steve were rich with so many connections. Steve’s wife Caroline is a psychologist who meets with a supervision group conducted by Jeffrey Zeig, the keeper of the tradition of Milton Erickson and, incidentally, the publisher of my book. She was a theater director at Radcliffe, and she and Steve joined Margaret and me in off-Broadway adventures, especially at The Metropolitan Playhouse, a 50-seat theater on East Fourth Street where Margaret chairs the board. Margaret also joined Steve and me in the Thursday morning sketch group at the Century – in fact she is as consistent a member as Steve was.

Margaret and I have gone to visit prisons with Steve and have been in correspondence with a playwright on the inside, reading his

plays in our play-reading group.

Steve invited Margaret and me to join in his first discussion group at the Open Center called “Happy Surprises in Later Life,” where we found that there were a whole group of strangers who were eager to join a group for talk with other strangers about love, families, and the fear of death, under Steve’s expert and very personal leadership. One summer we joined the Chinlunds for a trip to the South of France, painting, cooking, and exploring.

As you can guess from what I’ve said so far, the real group-maker in my life, the *pontifexis maxima*, is Margaret. She is the prime mover of dinner parties, visits, connections of all sorts, even joining in the sketch group and painting in recent years. Here is my portrait of her while she was painting on the porch at our Brewster, New York, cabin.



And here, also, is the still life she was painting.

I come here at last to describe the group Margaret started that has become for our old age what summer camp was for me growing up. Margaret had the idea to start a leaderless group of close friends and invited six to join us. We meet every month or so and talk about the experience of aging. At first, we called it the Retirement Group, but since we were all at different stages in that project, someone suggested we call it The Olds, which we certainly are, in our 70s to 90s. We are all in fair health, the worst problems being in the musculo-skeletal systems. We talk about what it's like to be still rowing together in this particular lifeboat, after the experience of more and more friends and colleagues going down with the ship.

It is a resolutely secular group, mostly people who, like Margaret, have a skeptical view of spirituality. Margaret grew up listening to the discussions of physicists, and in a sense, I grew up listening to sermons. The way I would think the relationship between metaphysics and spirituality would be illustrated by a sermon about Pentecost. That was the meeting of the disciples a good while after the crucifixion, when the Savior had not reappeared as promised, the Kingdom had not come, and each was discouraged in his own separate way, facing death again without hope. It seemed like a broken promise.

They met in a large room – some say the same room as the Last Supper – and shared their discouragement. Suddenly a great wind blew through the chamber, blowing out the earthly lamps, and each one of the company could be seen with a flame flickering over his head. Miraculously, in spite of speaking different languages from every corner of the Empire, they could understand each other perfectly. And what they understood was that they were, themselves, as a group, at once the Kingdom on earth, the Body of the Church, and the Holy Ghost, the Comforter.

What I think this means is that spirituality is something social, more understandable as “esprit de corps” – something akin to team spirit – the renewed courage that the disciples discovered at Pentecost. It is not *disembodied* – it is, precisely, *embodied*, in the group. This is why I find such comfort in gatherings like the Olds and the discussions we have together.

Our group of Olds rarely talks about death. A wise therapist said

most people are not afraid of death, but they are afraid of dying. I think that's true for me, and for the rest of the group. My fear of the experience of dying – with its weakness, disorientation, ennui, pain, whatever – is helped by the prospect of the physical presence of people, and those could be medical caretakers and hospice workers, as well as family and others. Lucy Squire, my friend and teacher at medical school said of a patient she had worked with closely, “He died in my arms,” as naturally as she would have said, “I held his hand.” We should all die in someone's arms, but it takes a group of watchers and waiters, encouraging and supporting each other to be present, that makes that possible – that makes the wait for the ending endurable for everyone.

I remember with regret waiting with my mother in the hotel room in the middle of the night for the telephone call from the doctor who was at my father's bedside. Neither the one who is dying nor the others in this grueling ritual should be alone and unsupported. Before modern medicine, everyone understood that.

This contemplation of spirituality, life, and death has been a thread throughout my friendship with Steve as well. He studied Hebrew in seminary and remembered etymological connections in that language between leaven, orgasm, and the power of creation that belongs to God. Steve saw the Christian Bible as a very edited patchwork of stories, selected by the Apostles, of an historical Christ, a man in the Jewish tradition of the Messiah, strongly influenced by religious traditions from all over Roman Asia Minor. His view of Jesus is as a wonderful friend. And as a priest, he was unconcerned with church teachings about punishment or reward after death, and more concerned with the dying themselves. Death is death a great mystery, which we will know about when it comes.

Steve wrote a play about love in late life between two old people who meet in a sketch group, become lovers, and struggle with each other over euthanasia. It is Steve's capstone work. And the Dionysus painting seems to be mine. I continue to tinker with it. The bodies of the exhausted Maenads, dancing or prone, need to be in the shade of the trees and bushes – they are still too bare in the light of the studio where they were first painted.

A few years ago, Steve and I decided not to renew our studio lease because, at our age, three years was too far ahead to plan with confidence. We still planned for plenty of time to talk and felt confident in the availability of sketch groups all over town. I prepared to find another way to paint, as well as another way to do a lot of things.

I have sold or given away most of the paintings of nudes, but they are still on my web site in the “Painting the Nude” e-book. Also on that site is the blog that follows the adventure of making the Dionysus painting from start to a very late stage. Andy Ferber bought a full-size *giclée* copy of it at that point, even though I am still puttering with the foliage in the original. All this will stay online until I stop paying rent on the website.

For a year after we discontinued our studio lease, I went every Monday to Steve’s apartment where there was room for us to paint. He had been stricken with hydrocephalus, which affected his gait and the speed of many reflexes. As he slowed down, Caroline took wonderful care of him. She organized a team of caretakers, continued her psychotherapy practice, attended a support group, and participated in the soup kitchen at Holy Apostles, the church where Steve has been a celebrant and preacher. In the evenings, Steve read to her while she did the dishes.

The year of visiting Steve once a week ended with his peaceful death from pneumonia in 2021. I miss him, but it was good to have a year of saying goodbye.

I am slowing down, too. Emerson said, “it is time to be old, to take in sail.” This chapter has been spread to the wind large and long enough, and with the others it is ready to come down and be folded for the night.

And then what? What I’ve written is certainly more than enough memory! And enough paintings – I can’t get rid of them all. Now when I think about dying, the thing that comes to mind is a short poem by Goethe that I first read in German class at St. Paul’s.

*Über allen Gipfeln
Ist Ruh,
In allen Wipfeln
Spürest du
Kaum einen Hauch;*

*Die Vögelein schweigen im
Walde.
Warte nur, balde
Ruhest du auch.*

*Over all the hills
Peace comes now.
The woodland stills
All through.*

*The birds make no sound on the
bough.
Wait a while – soon, now
Rest comes for you, too.*

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