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# Cytoplasm:

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# I.

There were two times in my life that my father gave me a soldier's farewell. The first was a dull September day in 1960, when I left home in Edinburgh to become a boarder at Sedbergh School. The second was at the end of August 1966.

We stood there at Greenock docks, my father, my mother and I. There, in the distance, resting sedately in the sparkling, blue waters of the Clyde, was the Empress of Canada. It lay there white and gleaming, looking like a huge, ornate wedding cake.

We stood there. As often happened in the company of my parents, I felt embarrassingly out of place. Around us was a hoard of people. There was excitement and bustle. There was laughter and there were tears. On all sides, there were feverish last minute conversations. By contrast, we just stood there, each feeling the other bursting with emotion, but somehow not knowing how to express it.

"Don't forget to write, darling," said my mother. I looked at her. Her usual expression of anxiety was softened by lines of sorrow and love.

"I won't Mummy." I swallowed hard to keep the tears down. At the age of nineteen, it was the last time I called her that. It was time to break away. She knew it and I knew it.

My father moved forward, his hand outstretched.

"Well, looks like you'd better be going. He indicated the waiting tender that had already started to take on its first passengers. "Time waits for no-one. Well, study hard. Play hard. Write to us as often as you can. I'm not one for lengthy farewell. A soldier's farewell is the best way. So, goodbye."

For just an instant our eyes met. Although his voice had betrayed emotion, his eyes were blank. I wondered yet again why he would not show his feelings. The one time his eyes became alive was when he was angry.

I turned to my mother.

"I promise I'll write," I said as I hugged her.

"We're going to miss you, Ian," she said, her voice soft and breaking. "You're the last one. Goodbye darling, good luck." I felt like we were watery colours in a painting, dissolving into and away from each other. In a mist of emotion, I picked up my travelling suitcase and walked towards the tender.

As we waited to set off, a man in a crumpled blue suit touched me on the arm, and said, "are you emigrating too, son?"

"No, I replied. "I'm going to University there - for three years."

"Well, you're going to the right place, son. We're awa tae Edmonton. Aye, that's the place tae be. You can have a decent life there. There's nae jobs here. Aye, you're going tae the right place. The 'Land of Opportunity' they call it, and that's what it is."

The tender started moving, and suddenly the man in the blue suit began waving furiously. All around me was a forest of waving hands. On the dockside, a lone piper began to play a lament. I looked to where my parents had been standing. To my surprise, they were still there. Solid, unmoving, separate - they could have been standing at attention. And yet, there was a vulnerability about them. As they began to recede into the distance, they seemed to transform themselves in my eyes from omnipotent beings into an elderly couple, somehow fragile in their stiffness and aloneness. An old man and an old woman standing alone on the quay, saying goodbye to the last of their three children.

Finally they were out of sight. I turned to my companion, the man in the blue suit. I wanted to ask him about Edmonton. I quickly turned back again. He was gazing out across the water and weeping quietly.

On the boat I needed to lose myself. The nine months between leaving Sedbergh and going to Canada had been eventful. Over the winter and spring, I had taken jobs working as a floorcleaner in a ski

hotel in Invernesshire, followed by a handyman's job at The Bridge Hotel in Buttermere, in the Lake District. It was while working there, in March, that I received news that I had been awarded a Drapers Company Scholarship. The first thing I did was to jump into the stream beside the hotel, fully clothed. Then, after explaining to the staff why I had gone temporarily crazy, I sent off a telegram to Pam.

A year previously, another Sedbergh boy, Tim Anderson, had been awarded a Drapers Scholarship. He had gone to Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario. I had written to him and he had replied saying that it was a good university and that he was having a wonderful time. That was good enough for me. After receiving word in January, that I had scraped through the London Board's Physics A Level exam with an 'E' grade, I had applied to Queens.

Eventually, I received an acceptance letter from Queens. What remained to be done was preparation for going to Canada and a whole series of goodbyes. I felt that the most wrenching goodbye would be with David Lungley. I knew that we both had some free time in July and August, and so I proposed to David that we go on a hitch-hiking trip around Europe. He accepted. We planned the trip on a shoe-string budget – literally! – we set off with £30 each, and somehow survived the next 6 weeks travelling through France, Switzerland, Italy, Greece, Yugoslavia, Austria, West Germany and Belgium. A few nights were spent in Youth Hostels but many more were spent under the stars. The trip cemented our friendship. I was sure I had a friend for life, a soul brother.

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The Empress of Canada blasted its horn and we were on our way. After checking out my cabin, I made my way to the bar. There I struck up an acquaintance with a group of high-spirited Canadians, about the same age as myself. It turned out that they were returning from a summer in Europe in time to start their first year in University, or 'school' as they called it. Before long, I was buying them Younger's Tartan and they were initiating me to Molson's Export. I eagerly pressed them with questions about Canada, but they seemed more interested in talking about their experiences in Europe. After a while, we were joined by someone who introduced himself as Harry Burke. To my astonishment it turned out that like me, he had won a Draper's Company Commonwealth University Scholarship. He informed me that he was going out to the West Coast to study at the University of British Columbia. "They love Brits. out there," he later confided in me.

Long before the Empress of Canada had reached the open water of the Atlantic, our little group had both proclaimed itself delightfully drunk and indissolubly a unit for the rest of the trip.

The next five days were a plethora of new impressions and experiences. It seemed that on an ocean liner such as this, the accepted lifestyle was one of excess. The morning after our departure, I sat down for breakfast and the waiter handed me the biggest menu I'd ever seen. I gazed at it not knowing quite where to start. I knew that the cost of meals was included in the overall fare, but I assumed there were limitations to what and how much one could eat.

"What am I allowed to have?" I asked the waiter.

"Well, sir, you're allowed to have everything on that menu, if that's what you want," was the reply.

"Everything!?" Slowly the implications of what he was saying dawned on me. Never in my life had I been offered everything. That morning I had grapefruit, orange juice, cornflakes, croissants, kippers, sausage and eggs, hot blueberry muffins, half a cantaloupe, toast and marmalade, and several cups of coffee. The waiter seemed impressed.

The next morning, he brought me everything on the breakfast menu without my ordering it. Clearly we had a friendly contest going. As it turned out, he won. Before the day was out, the combination of gluttonous eating and unrestrained drinking resulted in my being violently sick.

On the third evening, while we were somewhere in mid-Atlantic, there was a fancy dress competition. I persuaded Harry and one of the Canadian girls to join me in entering. We dressed ourselves in sackcloth, obtained huge meatbones from the ship's galleys, and entered ourselves as 'The Flintstones'. Our antics in front of the judges included flea-picking, seductive gestures from the scantily clad Canadian girl, and bursting Harry's strategically placed balloons. The audience loved it and we got the biggest ovation of the night. So, we were thoroughly let down when the judges gave first prize to a couple of old ladies who'd adorned themselves with white sheets and coronets of grapes, under the pretence of being Anthony and Cleopatra.

Although I liked him well enough, Harry Burke somehow represented the past. He was so 'English'. I knew his type inside out. He was predictable in word and action. On the other hand, one of the Canadians in the group fascinated me. His name was Reid Wilson and he was a doctor's son from Ayr, Ontario. He looked like a young version of Steve McQueen and seemed to be similarly action-orientated and attractive to women. He spent his time talking about sex. What amazed me was his language. Here was a doctor's son, about to enter University, talking about 'cunt in Europe', and using language like 'fucking this and fucking that', 'cocksuckers', and 'arseholes'. In my background to date, no one had talked this explicitly and this nonchalantly. There was an informality and complete lack of artifice about him that attracted me. He also made fun of Harry and I as 'Pommys' in a way that I liked, and yet was later to discover, was not at all representative of most Canadians I met.

It was a shock when, on the fourth day, someone said that we had already passed Newfoundland and were about to enter the gulf of the Saint Lawrence River. I felt like I'd been floating in a fifth dimension, away from the familiar moorings of time and place. For days, I'd been part of a tight little community, sheltered from the real world. Now the endless, free expanse of the ocean was bounded by a shoreline, and as we entered the mouth of the river, it became apparent that there was a purpose to our voyage other than just having a good time. Suddenly I felt distanced from my Canadian companions. For them, this was a homecoming. They began to talk about hockey teams and old friends and their families. For me, and perhaps Harry, this was the start of an adventure - both exciting and frightening, but one that was to be experienced alone. This was a new land, a new world. To me it was as if this new frontier was sheathed in layers of resistance to the newcomer. I sensed that my adventure would involve the necessity of having to push through the various layers. It seemed like a daunting task.

### Diary Entries

*30<sup>th</sup>. Aug. 1969:*

*The passport people came on board at Quebec City. I became an official student immigrant. Somebody points out the Plains of Abraham. I try to remember my Canadian history. 'That's where we creamed the frogs', Reid Wilson reminded me.*

*31<sup>st</sup>. Aug.*

*Put my foot on Canadian soil for the first time. Pamela, here we come! I'll be in Edmonton before Christmas. Impressions of Montreal: heat, size of the cars, speediness, impersonality. Canadians seem to smile a lot when they talk to each other, but on the bus to Kingston nobody talked, or smiled. Am still high as a kite from the boat trip.*

It took about two weeks for me to fully come down to earth. What brought me down with a thud was a meeting with Jean Royce, the steely Registrar of Queen's University.

"Welcome to Queens and Kingston. It's always nice for us to meet another Draper's scholar from the Old Country. Now, let me just find your file."

We were in her air-conditioned office in the central Administration building. Although I had been in Kingston for a while, this was my first official greeting to Queen's University.

Ms. Royce surveyed my file through her steel-rimmed glasses. Her grim face became grimmer.

"Oh dear, well I don't know I'm sure. You only have a 'D' and an 'E' grade at A level. With only two A levels and these low grades, I'm frankly surprised you were accepted."

I sat there flabbergasted. What was she trying to say? Had I just come over three thousand miles to be told that there had been a mistake? Didn't she realise I had come to this country in pursuit of two great quests? One to get a University degree, and two, to finally meet Pam, the woman of my dreams, after six years of writing to her. Now this wiry, grey-haired, old woman was telling me to go home? Or was she? It seemed like a conspiracy of enormous proportions.

"Where did you go to school?"

"Sedbergh."

"Haven't heard of it."

"Oh."

"And your A levels are in Physics and Chemistry. Is that what you plan to specialise in here?"

"No. I'm not sure exactly what I'm going to specialise in, probably Geology."

I began to sweat. This was like an inquisition and she was prodding all my raw nerves. It was true that I had got low grades in my A levels, but what she didn't know was that I had no aptitude whatsoever at either of these subjects. Consequently I'd had to work like a slave to even gain a pass mark. What she didn't know was that the reason I'd specialized in Physics and Chemistry in the first place was because my father had mistakenly believed that I needed A level in these two subjects in order to get into Sandhurst, the Royal Military Academy in England. Otherwise, I would have done English and History, two subjects for which I had much greater affinity. Nor did she know that my teachers at Sedbergh had thought me a bit 'slow', and 'not too bright'. She didn't even know that neither they nor my parents had ever expected me to get into University.

Yes, I had been awarded a Draper's Company Scholarship, but not because of academic merit but despite it. I had been awarded one because I had done well in music and sports, and because I was seen as a 'jolly good chap' and thus a good purveyor of the finer British values and attitudes abroad. I had got one because Hamish Blair-Cunynghame had written me a glowing reference.

Everything considered, my parents seemed relatively satisfied. My mother was impressed that the scholarship was worth £800 a year, for three years. And my father, although still in shock over my rejection of Sandhurst and then Cranwell, reiterated that he had always considered University an acceptable option, given that I was able to qualify. For my part, I felt I had a point to prove - the fact was that I resented my parents' and teachers' assessment of my intelligence. As to which subject to take a degree in, I didn't really know what I wanted except that I had it in mind to become a Geologist. I had arrived at the idea of Geology by way of two quite unrelated paths. One was a path of practical reasoning. I had discovered that Physics and Chemistry were prerequisites for doing Geology, but that because I had A levels in these subjects, I would be exempt from having to do these courses in first year. This seemed like a pay-off for three years of misery.

On the other hand, the other path was much more romantic. As a child I had been enthralled by the pictures in National Geographic magazines. They had transported me away to far-off lands, up the highest peaks, along the widest rivers, through the lushest jungles and remotest of plains, into what seemed like the most rich and colourful of human cultures. Often I noticed the articles were written by geologists. This led to a view of geologists as explorers and adventurers rather than as scientists working in pokey little laboratories.

These thoughts flashed through my mind as Jean Royce continued to peruse my file. Suddenly she closed it and stood up.

"Well Mr. Brown, you'll just have to work extra hard to justify our trust in you. If I can be of any assistance to you, don't hesitate to contact me. Now, good day to you."

I shook her bony hand and rushed out into the warm sunshine feeling like I'd just been reprieved from death row. As I walked away, I chuckled. The biggest thing she didn't know was that I was only a few months away from finally losing my virginity. Six years of writing to Pam was the lead-up to this great moment. I shuddered as I realised that, at a whim, the chaste Miss Royce could have condemned me to everlasting virginity.

## 2.

The pig squealed in absolute terror. Small wonder. Covered in axle grease for the occasion, it was being wrestled towards the opponent's goal line. I stayed on the outside, going through the motions. Somebody had warned me not to be the one actually holding the pig as it was quite common for the shit to be squeezed out of it, like icing from a baker's piping bag.

What the hell am I doing here, I asked myself. For a week, I had gone along with the Queen's 'Frosh' initiations. For a week, I had acquiesced to a series of hazing rituals designed to degrade and humiliate. Along with the other frosh, I had been obliged to wear a mock Scottish outfit, consisting of a 'kilt' of red material, a white sweat shirt with my name on front and back, a big name button on my chest, a 'tam' on my head, and a straw brush, as a sporran in front of my goodly gonads. For a week, along with everyone else, I had been mocked and bullied and ordered around by the Vigilantes. The V.I.G.'s, as they were called, were second year students whose job it was to put us in our place through various 'fun' activities.

There had been Slave Day, where for a day, we were sent out to do 'slave labour' for anyone who requested it. At the end of the day, we were paraded down the main street of Kingston to the cheers and jeers of onlookers and older students. Then there were the VIG sessions, where we were herded into a lecture hall, and for an hour or so, were verbally assaulted by various V.I.G.'s as they got their kicks pretending to be Gestapo in Auschwitz.

During the week I kept trying to convince myself that I was having fun. It wasn't as if hazing was foreign to me. I had undergone a similar process as a fag at Sedbergh School. But I had only been thirteen then. Now I was nineteen. Then again, I argued, if I had gone to Cambridge or Sandhurst, I would have had to undergo similar rituals. Or would I? If there were such initiations there, surely they had more meaning than these futile and overly sadistic exercises.

Meanwhile the pig was being torn apart as the defending team fought to gain control. The squeals were shrill and desperate. It wasn't even a full-grown pig, for God's sake - just a youngster with little strength or defences. And why were we doing this? Was this also meant to be imbuing us with the Queen's 'spirit', helping us gain the identity of true Queensmen?

Suddenly I felt nauseated. I pulled away and walked quickly to the side of the pitch. As I left Richardson Stadium, several hundred screaming frosh were still pulling and pushing and grabbing and heaving their way to and fro. And from their midst, the death cries of the pig drilled its way into my conscience. I just wanted to get away from there, before the squealing stopped altogether.

### Diary Entries

#### *First impressions of Queens & Canada:*

*The men are boys and the women are girls. Boys and girls both dress alike. They wear sweatshirts, checked Bermuda pants or cut-off jeans, short socks and running shoes. Most of the girls have short hair and the majority of men have crew cuts. If it weren't for a few Beatle-length mops, I'd feel like I'd just parachuted into an American campus in the fifties. The whole scene reminds me of that film 'Monterey Pop', with those over-fed, under-exercised, bermuda-shortened Americans. People here also seem to be loud and brash, like the Americans.*

*The abundance of food here is astounding. In the residence cafeteria, chilled milk is on tap (including chocolate milk!), steaks are frequent and huge, servings are very generous, and there is always a variety of main course items foods to choose from. There's no question that people here seem to eat and drink a lot, especially between meals. They eat potato chips and 'candy' bars, and if they are thirsty, they drink Coke instead of water. In any event, their standards and mine must be different. While I revel in the quality and quantity of cafeteria food, they complain about it. I*



wonder how they would have liked Sedbergh with its single servings, lack of choice, and water as the beverage.

*People here seem to place a great emphasis on their Scottish roots. I feel like saying, but I am Scottish (well at least half Scottish) and I'm trying to get away from all that stuff like Nationalism and waving the flag, I am too entangled in my roots.*

*Why does everyone here say 'you guys', including girls speaking to girls? Are the girls afraid of being girls?*

*My room is on the second floor of Leonard Hall, overlooking Lake Ontario. Besides drinking Coke, eating potato chips, and 'shooting the shit' (i.e. talking), the main activity round here seems to be centred around cleanliness rituals. It's back to standards again. Maybe my standard of hygiene is too low, but people round here seem to have a fixation with cleanliness. Maybe it's a hangover from pioneer days when I suppose having the facilities to wash yourself and your clothes was seen as a luxury. Anyway, people round here are forever washing their clothes, washing their hair, and taking showers.*

*It's not even that they are sweaty. I haven't seen much evidence of hard exercise as yet. And then there is the preoccupation with hangers. Clothes are always being put on hangers instead of being hung on the back of a chair or thrown on the bed. I can't figure it out at all. Jackets, and trousers that look spotless to me are hauled off to the dry-cleaners, underpants that have only been worn for one day are put into the dirty wash, and hair that is a still glossy is re-shampooed on almost a daily basis. And these are the guys!*

*On reflection, I realise that the main intention of the Frosh initiations was not just to brand you as a Queensman but also, 'An Artsman', 'A Plumber' (engineering student), 'A Meds' or a 'Phys. Ed.' student. Each faculty had its own initiations, and rivalry between faculties is encouraged. There are, for example, rival songs. The plumbers sing, 'if you're an Artsman then you're a queer', and the Artsmen would sing something about how Plumbers spent their time cleaning toilet bowls.*

*Each faculty has its own jacket. On completing the initiation week, I am 'allowed' to wear an official, red leather Arts jacket for \$40. I must admit that they look quite good in an Elvis Presley / Marlon Brando kind of way, but I'm not going to buy one for several reasons. First I don't like following the herd. Second, the initiations have failed to make me feel like 'a Queensman'. Thirdly, I had done nothing to earn such a fancy status symbol. At Sedbergh, when I got my 1<sup>st</sup>. XV Rugby jacket, it was an honour. It meant something.*

*In the last week I have thought about the incident with the pig several times. In terms of the group pressure to engage in something sadistic, the incident has made me think of George Orwell's essay 'Shooting Of An Elephant' and Golding's book, Lord Of The Flies. Once again I realise just how much I hate mindless conformity. I question why I have never really rebelled against anything.*

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#### Review:

Pamela Boyd had been a childhood friend of mine. As young children, we had both lived on Kingsburgh Road in the quiet, sedate Edinburgh suburb of Murrayfield. At around the age of nine, Pam emigrated, with the rest of her family to Canada. Her father, who was a doctor, set up a practice as an ophthalmologist in Edmonton, Alberta. I was sorry to see her leave, but I had other friends so I soon forgot all about her.

Then one Christmas, a few years later, I received a card from her. I didn't reply immediately. It was only a year later, when at the age of thirteen as a new boarder at Sedbergh School, that I felt an urge to reply. A correspondence was struck up and for the next six years we shared our innermost dreams and yearnings with each

other. After all this time, and all the paper work, the urge to see each other in the flesh was understandable. The urge was partly romantic, partly sexual frustration, and partly due to a natural desire to overcome circumstantial impediments. I had been determined to get to Canada one way or another, so when I was awarded the Draper's scholarship, it was like a gift from the Gods.

Now the reality of our meeting loomed ever closer. We had planned that I would take the train out to Alberta and spend Christmas with the Boyds in Edmonton. As the days and weeks went by, our correspondence became increasingly frequent.

Excerpts from Pam's letters:

Sept. 12<sup>th</sup>, 1966

*I'm starting school tomorrow at the U. of A. My courses are all pretty academic. It means, no getting into plays at all. It's going to kill me. When I don't do any acting for a long stretch I go out of my mind ... oh yes, when I told you I was 'very immoral' – don't get the wrong idea. I didn't mean I hop into bed with just anyone. It's just my way of life is very uninhibited.*

Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup>.

*I'm so depressed I could jump out of my attic window. My loan hasn't arrived. No one seems in the least bit friendly and I feel a complete misfit. I don't know why I'm here. I can't wait for you to come at Christmas. You can stay with me in Calgary for a week before we go back to our place in Edmonton. By the way, my mum's anxious about our getting together.*

I responded to this last letter by telling her that I was worried about her depression. I tried to empathise by telling her that I got really depressed at times too. And then I tried to perk her up by telling her that her courses would become more interesting, that she was bound to meet people soon, and that I was sure she would be acting before long. Then I asked her if her mother knew whether we were planning to spend a week in Calgary and whether she minded. The thought that she or her husband would *not* mind was hard for me to understand.

Letter from Pam: Excerpts: Oct. 13<sup>th</sup>.

*For the first time since we've been writing, I feel sort of angry with you. If there's one thing I really know about, it's depression and its remedies. I realised that you don't have a clue about what I'm really like and the life I live. But I can't possibly start to tell you in a letter. About Christmas. You misunderstood. Mum is only too anxious to have you come. I can't really explain why, or what the consequences will be. Just accept it and come. You don't really think I'd say, 'it's not a good idea, don't come.' After eight years you were willing to give up that easily. You know Ian, my parents have complete confidence in me, and I'm not cheating them either. I don't feel in the least bit guilty about one thought in my head or one thing I do ...*

*Something else I want you to understand; maybe you think I'm being self-pitying in my letters, especially when I'm depressed, well maybe I am, but sometimes I can't avoid it. I miss my old life and my old friends. It tears my guts out when I can't be with them. And when I do see them, things have changed, so it's not the same. In this institution of education, my mind is profiting but my soul is completely starving. I don't know which is more important to me.*



### 3.

It was a beautiful, crisp fall day. I was in Montreal as a member of the Queen's University Rugby Team. Our match, against McGill was held on the central campus pitch adjoining Sherbrooke Street and was due to start at 11 a.m. The rugby match was generally regarded as a preliminary bout to the main event, namely The Golden Gaels versus the McGill Redmen, in the Molson stadium. The streets around the University were filled with the red, blue and yellow jackets of Queens' students. It seemed as if the whole of Queen's University had descended on Montreal for the game.

After the disorientation of my first few weeks at Queens, I had needed to find an anchor - something familiar, and something at which I was adept. Rugby seemed the obvious choice. I hadn't known what to expect in the first week of practices. On the one hand, I remembered my father telling me that there was no greater honour than playing rugby for one's University except, of course, playing for one's country. On the other, I was surprised that there even was a Rugby team in the first place. I had assumed that Canadians only played Ice Hockey and Canadian Football.

As it turned out, the team was eventually made up of South Africans, Brits, and ex-private school Canadians. Of the latter, the most interesting were Peter Ryan, Pete Taylor and Chip Drury. Peter Ryan was tall and slim. He wore white leather shoes and was the sophisticated playboy of the team. Pete Taylor was curly-haired and, red-faced, a beer-sozzled, feisty hell-raiser. Chip Drury held a somewhat exalted status amongst the other Canadians due partly to the fact that he was the son of Bud Drury, a prominent politician, and partly because he had nearly made the Golden Gaels.

I had already learned that Rugby in Canada, for everyone but the players and most ardent supporters, was on the whole a curiosity - a game for the crazy Colonials, but not one to be taken seriously on the grass-roots level. Our game against McGill did nothing to change that view. Although some of the Queens students in town for the big football game wandered over to give us support, the most vocal support came with the unmistakable inflections of ex-patriots.

It was after the game, in the showers, that Pete Taylor revealed the real reason for being on the Rugby team.

"Listen mate, (Pete Taylor, although Canadian was at times more British than the British) the objective is not so much to score on the field. I mean, take today. All the ass in Kingston is down here for the football game, and some of it has to fall our way, right? It's like après-ski; the real action is after the game. By the way, if you don't have any safes yet, you'd better buy some before this evening. That's if you want to get laid."

'Get laid' - I had trouble with this expression. To my ears it somehow distorted and diminished my associations with the supreme event. Gone was the glorious act of intercourse, the wild copulating of coitus, the serpentine writhing of sexual union, the unrestrained abandon of fucking, the sweet sweaty tenderness of love-making; gone the animal lust with the man as the hunter and aggressor. Instead, the phrase 'get laid' conjured up associations of being sat upon by one's mother.

I also had some troubles with the intent of Pete Taylor's advice. On the one hand I was dying to lay someone, or even 'get laid' by someone, anything that involved something other than my own hand. But somehow, I felt I should be loyal to Pam.

This argument was raging in my head as I headed towards the Pharmacy with Pete Taylor. After all, I reasoned, it's only two more months and then I'll have all the sex I want for two weeks. Besides, Pam is probably holding back for me. What if she told me that she had remained a virgin exclusively for me, and I had to tell her I'd lost mine after a football game in Montreal? Talk about guilt. I could just hear her saying, 'after eight years of writing', you couldn't even restrain yourself for a few more months!'

"Are you getting threes or sixes?" Pete Taylor held up two different-sized packages.

“My God, will you be more discreet?” I said, looking around.

“Aw come on, this is Montreal. Everyone does it here, the French influence you know. We’re not in Kingston, don’t worry.”

“Maybe I’ll just get one,” I mumbled, thinking that even if I didn’t do anything, I could at least practice with the thing so as to get to know how to use it.

“ONE! You’ve got to be kidding. Is this what they call British reserve?” Pete Taylor laughed and headed off to the counter with a package of six.

Suddenly I felt a rush of tenderness and loyalty towards Pam. I replaced the single package. Yes, I had steeled my will. I would not be swayed by peer pressure. Let him have his orgy, I would remain steadfast to Pam. After all, I was a Sedberghian; ‘Dura Virum Nutrix’ was our motto. I was certainly not going to get laid by just anyone, I decided.

That evening we went to a party. After the football game, I made my way back to the hotel room where I had a shower and tried to sober up a little. The other reason for being on a Rugby team (and attending football games) was to get drunk at every opportunity.

After the shower, I put on my navy blue Old Sedberghian blazer, cavalry twills, white shirt and O.S. tie, and set off for the party. The address was in what had been described to me as the McGill ‘ghetto’. To get there, I had to walk up University Street past the so-called Fraternity houses. The street scene resembled something out of the Mardi Gras, or so it seemed to me. The doors and windows were open and music blared out. People were everywhere, on the steps, hanging out of upper story windows, whooping it up on the street. Everywhere I looked, there was booze and beautiful-looking women. This was more like it - hardly a pair of Bermuda shorts to be seen anywhere, at least not on the McGill women. For the first time since I had started at Queens, I began to forget the dryness of lecture halls and textbooks on Economics, Geology and Philosophy. Yes, this was much more like it, a jungle of sensuality, with me, the hunter on the prowl, safes or no safes.

The door was opened by a Queens student.

“Come in old boy. Party’s in full swing.”

I recognised the speaker. It was someone called Chris Porter. I was surprised to see him. He was not on the team. In fact, I had replaced him as fly half after the first week of the season. Because of this, I felt slightly uncomfortable in his company. I knew he bore some resentment for being excluded from the team. But there was another cause for discomfort. It turned out that Chris Porter was another Draper’s scholar. When I first heard this, I was delighted. However what began to bother me after a while was the fact that his English accent seemed to be in flux. He had only been in Canada for little over a year and already he was slurring his consonants. In addition, his speech was dotted with Canadianisms like ‘sure thing’ and ‘right on’. These lapses seemed to me indications of a weak will. Only a few weeks earlier, I had received a letter from the Draper’s Company wishing me good luck and telling me that they regarded each Commonwealth scholar as an ambassador for the Company and for his country. As far as I was concerned, anyone who slurred his ‘r’s’ and said ‘truck’ instead of lorry was hardly a good ambassador for his country.

These thoughts flashed through my mind as I surveyed the scene. By the look of it, things had been in full swing for a while. Pete Taylor spotted me and made his way over, a bottle of beer in each hand.

“Here you are, my old fruit,” he said affecting an English accent. “Drink some grog and loosen up.”

I took the beer and sat down at the side of the room. Being told to ‘loosen up’ had hit a raw nerve. I didn’t like parties for precisely that reason, the pressure to be loose. The expectation had the reverse effect; it made me tighten up. If I was going to loosen up, it had to happen naturally, not because I felt pushed. Suddenly I no longer felt like a hunter, more like a monk.

Peter Ryan floated by in his white leather shoes. “Want one of these?” He extended a black cigarette case. “They’re Black Sobranies. And while you’re at it, have a shot of this. He reached into the pocket of his tailored jacket and produced a hip flask.

“What is it?” I asked.

“Brandy.”

What the hell, I thought. Maybe I should let go a bit. The brandy seared my throat and flushed warm

in my stomach. It seemed reassuring. I got up and went over to a table, for another beer. The trouble with you, I thought to myself, is you're too sensitive, too damned sensitive, you get too introspective.

I took a long draught of beer and looked around. There *were* women but there seemed to be a shortage of them as usual. What was it that my Economics Prof. had been saying the other day? When there is scarcity of resources, the demand goes up and therefore competition is increased. This is what I hated - the competition, the rivalry to attract women. I hated pushing as much as I hated being pushed. As a Rugby team, we pushed together. Now, in this sort of set up, we had to push against each other. The ultimate goal was to get a woman and 'score'. But it seemed you had to push and shove even to get close to one. It was like the greased pig all over again.

I drank a couple of glasses of wine in quick succession. I took off my tie and undid my shirt. The music was getting louder. A group, led by Pete Taylor, was singing Rugby songs: "oh Sir Jasper, do not touch me, oh Sir Jasper do not touch me, oh Sir Jasper, do not touch me, and she lay between the lilly white sheets with nothing on at all."

"Just like Public School, eh?" It was Chris Porter again.

"This is Jan. I just met her. Isn't she beautiful? And this is Jan's friend Lynn."

My God, it was Chris Porter with two birds, or two 'chicks' as they said here.

"Jan and I are just going outside for a smoke. See you."

Suddenly I was alone with Lynn.

"Oh, Sir Jasper, do NOT ...."

She was beautiful - tall, long brown hair, intelligent-looking. She stood there waiting. What more could I ask for? She had been delivered to me on a plate, so to speak. I hadn't even had to push or shove or fight to reach her. Here she was, a beautiful bird, a beautiful chick, ready and willing to lay me or be laid by me. But wait now, maybe not. Maybe I was assuming too much. Now that I focused on her, rather than on my imagination, I wasn't so sure any more. She certainly didn't have that lips apart, cocked head, come-hither, ready-to-get-laid look that I'd seen in Playboy magazines. In fact, she looked rather bored, or was it just defensive?

"Oh Sir Jasper, DO ..." the chant became imploring.

Oh bollocks! Who cared if she was bored or defensive, or whatever? I was getting drunk.

"Would you like a drink?" I inquired.

"Some wine would be nice."

She seemed so calm, so mature - not the cutesy-doll type that a lot of men seemed to like. I felt she wanted to get away from the party. Part of me wanted to do the same, but something held me back. It was as if I'd already abandoned myself to the music and the booze. For better or worse, I'd somehow become a part of what was going on.

"Would you like to dance?"

"OK"

Some inner part of my cerebellum stood back in amazement at both the question and the response.

Surely I was acting too hastily. I would never have asked her to dance this quickly if I hadn't been drunk. But then she had said 'O.K'. I felt giddy with delight.

We danced, and then I drank some more, and then we danced again. And the room was becoming a blur. We danced. I held her close. I tried to kiss her. She seemed to hold back. Somebody screamed - I caught a glance of Pete Taylor pouring beer over a blonde head. I couldn't make if it was a male or a female.

"Hey, Pete," I shouted over to him, "who said I couldn't loosen up?"

Suddenly, I felt myself contracting. My stomach was turning. I rushed to the toilet and vomited, again and again.

Lynn walked me back to the hotel. As we left the party, the chant had become orgasmic: "Oh, Sir Jasper ... oh, oh, OH"...

I think Lynn said she was in the nursing program at Queens, but I'm not sure. I have a recollection of her being concerned as she said goodbye in front of the hotel.

The very last thing I remember was Chris Porter coming up to me in the corridor outside my room, a towel around his waist.

“Ian, old man, this is rather embarrassing but do you, by any chance have any safes?”

I don't remember what I replied, but whatever it was, I'm sure I must have slurred my consonants.

\* \* \*

The remainder of October and November saw the passing of the Rugby season, and with it a withering of my social life. I saw Lynn a few more times but nothing came of it.

For a while, I experienced mild ostracism in my hall of residence, due to the fact that on one particular Saturday, I decided to stay in my room and study rather than go and watch the blessed Golden Gaels. But this too passed.

Increasingly, I found myself withdrawing, from what seemed like an atmosphere of petty conformity and general immaturity. My neighbours in residence looked and acted like fifteen year olds. They didn't seem to do anything interesting or useful. They didn't play sports, they didn't play musical instruments, they didn't seem to take their studies seriously, they didn't even chase women. They gave me the impression that they had never had the experience of doing something with passion and conviction. By observing them, I began to understand the insidious passivity of the North American consumer life-style. Life seemed to be a bland affair, characterised by cokes, potato chips, pizza, watching T.V., listening to the latest hits, and going to movies on almost a weekly basis. There was none of the passionate exchange of ideas that I had always thought was meant to be a hallmark of University life. There seemed to be a sterility of life-style symbolised by the over-emphasis on personal hygiene. Were these guys representative of Canadians? They certainly were the antithesis of the rough and ready, outdoor types that I had expected to meet. Where were the Reid Wilsons, I wondered?

I began to take long walks along the waterfront. Lake Ontario seemed more like a huge inland sea - vast, choppy, unwelcoming. Admittedly, there was a beauty to the shoreline, especially as the leaves turned red and golden, but the featureless horizon of the lake and the immensity of the sky left a sense of bleakness in my heart.

I was beginning to feel lonely. Now the real meaning of separation from my roots was beginning to sink home. My old friends like David Lungley, John Aitken and Mark Hudson were over three thousand miles away. I would not see them for a long time. I envied the fact that they and other old friends were so close to each other. Compared with Canada, anywhere in Britain was close. As the first snows came and the winter wind cut in from the lake, I felt desolate. I longed for letters. I had written and couldn't understand why I hadn't yet received replies. As November wore on, I decided to send Christmas cards to just about everyone I knew in Britain. It became a massive project, and by the time I had finished, I had written and mailed off no less than fifty-three cards to friends and relatives.

Finally a letter did arrive from Mark Hudson. Mark had been one of my closest friends at Sedbergh. I had gone through school with him, sharing many deep and important experiences. Eventually he became Head of School, and after passing his A levels, he was accepted by St. Catherine's College at Cambridge. His letter was a typical reflection of his non-stop and highly organised life.

*'My dear Ian,*

*As ever I am late in answering your letter – please forgive. Am so glad that Dave and John were in Edinburgh to say goodbye to you and only sorry that I wasn't there also.*

*When in Canada (Mark had spent a couple of months in Canada before I arrived), I discovered that England would be the only place for me eventually...*

*And so to life here. Have taken up rowing. Great fun. Am taking it fairly seriously. Have just got back from Old Sedberghian Club meeting cum booze-up. Have just been elected Hon. Sec. for the year. Am finding Cambridge great fun. Meeting plenty of good people. Quite a bit of work, rowing, squash, drinking, parties, and societies taking up most of the time.*

*I know Canada will treat you kindly, and that you will get a great deal out of Queens - in many ways more than I may get out of Cambridge - everything seems bigger and freer out there.*

*Write soon,*

*Yours as always, Mark'*

This letter was followed at the beginning of December by one from John Aitken. Whereas Mark was out-directed, John tended more to share his inner life. It was this mutual sharing of feelings that had been the basis of our bond at Sedbergh.

As it turned out, John's first term at Reading University, had much more in common with my experiences than did Mark's rip-roaring life at Cambridge.

Excerpts from John's letter:

*'Dear Ian,*

*For over two months, I've sat at my desk here and seen a page of a letter to you with 'Dear Ian' on it. Don't think I've forgotten about you or that I haven't been bothered to write to you, but strange things have happened to me this term. It's difficult to explain, part of it is real depression such as I've never known before. I'm not exaggerating about it. My God, I lost most of my friends during it. It went on for five weeks and I was frightened. I seriously thought of packing up University altogether, but eventually decided against it. It's been a very interesting phase in that I've got to know myself much better, but I have felt an outcast, bitter and twisted all term. It's been made worse by the fact that Janie and I have stopped going out, and how fond I was and still am of her, it's nearly broken my heart. What it's like to be in love, I dread to think. Anyway, that's what's been happening at this end - a wretched term.*

*I expect you'll be seeing Pam. Good luck. God, I hope you hit it off. When I think of what it will be like to meet her after all these years. I think of the tape she sent - her Canadian accent and then her cool soft voice. Oh Ian, I really do hope that it will work out, your Christmas meeting, after so many idealised-ridden years of belief and hope.*

*Have a really great Christmas. I'm thinking of you...*

*All the best, John*

These letters helped raise my spirits, as did the fact that there was now only a matter of weeks until the semester finished. I was beginning to feel a rising sense of excitement about going out West to see Pam.

I received one more significant letter during this period, this being from Hamish Blair-Cunynghame. In the eight months between leaving Sedbergh and coming to Canada, Mr. Blair-Cunynghame and I had continued our meetings. He had, I am sure, helped me get my Draper's scholarship by writing me the following reference, in addition to possibly sending a longer letter:

*'I have known Ian A. Brown for a number of years both as Chairman of The Governors of Sedbergh School, where he was educated until December, 1965, and in a personal capacity.*

*I have the highest opinion of his integrity and of the general responsible nature of his character. He is good with people and has a pleasant sense of humour. If there is anything else you want to know, please do not hesitate to ask me,*

*J.O. Blair Cunynghame'*



Gradually, I had taken this man into my heart. He had become a father figure to me. And yet, despite his mentor status, he was also like a friend. Blair Cunynghame, so unlike my real father, was one of the least pompous of the British 'ruling class' that I'd ever met. His most exceptional quality, in my eyes, was his ability to listen. He not only listened, but he seemed to actually hear and take in what the other person was saying. He had the ability to do this without switching the focus to himself, the fault of so many adults. He also knew how to advise without becoming overbearing.

Coming after the letters from Mark and John, his letter fully restored my sense of confidence that the umbilical cord homewards was still intact and strong.

Excerpts from his letter:

*My dear Ian,*

*Thank-you very much for your long and most interesting letter. You certainly shouldn't have apologised for the delay in writing. I regard it as pretty creditable that you have managed firstly to write at all and secondly, to do it so well. Please do go on doing this at intervals. I shall most enjoy it and it will keep me in touch 'till we meet again.*

*I think you are very wise to take a varied first year programme so as to see just how you perform. I know of course that Canadian Universities, and American ones too, regard the whole thing as much more closely related to what you actually do in life than is the case over here.*

*This is not at all a bad thing. At the same time, I think it would be unwise to get too concerned about this in your case. I am fairly clear that your marketable qualities, in four years time will be:*

*(a) Maturity of relationships with people*

*(b) Common sense*

*(c) Integrity*

*(d) Great powers of application*

*(e) A sense of humour*

*(f) A capacity (because of all these things) to get other people to do what you want*

*(g) A more mature mind than you had, trained in the adult study of whatever course you have taken*

*(h) And more knowledge - in perhaps - economics, sociology, etc.*

*All this means that it is you as a person who will matter most - this implies that the external field of study is not all that important. I think you are wise to think of coming back here, although you may yet change your mind. I should like to have a chance of helping you to get a worthwhile job (although such help will be unnecessary, I imagine!).*

*I am going down to Sedbergh next weekend for a Governors' meeting, and I expect I shall find the same problems - food, money, and a difficulty in getting suitable staff, - and yet find everybody supremely unaware that there are problems! It is a strange isolated community in one way, but very much part of the whole community in another.*

*Well I must go. Look after yourself and thank-you for writing, Yours ever,*

*Hamish B.C.'*

## 4.

Once we left Toronto and began to pull into the Northern Ontario backwoods, the polite distance between people in my compartment began to disappear. It was a couple of weeks before Christmas and I was finally on my way West to see Pam.

I was on a new voyage, a new adventure. It was almost as if I had never stopped off in Kingston. Of the two quests that had brought me to Canada, this was by far the more tangible. The goal of finally linking up with Pam was clearer and seemed more attainable than the distant objective of obtaining a University degree.

I felt excited and rejuvenated. As the train passed through North Bay and Sudbury and entered a vast expanse of small lakes and endless forest, I began to sense the formidable dimensions of this land, Canada. How easy it would be to lose one's way in this country, I speculated - certainly easy to lose one's sense of belongingness.

Inner security, it seemed to me, came from connections and a sense of inter-connectedness. In Britain, my connections spread out in several directions. There were three main bases, my parental home in Edinburgh; my spiritual home Sedbergh in the Yorkshire dales, and London, where my brother and sister lived. In between these three main bases, there were many connecting paths. Like veins and arteries they spread out to the homes of various friends and relatives. Over the years, I had travelled these paths many times, slowly adding to my knowledge of the differing terrain.

It was only now in this barren hinterland that I realised how I had taken this security for granted. Here, in Canada, I knew no one. My principal connection was across two thousand miles of frozen tundra and prairie to someone who I knew only through the written word. And it was going to take over three days and nights on a train to reach her.

And yet, as the sun glistened on the icy lakes and the trains headed northwards through tiny communities with names like Gogama and Fire River, I felt a freedom in my soul, and the outward urge to explore and escape from the constraining aspects of rooted security.

Just past Lake Nipigon, we stopped at a place called Armstrong. It was there that I observed for the first time Canadian Indians. Several of them boarded the train and headed straight for the bar. To my surprise, they looked sullen and dispirited. There was little in their appearance to remind me of the proud and noble 'red' Indians I had seen in books and films when in Britain. Their brief appearance left me confused and full of questions. Who were these people? How much of the land was still theirs? How much of their traditional way of life still existed? How much power did they have vis-à-vis the elected federal and provincial governments?

Meanwhile, in our little 'white' world, the travelling companions in my carriage continued to get to know each other. Opposite me sat a tall, attractive woman with a small baby. As we talked, and began sketching in the details of where we were going and where we were from, I learned that her name was Sue Cuncliffe, and that she had been working as a hostess in Montreal. It turned out that she was running away from her boyfriend and heading for Vancouver.

After the first day of travel, she began asking me every so often if I could hold the baby while she took a break. I agreed, and in fact became quite eager to help out, especially when I saw how grateful it made her. However crazy it sounds, I got the feeling that she was attracted to me. Maybe I wasn't totally undesirable to the opposite sex after all.

Nighttime turned out to be a bit of an ordeal. I had not paid for a sleeping berth and was travelling the cheapest way possible - in a regular carriage with reclining chairs. Much of the night was spent experimenting with new positions in order to find one that might allow relatively undisturbed sleep. But there was no escaping crying babies, or drunken passengers returning late from the bar, or the inevitable traffic to and from the toilet. It was a whole human circus on wheels. But after the sterility of Queens and

my cloistered room in Residence, I welcomed it. I liked situations where image and pretence were stripped away. Here, there was nowhere to hide. Your every movement was observed, even the privacy of sleep became a communal experience. It was almost like being back in the dormitories at Sedbergh.

In the morning, people would buy each other cups of coffee in a kind of mutually supportive celebration of getting through the night. Meanwhile Sue, the single mother, had begun to ask me about my past and the reason for my trip west. It wasn't long before I was giving her the history of my relationship with Pam. I was carrying the most recent letters I'd received, so I dug them out and showed them to her. What I found hard to understand was how she could show interest in my relationship with Pam, while at the same time apparently coming on to me. I liked it; I just didn't understand it. I'd always been told that women were supposed to be jealous of each other.

As the train began to crawl across the Great Plains and the vast Prairie sky became the sea that surrounded us, I took the letters that had been returned by Sue and re-read them.

Excerpts from Pam's letters:

*'I am very depressed again - went to the doctor. He said that a couple more of these bad depressions might have led to a nervous breakdown. I know I couldn't have stood up to much more of this crap.*

*He gave me tranquillisers and I'm going to have regular bull sessions with him. He's young and good-looking to boot. Anyway I can sit back and relax now. I'm in competent hands...*

*I don't believe all that junk about your face. Nobody has inexpressive eyes! An artistic person (like you) always shows emotion first through his eyes and sometimes his hands. My God, I think your picture is smashing, my roommate is very impressed. We both think you're simply gorgeous-looking, so there!*

*Only twelve days to go. I'm so excited. We're going to have a riot. The whole time I'm planning what we're going to do, what I'll show you, what we'll talk about, etc. etc.*

*I re-read your last letter the other day and it suddenly dawned upon me that you were just kidding about posing nude for Rodin's 'The Kiss'. I was really quite jealous you know.*

*Haven't a clue what I'll be wearing at the station, probably jeans and my ski jacket. Anyway, I'm average height, averagely good looking, average blond hair, averagely well dressed, but you'll know me because I'll be the only girl in the station with my knees knocking.'*

\* \* \*

My first week with Pam in Calgary was so 'fantastic' that I can only write about it as a fantasy:

Fantasy dialogue, Jan. 1967

*FREUD: Hey, wait a moment here. Vot's all dis about a 'fantasy dialogue'. You can't do dis. It's like you skip a chapter. I mean you titillate us all vit all dis stuff about de great romantic climactic meeting, and den you skip de reality.*

*BROWN: That's just the point. It wasn't real. It was just a big dream.*

*FREUD: Ah, you've been studying too much Vilosophy. Vot's real? Vot's a dream? It happened, ja? You saw her didn't you?*

*BROWN: Well yes, I saw her. But...*

*FREUD: (interrupting) OK, OK enough already! Time is money. Let's get us down to de brassen tacks ... (sighs)*

*Zo ... finally after all dis time, you lost your virginity, ja?*

**BROWN:** *Well, not exactly.*

**FREUD:** *Oh mein Gott ... vot happened?*

**BROWN:** *Well, we met at the station at Calgary and it was ... well, it, was great. She was everything I'd hoped for.*

**FREUD:** *She vas beautiful?*

**BROWN:** *Oh yes, and full of life.*

**FREUD:** *Zo, you vent back to her place ...*

**BROWN:** *Yes, she lived on the second floor of an old wooden building with an outside staircase. We walked all the way there from the station. It was so cold. Colder than anything I've ever known. The sort of cold that gives you a crackling feeling in your nostrils. But we were so happy; I didn't even feel the cold. We were jumping and laughing and holding hands.*

**FREUD:** *OK, OK, spare me ze Dr. Zhivago. I'm a busy man, right? Let's get us down to de meat, zo to speak.*

**BROWN:** *All right. Well, we got back to her place.*

**FREUD:** *Did she live alone?*

**BROWN:** *No, she shared her apartment with another girl called Sandi.*

**FREUD:** *Vas she dere ven you arrived?*

**BROWN:** *Yes.*

**FREUD:** *Vot was she like, dis Sandi?*

**BROWN:** *Well it's funny but right from the word go, she seemed kind of sullen. It was like she resented Pam having me there. You know, she was sort of envious.*

**FREUD:** *Maybe she wanted a piece of de action. Maybe she wanted you for herself. Or maybe she wanted Pam for herself.*

**BROWN:** *Well, it was sort of embarrassing with the three of us there. We ordered some pizza and drank a bottle of wine. It was late. I was tired. I just wanted to get Pam into the bedroom and you know have some privacy.*

**FREUD:** *You should have talked Sandi into coming vit you. Nothing like threesome I always say. (Sigh) Ah ... zere vere times in Vienna, I can tell you ...*

**BROWN:** *I don't know what you're talking about. I wasn't in the least bit interested in Sandi. Let's just forget about her. I mean this was the big moment with Pam. That's what I want to tell you about.*

**FREUD:** *Hey, I'm all ears. Did she give you a blow job?*

**BROWN:** *What? No ... God, you're crude.*

**FREUD:** *Just doing my job.*

**BROWN:** *Well anyway, we were a bit drunk, and she had smoked some marijuana. We took off our clothes and she produced these body paints. It was fantastic. I'd never seen a woman naked in front of me before. So then she began to put paint on my body. It was incredibly sensual. She even put some on my ...*

**FREUD:** *On your schlong?*

**BROWN:** *Yes, but she seemed nervous about touching it.*

**FREUD:** *And then?*

**BROWN:** *And then I put paint on her body and ran my hands over her breasts and her stomach and between her thighs...*

**FREUD:** *Ah yes, yes.*

**BROWN:** *And then I asked her if she ... you know, if she was on the pill. And she said no, so I fumbled around and got out a contraceptive ...*

**FREUD:** *Ah zo, you had some?*

**BROWN:** *Yes.*

FREUD: *How many? One?*  
 BROWN: *No! Twelve.*  
 FREUD: *Oh, excuse me! Carry on.*  
 BROWN: *Well, I put it on. And then ...well, that's when it happened.*  
 FREUD: *Vot? Vot happened? Come on, don't tell me der ver any last minute hitches. Her modder phoned? Sandi rushed in and threw herself between your? Oh no, vait a minuten, don't tell me ... you had a P.E.?*  
 BROWN: *A pee!?*  
 FREUD: *No no, God forbid, no 'a P.E.', premature ejaculation.*  
 BROWN: *No, no, none of those. I tried to enter Pam. She seemed to want me. She even put Nivea on her vagina. But just as I was about to enter...*  
 FREUD: *Ja, ja, just as you vere about to score ... just as you vere about to get laid by your Canadian chick ... just as you vere about to forever erase the humiliation of being a twenty year-old virgin ... I can't stand the suspense, vot happened?*  
 BROWN: *She rolled away saying she didn't want to do it.*  
 FREUD: *Holy Cow! Meine Mutter! Vie vas dis? Vie she do dis?*  
 BROWN: *She said she didn't really know. That it just didn't feel right ...that she'd had sex once before and it had been O.K. but not great. That she had anxieties about being a lesbian.*  
 FREUD: *What? You not serious?*  
 BROWN: *That's what she said – that she might be a lesbian.*  
 FREUD: *Hah! I knew it! It vas all de fault of dat butch voman, Sandi.*  
 BROWN: *She just seemed to be confused.*  
 FREUD: *Vell, der you haf it. Der 'Schwartzewaldetorte' of all defense mechanisms; oedipal anger towards her mudder and guilt towards her Vater ... repressed sexual urges between them ... rationalisations dat she's a lesbian, etc. etc. I've heard it all before. (sigh) Vell anyway, did you get into her pants in the next veek, before you, vent back?*  
 BROWN: *No, it never happened. I mean we kissed and hugged and slept together until we went to her parent's place in Edmonton but there was no actual sex. Before we hitchhiked to Edmonton, I told her I loved her. That was a special moment for me. It was the first time I ever said that to anyone.*  
 FREUD: *Very nice, ja ... but, in my opinion, just a little inappropriate under the circumstances. Still no boom-boom?*  
 BROWN: *What do you mean?*  
 FREUD: *To say you 'loved' her when she had denied you de boom-boom. Vell, my boy, I haf to tell you ... that's the longest and saddest shaggy dog story I ever did hear. A shaggy dog story without the shaggy. In fact, just a dog of a story. I need a smoke ...*

It *was* unreal. In our different ways, we were trying to act out some fantasy script, some Hollywood schlock scenario. But reality kept popping up like an unwelcome intruder, intent on upstaging the gala performance. Pam had said she missed acting. Well, there it was – a comic melodrama in two Acts.

The second Act was at her parents' house in Edmonton. For my part, I felt I had to be the nice young man, especially as her parents, presumably, assumed that I had just been busy in Calgary deflowering their daughter. But, to complicate things still further, while I was playing the wholesome, ex-Public Schoolboy role, *in reality*, I was not playing the role that Pam would have liked me to play. I think she wanted me to be wild and rebellious, not so clean-cut.

At a New Year's party, I actually got to meet all her friends, including Tom, the guy who *in reality*

had taken her virginity. They were all theatre people and were playing their roles of being Bohemian outsiders to mainstream society. Meanwhile, in their company, I felt like some British twit. I felt like an outsider. Pam was busy talking to everyone. I felt kind of deserted. I was getting drunk as fast as I could. While I was sitting on the stairs in this state, Tom joined me and asked me why I looked so depressed. I told him that I didn't always understand Pam. I said that only a few days ago, I had told her that I loved her and she had replied that she loved me, and if this were so, why wouldn't she make love and why didn't she stay closer to me at this party.

His reply was interesting. He said, 'your love is more demanding than hers, you expect too much of her.' I thought a lot about that afterwards. I liked this guy. We had a good talk. On the other hand, I felt sort of stupid and a bit vulnerable. After all, I was the one who was meant to be *the* boyfriend over all these years, and yet he knew her much better than me, on *all* levels. I finished up playing the piano which, as always, bailed me out and made me feel better.

Pam's family was unlike anything I'd ever experienced. They were as liberal as my family was traditional and conservative. Pam, her sister and two brothers were allowed to be expressive and free-spirited. They could question, answer back, criticise, and even be disrespectful towards their parents. I got the sense that the freedom to be like this was based on deep trust. I was amazed and impressed.

But Pam was right about her mother. She was, in a literal sense, too anxious to see Pam and I together. On the day before I left, Pam's mother came into my bedroom early in the morning and told me that she didn't mind if Pam and I got engaged. What could I say? All I could think was that Pam and I had already been married for too long.

\* \* \*

I returned east by train in time to spend the last week of my holidays in Ottawa at the house of my brother in law's parents, Percival and Muriel Moore. Also there, on a visit from Britain, were my sister Joy and her husband Jim.

My sister had met Jim at the London School of Economics. She was doing a diploma in Social Work and he was working on his Ph.D. dissertation (on the ideas of David Hume, the Scottish Empirical Philosopher). Except for a brief farewell in London, I had hardly seen them at all in almost two years. I was excited about seeing them again, especially as I had learned that they were planning to move to Canada later in the year. Apparently, Jim had found that he could work as a University lecturer in Canada (assuming he found a position) while putting the finishing touches to his dissertation.

Joy and Jim were my favourite relatives. In my last two years at Sedbergh, I had made several visits to London where I had stayed with them in their flat in Belsize Park Gardens. These had been wonderful times, full of stimulating discussion, laughter, wine, music, and overall a liberating atmosphere. Joy and Jim were married in 1962 and in those first two or three years together; they seemed very close and very happy. My contacts with Joy had helped give me perspective on our neurotic and destructive family background. Joy helped me see the extent to which they turned their own failures into a burden of anxiety and guilt, which they then laid on the shoulders of us children. She had supported me in my decision not to go into the Army and she had encouraged me to go to University.

Jim, for his part, acted as my intellectual mentor. It seemed to me that there was nothing he didn't know. Whereas with my parents, the communication process was mired by tired anecdotes and merciless judgement, and continually coloured by their respective emotional states, with Jim, there was a freethinking spirit of inquiry. He was always asking questions, posing questions, provoking questions, and at such times that he answered questions, it was usually only a springboard to posing further questions. If he gave information, it was usually conceptual, rather than anecdotal in nature.

His knowledge of literature, philosophy and politics was prodigious. One time in London, I had mentioned that I was reading George Orwell's Animal Farm. Jim asked me a few questions and then proceeded to give an incredibly clear and yet simple analysis of Orwell's underlying message. During the visit to Ottawa, there was another display of the power and scope of his knowledge. I mentioned, in passing, that I had

been struggling with Chaucer's 'Tales'. At this, Jim launched into the first ten or so lines of The Prologue complete with the appropriate Old English vocabulary and diction. Once again, I was left marvelling at his mind, the depth and breadth of his knowledge, the clarity of his vision, the precision of his logic, and his ability to reduce complex matters to their essentials. If this was the product of university training, then perhaps after all, the end justified the means.

However, despite some good talks with both Joy and Jim, I realised during that week, that their relationship had changed considerably since the happy days in London. There seemed to be an underlying tension and Joy, in particular, looked frustrated and restless. This saddened me as I had a selfish need to see them stable and fulfilled. It was, as if following years of witnessing the incredible unhappiness of my parents, I needed someone to prove to me that a couple could be happy together.

During and following my trip to Ottawa, I thought much about my family. This was the first Christmas that my parents had ever spent completely on their own. I wondered how they were doing.

In the past few months, my mother's letters had dwelled on a few, central topics. One dealt with how she had been house hunting. Like me, she hated the gloomy flat on Spottiswoode Street. Our happiest times as a family had always been at Gullane, a seaside town twenty miles from Edinburgh. In one letter she wrote:

*'I long to live in Gullane. That is my dream. To have a bungalow with a garden for Daddy.'*

In another letter she described a walk she had taken along the seashore:

*'I followed the track close to Muirfield golf course and then along the coast to Freshwater Cove and the beach beyond. The sun was sparkling on the water, the rocks were covered with loveliest yellow lichen. It was all so beautiful. The white of the breakers, the gleaming sea, the blue sky and salt white clouds.'*

But in the next breath, she would go on about how expensive the bungalows were, and how my father, at the age of sixty-seven was becoming less and less mobile. There always seemed to be a reason why a decision could not be taken.

Another topic of her letters was how she had joined the Women's Voluntary Service (W.V.S.) and was busy twice a week doing 'meals on wheels'. She drove the van and her excursions took her to such run-down-areas of Edinburgh as the Cowgate and Cannongate. Her involvement in this work at least got her out of the house and away from my father. This, at any rate, seemed positive.

But despite this, her loneliness was all too apparent. Her life-long job had been as a mother, and now she was going through a difficult period of re-adjustment. I was in Canada; Joy was on the verge of coming to Canada and my brother Robin was living four hundred miles away near London.

As for my father, I felt an ever-increasing distance growing between us. To my surprise he had written to me at Christmas. The contents, however, was predictable. Included was the following exhortation:

*'University is just damned hard work, blood and guts, as far as I can see. But the only achievement worth a tuppenny damn in life are those achieved the hard way.'*

Why did he *have to* keep telling me to work hard? Why couldn't he just trust me? I despaired of getting closer to my father. We seemed to have so little in common.

The best family news, as it turned out, came from my brother and his wife Avril. In September, they had had a daughter who they called Shuna. As far as my mother was concerned, being a grandmother was at least some compensation for the stripping away of her maternal role. For my part, all I could think was: 'my God, here I am - still a virgin, and meanwhile my brother must have been getting it for years, and now he's proved it by fathering a baby.' A case of sibling rivalry, I suppose.

## 5.

Returning to Queens brought with it withdrawal symptoms. From a world of unfolding sensations and experiences, it was back to the sealed vacuum of books and ideas and analysis. Despite my admiration for Jim and his mental prowess, the cerebral life was one that contradicted my natural inclinations.

However, within this hermetic world, there was a sort of life. It was characterised by the growth of consciousness and the learning of specific mental skills such as how to think logically, how to extract the essence of an argument, how to proceed dialectically from a hypothesis to its antithesis, and thereby seek a synthesis. Then, there were study skills to be acquired: how to skim, how to scan, how to summarise. In the past, I had made the great error of assuming that I must read, digest and remember everything in an assigned book. Slowly, laboriously, I tried to assimilate the totality of a piece without having the powers of discrimination to extract what was immediately relevant.

In my first year at Queens, I began to learn that the University approach to acquisition of knowledge amounted to a kind of game, in which the student was expected to play a specific role if he or she hoped to be successful. The game consisted of taking an enormous book list, as provided by the professor, and proceeding as follows:

- (1) First, realise that despite what the Prof. might have said, there was no need to read *all* the books on his list.
- (2) Instead, select an appropriate number (say, 3-6) and,
- (3) Scan and skim these books (rather than read them, cover to cover) for chapters and sections relevant to the task in hand, whether this be an upcoming lecture, seminar, term-paper, or exam;
- (4) Then, underline the most important sentences in these sections:
- (5) Look specifically for alternative and opposing points of view on the same topic.
- (6) If writing a paper, do three things.
  - (a) fashion as your narrative voice one that combines your own best ideas with some of the best ideas and juiciest facts from what you have read;
  - (b) intersperse a liberal number of quotations from your reading material. Make sure to include quotes of quotes and references to other authors, so as to make it seem that you've actually read more books than in fact is the case. The trick here, of course, was always to make secondary source material look like it had been read in the original;
  - (c) Compile a bibliography that is at least twice as long as the actual number of books you have read.

However, this game lacked an important element as far as I was concerned. I began to realise that, if I was to play the game successfully, I would have to adapt it to my own needs. My problem was that fresh information just did not seem to enter my consciousness unless I could relate it to my own, personal experience. Once such a link was made or found, then the new data gained sufficient weight to break through the resisting pores of grey matter.

One of the problems I'd had with Physics and Chemistry at Sedbergh was the fact that I could in no way relate it to my experiential world. At Queens, I found the same thing happening with Geology, or 'Rocks 010', as it was fondly called. The memorisation of endless lists of rocks and fossils was mind-numbing drudgery and seemed utterly irrelevant to my romantic 'National Geographic' image of the geologist.

The other course with which I felt absolutely no affinity was Economics. At the age of twenty, I had virtually no idea of the meaning of money, at least not as far as the producing of it was concerned. At



Sedbergh, money was almost completely unnecessary in my day to day life. Practically everything was pre-programmed and pre-paid. And even now, at Queens, I was cushioned from the realities of the labour market by a fat scholarship. I had a guaranteed monthly and yearly income for the next three years.

After two back-to-back scholarships, a music scholarship at Sedbergh, and the current Draper's scholarship, I had formed the notion that money was something you 'won' rather than earned. In other words, you worked hard for a while, then you took an audition or interview or exam, then if all went well, you were awarded a lump sum of money. In one way, perhaps, you had earned the money but not in the sense of the daily grind of 'a job'. I did not understand the essential concept that money is created through labour. I did not understand the nature of a market economy and how it pervades every aspect of most people's lives. Despite the fact that I had worked at various temporary jobs before coming to Canada (including being a bootblack, a dishwasher, and a door-to-door brush salesman) my understanding of money matters was limited to a hazy notion that such work was a means to creating *surplus* money (or disposable income) rather than being intimately connected with survival itself.

Given my ignorance, the course on Economics could or should have facilitated a better understanding. However, with the dry, abstract presentations, lacking any practical human dimension, the basic, important precepts remained shrouded in a fog of techno-language and impenetrable formulas and statistics.

With my three other courses, Philosophy, English, and Sociology, it was easier to find links to my own experience and interests. Philosophy interested me to the extent that it posed essential questions like, 'What is God?', 'What is Reality?', 'What is Truth?'. However, in our course we were instead dealing with the gripping question, 'how do we know what we think we know? I learned that Epistemology was not my thing'. Perhaps my knowledge was too undifferentiated, and my thought processes too crude to catch the fine detail of being able to distinguish between 'statistical universal propositions' as opposed to 'causal universal propositions', or 'tautological premises' as opposed to 'synthetic premises'. As in the Economics course, we were parachuted into a conceptual forest at midnight and then told to spend the rest of the night studying one tree through a microscope. There was little if any orientation as to precisely which forest we were in, or what it might look like, or where it was located. My rapidly expanding critical faculty grumbled; 'first things first; if it's a Philosophy course, let's start with questions like, 'what is philosophy?' ... 'what is it trying to do?' ... 'why is it important to study it?' ... 'how does it relate to me and my life?'"

As the academic year wore on, I began to realise that my two favourite courses were Sociology and English. I was extremely interested in the individual and his or her relationship to the rest of society. In Sociology, I was able to further that interest through a study of the institutional cultures and sub-cultures created by individuals. I was also able to bring such inquiry to bear directly on my own experience. Thus, in addition to doing book reports on, for example, the Navaho, and urban street gangs, I was allowed to do a report on the value-system at Sedbergh School. Such reflection in turn enabled me to clarify that although I admired such Sedbergh values as toughness, honesty, integrity, self-reliance and mutual co-operation, I disliked the hierarchical system that was at its root.

The English course was an overview of English Literature, from Chaucer to the present. The two writers that most caught my attention were Swift and Wordsworth. I found Gulliver's Travels to be an amazing commentary on man and his relation to society. It seemed at one and the same time, more philosophical and sociological than anything I had come across in either of those two courses. Wordsworth, of course, was very different from the biting satire of Swift. What appealed to me about him was the fact that in a year where almost everything I read was in the language of the mind, his poetry spoke clearly and directly to the heart. It was a relief. It also provided a link back to my beloved Fell country and the Lake District, where I had spent so much time during my years at Sedbergh. And on top of this, Wordsworth's romanticism seemed utterly to mirror my own sensibility.

First he talked about the childlike happiness that comes from being among the beauty of nature:

*All things that love the sun are out of doors  
The sun rejoices in the morning's birth.*

Then, the turning inwards, the entrapment of inner depression:

*But, as it sometimes chanceth, from the might  
Of joy in minds that can no further go  
As high as we have mounted in delight  
In our dejection do we sink as low  
To me that morning did it happen so  
And fears and fancies thick upon me came  
Dim sadness - and blind thoughts, I knew not, nor could name.'*

And finally, the jolt out of self-pity by the meeting with one less fortunate:

*He told me that to these waters he had come  
To gather leeches, being old and poor  
'Once I could meet with them on every side  
But they have dwindled long by slow decay  
Yet still I persevere, and find them where I may...'  
I could have laughed myself to scorn, to find  
In that decrepit man so firm a mind.  
'God', said I, be my help and stay secure  
I'll think of the Leech-gatherer on the lonely moor.'*

There were lessons here for me on the importance of not getting too wrapped up in myself, and the need for humility and gratitude for what one has.

\* \* \*

I read that poem at a time when my emotional life was sinking low. The Canadian winter was harsh and seemed endless. I missed the Yorkshire moors. I felt lonely and displaced. Despite the fact that I had received quite a number of Christmas cards, I felt the links with my old Sedbergh friends becoming more tenuous. In particular, I had been a bit upset by a cassette tape I had received from Mark Hudson and some other old Sedbergh acquaintances. They had made the tape during a drunken party at Cambridge. It was full of an insincere, 'old-Jock-Brown-in-Canada-chasing-the-grizzlies' rah-rah type of humour. I know they meant well but the effect of the tape was to alienate me.

My response to this loneliness was to reach out once again, by letter. I wrote to Pam, confiding my feelings and suggesting wild plans as to how we could get together again. In February, she wrote back saying she missed me, and telling me once again how much she hated university. As she put it:

*'I hate this dump. I'm sick of being cold. I'm sick of dressing properly, using the right language, doing what is expected of me and all that crap. I want to stop pretending, stop fighting things and people and BE ME. Why am I in such a rut? Why are my nerves in constant shreds? Why is it always a constant fight? Why? Why? Why are there never any answers? Why? I want to stop being phoney.'*

This was followed by another letter saying that her latest plan was to go to Theatre School in Michigan. Compared with Calgary, Michigan sounded pretty good. I got out a map and figured out that it was only 550 Miles from Kingston to Detroit. This led me to the conclusion that if Pam did, in fact, go to Detroit, we could probably take turns hitchhiking so as to see each other on weekends.

However, despite these grandiose plans, the truth was that I was becoming confused about my feelings towards Pam. On the one hand, I continued to reaffirm my love (or what I thought was love) for her, but on the

other, I felt increasingly weighed down by the absurdity of the situation. More and more, I was questioning whether I really wanted to re-enter our fantasy world.

An entry in my diary reflected this:

*'This whole relationship is so crazy. Can we continue writing letters such as this year after year, with only brief meetings in between? Where does it all end? It's as if a tension is being built up between us, one that can only be resolved by one of us breaking away from the other.'*

Then in March, I received a letter from Pam that tipped the balance of my feelings. I had written a concerned, caring letter in response to her breast-beating about why her nerves were always in constant shreds. As had happened once before, her reply confused me about her wants and needs:

Excerpts from Pam's letter:

*'I chuckled at your letter. Now don't be insulted! It's just that I know damned well why I felt the way I do. I know the remedies to apply to such a feeling. Remember, an actress is well-learned in human emotions, what causes them, and what symptoms come with them. It's just that one has to express them to get them off one's chest. However, you made me feel like a million bucks because of the concern you express. Thank-you lan, you'll never know how much good your letters do ...'*

This was bad enough. Somehow I felt tricked. It was like she was saying that the feelings she'd expressed weren't real, or if they were, they were ephemeral and not worthy of real attention. If this was the case, I wondered why hadn't she had the self-restraint to keep them to herself?

But then to make matters worse, she continued on a different theme:

*'Well I've seen the light. I'm going to an audition for Neighbourhood Playhouse in New York and (you're gonna kill me) LAMDA in London, oh ... and also N.T.S. in Montreal. If I have a choice, I'll naturally choose the National Theatre School, but if it's LAMDA ... it's LAMDA, and there's not much I can do. Oh boy, ships that pass in the night.'*

This was too much. After six years of figuring out how to do it, I had made it to Canada. Pam had beseeched me to come. She had even suggested that I work my way over on a boat, and then work my way through university if I failed to get a scholarship. Then, I take the train across Canada so that we can have our great reunion ... and what happens? The person who's been playing the great sexy flirt all these years, turns to me and says that she can't do it. And now, to cap it all off, she's ready to waltz off to where I've just come from. So much for commitment, I thought.

The winter eventually passed and the semester ground to an end. As the April showers washed away the last of the snow, my spirits began to rise once again. Earlier in the year, I had applied to work at the British Pavilion, at the world's fair, Expo '67, in Montreal. I was accepted as a 'guide' and told that I should report for work at the beginning of May.

## 6.

It was like emerging from a long period of hibernation. From my den in Kingston, I suddenly found myself in the bright sunlight and spring showers of Montreal. Everything was bursting with vitality. The buds on the trees appeared to quiver with energy. There was a craziness in the air, a spontaneous release of the spirit. Part of this was due to the annual celebration of life that seemed to follow survival of the Canadian winter, but to a greater extent it was due to the excitement of Expo '67 and Canada's one hundredth birthday. Expo '67 was the closest thing to an extended Mardi Gras that Canada had ever seen. So for me, spring fever, Expo fever, and my delight at shaking off the dust of academia, all combined in a churning confluence of energies.

One evening at the beginning of May, I moved into an apartment at 2325 de Maisonneuve, across from the Forum, home of the Montreal Canadiens. I shared the apartment with an Englishman named John Langley, who was working in a travel agency, and a Queens engineering student called John Scott. Due to conflicting schedules I saw little of either of them in the ensuing months.

I started work the day after I arrived. The British Pavilion was a fortress-like structure on Ile Notre Dame. To get there, I took the magnificent new Metro from Guy station to Ile Sainte Hélène, and from there I walked across the bridge to Ile Notre Dame. As I soon discovered, I was in the right place at the right time. It was 1967, and it was very 'in' to be British. The Beatles and the Rolling Stones were at their height. Everyone wanted to visit London and go to places like Carnaby Street. As it turned out, the British Pavilion was determined to blend the best of the old with the best of the new. This included clothing their hostesses and guides in the latest fashions. It was a P.R. brainwave. The hostesses were instantly recognisable in their Union Jack mini-skirts and it wasn't long before we gained the reputation of being the most 'with it' pavilion on the site.

The guide's outfit consisted of a light blue suit (designed appropriately by John Stephens of Carnaby Street), red knitted tie, white shirt and black elastic-sided Chelsea boots. In case anyone hadn't got the message, we also had a Union Jack name tag on our lapels.

The main topic amongst the guides in the first week was how easy it was going to be to find women.

"Have you seen the birds here? I mean they're bloody incredible!"

"I've never seen anything like it. French hostesses, Italian hostesses, cute little Japanese hostesses."

"Yeah ... and what about our own ones?"

"What about the Montreal women themselves. They look like they're raring to go."

"No. No ... let me give you a little tip mate. You know the ones who'll be the most willing? The ones visiting the fair for a few days. The ones who've been saving up their money all year so that they can come to Montreal. What for? To see the world's fair? NO, to have 'a good time', if you know what I mean. Don't you see? Their biggest fantasy, all these birds from Toronto and Edmonton and Arkansas or wherever, is to get away from their mums and dads, and boyfriends and husbands, and come to Montreal for a few days and shack up in a hotel somewhere, and then, sight-see, and drink and eat and then, sometime on the first day, meet an exotic foreign young man, preferably from a with-it country like the good old U.K. and dressed a la mode, and then, we all know what she wants from there on. Yes, that's right, two, three, maybe even four days solid fucking. I'll tell you sports, we have got it made."

In all of this talk, I didn't say much. I just kept wondering how many of these guys, if any, were still virgins.

But it was true what they were saying; here surely was my great chance. I had everything going for me. If I hadn't lost my virginity by the end of the summer, then I might as well take vows of celibacy. At least then I could rationalise that I had 'chosen' not to have sex.

Diary entries:

May 14<sup>th</sup>. 1967

Have started to read *Crime and Punishment* by Dostoevsky. This question of whether poverty and / or deprivation can be a just cause for violence or even killing seems fundamental. On the one hand, Gandhi, Russell and Luther King. On the other, Mao, Lenin, the Black Panthers, the F.L.Q. and Raskolnikov (although I don't know yet how things turn out with him).

Have decided that part of the problem of the last year was not having a piano. As a result, I have just rented an old upright from Andy's Pianos on Bernard Street.

On the subject of pianos: a week ago, I bought Jacques Loussier's 'Live at the Champs Elysées'. This is fantastic music. So sophisticated. Bach, plus the added dimension of jazz improvisation. It lifts me and enlarges me.

May 21<sup>st</sup>.

A saying picked up somewhere:

'Absence to lovers is like the effect of wind on fire,  
It extinguishes the small, it enkindles the great'

Have now reached the firm conclusion that I've been foolishly treating Pam as a dream goddess all these years. Absence is not enkindling us any more. The reality falls far short of the dream. I'm not going to tie myself down any longer, by remaining emotionally and sexually monogamous to Pam.

So, having got that out of my system, I can now confess that there is a girl called Val Thistle who seems interested in me. She works in a puppet show on Ile Sainte Hélène. She's been hanging around the Brit. Pav. a lot. But I'm not sure I'm the one she's really interested in."

May 23<sup>rd</sup>.

The Brit. Pav. guides and hostesses seem to comprise about two thirds new arrivals from the U.K. (i.e. just here for Expo), and one third Canadianised Brits (i.e. guys like Iain Anderson and Jerry Lach, whose parents moved over here when they were quite young). I feel I am somehow between these two groups. At least I'm not yet slurring my consonants and saying 'sure thing' like Chris Porter.

May 29<sup>th</sup>.

Just received my grades from Queens. Economics, 51 (C); Geology, 60, (C); Sociology, 66 (B); Philosophy, 67 (B); English, 73 (B).

Am very disappointed. I thought I'd done better than this. I'm just not cut out for university.

June 5<sup>th</sup>.

Have been depressed since getting my results. Feel like being on my own, especially seeing it's so crazy on the site. People, people everywhere. It's not just the site. In downtown Montreal and on the metro, it's the same thing. You can hardly move.

I've been reading some more of *Crime and Punishment*. Dostoevsky is amazing. His psychological insights are so deep and so clear. He allows me the feeling that I can be complex without having to feel abnormal. And always, always there is this vital question of what is moral and what is immoral.

June 6<sup>th</sup>.

Val told me a couple of days ago that she would like to go out with me. She linked her arm with mine as she said it. I really don't know to what extent I am attracted to her. She seems

*so young, so school-girlish. My God, let's face it, she is young – she's only seventeen! But she is physically attractive, and I really like her body. The other day, Jerry Lach pointed out that she was dying for it. He asked me what I was waiting for.*

*Maybe he's right. Maybe that's the problem. Maybe I set my sights too high. Maybe I just don't seize the opportunity when it arises. Maybe I'm blind to even seeing it when it does arise! Anyway, I should listen to Jerry - he certainly seems to have 'the knack'.*

*JUNE 14<sup>th</sup>. \* JUNE 14<sup>th</sup>. \* JUNE 14<sup>th</sup>.*

*HALLELUJAH! The great day has finally arrived!! I've finally done it! I went to 'Le Bistro' with Val after work. We both seemed almost feverish with lust. We sat beside each other, in a corner, and right away Val started caressing my thigh under the table. Then she started rubbing the back of her hand across my cock. I was wearing a pair of really tight pants and after a while I had to tell her to stop so that we could get out of there without people noticing my erection. We walked up Mountain Street until we got to Redpath Park. Then we lay down, me on top of her, and we simulated fucking. I kept thinking of the time in Edinburgh when I was eighteen. On that occasion, I had lost my chance with a girl called Carol because it was freezing cold outside and there was nowhere to go. Now, two years later, things were different. Nothing could go wrong this time.*

*We went back to the apartment and got into bed. She told me she was a virgin but that she was on the pill. This I found a bit strange. Anyway, I didn't have any trouble entering her. What can I say? It was wonderful, it was fantastic. I don't mean the fucking so much as I mean the glorious shedding of the stigma of being a twenty year old virgin. However, the fucking was great too! (much better than masturbating!)*

It was true. I felt new inside and I wanted to look new outside. Begone white shirts, grey flannels, Old Sedberghian blazers, and cavalry twills. I was a butterfly now and I wanted to look like one.

In the weeks that followed, I made several visits to a boutique called 'Le Chateau' on Ste. Catherine's Street. I came away with hipster pants, pink shirts, and a camel-hair double-breasted jacket. Goodbye Protestant Ethic.

I was on duty in the three-screen area of the Pavilion. The place wasn't as crowded as usual. I suddenly noticed a stunning woman enter. She looked like she'd walked straight out of the pages of Vogue magazine. She was tall, slim and impeccably turned out in a red and white striped dress with a high hemline and low neck line. Her face and legs were tanned and flawless. At the end of the presentation, I did my usual 'move to the left, please, allez à la gauche s'il vous plaît.' Then this incredible woman comes up to me so that she is quite close, looks me coolly in the eyes and says, 'do you mind if I stay and see it though again.' I muttered 'of course not,' and in a daze started trying to interpret what was going on. The next five minutes were an age of indecision. Had she come on to me? Surely she had. Why else would she want to see this crummy film twice? No one else did. And the way she had said it. But then that was crazy. Why would a woman, a mature sexy woman, who you would normally see with a rich man in his thirties or forties, why would a woman like that be even remotely interested in someone like me? I didn't know. I couldn't figure it out.

The movie ended, and almost reluctantly (or so it seemed) this fantastic woman, this sex-goddess moved out of the room. I stood there paralysed. And then a crystal clear realisation came upon me. If I didn't go after that woman, I would never be able to live with myself. It would be the ultimate cop-out, the most despicable act of cowardice. I knew what I had to do.

I went tearing off in hot pursuit. I couldn't see her in the Industrial Britain exhibit. She didn't seem to be in the Culture and The Arts room with the tall sculptures. Damn! Where was she? Finally I caught up with her just as she was going through the turnstiles.

She didn't seem to show any great surprise at my inept performance. And when I breathlessly asked her to meet me at 'Le Bistro' for a drink, to my astonishment she agreed.

That evening, we met as planned. 'Le Bistro' was noisy, boisterous, vibrant as usual. We sat across from one other amidst the marble-topped tables, the moustachioed waiters and the Toulouse-Lautrec posters.

She ordered a Pernod and I requested a beer. This was not like being with Val. This was altogether different. Her moves were slow and deliberate, and guarded. She was like a female panther.

She told me that her name was Muriel Lachance and that she was a model in Toronto. She didn't tell me much more than that. Instead, I yakked on a bit about life at the Brit. Pav. As I talked, I got the impression that she was appraising me, physically. Her eyes, subtly but unmistakably, were taking in my build, the expression of my gestures, and the rhythm of my movements.

After a few more drinks, I took her to 'La Rose Rouge' discotheque on MacKay Street. I had been there a few times before with Val, and had originally chosen it for its location - it was exactly halfway back to my place from Le Bistro.

'La Rose Rouge' was a small, intimate boudoir. The lighting was muted red, the material used on the chairs seemed like pink velvet, and the walls and ceiling were a white stucco which added to the already tactile, sensuous feel of the place. The dance floor itself was so tiny that it discouraged anything but body-hugging, cheek-to-cheek dancing, especially because the club was always crowded.

The place was a perfect partner to 'Le Bistro' as far as first dates were concerned. The extraverted atmosphere of 'Le Bistro' was stimulating and quickly helped get rid of inhibitions. 'La Rose Rouge', on the other hand, soothed and caressed and gradually elicited the desire to hold and touch and feel – rather than just talk.

We had a drink and then I asked her to dance. It was while we were dancing that she seemed to loosen up a little. I got the feeling that she was being driven by contrary impulse. On the one hand, her body was warm and willingly pressed against mine, but despite this, her face still seemed tight and her eyes guarded.

Something told me that I should take things slow - have another drink, and follow it with more dancing. But I wanted her so badly. I felt I was bursting. I suggested we go back to my place, and to my surprise, she agreed without any hesitation.

Perhaps I've been reading her wrong, I wondered as we climbed the steps to my apartment. Perhaps I'm imagining that she is guarded. We went straight to my room and sat down on the bed. I moved towards her to kiss her and then hesitated for an instant. I checked her face for any signs of resistance. There were none. Her lips were parted and she was breathing quickly. Kissing her was a confirmation of what I'd known all along. This lady had experience! Her lips were hot and soft, her tongue hungry and knowing. Suddenly, her movements were quick and efficient. Her hand slid down to my fly. With a deft movement, she unzipped it and then carefully she eased my cock out from the restraining pants. Then she changed her position so that she was kneeling on the floor, her elbows on the side of the bed, her head over my groin. As she caressed my cock, she seemed to be looking at it and talking to it, stimulating me not only with her hands but also with her eyes and words. This drove me crazy. Instinctively I pushed her head down.

"You'd like me to do that wouldn't you?" she said, raising her head and smiling.

"Yes, yes."

"No, not this time." She sat up and removed her hand from my cock.

"Well, let me come inside you." I tried not to sound desperate.

"No. I don't think so. In fact I must be going soon."

"What? Why?"

"I have to get an early train back to Toronto tomorrow. Anyway, I'm sure we'll see each other soon."

Suddenly the rising balloon of my expectations was punctured, the momentum of the evening lost. Still inwardly gasping, like a fish out of water, I saw her back to her hotel in a cab. Then I walked home, trying all the way to calm myself and work my way out of feverish desire. What would it have been like, I kept wondering? What would it have been like to have those long, lithe, tanned legs wrapped around me? What would it have been like to have her hot lips exploring my body? What would it have been like to be deep inside her and to have the years of her experience driving me higher and higher?

I didn't see Muriel again for two weeks and they felt like the longest two weeks of my life. Night and day I experienced a passionate yearning to see her. Despite her reluctance to go 'all the way', she had been so responsive. For some reason that I did not know or understand, her will had held her back while her body had been more than willing and eager.

Ironically, it was only a few days after my meeting with Muriel that who should re-enter my life but Pam. As it turned out, it was a brief and final encounter. She had hitchhiked across Canada with her friend, Tom. Her intention was to check out The National Theatre School and, apparently, to see me. We met at the Copacabana on Ste. Catherine's. The place seemed to be run by gangsters and the oppressiveness of the atmosphere matched the mood of the occasion.

I was tired of Pam's vacillations and I was tired of the dreamlike nature of our relationship. But above all, I no longer needed her as the person with whom I would discover and share the joys of sex. And on top of all this, I was infatuated with another woman.

The meeting was brief and somewhat bitter. Afterwards, as I walked out into the humid Montreal night, I realised that another major chapter of my life had ended.

It was on a Thursday, around 6 p.m. that I decided I couldn't wait any longer to see Muriel. I had planned to go up to Rawdon (where the British Pavilion guides and hostesses had rented a cottage) but as I sat on the Metro on the way home from work, I was gripped by an irresistible urge to set off to Toronto right away. I stopped off at my apartment just long enough to change out of my blue suit. I realised that I didn't have enough money to pay for a return bus ticket and I wasn't about to wait for the bank to open the next day. So there was only one thing for it - I had to hitchhike.

I got back on the Metro and took it to Crémazie on the northern line. From there, I walked to the entry ramp for the Métropolitain Boulevard, which later became the trans-Canadian highway.

I hitch-hiked through the night and at about 6 a.m. on a beautiful, clear Friday morning, a westbound truck let me off at the Yonge Street exit of the 401.

Muriel had not given me her address but she had given me her phone number. She had also mentioned that she worked at a Beauty Salon on Yonge Street near York Mills. My plan was to surprise her by turning up at the Salon - at least, that was the plan before I found myself on Yonge Street at dawn.

As I started walking down Yonge Street, I suddenly realised that despite the sunlight and blue sky, it was still damned cold. In my rush to get to Toronto, I hadn't thought to bring a sweater or jacket. In fact I was wearing only a short-sleeved shirt and my 'Le Chateau' hipsters. To try to keep warm, I alternated brisk walking with jogging. After what seemed like an age, I finally came to what I took to be the Beauty Salon in question.

Next door to the Salon was a restaurant. It was still closed. I checked my watch. It was still only 6-45 a.m. Damn! What to do? I wanted to call Muriel but I knew it was too early. Don't blow it by moving too fast this time, I thought. So for the next half-hour, I paced up and down the block, swinging my arms and rubbing them, all the while wishing I was snuggled up to Muriel in bed.

Fortunately, the restaurant opened at about 7-15. I went in and slowly thawed out with several cups of coffee. At around 8 a.m. I made the phone call. I was half-expecting that she wouldn't want to see me or even worse, that she had given me a fictitious 'phone number. The receiver was picked up and there was Muriel. Right away, she sounded excited to hear my voice. She told me to stay put and that she would meet me half an hour later.

Sure enough, half an hour later, the restaurant door opened and in walked Muriel. Once again, my first impression was that she was a visitor from another realm, a world of airlines and large hotels, plush restaurants and fast cars. It was certainly not a world with which I was familiar.

From the outset, Muriel's mood was different from in Montreal. She kissed me warmly and then began fussing over me affectionately. I felt a boy-man, with her - the older woman - telling me that I really shouldn't have gone to such lengths to see her but that she was glad I had.

And then, without further ado, she took charge and told me to come with her. I asked her where we were going and she just smiled and said, "you'll see." I had to admit, things were shaping up well, very well.



Outside, it was warmer, the rising sun dispelling the chill of the dawn. The sky was an even more brilliant blue than before. We walked down Yonge Street arm-in-arm, like we were lovers. As we walked, I became aware of the stream of cool air on my thigh, close to the crotch area. Then I remembered, I had split my pants the night before in stretching up to get into the cab of a truck. I mentioned the fact to Muriel. She smiled, opened her bag and took out a sewing kit.

“As a model, I need to carry this around everywhere I go. You never know what’s going to happen and you’re responsible for your own clothes.”

By the time we’d passed Eglinton Avenue, what seemed like a large park became visible on our left.

“Let’s go in here,” said Muriel. “This is Mount Pleasant Cemetery.” She smiled again and added, “I’ll take it from here.”

My pulse quickened. A cemetery, eh? What better place to drop my pants, I thought to myself. I was rapidly beginning to feel radiant about the prospects for the day. We found a secluded stand of trees and I slipped off my pants. Muriel’s eyes showed a trace of a smile as she looked at the growing bulge in my pants. As I watched her, I wondered what it was that made her eyes so mysterious and seductive. Suddenly, I realised that part of the effect was due to long and thick false eyelashes.

In no time at all, she had fixed my pants and handed them back to me. Her attitude, although still warm and sensuous, let me know that the cemetery was not to be *the* place. I was going to have to wait longer.

We continued our walk down Yonge Street. I had no idea where we were going, but it was clear that Muriel had a definite plan in mind. When we got to St. Clair Avenue, Muriel suddenly disappeared into a fruit shop. She came out a few minutes later with bags of peaches and plums and grapes. Then, with a smile and no explanation, she led me down into the subway where we got onto a southbound train. After quite a long ride, we finally got off at Union Station. This name had no significance for me other than being the place where I had taken the train out to Calgary.

It was only when we reached Toronto harbour and saw the island ferry that I understood what we were doing. Another rush of excitement tingled through me as I contemplated Muriel’s plan. It was all too much. Here I was, about to set off on my own private love-boat to a deserted island in the middle of Lake Ontario, accompanied by this siren with brown eyes and the perfect body. There was no doubt about it - it certainly beat battling the crowds to get to that other island, Ile Nôtre Dame.

As it turned out, the island was not exactly deserted. But once we reached the far side, the crowds had disappeared and we had a sandy beach to ourselves. We sat down and began eating some peaches. I could feel my stomach turning. There was no conversation, just a volatile sexual tension. Then after a few minutes, Muriel reached over and undid a few buttons on my shirt. She slid her in and stroked my chest with the flat of her palm, her fingers outstretched and probing. Suddenly, at the same moment, we began kiss each other passionately. Her lips were burning, her breathing quick and shallow.

“I want you Ian, I want you now, I want you to fuck me, *now*.”

“I felt bewildered. It was so sudden, and yet it wasn’t. I felt like a virgin again, and yet I wasn’t. I hadn’t even felt her breasts yet. What about the different stages? What about the foreplay? But of course, the whole morning had been foreplay, to say nothing of the evening in Montreal and the two weeks of waiting.

Muriel had her dress off and was lying on her back, her knees up and her legs open. For an instant I was stunned by the sight of her body. She was so ... so perfect; long, lithe, unblemished, perfectly proportioned. Then I tore down my pants and lowered myself onto her. She guided me in and I gasped as I entered her. She was so wet, so warm. I slid in and out, and she moved with me.

It took only a minute or two before I exploded inside her. I felt utterly ashamed but she cut short my apologies and said it had felt wonderful. We ate some fruit and caressed each other and before long, I was hard again. This time we fucked for what seemed like a long time. At last, pure physical pleasure. No messing around with contraceptives, no last minute uncertainties, no hesitation, no guilt, no remorse. This time I didn’t feel any anxiety about coming too soon. I loved every moment of it. I loved being with a woman who was so sure of herself and what she wanted, who was so free and uninhibited.

We spent the rest of the afternoon together, but as the hour grew later, Muriel seemed to become fidgety. Without explaining, she said she had to get back. When I asked if I could come to her house, she said that it would be impossible.

Somewhere in downtown Toronto, I took my leave of her. It was not easy. I still felt we were a part of each other. I didn't want to let go of her. I just wanted to make love to her, again and again and again. Why couldn't it happen? Why did she have to go? Why couldn't we at least spend the evening together? Our parting was intimate but once again, I was confused.



## 7.

Back in Montreal, I was on a crest of self-confidence such I'd never known before, certainly not as far as women were concerned. My sexual experience (or lack of it) was no longer an embarrassing source of vulnerability. Even some of my fellow guides who seemed to be 'getting it' all the time, even they had not made it with someone like Muriel.

This self-confidence led to a kind of manic high energy. For the first time since about the age of fifteen, I really felt like letting go and having a good time. For the first time since that age, there didn't seem to be any immediate, overbearing pressures. I was not the only one who wanted to let go. Most of the other guides and hostesses appeared to have the same idea. As it turned out, having a good time was not reserved solely for off-the-job activities. After a month or so, The Brit. Pav. itself began to show its own potential as an amusement park.

Certain things happened without our initiation. For example, there was a couple of amusing incidents with visiting V.I.P.'s that kept people talking for days after. There was the day that President de Gaulle kept the British Pavilion staff waiting lined up outside for forty minutes before he arrived. When he *did* finally arrive, he walked up the steps towards the official reception, and then suddenly, without warning, turned on his heel, walked down the steps again, got into his car and drove off. Given that this was the day before his famous 'Vive le Québec libre' speech, it could be inferred that this strange behaviour was not due to, for example, Gallic idiosyncrasy or a sneaky attack of diarrhoea. In any event, it was excellent street theatre.

On another occasion, we were honoured with a visit by Haile Selassie, the Emperor of Ethiopia. At the time, I was posted at the top of the longest escalator in the Pavilion. Our job was to clear the general public out of the way and to assist in any way we could with the Imperial visitation. After a couple of false alarms, I received word that the Emperor was about to step on the escalator. I peered down the tunnel of the escalator. Sure enough, way down at the bottom, I could see a gathering of people led by a small man festooned with gold braid and ribbons and medals. One by one, the group of people stepped onto the escalator. I straightened my tie and debated whether I should stand at attention or at ease. Suddenly, there was a grinding noise and the elevator slowed to a halt. Then the grinding recommenced and the elevator started to go backwards.

Now most people faced with this situation, would probably turn around and 'go with the flow', so to speak. They would, in other words, return to the bottom and wait until the escalator resumed the desired direction. Haile Selassie, however, was not an ordinary person, as soon became apparent. Something inside of him must have said, 'I will *not* go back, I *will* go onwards and upwards', for suddenly, there was this little man covered in gold braid, bravely continuing his climb, looking for all the world like someone working out on a treadmill at 'Vic Tannys'. Without showing any outward sign of consternation, he continued to walk up. There was one problem – the balky escalator continued to go down at the same rate that he was climbing up. Result? What the sociologists called 'dynamic equilibrium'.

Of course, I should have stopped the escalator by pressing an emergency button at the top of the escalator. However, I was so convulsed with laughter that I didn't think of this. In the end, a perspiring Ethiopian bodyguard made his way up to the top of the stairs, and stopped it himself. I had just enough time to compose myself before the Emperor, by now thunderous-looking, and a sheepish British entourage passed by. So much for my glimpse of The 'Lion of Judah'.

In addition to such incidents as these, there were certain areas within the Pavilion that proved themselves to be on going sources of amusement. For instance, the last section of the Pavilion contained huge, forty-foot high naked statues, of which the male species were endowed with truly prodigious members. A real laugh was always to be had watching the reactions of the ever-present groups of nuns as they turned the corner and were confronted by original shamelessness.

On the other hand, some humorous situations were precipitated as a result of malicious forethought. In the first exhibit, for example, a revolving platform took visitors around a huge cave in which they were treated to film displays depicting life in early Britain. These films were so absorbing that often people would trip up when the revolving platform came to the ramp. On occasion, the tip of somebody's sandal would get dragged under the ramp. Our job was to stand at this critical point and shout out "watch your step, attention à vos pieds." If the worst happened and we heard screams, we would rush into the control room, and shut off the platform.

However, on particularly boring or frustrating days, it was not unknown for some guides to press the reverse button and watch with disguised glee as it slowly dawned on people that they were gliding backwards the way they'd come.

For me, these situations meant more than just prankish excursions into the theatre of the absurd. They also presented the opportunity to observe people in a controlled setting. There was so much that I didn't understand about people's behaviour, whether as individuals or in groups. Over the year, my interest in Sociology as a possible focus of my studies, had increased greatly. Standing in the same spot day after day, observing a continuous flow of people try to cope with unfamiliar surroundings led me to certain hypotheses and conclusions. It certainly wasn't long before I accepted the essential sociological axiom that mass behaviour can be classified and to some extent, predicted.

Working at the British Pavilion re-connected me to Britain and my roots. It was true that we made fun of others, but we also made fun of ourselves. The whole tenor of the Pavilion was self-mocking in one way or another.

Canadians, on the other hand, seemed unable or unwilling to laugh at themselves. And they were so pathetically over-awed by all things British. Why did they have to be so deferential? I couldn't understand it. They seemed to be so weak in their sense of who they were. The emphasis was always on their ethnic roots, the fact that they were French-Canadian, or Italian-Canadian, or Chinese-Canadian, rather than just Canadian. The expatriate Brits, of course, were just that – Brits who happened to be living in Canada, certainly not anything as compromising as 'British-Canadian'. However, on the question of the ability to laugh at oneself, it did occur to me, that if you don't know who you are, you can't really be expected to laugh at who you are.

The Canadians who bothered us most were the guides and hostesses from the Ontario Pavilion. From the beginning, they went to great lengths to try to meet us and get to know us. We couldn't understand why they were so obsequious. Why did they suck up so much? This was their country, their party, their one hundredth celebration. The last straw was when they rented a cottage next door to ours in Rawdon. This was accomplished completely on their own initiative, without any invitation or suggestion from us.

Although it appeared as if the Ontario Pavilion people were prepared to go to almost any lengths to emulate us, the curious thing was that there were several guides working at the British Pavilion who seemed much more able to be 'Canadian' and proud of it. In particular, I was attracted to Jeremy Lach and Iain Anderson. Both these guys were at McGill University and both of them had British parents who had immigrated to Canada. Jerry's father had an executive position with C.N. railroads and Iain's father was in the upper echelons of the Air Canada organisation. As it turned out, I spent a couple of months that summer, working closely with both of them.

During June, I had the idea of putting together a Brit. Pav. Revue (of the 'Beyond The Fringe' variety). Most of the material was culled from the kind of situations and incidents mentioned before, and it was developed primarily by Iain, Jerry and myself. I also wrote the songs and pieced together a band to play at the Revue.

Jerry's claim to fame at the time was the fact that he was carrying on relationships with two Brit. Pav. hostesses at the same time. At first, his adroitness consisted of doing this without either one knowing about the other. Then, after a while, they did come to realise what was happening. However, even then, such was the power of attraction of Jerry Lach that they both decided to continue with their relationships with him despite the presence of the other. This was carried out covertly without either one ever formally recognising each other or agreeing to share him. The two women concerned also happened to be the most

attractive hostesses at the Pavilion. It was an amazing performance on the part of everyone concerned, and left myself and various other guides half in awe and half green with envy.

Jerry and Iain had several things in common. They were both highly intelligent and possessed a good sense of humour. They both shared similar backgrounds in Theatre, Politics and Literature. And they were both anti-authoritarian and in a stage of rebellion against their parents. That was where the similarities ended.

On the other side of the coin, Jerry was tall and good-looking, whereas Iain was short and unattractive. Jerry was courteous and generous whereas Iain tended to be pushy and self-seeking. Although quick-witted, Jerry was slow and thorough when discussing serious matters. Iain, on the other hand, was continually flashing from one idea to another. He seemed to be 'into' everything, relentlessly probing, exploring, experimenting.

Our best times together, and where the real work on the Revue took place, was at the cottage at Rawdon. Here in the backwoods, beside a lake, the pace of life slowed and the world became a smaller and simpler place. At night we would light a fire and drink beer and hope that the Ontario Pavilion people wouldn't come visiting.

Meanwhile, throughout this period, I was scheming how and when to next get together with Muriel. I finally hit on the idea of taking her to Stratford Festival, where we could soak up a little culture while spending a lust-filled weekend by the Avon.

\* \* \*

My expectations could not have been higher. My last meeting with her on Toronto Island had been a feast in itself, and yet at the same time, only a foretaste of what might be to come. In anticipation of what 'might be', I had planned the Stratford trip in detail. This time, we would do it in style. This time we would have our own room and our own bed. This time I was not going to be robbed of my ecstatic vision of spending a whole night with Muriel. We would have not just one but two whole nights together.

I had brought lots of money to pay for the theatre tickets, the accommodation and the forthcoming wining and dining. 'Why not be hedonistic', a voice inside me reasoned. 'After all that's what your relationship with her is all about - it is physical, it is carnal, it *is* grounded in lust. After what you went through with Pam, you need it ... hey, you deserve it.' Yes, a weekend of unbridled passion, of sensual delight, of utter licentious, debauched pleasure. I could hardly wait.

I met Muriel at the bus station in Toronto. She seemed glad to see me but hardly excited. This didn't bother me too much. I was beginning to recognise that Muriel was temperamental and so it didn't seem worthwhile to read too much into her mood.

Sure enough, on the bus to Stratford, the animal urges between us began to re-awaken. We positioned a raincoat over our laps and with this as protection against prying eyes, we began furtively to explore each other. Slowly and carefully I worked my hand up her thigh until my finger was pressing in against the moist fabric of her underpants. Within minutes, she was beginning to breathe quickly and make little moaning noises in her throat. I thrilled at her responsiveness. I could also feel little movements in her pelvis as she tightened and untightened her buttocks. When it seemed we might arouse attention, I stopped playing with her and she started on me.

By the time we reached Stratford, we had both been on the brink of orgasm several times. It felt like the sexual tension between us had become like an active volcano, ready to explode at any moment.

I had expected Stratford, Ontario, to be like its English namesake. Instead, it seemed to be very Canadian. There were the usual flat-topped buildings on the main streets, the wide right-angled streets, the ubiquitous overhead power lines. There was also the air of reserve and forced politeness that seemed to be an intrinsic feature of small Ontario towns. In a way, I could have been back in Kingston, except Stratford was on a smaller scale.

The day was humid, and dark cumulus clouds hung heavy and sombre overhead. As we trudged down the street in search of the Tourist Accommodation Bureau, I got the impression that Muriel's mood was also beginning to darken. After a while, we found the office we were seeking. Inside, there was a line-up. After a moment, Muriel gave me a look of exasperation and hauled her suitcase (an extraordinarily large one) over to a vacant chair. There

she lit a cigarette and buried herself in a Vogue magazine.

Ten minutes later, I had the addresses of several different guest homes.

"Where the hell are we supposed to be going?" Muriel inquired curtly, as we started off down the street again.

"Well, it's not meant to be far from here." I replied suppressing resentment at Muriel's tone of voice and attitude. "Would you like me to carry your suitcase? It looks kind of heavy."

Muriel threw me another exasperated look and dumped her suitcase on the sidewalk. I could feel myself tighten inside. I could always understand a bad mood but she didn't have to act as if I had done something wrong.

Finally we found the house. It had a white picket fence and a willow tree in the garden. Everything looked obsessively neat and orderly. I rang the bell. A woman with a starched face and knitted eyebrows came to the door.

"Do you have a room for my wife and I?" I inquired, hoping fervently that she wasn't going to ask for age identification.

"Hmm ... and how long is it you want to stay." she replied looking me up and down, and knitting her eyebrows some more.

"Oh, just two nights."

"Would you be wanting single beds or a double bed?" As she said this, she turned her gaze on Muriel. I could almost feel her making a note of Muriel's false eye-lashes. For her part, Muriel glared at the woman, making no attempt to play the part of the older but innocent wife.

"Well, er ... a double bed, if you have one," I said beginning to wilt and wishing that I could get some support from Muriel.

"It's \$15 a night, cash in advance."

"That's no problem."

"And you must be in by 11 o'clock."

"Yes of course," I replied with my best English politeness. I felt like I was back in Public School.

"Well, come in then and sign the guest book. What did you say your names were?"

"I'm Ian Brown, and this is Muriel ... Brown. Mr. and Mrs. Brown."

\* \* \*

"*Brown?* Oh come on, your name isn't *really* 'Brown', is it?! Couldn't you have thought of something more imaginative?" asked Muriel when we were safely up in our bedroom.

"That *is* my name," I replied testily.

At this stage of the original game plan, we were supposed to dive into bed and relieve ourselves of all that suppressed sexual energy. However, given the mood of the moment, it seemed an unlikely event. As Muriel disappeared into the bathroom, I contemplated my next move. Maybe I was wrong. Maybe, despite her apparent bad mood, Muriel was more than willing to go to bed with me. Perhaps I was handling her all wrong. Perhaps, I should adopt a more assertive, masculine, 'I'll make the decisions' approach. Or maybe, I thought as I desperately searched my mind for suitable male role models, maybe I should use a romantic Errol Flynn approach. When he comes out of the bathroom, maybe I should just sweep her off her feet while uttering the irresistible imperative, "come to bed darling." Or maybe I shouldn't say anything at all. Maybe I should take the strong, silent Robert Mitchum approach, get into bed, light a cigarette and await her while pretending to read a magazine, and when she appeared, beckon her over with a brief nod of the head.

I had just unbuckled my belt when a flat disgruntled voice from the bathroom announced, "I'm hungry, let's go and eat."

O.K. Scrap original game plan and impromptu variations. Move to option two. Eat first, fuck later. That still sounded pretty good. Maybe Muriel's mood would improve once she had some food in her stomach. After all, she *is* a model, I thought. Maybe she hasn't eaten for a couple of days. Yes, that made sense, we would have a

long, lazy, relaxing, intimate, tête-à-tête, with apéritifs and appetisers, succulent entrées and delectable desserts and liqueurs, and all of this accompanied by robust, earthy wines, impeccable service and a warm, sensuous candle-lit atmosphere.

“Yes, let’s go and eat,” I replied.

It took us at least half an hour of trudging around Stratford to even locate a restaurant. It was incomprehensible to me. This was a festival town after all. Goodness knows, my hometown of Edinburgh was stodgy enough, but during its festival, it came alive. But in this godforsaken spot, not only could we not find any restaurants, we couldn’t even find any people to ask directions. The streets seemed devoid of any sign of human life. The place was like a ghost town – Tombstone with white picket fences as marital hitching posts.

The restaurant was one of those badly lit, red-walled, liquor-licensed, pizza and lasagna joints that seemed so popular in Canada. One better than a greasy spoon but still a long way from the kind of intimate little nook that I’d got used to in Montreal.

We sat down at a booth. I looked around. There were only two other people in the restaurant. One was a middle-aged man sawing away at a T-bone. He looked like a salesman on his way home after a long road trip. The other person was an old, decrepit looking woman, sitting in the corner. There were several empty beer bottles in front of her, and she appeared half drunk. We looked out of place. I was wearing my camelhair double-breasted jacket and Muriel was wearing a crocheted mini-skirt.

“What can I get you people?” asked the waitress, listlessly.

“I just want a Cesar salad,” said Muriel.

“Wouldn’t you like something more than that?” I inquired solicitously. An entrée with the salad, or an appetiser to kick things off with?”

“No, that’s it,” snapped back Muriel.

“O.K. ... could you bring me the special, the spaghetti and meatballs, and could you please bring us the wine list?”

“We don’t got a wine list, just the house wine.”

“What’s that?”

“Bright’s red.”

I noticed Muriel’s eyes roll upward.

“Yes, well, I’ll have a beer ... a ‘fifty’.”

“Bring me a gin and tonic please,” said Muriel.

It was while I was in the middle of my spaghetti that it happened. The old woman in the corner who had been getting progressively more drunk and garrulous, suddenly vomited all over her table and herself.

I looked around. The salesman had left five minutes earlier and the waitress was nowhere to be seen. I got up and went over to the woman and helped her towards the washroom. A minute later, the waitress and the owner of the restaurant appeared and took over. A taxi was called. The old woman was cleaned up a bit and after a five or ten minutes wait, she was escorted away by the cab driver. When I returned to the table, Muriel looked furious.

“How could you do that?” she demanded of me incredulously.

“Do what?”

“Go anywhere near that disgusting old woman.

“She needed help. I was helping her.”

“Somebody else could have done that.” Muriel pushed away her half eaten salad. Her mouth tightened in disgust and she shuddered involuntarily. For a moment, I thought that she too was going to throw up.

“You mean you wouldn’t have helped her?” I could feel anger rising.

“Of course not!”

“Why not? What’s wrong with you?”

“What’s wrong with *me*? Listen, Ian Brown, let me tell you something. I have made something of myself. My parents were poor. My father was an alcoholic and my mother was always tired and worried. You know where we lived? A dreary little town in Quebec called Trois Rivières. But I got out of that scene. I came to Toronto. I



became a model. Now I make good money. I can afford nice clothes. I look after myself. I don't do anything I don't want to do"

"But she needed help," I protested.

"She got herself into that mess. *She* has to get herself out of it. It's got nothing to do with me. I'm surprised you could degrade yourself by having anything to do with her."

I could feel a cold anger, almost a hatred from her. And in turn, I felt contempt for her selfishness. She seemed to be all image and no substance. Where were her values? But in another part of me, I was anxious to salvage the evening.

"Let's go back," I ventured.

She agreed. I paid the bill and we went outside. But of course, I should have known - it had started raining.

Back in the room, we silently took off our clothes. We were disconnected on all levels but for the physical, and there the desire was mixed with anger and hostility.

I looked at Muriel's naked form and became molten with lust. She was lithe and beautifully proportioned. Everything about her physical presence seemed to be silky smooth, her hair - including the soft triangle of pubic hair, her flawless skin and of course, her warm and wet cunt.

She moved to turn off the light.

"No, let's leave it on," I said. "I want to be able to see our bodies together."

"I want to take off my make-up," she said.

"So what?" I asked uncomprehendingly.

Muriel turned round and fixed me with a sharp look.

"I don't like to be seen without my make-up on," she answered and turned off the light.

Once in bed, Muriel's coldness seemed to disappear. As I ran my fingers over her hardened nipples, she said she wanted me to fuck her long and hard. I inserted my finger through the lips of her cunt and began to move it in and out.

"No," she hissed, "higher ... let me show you," and she moved my finger up until I could feel the hard protrusion of her clitoris. Then she showed me how to run my finger over and around her clitoris.

Now do it with your tongue," she commanded. I moved my head down her body, kissing her stomach, licking her velvety skin. I found her clitoris with my tongue and began playing with it. She even tasted sweet. As I licked her, she began moaning with pleasure.

"Oh, that's good, that's good." And then suddenly, she broke away from me and like a tigress, she began to move over my body with quick supple movements, brushing her breasts across my stomach, kissing, licking, sucking my nipples, my arms, my fingers.

Then her head was in my crotch and she was licking my balls, carefully, expertly. And just when she knew I couldn't wait any more, she took my throbbing cock and put into her mouth. Slowly, she began to move up and down on it, all the while running her tongue around the shaft and the head.

And then she sat on top of me, straddling my inflamed cock. Again, she moved up and down and around and around, only this time with her whole body. She seemed to sense when I was about to come, and each time that happened, she stopped moving and pressed her fingers around the base of my cock and waited until the reflex subsided. Then again she would start. I could see her rubbing and massaging her clitoris, getting herself higher and higher. Finally she started moving quicker, riding me back and forth. We became one, our breathing, our moans of ecstasy, and in a crashing climax of sensations, we came together.

The passion of that first encounter was just the prelude to a long night of sexual exploration and intimacy. By the time it had finished, we had fucked at least four or five more times. On the last of these occasions, Muriel insisted that she have her back to me while I enter her from the rear. It was already light outside and in the half-light of the room, it became apparent that Muriel didn't want me to see her face.

After we finished, she got out of bed, went into the bathroom and closed the door. I could feel myself dozing off, exhausted but supremely satisfied. A while later, I opened my eyes and realised that Muriel was still in

the bathroom. I checked my watch. It was at least twenty minutes after she first went in. As I was wondering what was going on, the door opened and Muriel walked out. She was fully made up and dressed. Without looking at me, she took her suitcase, opened it and began to fold in some dresses that she had put on hangers the previous evening.

“What are you doing?” I asked feeling confused and anxious.”

“I’m leaving,” she replied curtly.

“You’re what!?” I exclaimed incredulously. “Why?”

“I want to go back to Toronto.”

“Why? What happened? What’s the matter?”

“I hate you.” Muriel spat the words out at me.

“What? Why?” I felt I was crumbling in confusion.

“Because you made me feel guilty.”

“But how could you hate me after what we did ... what you did and said last night. I mean, why do you feel guilty ... and how am I to blame?”

My protests died out as Muriel opened the door and left.

I lay there utterly dazed. This was impossible. This couldn’t be happening. She couldn’t leave, not now. We hadn’t even seen the plays yet. And why was she leaving? What had I done to her? What did she mean, she hated me? What had I done to make her feel guilty? A thousand questions bombarded me, until suddenly, I was struck by the fact that meanwhile, I was letting her get away. Maybe this was just another test to see how much I really wanted her.

I jumped out of bed, got my clothes on in no time, and went rushing out of the house. I ran all the way to the bus station and got there just in time to see Muriel entering the coffee shop. But when I entered half a minute later, there was no sign of her. It struck me that she must have seen me and hidden herself in the washroom.

I felt another rush of adrenaline and I charged over to the washrooms. I opened the door to the Ladies and shouted, “Muriel come out, I just want to talk, please.” There was silence.

It was at that point that I suddenly felt all energy, all motivation to pursue Muriel drain out of me. I stood there for a moment, numbed, not able to move, not knowing which direction to set off in. This wasn’t a game. She obviously did not want to see me, whatever the reason. What was the point of pursuing her? I couldn’t force her to stay.

I left the coffee shop and headed out of the bus station. As I crossed the street, a Greyhound bus with ‘TORONTO’ marked on the front, turned the corner. ‘There goes Muriel,’ I thought. I was too numbed by shock to think or feel anything more than that. ‘There goes Muriel’ was all I could think. I didn’t really know where I was walking. A while later, I realised that I was beside a river - presumably the Avon. There were swans, beautiful white swans. As I watched them glide gracefully about, my thoughts drifted to the Shakespeare sonnets I’d been studying that year. Yes, that was it - the dark lady of Stratford – passionate, mysterious, destructive.

Muriel was my dark lady. I didn’t understand her at all. And as I sat there watching the river flow, once again the question came back to haunt me. Why did she leave? Why did she say she hated me? Why did she abandon herself with such free will and then say that I’d made her feel guilty?



## 8.

August was the last month in Montreal for me. It was a strange time. On one level, the hectic rhythm of the Expo months continued unabated. On another level, it was a time for goodbyes and uncertainty about the future. For my part, I was sad to see our community of guides and hostesses face the prospect of dissolution. For a few precious months, life at The British Pavilion had returned me to the womb-like security of Sedbergh. There had been friendship, adventure and fun. And now the party was almost over.

The Revue came and went. It was, in the end, a great success. The Brit. Pav. was besieged by guides and hostesses from other Pavilions who had been invited to see the Revue. They were entertained with a variety of skits and songs, most of which could be described as good-old self-deprecating British humour. Given the relative lack of rehearsals, it certainly helped matters that Iain Anderson and I were half-sozzled at the time. As far as I was concerned, the best thing about the Revue was the fact that it established especially strong bonds amongst those who had participated in it.

In the last two weeks before I left, there were two arrivals from Britain, neither of which, at that particular time, were very welcome. On August 7<sup>th</sup>, my sister Joy arrived. As it turned out, Jim had secured a job at Loyola University in Montreal, and was due to commence teaching in September. Joy had come over alone by boat, the plan being for Jim to follow later by plane. Joy seemed nervous and ill at ease. She mentioned that things had not been going well between her and Jim. For my part, I found it hard to relate to her. I sensed a distance between us, possibly because she was an immigrant 'off-the-boat' whereas I, on the other hand, felt that I had already undergone certain changes due to my year in Canada.

I also felt this same sense of distance with Dave Roberts, an old school-friend from Sedbergh who turned up shortly after Joy arrived. However, at least Dave and I had the common experience of Sedbergh to fall back on, whereas Joy and I had never spoken much together, with the exception of some good times in London. As it turned out, Dave wanted to see Kingston on his way through to Toronto, so I invited him to return with me and spend a couple of days before moving on.

After Montreal, Kingston seemed as empty, and void of colour and life as outer space. If vitality of culture was what animated a city or town, then Kingston either didn't have a culture or else its culture had atrophied long ago. Kingston might be known for its University, its Royal Military College, its Penitentiaries and its hospitals, but it surely wasn't known for its fun-loving citizens.

Something happened to Dave and I within a couple of days of being back in Kingston that illustrated this pretty well. It was late evening. We had been at a couple of parties and were quite drunk. As we were walking along Princess Street, we were fooling around and making fun of everything and everyone. On a corner, ahead of us, there were two men arguing. They were going at it hammer and tongs. We could hear them shouting, 'fucking this' and 'fucking that'. As we passed them, I said in my best plummy, aristocratic English voice, "I say old chap, what shocking language." From this point on, everything happened very quickly.

One of the men, who was very large, grabbed me and said:

"Hey you, shithead, are you insulting my friend 'cos he's a cripple."

I had just enough time to glance at the other guy (who was very small) and see that he had a deformed leg, before a fist landed on the side of my head.

"Hey, I was just joking," I managed to get out, but it was all in vain. The big guy was raining blows on me and I was forced to cover up as best I could. That was where Dave came to my rescue and tried to pull the big guy away.

The next thing I knew was that Dave was lying on the ground with blood all over his shirt. I looked around. The big guy and the little guy had taken off.

“What happened?” I asked Dave.

The little guy ... he hit me with his walking stick,” was the reply.

An hour later, we left the hospital both very much sobered up, and Dave with several stitches in his forehead. So much for fun-loving Kingstonians, I thought at the time. The incident later gave me much cause for reflection. It was my first taste of violence, North American style. In Britain, anger and potential violence was usually channelled into verbal assault. The feeling I got was that in North America, the tradition was that you acted first and talked about it later.

The next day, Dave left and I was on my own again, uncertainly and unhappily at the threshold of my second year at Queens University.

\* \* \*

My first priority was to find accommodation. There was no way I was going back to the insipid atmosphere of the Residences. After a brief search, I moved into a room at 96 Union Street in the centre of campus.

The first week I was back, I had no desire to see anyone. I could feel my spirit and my guts rejecting the prospect of another year at Queens and another year of Kingston. Outside in the streets, I could see the Frosh in their silly get-ups going through the same inane initiations that I had been stupid enough to put up with the previous year.

In some ways I felt more unsettled than I had at the beginning of my first year. There seemed to be so many loose ends in my life. Rather than see relationships grow, I had the bitter taste of a series of abortive, or at best ephemeral relationships. There had been the broken dream of Pam and I, the utter shock of what had happened with Muriel in Stratford, and the necessary departure from a close group of friends in Montreal. It wouldn't have been so bad if I knew that the Brit. Pav. crowd were going to remain in Montreal. Then, at least, despite being in Kingston, I would feel that I had a home base in Montreal. However, the majority of guides and hostesses were planning to return to Britain, or go on to jobs elsewhere. Consequently, once again, I was left with the uneasy feeling that I was just passing through - to where I did not know, and *from* where was becoming increasingly hard to define.

It was a time for reflection, a time to once again question where I belonged. In the summer, I had received a letter from David Lungley informing me that he was going to get engaged to a girl called Frances. He added that they were planning to move to Australia when he completed his degree at the end of the year. This, too, added to my feeling of being unsettled. It seemed as if even my roots in Britain were getting pulled up. As for David getting married; given that I had only just lost my virginity, I found the idea of marriage a little hard to relate to.

It was easier to relate to a letter I received from John Aitken. It turned out that John had been going through some rough times, with women, at University, and with respect to the problem of 'finding himself'. To a much greater extent than David, John seemed to question the influence that Sedbergh had had on all of us. And as with my feelings regarding Queens and Kingston, the issue boiled down to the 'evils' of conformity.

Excerpts from John Aitken's letter:

*'My severest criticism of Sedbergh is that it tends to produce 'Sedberghians', not individuals with full personalities. Don't you think this is why you are having to find your 'true self' now? ... I'm sure this is a transition from boy to man, from Sedberghian to full individual. And this is sometimes a struggle as you are taken against what you thought, and so for a long time your ideas are much divided; as you say, 'the essence of life is to find the truth in oneself - to do away with all the phoney superficialities'; you're dead right.*

*Of course you're finding University and academic work a struggle but it's only what happens to most. Of course, you'll get fed up with exams, but remember that if you left now, you'd find it very difficult to find full employment. What could you find that would give you satisfaction?*

*Don't worry about fitting in and making friends. Not only have you had to make the transition from school to University, but you've also joined what I should imagine is a very different social life. Give yourself time. As you know, it's taken both Dave and I over a year to find our feet. Sedbergh and Queens - what a fantastic difference! Is it any wonder that you're finding the change hard?'*

To whatever extent John was right and I had been turned out of Sedbergh as 'a Sedberghian' rather than a full, complete individual, it was clear that definite changes were going on inside me. The question, as I saw it, was where and when to adapt (and how, and to what extent) and where and when to hang on to one's root identity? At Sedbergh, the House magazine had been called 'The Chameleon'; is that what I was now? Yes, we had to 'adapt', but the theme of people *losing* their identity was scary. To what extent was I prepared to accept or adapt to the social game at University that prevented people from being 'natural'? Perhaps I was in the process of morphing from a chameleon into something more elemental.

In those first couple of weeks at Queens, one thing became clear. I was *not* going to conform to the social pressures of Queens University. I was *not* going to buy a red leather jacket. I was *not* going to go to the College football games. I was *not* going to eat pizza and drink coke and go to movies, just because everyone else did. And I certainly was *not* going to go hunting for 'dates' just because it was the beginning of the year and that was what was expected.

Diary entries:

Sept. 9<sup>th</sup>. 1967

*A little ditty to start off the semester:*

*God Save Our Queens:*

*Queens is such a respectable place  
Being different's no crime but it's still a disgrace  
Don't be creative in colour or form  
No beads or blazers please, they just ain't the norm  
Your profs. are gods, believe what they say  
Play the game right, you might get an 'A'*

Sept. 11<sup>th</sup>.

*I am now registered for my second year. I am officially an English Honours major with Sociology as my minor. My courses are as follows:*

*English 290 - History of the English Language*

*English 220 - Elizabethan Poetry and Prose*

*English 240 - Restoration 18<sup>th</sup>. Century Poetry*

*Sociology 291 - Personality and Social Structure*

*Sociology 281 - Class and Social Structure.*

*Comments on my Profs. - 2 of them are British, 3 are Americans. Why no Canadians?*

Sept. 14<sup>th</sup>.

*Well what do you know? Muriel phoned me today out of the blue. I never expected to hear from her again. Not only did she phone, she also apologised for what happened in Stratford. She said she liked me a lot, and would still like to see me. I don't know what to feel. On the one hand, I don't trust her now - one minute she's one thing, the next she's something else. But, my God, I do*

*miss her. I yearn for her. This feeling inside me, this aching, this restlessness ... I long to bathe in the light from her beautiful brown eyes ... my lips thirst to recapture those short moments of bliss ... if this is 'only' infatuation, then what in hell does it feel like to be in love!?*

Sept. 16<sup>th</sup>.

*In Montreal for the weekend to play Rugby against McGill. In the evening, various Brit. Pav. friends held a party in honour of my visit. I felt obliged to invite the Rugby team or at least some of them. Big mistake!! The whole scene is acutely embarrassing. The Queens jocks on one side of the room and the Brit. Pav. people on the other. There appears to be nothing in common between them, nothing whatsoever - except me. I know where I want to be and yet feel I should not desert my teammates. In the end I deal with situation the only way I know how. I announce that I'm leaving. The rugby team leaves with me. Shit!*

Sept. 24<sup>th</sup>.

*Today I phoned Muriel at her Salon. I just had to. It was an irresistible impulse. I left a message for her to phone me back this evening. Right now, it's 11-45 and still no call. She didn't call. I can't believe it. I mean, what is she trying to do? Maybe she's sick. Maybe she didn't get the message.*

Sept. 30<sup>th</sup>.

*Still no word from Muriel. Today, I can't stand it any longer. I wrote to her pouring out my feelings of frustration and grievance.*

Oct. 12<sup>th</sup>.

*Finally, received a letter from Muriel. Some extracts:*

*'My darling Ian,*

*Yes, I do care if you hate me and I think you should. But Ian, why so shocked? You knew what a selfish, cold bitch I was. Surely you hadn't forgotten. I had told you many times when I first met you, and you, Ian, would say 'no-one can be that bad.' As for not ringing you up at 11 p.m. that night, our receptionist threw away your number by mistake, and there was no way for me to get in touch with you...*

*I am very sorry you must feel so bitter towards me. I like you a lot in my funny way but you don't seem to understand me, and you shouldn't try. You see, I'm so wrapped up in myself at times and don't get time to think of anyone else.*

*Conceit and selfishness Ian, that's the difference between you and the people I know. They love me because I'm like this. I was told that's what keeps me going, especially in the modelling world. I'm like a different person each time you see me. Sometimes it's quite depressing, but I most certainly don't enjoy hurting people like you say I do.*

*Ian, the times I said I would love to see you, I really meant it. Please try to understand, Ian, I would still like you to be my friend.'*

Oct. 20<sup>th</sup>.

*Today I met an amazing woman - well more like a girl really. I was doing some work in my room when there was a knock at the door. Before I had a chance to say or do anything, the door bursts open and there was this ... this girl. She was wearing a mini skirt and blue tights. Her long, dark-brown hair was drawn back tightly across her head and held by an ornamental clip at the back. 'Hi Dave,' she said as she leaped into the room, and then as she realised I wasn't Dave, she said, 'oh, sorry ... must have the wrong room.' At this she let out a high-pitched giggly laugh.*

*And then she was gone. The whole encounter was unreal. It was almost as if an elf or sprite had materialised from another realm. Anyway, she left a little of her magic. I was quite entranced. Hope I see her again.*

Oct. 21<sup>st</sup>.

*Well, I met my sprite again. I was in the Student Union building and heading downstairs to the cafeteria. Before I even saw her, I recognised the giggly laugh. I went round a corner and there she was, standing on the stairs with a pile of books in her arms. Her head was turned and she was just in the process of saying goodbye to some guy in a red leather Arts jacket. Then she turned round and saw me.*

*“Hello, do you remember me?” I asked her.*

*“Yes, you’re that guy in my Psych. class ... no, no, he’s fat, you’re not. You’re the guy that works in the reference library ... no, wait a minute, I remember, you’re the guy I bust in on the other day.”*

*“Would you like to join me for a coffee?”*

*“No, I don’t drink coffee but you can buy me an ice-cream if you like.”*

*So I bought her an ice cream and we talked for a while. Her name is Lesley. She is quite unlike anyone I’ve met before. I mean I’ve met crazy guys, but I’ve never met a crazy girl.*





## 9.

As the leaves began to wither on the ground and the icy winds once again began to sweep in from Lake Ontario, I found myself spending more time with someone called Mark Elliott. I had met Mark briefly the year before in residence but we had not got to know each other. It turned out that he was another Drapers scholar – which made three of us – Mark, Chris Porter and myself.

One day in October, Mark came up to me and said that he had heard about a house for rent on Wolfe Island. I asked him where Wolfe Island was and he replied that you could get to it by ferry from Kingston.

That afternoon we got into Mark's car and set off to see the house. It was a perfect day. The sun sparkled on the water as we stood on the ferry dock and watched the Kingston skyline recede in the distance. For the first time in weeks, I felt my spirits rising. It took about half an hour to reach the Island that looked to be between five and ten miles long. We docked at Maryville, the island's one village, complete with general store and licensed hotel. The house we were seeking turned out to be a stone's throw from the quay. Things were looking better and better by the minute.

The house itself was not particularly inspiring. From the outside it was a drab grey, its tiny yard rocky and covered with weeds. Inside, the walls were green, that juicy green shade - so appealing when leafy and growing, and so nauseating when painted on dimly-lit interiors. To make matters worse, the living room walls were dominated by a series of portraits of grim-looking Presbyterian relatives of the landlord, a Mr. Greenwood. But, on the other hand, there was plenty of space - two floors, a wood stove, and a large fridge. But most important of all, it was a retreat, somewhere to escape the humdrum academic life, somewhere distinct and far away from awful, boring, parochial, conformist Kingston. In fact, it was just what I needed - a way of being able to continue my life at Queens without having to put up with everything that surrounded it.

On the way back, we were both excited:

"Great place for pot parties," chuckled Mark.

"Great place for some peace and quiet," I responded.

"Great place to bring birds. By the way, what's been happening with that bird you've been seeing?"

"Who?"

"Lesley what's-her-name."

"Oh, Lesley. She can come out to visit any time. I sort of like her."

"We'll have to get a phone."

"Yes, I suppose so."

"And you may have to think of getting a car."

"What?" I retorted, not seeing the connection.

"Well, some days we will have classes beginning at different times and some days we'll want to come back at different times, so you won't want to depend on me."

"Yes, but I can walk."

"Well right now you can. But when it gets colder, you'd freeze your nuts off. Besides someone told me that when the lake ices over, the ferry dock is somewhere around the point, at least a couple of miles from Maryville."

I mulled over what he was saying. He had a point, but buy a car? Me? It was something I'd never even dreamed of, at least not while being a student. I just didn't associate a car with a student's lifestyle. But I had to admit that lots of students at Queens had cars, and I couldn't deny that what with money left from the Brit. Pav. job, plus my scholarship money, I could afford one, second-hand of course.

For his part, Mark had a brand new Hillman Imp. "Present from Mummy," he informed me one day. Mark reminded me a bit of the other Mark, my old Sedbergh friend, Mark Hudson. Both were rapid talkers, witty (rather than funny), more cerebral than athletic or artistic, and both had wealthy, upper middle-class

parents. Mark was an ex-Etonian, a fact that he did not seem particularly proud of. Physically, however, they were very different. Mark Hudson was on the rotund side whereas Mark Elliott was skinny and gangly. Mark Hudson had been nicknamed 'Jumbo' at school on account of his big ears and plump build. Mark Elliott, on the other hand, reminded me of a heron or some such bird.

Diary Entries:

Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>. 1967

*Today we officially moved into our house on Wolfe Island. We bought some wine to celebrate. Mark offered me some 'pot' but I refused. I refused it all summer at Expo, too. It seemed such a decadent and unhealthy way to get high. Maybe I'll try it some time but I'm in no rush. Mark is much more into the whole hippie thing than I am. He's growing his hair long and he's always talking about the Grateful Dead, or Jefferson Airplane or John Mayhall.*

Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup>.

*In about three weeks, it will be my twenty-first birthday. I feel there should be some kind of celebration. Have just written to Jerry and Maggie and some of the other Brit. Pav. people to invite them to stay for a wild weekend on Wolfe Island.*

Nov. 8<sup>th</sup>.

*Lesley seems to like me. Today she handed me an envelope and told me not to open it until I got home. It was a poem that made reference to a meeting we'd had the week before.*

*Eyes join hands  
Across the table  
And tie knots in our  
Vision, embarrassed  
They let go, a  
Filled ashtray of  
Burned moments is  
An easier subject.*

Nov. 9<sup>th</sup>.

*Got a letter from Jerry this morning. Unfortunately, he and other Brit. Pavvers can't make it here for one reason or another. It's too bad. I would have loved to see them again.*

Nov. 10<sup>th</sup>.

*This really is great being on the island. I love the quietness, the proximity to the water. Some days Mark has classes in the afternoon and I don't. So I walk down Brock Street, get an early ferry back, and have the house all to myself. Thanks to our daily ferry ride, Mark and I have discovered the old waterfront quarter of Kingston. It turns out that Kingston is not all gray limestone, thank God. There are actually a few places of interest in this part of town. There is a wonderful old-time grocery store called Cooks that has such delicacies as Robertson's marmalade, Toblerone chocolate, and first-rate sausages.*

*Opposite is a cheapish seafood restaurant that is reputed to be quite good. And on Ontario Street is our favourite haunt, the Salvation Army Clothing Store. There we have found the most wonderful array of jackets. At fifty cents each, I now have at least three double-breasted jackets.*

*Mark and I are also developing certain domestic rituals: grapefruit for breakfast is one; watching late-night movies on our beat-up old TV is another.*

Nov. 14<sup>th</sup>.

*I'm going to have to see Muriel again. I find myself pining for her. Part of it is sexual ... (all of it?). I feel like a hound dog in heat whenever I think of her. I am not having sex with anyone else as of this moment, and I miss it! But there is also an emotional part. I am still confused and hurt by what happened in Stratford. I wish I could straighten it out with her.*

Nov. 15<sup>th</sup>.

*I've decided to go down to Toronto on my twenty-first birthday to see Muriel. I'll make it a surprise just like the first time I saw her in Toronto. That seems to work better than planned visits such as the one to Stratford.*

Nov. 22<sup>nd</sup>.

*Today was my twenty-first birthday. I took a bus to Toronto in the morning. When I arrived at the hairdressing salon. I found it closed. A sign informed me that the Salon was always closed on Wednesdays. Muriel had once mentioned the name of her model agency, so I found the address in a phone book and I went there by bus. I located the agency, went in and asked a receptionist if I could see Muriel Lachance. She said she didn't know where Muriel would be, but that I could wait there if I wanted. I sat down and waited. What else could I do? Muriel continues to refuse to give me her home phone number. At least now I know the reason. In Stratford, Muriel had explained to me that the reason that she didn't want to give me her number was because she was living with a sculptor.*

*I waited and waited. Finally after about an hour of watching a parade of gorgeous women come and go, I decided the whole thing was ridiculous and I took the next bus back to Kingston.*

*When I got back to Wolfe Island late in the evening, there was a birthday card from Lesley waiting for me. On it was written:*

*Ian cher bonhomme  
I'm there with thee  
Yet here with me thou art  
Lodged in each other's heart*

\* \* \*

It's amazing what one month of a Canadian winter can do to alter the character of a place. As November drew to a close, the ice began to form on Lake Ontario and the ferry crossing lost its benign aspects. Whereas before Wolfe Island had been somewhere to escape to, now it was becoming somewhere one had to battle the elements to get to and from.

Mark's car with its life-saving heater was beginning to figure more in my daily routine. This really wasn't good for either of us, as it made me too dependent on his schedule. One day, the matter came to a head. Mark came back from classes and announced as he walked in the door:

"I've just heard that if the ice gets much worse, they're going to have to move the dock around the point. So, it looks like you will have to get a car," he added emphatically.

The next day, we drove to a car dealer on the outskirts of Kingston. As we were driving up to the office, I saw a diminutive white sports car standing by itself and gleaming in the sunshine.

"Boy, isn't *she* beautiful? Wouldn't it be nice to have something like that? I said, already smitten by the car.

"Well, ask how much they want," urged Mark.

“What? You’re kidding ... *me buy that?*” I said. “I don’t even know how to drive yet.”

“Oh, don’t worry about that. Buy it today. I’ll pick it up tomorrow. You get a learner’s license and I’ll give you lessons on the island. You’ll get the hang of it in no time.”

It was at times like this that I didn’t know whether I was basically foolish and gullible. Or was it that I was flexible and adaptable? Or perhaps, I was just suggestible and lacked judgement. Somehow, the legacy of all that sports and army training at Sedbergh, was that I had to go on proving to myself and others that I was not afraid of taking risks.

*Anyway*, half an hour later, and \$450 poorer, I was the very proud owner of a 1961 Austin Healey Sprite Convertible.

The next day, Mark and I picked up the car and immediately took it to show Lesley.

Lesley was very impressed.

“Oh, it’s *you*, Ian, suits you perfectly. When are you going to take me for a ride?”

“Well ... er, when I get my Driver’s Licence,” I answered sheepishly.

“What? You don’t have your license yet?” retorted Lesley incredulously, and she began to giggle.

“No problem,” interjected Mark, “the Ontario Test is a cinch. He’ll have it in a week or two, won’t you old boy?” he added turning to me.

“I’ll tell you what!” said Lesley gaily, picking up on Mark’s comment. “I’ve got a great idea. I was planning to take the bus down to Toronto to see my sister next Friday, a week from today. Why don’t you take your test and we can drive down together?”

I was beginning to realise that Lesley was, by nature, an initiator, especially when it involved getting what she wanted. Despite her small size and girlish immaturity, she seemed to have an inner toughness that I found most appealing. She also had a spontaneity that was continually surprising and delighting me. I was beginning to feel that we were somehow meant for each other. I could feel myself opening up to her.

I resolved to pass my test in time to make the trip to Toronto with Lesley. I also hit on the idea of inviting her to have a sumptuous dinner and spend the night *chez moi* on the Thursday evening before we were to go to Toronto. There had been heavy petting (as they would put it at Queens) between us, to say nothing of incessant, flirtatious behaviour from Lesley, but we had still to have sex together. I started wondering if she was as good in bed as Muriel. The way she flirted suggested to me that she would be.

Without delay, I got off an invitation to Lesley.

The next day, a friend of Lesley’s who happened to be in one of my English classes, handed me one of Lesley’s unmistakable orange envelopes. Inside, was a note on which written three separate entries:

*Wolfe Island*

*Banquet*

*A feast of*

*Bodies*

*Eaten*

*For the*

*First time*

*And relished*

*Forever*

*A moment’s thought*

*As eternity*

*Is reckoned*

*There’s a lifetime*

*In a second*

*by Piet Hein*

*Je voudrais beaucoup*

*Dîner chez toi*

*désirée*

I read these words again and again. 'A feast of bodies'!? ... 'eaten and relished' ... 'désirée'? These were arousing words. My pulse raced and my kundalini had already arisen in anticipation.

The next five days were ones of feverish preparation. On the one hand, I had to get ready for the driving test, on the other there was the 'feast of bodies' to think about. During one of my driving lessons from Mark, I persuaded him to spend Thursday night at a friend's place in Kingston. Then I made up a shopping list that included the following:

- ingredients for Italian spaghetti and meat sauce
- paté, ice-cream, fruit and brie cheese
- red wine, a bottle of Gilby's gin
- a box of candles, and a box of condoms (twelve at least).

Out of Mark's huge collection of records, I picked out the most salacious blues I could find as well as the most romantic mood music. I cleaned the house from top to bottom, took my sheets to the wash, and shook out my blankets.

By Thursday afternoon all was ready. Lesley was due to arrive by ferry in a few hours. The plan was that after spending the evening and night together we would go in to Kingston together, I would take my test, and we would proceed on to Toronto sometime Friday afternoon.

\* \* \*

"Isn't this fun," enthused Lesley as we sped along the 401 in the Sprite.

I mumbled a non-committal reply as I glanced around nervously to make sure there weren't any police cars lurking under a bridge or an overpass. The truth was that I was apprehensive and tense. I had taken my test that morning and had failed. I had been so preoccupied with how to change from second to third gear that I had somehow gone through a red light.

Who knows, maybe I was still a bit shaken up from the previous night. My God, in retrospect, it certainly had not been anything like Stratford. It had started well enough:

Lesley embarks from the ferry, delighted to see me. In the house, she took off her coat and she was wearing the very same mini-skirt and blue tights that had set my blood pumping when I first met her. Then she gave me a belated birthday present. It was a huge collage of photos of beautiful women. Some were clothed and obviously snipped from a fashion magazine like Vogue; others were naked and presumably culled from Playboy. This struck me as a remarkably generous and unpossessive act on the part of Lesley. It made me wonder if I would be prepared to give her a collage of gorgeous naked men.

We started the meal, which proceeded as planned. An hour or two later, duly loosened up with wine and Muddy Waters, we retired to bed – as planned. That's when the fun (?) started. Lesley got anxious and told me she was a virgin. I told her not to worry, remembering my experience with Val – not to mention Pam. I put on a condom, and after some kissing and cuddling, I tried to enter her. Screams from Lesley ... I thought, 'push harder'. I pushed harder. More screams from Lesley. And then I remembered Muriel using her saliva to lubricate my cock on a couple of occasions. But of course, simple mechanics, lubrication to reduce the friction. So I try the saliva method and success ... I slide in an inch or two. I push again. Lesley is moaning with pain and digging her fingernails into me.

Suddenly, she shrieks and I collapse into her. I withdraw terrified that I've done permanent damage. We turn on the light. There is blood everywhere. I get a cloth and clean up and the put a towel down over the blood stain. Later, I persuade Lesley to let me try again. This time there is no problem entering although she seems incredibly tight. A few minutes later it's all over. Lesley hasn't enjoyed it. I haven't enjoyed it, except to obtain relief. Then, Lesley starts getting anxious about how I withdraw lest I spill or squish some of my sperm over the top of the safe. Finally it's all over. The safe is thrown away, the light is turned off and the Feast of Bodies comes to a bloody and anti-climatic conclusion.

“We’re getting close to Toronto, Lesley’s voice interrupted my reverie. “Do you know which exit we take?” I didn’t know. I hadn’t a clue. What I did know was that it was getting dark and I was getting scared. We were now on a six-lane monster of a highway with lots of cloverleaves and feeder roads, and a plethora of road signs. Huge trucks with trailers were sweeping by, making me hang on to the wheel with all my might as the Sprite got buffeted around. One thing was clear; I wanted to get off that highway as soon as possible.

“Listen, we’re pretty well into Toronto now. Let’s take the next exit.” I volunteered.

“O.K.” replied Lesley, enthusiastic as ever and apparently unaware of my nervousness. “We just passed a sign that said ‘Kingston Road, half a mile’.”

A few minutes later, we were off the highway. No sooner had I heaved a sigh of relief then I tensed up again. Highway driving at night was bad enough but at least I hadn’t had to worry about shifting gears. Now we were on a city street, going through a suburb called Scarborough, and there were traffic lights every few blocks. I felt trapped. I could always stop somewhere and we could have a coffee and catch our breath. But then I would still face the same situation afterwards. The problem was not the city streets. The problem was my almost total lack of driving experience.

We were at a red when suddenly Lesley grabbed my arm and said, “this is Lawrence Avenue ... turn right here, if we go far enough along Lawrence, we’ll get to the centre of the city.”

I did as she said. I was beginning to regain some confidence. I had negotiated at least seven or eight sets of lights and had managed to shift gears without any appreciable problems. But then, it happened. Suddenly, we heard the sound of a police siren and I was aware of a motorcycle cop right behind me. He was signalling for me to pull over. My heart jumped. What had I done? I didn’t understand it.

“He wants you to reverse into that space in front of him,” said Lesley peering around. I looked at the mirror, and through the scratched rear window, I could see the blurred outline of the cop who was sitting on his motorbike at the side of the road. In front of him was a fair size parking space.

“Oh God, not reverse,” I muttered, feeling my blood turning to ice. I jiggled the gearshift and, there was a terrible grinding sound. Lesley giggled.

“Oh come on, this isn’t funny.” I hissed. After a few tries, I had it in gear. I let out the clutch and turned the wheel. Easy does it, easy does it.

Suddenly there was a crunching sound from the rear. I looked up at my rear-view, and there, through the vinyl window, I could see the cop still sitting on his bike, a look of utter incredulity on his face.

And then all hell broke loose. Within a couple of minutes, there were two squad cars on the scene and a little throng of curious spectators had gathered on the sidewalk.

“O.K. fellow,” let’s see your license,” said the motor-cycle cop, satisfied by now that there had not been any real damage inflicted on his Harley-Davidson.

“Excuse me, why have I been stopped?” I asked, trying to stall.

The cop sighed. You’ve been stopped because you sailed right through that pedestrian crossing over there. You were lucky there wasn’t a pedestrian around. Now, your license please.”

“I ... I only have a learner’s license,” I replied.

The cop scratched his head. “Does your girlfriend have her license?”

“No, she doesn’t.”

“Where do you live?”

“We’ve just come down from Kingston.”

“You what! Did you say Kingston? The cop shook his head.

“O.K. Insurance. You got insurance for this car?”

“Yes, I’ll get it.” Thank God, at least I had insurance.

As this scene was going on, Lesley meanwhile was chatting with the policemen from the squad car. She seemed to be pleading with them. I heard her say, “he’s only a student, he’s a very responsible person. It’s really me to blame. I’m the one who persuaded him to come down to Toronto. He didn’t want to come.”

In the end, they took Lesley and I off to a police station. There I was questioned further and told that

the Sprite would be impounded until such time that I could show a valid driver's license. I was also informed that I would be hearing from the Department of Transport regarding a fine for driving without a proper license, and demerit points for not stopping at a Pedestrian crossing.

As we left the police station, it struck me that if it hadn't been for Lesley's powers of persuasion, I might have had to spend the night in a cell. I felt shaken up but grateful.





## 10.

Lesley's home was in Ottawa. Consequently, the incentive to spend the Christmas holidays with Jim's parents was greater than it otherwise might have been. Lesley had persuaded me to buy some skis and the plan was to get in as much skiing as possible while in Ottawa. Shortly before the end of the semester, Joy had phoned me to say that she and Jim would also be coming to Ottawa for Christmas. She added that there was much she wanted to talk about with me.

As for my 'new' sports car - a week before I set off for Ottawa, I retook and passed my driving test, thanks mainly to driving an automatic. I went down to Toronto the same day, reclaimed the Sprite, and drove it back to Kingston *very* carefully and thankfully without incident.

Diary entries: Account of Christmas holidays, 1967:

23<sup>rd</sup>. Dec.

*I have been in Ottawa for three or four days. Today I drove down to Hudson, Quebec. Sarah Collin (an old but unconsummated flame from Expo days) had invited me to her family home for a party. In her letter, she had said, 'we would love to have you ... very important that you come, much love, Sarah.' Lesley wasn't too happy about my going. She wondered why I hadn't invited her. I don't know what I told her, but I guess it was a case of wanting to check out my other options before becoming committed to Lesley.*

*Anyway, as it turned out, she needn't have worried. The drive down was bitter cold, twenty below at least. The Sprite didn't have a heater and that, combined with the fact that the wind whistles in under the canvas top, made driving a test of endurance. By the time I crossed the Ontario-Quebec border, I was really frozen. My feet were completely numb and my body had become rigid. I was determined not to stop until I got to Hudson. It became some crazy test of will power. I was a Sedbergh man again.*

*'Strain and struggle might and main  
Scorn defeat and laugh at pain  
Never shall you strive in vain  
In The Long Run.'*

*Finally, I made it to Hudson only to discover that Sarah was apparently in Montreal. Her father knew nothing of a party. He didn't even invite me in to warm up. So I turned right around and drove back. Two frozen hours later, I was back in Ottawa.*

*Moral of this story? I have to stop taking things on trust.*

*In the last month, I have received two letters from ... guess who? yes, Pam. They came right out of the blue. Since our break-up in Montreal, I haven't contacted her and I didn't expect to hear from her. Anyway, in the first letter she invited me to spend Christmas in Edmonton and then, in the next paragraph, told me how she'd 'fallen in love' and how this time, there were no romantic ideals messing her up, or, as she added, 'no pink mists fogging my vision.' And then, as if this weren't enough, she said 'the whole bunch of us could have a riot together.'*

*So, I wrote back and told her what I thought of all that. And then I got a reply from her admitting that she'd been dishonest and saying that the only reason she'd invited me to Edmonton, was because she'd been pressured into it by her mother!*

Dec. 25<sup>th</sup>.

*This afternoon we had the Christmas dinner. How I hate these formal occasions. So few times in*

*my life have they turned out to be genuinely convivial or celebratory. Things seemed pretty stiff around the table. There is definitely tension between Joy and Jim. Jim seems to be considerate of Joy as usual, but for her part, Joy is cool and withdrawn.*

Dec. 28<sup>th</sup>.

*Went up to Camp Fortune again today with Lesley. I am beginning to feel very happy with her. I feel that finally I have a real girlfriend - someone who wants to be with me, someone who cuddles up and says (like Lesley) 'Je suis ton chat'. Someone I can rely on. She makes me feel good. On the way up to the slopes today she said that she thought I was like a racing driver when I drove the Sprite. That made me feel really good. She loves the Sprite as much as I do. We call the Sprite 'bébé'. She is our nest, our cocoon, just big enough for two, ready to take us on adventures. She has become part of my life.*

*But as well as flattering me, Lesley also challenges me. On the slopes for instance, she is a really good skier, so it is easy for her to go down the steep parts. I, of course, am a novice. But rather than nurture me along she taunts me with comments like, 'come on, you've got to be courageous.' As a result, in trying to prove myself to her, I proceed downhill in a straight line, thus attaining tremendous speed but inevitably suffering horrendous tumbles when I go out of control or try to stop.*

Dec. 29<sup>th</sup>.

*Today Joy and I went out for a drink together. It reminded me of the times in Edinburgh before she went to live in London, when we would go to Palmerston Place Church together, and afterwards slip into a restaurant for a coffee before returning home to face the pressure of Sunday lunch. There was something almost illicit about it.*

Scene: *Dario's Restaurant: Joy and Ian seated at small round table beside window.*

*IAN: How's Mum?*

*JOY: Not so good. She hasn't been able to adjust to life without the three of us.*

*IAN: She's been depressed?*

*JOY: Oh yes, that and other things. In the Spring, she lost her handbag on Arthur's Seat. In it were all her important papers. She was very upset about that. And then there was the pressure of Jim and I leaving. Anyway, in June, she had a breakdown. She was in Craighouse.*

*IAN: Craighouse? The asylum?*

*JOY: They don't call it that these days. 'Psychiatric Institution' sounds better. Anyway, it's not as if she was in a straight-jacket or anything. She was only there for a couple of days. They put her on Stellazine.*

*IAN: What's that?*

*JOY: An anti-psychotic drug.*

*IAN: My God! (pause) ... is she still house-hunting?*

*JOY: No, that's all finished. Dad doesn't want to go anywhere. I mean, he's 67 now.*

*IAN: That reminds me ... I got this vintage letter from Dad on my twenty-first birthday ... (reaching into pocket) I brought it with me so that I could show it to you. Here, let me read some of it (reading) 'Dear Ian, just a line to wish you a very happy birthday - rather a special one really, as now, in theory at any rate, you are a man - whatever that means ...'*

*JOY: No. Does he say that?*

*IAN: Here, see for yourself. I mean, it makes me so angry, that kind of remark. And then we get the guilt-trip ... (continuing to read) 'I hope you have a very happy day and some kind of celebration in that foreign country. It would have been splendid if you could have had the day in Scotland ....'*

JOY: *Shit, having alienated us all, they can't understand why we don't want to live in Edinburgh. What else does he say?*

IAN: *Oh, he goes on about how he spent his twenty-first birthday, somewhere in a tent in Persia near the Caspian Sea. And then he says, 'and now for the real news - the All Blacks tour...'*

JOY: *The what?*

IAN: *The All Blacks, the New Zealand Rugby team visiting Britain ... the real news, three pages of waffle about rugby.*

*The conversation continued but the topic turned to Joy's relationship with Jim. I began to get some of the background to the tension I'd been perceiving. She told me how she hated living in the Montreal suburbs and having to play the role of Professor's wife. She said she found the life 'stiffling'. She pointed out that she was doing some music and although that helped, it wasn't enough. She said she needs a job. She also mentioned that she and Jim had 'personal problems in the relationship' but she didn't elaborate.*

Jan. 4<sup>th</sup>. 1968

*Said goodbye to Jim's parents and to Jim and Joy. Went down to Montreal with Lesley to ex-Brit. Pavver's party. Once again, like the drive to Hudson, it was an ordeal in the cold. Only this time, Lesley was there to keep me company, and we stopped a couple of times for coffee.*

*As for the party, I don't know quite what to say. I'm still in a state of shock over the way Lesley behaved. I had wanted to introduce 'mon chat', to the Brit. Pav. crew. I had wanted to take her under my wing. I mean she didn't know anyone there. But if I thought Lesley might be intimidated or shy, boy was I wrong. Within a very short while, she had detached herself from me and was 'socialising' like mad. It wasn't that she was trying to ignore me or be mean or anything like that. It was more a case of her being an opportunist and making the most of the opportunity to make contact with some interesting people. But what I didn't understand is why did she have to do it all on her own? For me, it was an amazing spectacle. To start with, she seemed completely insensitive and just plain unaware of what I might feel, I mean she went around introducing herself to one person after another, all the while giggling and chatting. Then to top it all, on several occasions, she produced her address book and wrote down names and phone-numbers.*

*At one point, someone came up to me and said quizzically, "did you say she was your girlfriend?"*

*I felt myself becoming more and more confused. All I wanted was to find a way to get Lesley and I away from the party. It was as if I was being assailed by a barrage of thoughts, feelings and questions. I'm still confused now. For instance, it's true that many English Canadians I've met seem dull and unsure of themselves. Lesley, on the other hand, is quite the opposite. She's like something out of 'Mid Summer Ntght's Dream' – a magical nymph bringing life to all she touches. But then again, in a relationship - even with a magical nymph - there are conventions, there are do's and don'ts. There are limits to what is acceptable. There have to be, don't there? I mean, if we reversed roles, I would never have detached myself from her in that way. That would have seemed rude, inappropriate, offensive. But ... then again, maybe she's in touch with the times and I'm not. I mean everything's 'do your own thing, man'. So what does being 'a couple' mean? Are there no restrictions, no restraints? ... I don't know ... maybe she's right, maybe she's not. Maybe I should have been more assertive with her. Maybe if she doesn't set her own limits, I have to set them for her. But that seems so authoritarian.*

*And so went my thoughts at the time, searching for some clear, conviction upon which to base my actions.*

*But the best was yet to come. The real test came just as I was about to go up to Lesley and suggest we leave. She was rapt in conversation with a fellow called Bob Jordan who had the reputation of being the Brit. Pavver's most notorious and unscrupulous womaniser. Then Lesley saw me approaching her. She hurriedly said something to Bob Jordan and then broke away to join me.*

*"Oh, lan chérie," she said, brimming with excitement, "I've just met Bob. He was telling me that he just got his pilot's license the other day. And you know what? He's offered to fly me back to Kingston. Isn't that fantastic? So I said, yes, of course. Sorry chérie, hope you don't mind, no room for you. Besides, you'll have to drive Bébé back.*

*As I said my goodbyes, my friend Jerry whispered to me, "you're not going to trust her with Bob Jordan, are you?"*

*I never did ask Lesley about her trip back. I kept trying to convince myself that it was none of my business. Besides, despite my confusion about her 'openness', I did trust her.*

\* \* \*

Further meetings with Sigmund:

*FREUD: Zo I thought I vood zee how you vere getting along.*

*BROWN: Well good and bad, you know.*

*FREUD: Like Dostoievsky?*

*BROWN: What?*

*FREUD: You vere reading Crime and Punishment, vere you not?*

*BROWN: Yes.*

*FREUD: Vell ...*

*BROWN: Yea, but that's not what I meant.*

*FREUD: Oh, never mind about vot you meant. You must understand dat vot you think you mean, is not necessarily vot you mean, if you know vot I mean.*

*BROWN: You're weird.*

*FREUD: Whatever. Look, here's de point. I think you think a lot about good and bad, what's right and wrong, who's right and wrong, ja?*

*BROWN: Maybe I do ... (thinking) ... yes, you're probably right.*

*FREUD: Of course I'm right! For example, you think Lesley vas wrong to desert you at dat party*

*BROWN: Yes, I do. At least, it was not what I expected.*

*FREUD: And Muriel vas wrong to leave you at Stratford?*

*BROWN: Well. Yes, then I definitely felt deserted.*

*FREUD: Would you say she vas a bad person?*

*BROWN: Well, no, I don't know...*

*FREUD: Maybe evil...?*

*BROWN: That's a pretty strong word.*

*FREUD: Yes it is. Vot means it to you?*

*BROWN: I'm not sure. Probably it means being destructive, intentionally destructive.*

*FREUD: Zo, vas Muriel intentionally destructive towards you?*

*BROWN: Listen, I don't know. These are hard questions.*

*FREUD: Ja, ja ... you're right ... dey are hard questions. But, let me tell you something. If you vant to be a seeker of the truth, if you vant to understand men's souls, den you'd better get used to asking yourself hard questions.*

*BROWN: OK for now I ask you an easier question. Vat is the situation at dis moment? With Muriel? It's over. The last straw was in January, right after the Christmas holidays.*

*FREUD: Vat happened?*

*BROWN: I rang the salon. The phone was picked up, and I said I wanted to speak to Muriel. There was an immediate 'you've got the wrong number,' and the phone was put down. I know that I had rung the right number so I rang again. This time the same voice at the other end told me that Muriel was out of town. I asked when she would be back. There was another pause and then the receiver was put down.*

*FREUD: And you think dis was Muriel?*

*BROWN: No. I think it was probably the receptionist, but Muriel must have told her to put me off.*

*PREUD: Frustrating, ja?*

*BROWN: Yea, very ... I mean she was playing games wthh me.*

*FREUD: And you don' t like dat.*

*BROWN: Not destructive games.*

*FREUD: Like vot your Father did vit your Mother?*

*BROWN: Yes.*

*FREUD: It makes you wonder about women, ja?*

*BROWN: I don't know about that, both men and women do it. All I know is I like people who say what they feel and act on that. I can't stand it when people lie or deceive, or put on an act so as to get what they want.*

*FREUD: I see. And your studies?*

*BROWN: I'm really excited about what I'm learning.*

\* \* \*

It was true. I *was* excited about the process of learning and intellectual discovery. In November, I had attended a Symposium entitled 'The Ethics Of Change. One of the speakers had been the famous writer Arthur Koestler. At the Symposium, I discovered that his latest book was entitled The Act or Creation. Reading the book led me towards research of writing about the creative process and the nature of the learning process. This is something in which I was very interested. At Sedbergh, I had struggled but I knew I was not unintelligent. What intrigued me was the way in which I had learned the piano on my own. I had learned at my own speed through a process of gradual exploration, where the next step always seemed a natural progression from where I'd just been. What I found was that as one problem was solved, another problem would arise, and rather than being lost in a maze of problems, I felt guided towards the next challenge. The more I did this, the more I trusted the intuitive sense of learning that seemed to be helping me along the line of least resistance. I didn't need a teacher or even a 'how-to' book. I just needed interest, curiosity, and desire to play better.

There seemed to be implications to be drawn from this experience for the process of learning in other areas. Questions arose such as, to what extent can / should learning be directed as opposed to self-directed? To what extent should learning be goal oriented as opposed to the 'goal' being the very process of exploration itself? Then there were other puzzles I wanted to solve. Why had I always found it easier to be creative than analytical? Why was improvising on the piano, for example, so much easier than the kind of conceptual analysis that was the staple both at school and at University?

I got some clues to answering these latter questions in sifting through the research findings of Torrance and J.P. Guildford. Torrance (a psychologist who had founded a magazine called 'The Journal Of

Creative Behaviour') seemed to relate creativity to the desires to solve problems. As he put it, 'creativity is a process through which difficulties, gaps in information, and incongruities are sensed, and the resolution of the resulting tension is sought through questioning, searching for additional information and new relationships, guessing or hypothesising, testing these hypotheses, correcting them, and communicating the results.' Guilford, for his part, helped me understand the difference between two different ways of thinking. He called one mode 'convergent' (analytical) thinking, while the other was referred to as divergent' (creative) thinking. Convergent thinking had to do with the ability to find the one right answer to a given problem - for example,  $2+2 = 4$  ... not 5 or 7 or 63. Divergent thinking, on the other hand, had to do with the ability to see different solutions to a given problem or challenge - for example, different ways to make a camp fire, different ways of drawing the same face, etc.

A series of what seemed like important insights began to dawn on me:

- (1) Personally, I loved problem solving, but *not* when there was only one answer (as in mathematics or science). When I could create a solution or improvise an answer, then I was happy, then I felt I was 'intelligent'.
- (2) Educational institutions presented the learning process in such a way as to maximise convergent thinking. Thus students who were good in this mode were valued and rewarded as 'intelligent'. Meanwhile, other students who might be equally intelligent in their mode (e.g. 'divergent') were misunderstood, mis-assessed, and generally thought of as 'not too bright' to plain 'dumb'.

The more I thought about it, the clearer it all became. I loved putting things together. I loved playing with things and finding connections between them. Conversely, I hated pulling things apart. Maybe that's why I would never be a scientist because in their analysis, they methodically and intentionally pulled things apart. Somehow it seemed destructive to me, especially because of the much-espoused 'detached objectivity' in which concern for the 'object' (a 'subject' in its own right) was lost.

However, despite my preference for creative activities, there was one snag that bothered me - what about *quality*? In convergent thinking, 'quality' was easy to measure. If you say  $2+2 = 4$ , and I say  $2+2 = 5$ , then the quality of your reasoning is better than mine. But in divergent thinking, how was one to judge what was of good quality and what was not? That inevitably brought up the question of critical judgement. This was an area in which I felt weak. I improvised on the piano. I enjoyed it. It made me feel good. But was it any good? - and if so, by whose standard? And what of the way in which being over-critical inhibited and suppressed people's creativity? Was it that 'critical thinking' and 'creative thinking' were, by definition, inimical?

I felt I needed to develop criteria by which to understand and weigh my own thoughts, actions and expressions, as well as those of others. I needed to search for criteria of aesthetic, intellectual, moral and spiritual quality or worth. I needed to know clearly, for example, whether the servant in the movie was right or wrong to dominate and destroy his master. Was it understandable *and* acceptable, or understandable but *not* acceptable? What about Marlene Dietrich in 'The Blue Angel'? What about Muriel in Stratford, or Lesley in Montreal? What about my beating Robert Stoner at Sedbergh? What about the way my father behaved towards my mother? Could everything be explained in a kind of moral reductionism, or were some things just plain 'bad'? I knew there was such a thing as 'good' but was there such a thing as 'evil'?

## 11.

"I feel so good with you," said Lesley, snuggling against my shoulder.

We were driving along Highway 2 on our way to a French restaurant near Napanee. The restaurant was the only one of its kind in or around Kingston and I had been wanting to take Lesley there for some time. The restaurant did not have a liquor license but the owner allowed patrons to bring in their own alcohol. As a result, I had brought a bottle of gin and a bottle of wine.

I turned my head for a moment and kissed her. She looked so beautiful. She was wearing a full-length velvet dress with white satin cuffs and trim. A corsage of red roses was pinned to her shoulder. Her hair, which was usually drawn back tightly and held by a clip, cascaded long and brown, full and lustrous about her shoulders. As a final touch, she was wearing white gloves.

On this evening, late in January, it seemed as if we were a perfect match. It was the night of the Arts and Science Formal Dance in Grant Hall. This was generally seen as the final fling before people buckled down to the serious business of turning out final papers and preparing for final exams.

"You realise that we're dressed in the same colours," Lesley said suddenly.

"Yes, I suppose so," I replied, aware of my tuxedo and red carnation.

"Yes, *chérie*, black, white and red – the colours of life, of death, and of passion, *n'est-ce pas?*"

I felt a familiar charge run through me. Lesley could arouse me so easily. She had a flair for the dramatic that I found constantly stimulating. She also had a way of making me feel that I was in control, that she was mine, and that whatever I wanted was what would give her the utmost pleasure. I had almost forgotten the way she was at the Montreal party. Her flightiness had disappeared and now all indications were that she was deeply involved with me.

Although Lesley made me feel I was in control, somehow on a deeper level I felt I was in her power. When I first met her, she was only one of several women in the picture. But now Pam, Muriel, Val and Sarah were history and it was Lesley who dominated my thoughts.

"You know, I *have* to get out of Residence. I'm checking out West Street. We were at the dessert stage of our meal. The entrée had been sumptuous, the wine mellowing, and now the candlelight softened us in its soft glow.

"*Everyone* lives there," Lesley continued. "Do you know anyone who could help you, or me, to get a place there?"

"Everyone *wants* to live there," I replied, feeling mild irritation.

"Well I would really like to live there. It would be really neat. It's like a small artist's colony down there by the waterfront."

I could feel myself wanting to shift the topic of conversation. This was the side of Lesley that I had trouble with, the one that was continually seeking out the best opportunity or advantage for herself. She seemed always to be exploring several avenues at once. Just recently, she had told me that she wanted to explore the possibility of going to University in Britain. She had asked me if I knew of anyone in Britain who could give her some information. I thought of Iain Anderson, my Expo friend, who I knew was studying at Sussex University, and I gave her his address. She had also followed up on the other contacts she had made with my other Brit. Pav. friends at the Christmas party. Her plan was to work at the post-Expo 'Terre Des Hommes' fair during the summer. That was the problem - just as I began to feel the security of a deep involvement, she would remind me that she was also deeply involved in other areas that didn't concern me or us. It felt like she was stealing my friends.

"We should order coffee and then go. Its getting late and we still have a half hour's drive back to Kingston." I said.



"I feel so good with you, just the two of us together." Lesley reached across the table and squeezed my hand. It was as if she knew what I'd been thinking.

Suddenly everything was fine again. It *was* so good, just the two of us. I wished it could always be like this.

"You know, sometime I wish I could see more of you," I said awkwardly.

"But *chérie*, you've seen all of me, several times now," Lesley murmured back at me, brushing her hand lightly over her breasts.

"No, seriously, sometimes I feel a kind of aching, a kind of longing ... all I want is to be with you."

"Oh my baby, my beautiful baby. Lesley leaned over and ran her fingers through my hair. "Je t'aime, je t'aime."

She seemed so soft, so serious. The nervous energy, the high-pitched giggle were gone. Suddenly she was a woman.

"Do you really love me?" I asked, feeling like I was on the verge of levitating.

"Oh yes. I know I love you. Je t'adore ... even though sometimes you get sad and depressed," she added, perhaps sensing the vulnerability that underlay my question.

"Well you know that I don't like to play around with the word 'love', but..." I broke off nervously and lit a cigarette, and then my eyes came back to meet Lesley's. In the candlelight, they seemed soft, caring and yet amused.

"But, anyway, I continued, "I think I may be falling in love with you. What I feel is very powerful."

There. After years of resisting, I'd finally said it. It hadn't seemed right with Pam and Muriel, so I hadn't said it. But now, with Lesley, it did feel right. What else could it be that I was feeling so deeply, so achingly inside me?

By the time we set off, it was nearly ten o'clock. The dance at Grant Hall would be well under way. I decided I'd better step on the gas. There was little or no traffic on the windy, two-lane road, and the little Sprite sped through the night.

Suddenly, the quiet was shattered by the wailing of a siren, and a police car screeched out of a turn-off behind me.

It turned out that I had been speeding at twenty miles-an-hour over the limit. Worse than that, when the policeman checked my car, he found the bottle of gin that we had opened at the restaurant. As it was against Ontario laws to carry an open bottle of liquor in your car, I received a \$30 fine on top of the five demerit points.

Instead of this little incident spoiling our evening, it somehow strengthened farther the bond between us. We had been partners in crime in Toronto, and now here was a repeat performance.

We arrived at Grant Hall to find the dance in full swing. I was half afraid that Lesley would start her 'socialising' routine but I needn't have worried. She remained glued to my arm and in tune with my every move. As we slowly made our way towards the dance floor, I saw a familiar and unwelcome figure heading towards me. It was Padre Laverty, the University chaplain. I had been introduced to him when I first came to Queens and had come into contact with him off and on since that time.

"Hello Ian, are you having a good time?"

"Yes thank-you, Padre," I replied wondering what on earth this tight-lipped and God-fearing man was doing at a student occasion such as this.

"May I introduce you to Lesley Bowland, my girlfriend?" I added, wanting to get the formalities over with and then find a way to detach ourselves.

Padre Laverty greeted Lesley with a handshake, after which Lesley said that she had to go to the washroom for a minute.

The Padre fixed me with an appraising look.

"So Ian, how's your studying going?"

"Oh, very well thank-you."

"I seem to have seen you at several social functions like this," he went on inquiringly.

"Well yes, this is the second Formal I've been to if that's what you mean," I replied, resenting the

innuendo and feeling like I should point out that the Padre had also been at the same social functions.

“What I’m saying Ian, is that it’s very important that you don’t let anything get in the way of your studies. You know what happened to Tim Anderson.”

As it happened, I had been reminded several times about what had happened to Tim Anderson, former Sedberghian, former Draper’s scholar, and former Queens student. Essentially, his fate could be summed up by saying that he’d had such a good time in his second year that he’d failed his final exams and consequently, had been stripped of his scholarship.

“Well I’m glad I bumped into you, Ian, because I’ve been meaning to tell you about Crossroads.”

“I’m sorry, what’s Crossroads?” I asked blankly.

“Crossroads Africa is a church-funded organisation that sends young College students such as yourself to African countries so that they can work with the young people there on projects such as digging trenches, constructing buildings, etcetera.”

I made a sudden connection and with it came a spark of interest.

“Do they send people to Kenya?” I asked, thinking of David Lungley, who had visited his parents in Kenya the previous summer.

“Oh, I would imagine so.” The Padre spied Lesley returning.

“Anyway, you’re the kind of young man we’re looking for. If you’re interested, please drop into my office sometime next week and I’ll give you more information and an application form.”

“I don’t like that man,” said Lesley as she linked her arm with mine.

“Neither do I,” I agreed. “He doesn’t exactly strike me as a very spiritual person.”

“What did he want anyway?” inquired Lesley as she put her arm round my waist and led me towards the dance floor.

“Oh, he suggested that I go to Africa for the summer on something called Crossroads Africa.”

“Well I’m not sure I like that, my darling.” Lesley pouted and threw a side-long glance at me. “If I’m in Montreal and you’re in Africa, we’d have a whole summer without each other.”

And then it was time to dance. For what must have been a couple of hours, we danced and danced and danced. It was the final fling, a dance of wild abandon, and letting go, and merging as one.

I rejoiced. I finally had someone to love. I finally had a girl friend of my very own.

\* \* \*

### Diary Entries

Feb. 6<sup>th</sup>. 1968

*It’s been about a month since I moved from Wolfe Island to 125 Union. It was definitely the right thing to do. The weather has been bitterly cold and the lake is frozen. Besides, I see more of Lesley now. Ever since the Formal, I’ve been thinking about the possibility of going to Africa. I think I may do it. It seems certain now that Lesley will be in Montreal over the summer. After the experience of Expo, I’m not sure if I want to go back to Montreal so soon. On another level, I feel as if I’ve been something of a playboy in the last year. Somehow, this plays on my conscience. It feels like it’s time to do something for others.*

Feb. 7<sup>th</sup>.

*Went to Padre Laverty today and made an application to Crossroads Africa. I put Kenya as my first choice. I have several links to Kenya. In addition to David’s parents living there, Begley has left Sedbergh and is now teaching at a boarding school in Nairobi.*

Feb. 15<sup>th</sup>.

Today, I met someone who I think I could become good friends with. I was in the Student Union common room playing the grand piano, usual combination of blues and free-flow improvisation. After a while, I became aware of a hippie-looking guy with a beard and very long hair. He was in an armchair apparently listening to me play. When I finished, he came over and said something like, 'hey, man, that was far-out music'. We talked for a while and then he sat down and began to play some boogie and then switched to Chopin. In no time we had a mutual admiration society going. Afterwards, I asked him back to my room where I played him 'Jacques Loussier at the Champs Elysées'. His comment, after listening to one side was, 'that dude blows my mind'. It was a fantastic meeting. We talked and talked and talked. I really like him.

Feb. 23<sup>rd</sup>.

SHIT!! I don't believe it. Today I get charged with 'Careless Driving'! It was late evening and I was approaching the intersection of Union and University. I could see a car ahead waiting to turn right. I was going less than 30 m.p.h. when I started to brake. Anyway I must have hit some black ice, because suddenly I was in a skid. I forgot about pumping the brakes, and as a result, I kept skidding. For some reason that I'll never know, the car at the intersection still hadn't turned right. After several seconds of what seemed like a slow-motion action sequence, I bumped into the back of him. There was practically no damage to his car but the bastard insisted on calling the cops. So the cop arrives and talks to the other guy who then disappears. Then the cop measures the skid marks and books me for careless driving. I said to him, 'but isn't careless driving when you are going at 90 m.p.h. and nearly kill someone?' He refused to talk and just kept saying, 'tell it to the judge'. I can't believe it. I'm going to court. Anyway tomorrow I'll see a lawyer. I'm going to fight this all the way.

Feb. 24<sup>th</sup>.

Today any thought I ever had of being a lawyer went up in smoke. I went to see a legal aid lawyer and told him what happened. He said that he believed me, and he agreed that 'Careless Driving' was a ridiculous charge under the circumstances. Having said that, he then advised me to plead guilty. I was incredulous and asked him why. He said that if I wanted to hire a lawyer, it would cost more money than I could possibly afford, and if I tried to defend myself, I would (in his words) 'get ripped to shreds'.

March 2<sup>nd</sup>.

I went over to Frank's house today. He lives in a tiny room with his 'lady', someone called Marion. She's apparently a former girlfriend of Richie Havens. Their room is an incredible jumble of music equipment, macramé, and paraphernalia related to dope smoking. I told Frank about my upcoming court appearance (in two days). He was sympathetic but not very interested. I got the feeling that the whole thing was somehow too 'real', too earthbound and uncosmological. Marion made some comment about 'what the pigs have done in the U.S. race riots and in the anti-Vietnam war demonstrations, they could do in Kingston.'

On the way back, I met Lesley coming out of one of the houses on West Street. She seems to be spending a lot of time there these days. I wonder about her and I. I have been having bouts of depression lately. Anyway, last week I told her how I felt. I told her I needed her understanding. Then a couple of days ago, I found a note from her in my mailbox. It was written on her special intimate orange paper:

*Sometimes, Ian, I see so much of myself  
In you, my doubts, my uncertainties -  
And I am frightened -  
I understand your loneliness  
And I want so badly to offer you my hand  
To help you over the rough stuff  
But I am frightened  
And I don't know how  
But I'm getting closer, closer.*

March 4<sup>th</sup>.

*The system of justice - what a joke! Today I was in court. Against my deepest inclinations, I let myself be persuaded by the legal aid lawyer and consequently pleaded guilty. When the judge asked me if I had anything to say, I told him in my own words exactly what happened and then contrasted that with what I thought careless driving was supposed to be. The judge must have been sympathetic because when I'd finished, he said, 'well, I've certainly heard more serious cases of careless driving ... fined \$29.'*

*The whole affair disgusts me. I feel disgusted with that lawyer for complicity with an unprincipled system, and I feel disgusted with myself for not sticking to my guns and fighting the charge. I now have twelve demerit points (6 for the careless driving, 4 for the speeding charge, and 2 for not stopping at the pedestrian crossing in Toronto) and I've only had my license for little over three months. I'm not even clear whether or not they will suspend my licence. What I am clear about is that I don't feel like driving the car for quite a while. Apart from anything else, I've been spending all my scholarship money on getting the 'Bébé' fixed. It seems the murky reputation of British cars over here is well deserved.*

March 12<sup>th</sup>.

*Am now in the thick of studying for my exams. It's been a good year academically - much better than last year. I am finding my feet. There is still a lot of crap to contend with, but at least this year, I have been able to pursue my interests to a greater extent than last year.*

Summary of my courses:

- (1) English 290: History of the English Language  
*American Prof. (Clarke); young, cynical, caustic laugh; course is boring - too analytical (e.g. phonemics, yuk!); reading – Beowulf, Dior, Sapir's Language.*
- (2) English 220: Elizabethan Poetry and Prose  
*English Prof. (DeQuincy); competent, friendly, screws with some of the female students; course quite interesting, thanks mainly to Swift; satire is such a good weapon to deflate pomp and pride. Gulliver's Travels is an amazing book.*
- (3) English 290: Restoration 18<sup>th</sup>. Century Poetry  
*American Prof. (Logan) meek, timid, dreamy, boring as hell; course saved for me by the juicier parts of Spenser's Faire Queene and Shakespeare's 'Sonnets', but especially by Thomas More's Utopia. The whole question of how society could be reformed fascinates me and seems to strike at the heart of my interests. Reading Utopia also linked up with my Sociology courses and made me realise that I am more interested in Sociology than I am in English literature. I have decided to switch over to a Sociology Major next year.*

*My feeling is that writing literature, by definition, is divorced from Life. It is the artist's study of Life. But reading and analysing English literature means being even further removed from Life. One is now studying the study, or more often than not, studying the study of the study. Not once has it been made clear to me what the point is of dissecting these works. If the course included 'creative writing', then perhaps I could understand.*

(4) Sociology 291: Personality and Social Structure

*American Prof. (Clark); John Wayne type; big, muscular, slow, silent, strong, rather dull; I'm not particularly inspired by him, but I respect him. He has encouraged my research into 'Creativity'; in class, we have had to read Freud's Civilisation and Its Discontents, Skinner's Walden Two, and some of the gestalt psychologists.*

(5) Sociology 281: Class and Social Structure

*English Prof. (Carsch); the most interesting course and Professor by far. The key books in this course are Baltzell's Caste and Class In America, De Tocqueville's Democracy in America, Huizinga's The Waning Of The Middle Ages, and Erikson's Witches Of Salem. In addition to these books, over the last six months, I have read Erich Fromm's Escape from Freedom, Iain Weinberg's The Public School Elite and a fascinating article by Melvin Tumin called, 'Obstacles to Creativity'.*

*There has been so much that has been stimulating in this course, the highlights being the comparison of egalitarian and hierarchical societies, and the exposé of materialism and capitalism, and Fromm's comparisons and clarifications of Freud and Marx.*

In my second year, through studying Sociology, I had gained some conceptual tools with which to understand both my own experiences and those of others. The concepts of 'power elite', 'primary' versus 'secondary' groups, institutions, cultures, sub-cultures, class and caste, 'open' versus 'closed' societies ... all these concepts plus many more have given an edge to my perceptions, and a greater breadth and depth to my understanding. I begin to understand some of the contradictions between my life at Sedbergh and my life at Queens. For example, the individualism here: the way in which North American society focuses on individual aspirations rather than on the needs of the group and community. Also the underlying distrust that runs through this mosaic of different ethnic groups, the differences of language and custom and values that inevitably gives rise a kind of cautiousness and impersonality in behaviour.

I have always felt that things could and should change in society, but it is only now that I am beginning to grasp some of the complexity of what needs to be changed. I am beginning to understand that despite my desire for peaceful and gradual reform, there are sometimes reasons, *valid* reasons why people have been driven to violence.

So many myths are being shattered. For example, my father always talked of blacks as 'trousered apes'. Well, there is a black guy in my class from Jamaica. He is very good-looking, very courteous and charming, and very smart. I am beginning to read books on Kenya and am getting excited about the possibility of going to Africa and seeing through the distorted picture presented by my father.

Diary entry:

March 23<sup>rd</sup>.

*Professor Carsch is getting terribly buddy-buddy with me, in fact too much so for my liking.*

*There's no doubt about it. This man, Henry Carsch is exceptional. He is striking and stimulating in every way. His dress, mannerisms and accent are all upper middle-class*

*English. With his tweed jackets and gray flannels and ever-present pipe, he could be an Oxford don, yet his doctorate is from Princeton, and as far as I know, he lived in the States for years before coming to Canada.*

*He is probably in his late forties or even early fifties, but is still lithe of build and sprightly of step. He is balding but his hair at the sides and back is long and swept back. His face is most striking. The dominant feature is a huge aquiline nose below which is a thin-lipped mouth. If his eyes were rounder and brighter, he might look like an eagle. However, they are heavy-lidded and remind me more of a lizard or a snake.*

*There is something disturbing about his face. It presents a cold arrogance with little sign of softness or empathy. In class, he is clear and lucid, stimulating, even inspirational. He is also challenging and can be mocking, to the point of being cruel. Whereas most Profs. treat their students as a bunch of robots, Carsch differentiates and lets individuals know what he thinks of them. He is certainly not 'value-free' in his approach.*

*Take his relationship with me; early on, he fostered a link with me based on our common British and (it turns out) public school past. After a while, he began to call me by my first name in class (although still calling the others 'Mr.' and 'Miss' so and so). Then the preferential treatment extended to remarks like, 'oh I'm sure Ian will know the answer,' implying what? ... that I was more intelligent or knowledgeable than some other students.*

\* \* \*

As my second year drew to an end, I found myself getting more and more confused by Carsch. On the one hand I respected his powers as a teacher and I was flattered by his increasing praise of me as a student. On the other hand, I hated favouritism, and abusive behaviour. The more I saw this coming from Professor Carsch, the harder I found it to accept.

One day, for example, a girl called Ruth came into his class a little late. She was holding a cup of coffee. Ruth had a somewhat slovenly appearance and reminded me of Janis Joplin in a way – not very attractive but 'experienced'. She had a rather rebellious image but in fact, she was eager to learn and was a good student. Carsch seemed to run hot and cold with Ruth – sometimes he was accepting of her, and tried to portray her as 'a woman of the world', but on other occasions he was rude, or worse.

Anyway, after about ten minutes, Carsch noticed Ruth raising the cup of coffee to her lips. Suddenly, and unpredictably, he exploded in rage and told her to 'get out' and come and see him afterwards. He then added that she had no right bringing coffee into *his* classroom without permission.

Quite apart from the fact that he always brought in an identical cup of coffee himself, and the fact that we were University not High School students, the man had been lecturing us on 'Elites' all year. The disturbing thing was that he seemed to believe in them. He seemed to believe in hierarchical privilege. Ruth did not bow and scrape like some of the other students and this seemed to be what had been upsetting him. The coffee cup was just an opportunity for him to vent his spleen. After she left the classroom, he then used the incident as a means of demonstrating to the class that he expects complete 'respect' from his students.

I found myself torn in different directions. I wanted to work hard for Carsch 'the teacher'. But, increasingly, I found myself wanting to either avoid or confront Carsch 'the man'.

It was disturbing but in some ways, Carsch reminded me of my father. His behaviour with Ruth had been more than rude; it had been abusive.



## 12.

As it happened, it was Professor Carsch who indirectly helped me get a job in Toronto in the spring. Towards the end of term, he had invited me to his house for a drink, and the opportunity to meet Iain Weinberg, Professor of Sociology at the University of Toronto, and author of The Public School Elite.

At this meeting I told Weinberg of my plans to work in Toronto prior to going to Kenya with Operation Crossroads Africa. He told me to contact him when I came to Toronto as he might be able to hire me as a research assistant.

It was around the end of April that I set off for Toronto. Due to my recent skirmishes with the law, I decided to leave my car in Kingston. Another factor in this decision was the large amount of money I had been paying out in repair bills. When I got off the bus in Toronto, I had about \$20 or \$30 in my pocket. Exactly a year before, I had arrived in Montreal with money in my pocket and a well-paying job starting the next day. Now my situation could not have been more different. I was nearly broke and had to survive six weeks in Toronto. Not only that - somehow during that period I had to find work and save \$500 to allow me to participate on Crossroads.

For the first few days, I stayed in a flat on Delaware Street. The flat was rented by Lynn Bowland, Lesley's older sister. She had quit University a year earlier and had come to Toronto to seek fame and fortune as a fashion model. She shared her flat with an English guy called Dave Morris. He was a fashion photographer and as such, was trying to help Lynn get a start in the business.

I liked Dave more than Lynn. She seemed cold and hard and shrewish. Dave, on the other hand, was open and friendly. On several occasions we went out for a drink and discussed Lynn and Lesley.

Dave was from a working class background in Manchester. In Britain, we would have had little in common. But here in Canada, it was different. In particular, we could look at the cultural and attitudinal similarities between us as distinct to those of Lynn and Lesley. For example, we discovered that we both disliked their raw ambitiousness and manipulative tendencies. Although I only knew him for a short time, meeting Dave gave me a new positive perspective on Canada. Here was a practical example of something I'd been seeking, namely a way to transcend class barriers and relate to people on their own merits. I didn't see how it could have happened in Britain. There would have been too many obstacles, too much distrust.

During my stay with Lynn and Dave, I went to see Professor Weinberg. He informed me that he needed a research assistant to compile a comprehensive bibliography on 'elites'. He added that the money to pay me would be available by mid May. This was good news but it didn't take much figuring out that I was not going to be able to save \$500 from this job alone, especially given that it wasn't due to start for another two weeks. However at least it gave me an orientation in terms of where I should live. The research would have to be done in the University library and so I decided to look for a room in that area.

After a morning of walking around the Queens Park area, I eventually found a room on Charles Street West, between Yonge and Bay. The room was on the top floor of a three-storey rooming house, one of several in a block of decaying, ill-kept buildings. My room was small, with a sloping attic ceiling. The window was also small and had grimy paper curtains drawn across it. The mattress was lumpy and stained. The walls had a florid print that seemed to leap out at you. The house itself was a rabbit warren of dark hallways and numbered doors. Everywhere there was the heavy odour of a dozen different varieties of cooking - the smell of Kraft macaroni and Heinz spaghetti sauce mixed uneasily with the incompatible smells of fried Ukrainian sausage and boiled fish.

It was a far cry from my cosy flat in Montreal the year before.



Diary entries:

May 3<sup>d</sup>.

*I went to the U. of T. Student Placement Office again today. This time they actually came up with a job. It's only a three-day job painting the wooden eaves under a roof. The house belongs to some Prof. living in Rosedale.*

*After I celebrated. I had a beer at a tavern called the 'Baybloor', just around the corner from my room. Some celebration! Some place! Green walls, sawdust floor, no music, little conversation, people there to drink - and get drunk. Somehow the place seems to personify the soul of Toronto ... Presbyterianism, colonial-style, a dour emphasis on the basics of life. If you have any extra cash, you save it. Pinch your pennies. Don't be frivolous. Waste not, want not. Like Padre Laverty's message, 'what are you doing having so much fun?' But when all's said and done, leave just enough money for a wee dram now and then, just enough to escape the awful reality of this desolate place.*

May 6<sup>h</sup>: Letter from Lesley (extracts)

*'Mon cher, je t'adore, je t'adore, je t'adore. I loved your letter. You are a very funny boy. You ought to write screenplays for movies. You do write beautiful letters – like you, fluent and sincere - I can hear you talk to me.*

*I have a job at Terre Des Hommes as a cashier and I've just moved into my new place (that I'm sharing with Jacques and Hélène) on 3954 Rue Parc La Fontaine. It's beautiful - hardwood floors and very high ceilings, marble fireplace, old chandeliers, oak floorboards and doors, etc.*

*Jacques is very kind but Hélène seems a little jealous or resentful. I am angry with Roger for putting me in this position. I thought it was his apartment. He is moving in, yes, but it is not his apartment. I can't help sometimes feeling as if I'm imposing because of this. Roger is very seldom around so I am left to my own resources with next to strangers. The whole thing is rather depressing. I am still only eighteen (nearly 19) and it is a little frightening to be in such a large city with no close friends. Roger, in his letters and in our rendezvous, always showed a great deal of friendliness and companionship – that's all there was or ever could be - I depended on this friendship to give me a boost in my first awkward days in Montreal. It seems as though he has lost total interest. It is very hard for me, being me, to accept this.'*

Comments on the above

*Sometimes Lesley is like a spoiled little girl. Take the above. My God! What does she expect? She has squeezed all the contacts she made through me for all they were worth, and still she's not satisfied. Roger Frappier, for example: first she tries to get into the movie he's making; when that falls through, he tried to help her get a job in Quebec City. Then, when that didn't work out, he helped find her a place to stay in Montreal. So how does Lesley respond? She blames him because it wasn't his apartment and because he's lost interest in her. What does she want anyway? More than "friendliness and companionship?" I don't understand her. Is she trying to make me jealous? Why this comment, 'that's all there was or ever could be?' Where the hell's that coming from?*

May 8<sup>h</sup>.

*The last week has been really bad. What little money I had, is nearly all gone. I have never been poor like this before. My present diet consists of rice and ketchup – that's all I can afford. And I'm meant to feel sorry for Lesley in her set-up?*

*Yesterday, something very significant happened. For the first time in my life, I stole. What with making sure I had the rent money and enough left over for rice, I haven't had enough to pay for buses or newspapers. I need to see the newspaper in order to check the*

*job ads. What choice was there? I had to steal a paper. It gave me insights into the connection between relative deprivation and crime. It also gave me an insight into the possible fallacy in absolute notions of 'right' and 'wrong'. As for not having bus money, yesterday afternoon I applied for a job as a dishwasher in a restaurant way out on Eglinton West. I walked miles to get there only to find that the job had already been taken. Of course, then I had to walk miles back again (and I mean miles!)*

*At least I know now that I have the Weinberg job, starting in a week. The other news is that I went back to the Student Placement Office today and they said there might be a weekend handyman job at a Professor Lumsden's cottage in a place called Singhampton (on the way to Collingwood).*

*Finally, and the best news of all - Lesley phoned to say she'll take the train down on the weekend for a two-day visit.*

May 15<sup>th</sup>. Letter from Lesley (extract):

*'I was so glad to see you again, Ian. It really was a fabulous weekend. I feel our relationship did something this weekend - changed, slightly I think, matured more. It is really beautiful to be with someone who understands me so well. I think I understand you. It is also an amazing feeling to realise that no matter what the passing circumstances are, the moment we're together, nothing makes any difference except the fact that we are together and love each other very much.'*

*Three days ago, Lesley took the train back to Montreal. I miss her. She's right, it was a really good weekend and something did change. For me, I feel as if finally, I have surrendered all of myself to her. There's no more holding back. I have never met anyone who creates such waves of feeling within me. Sometimes, it's negative feeling: like last weekend with Lynn, Dave, Lesley and I went to Toronto Island. Dave had a camera and was taking shots of Lynn for her portfolio. Lesley asked him to take photos of her too. She posed and played and even flirted with him. Once again (it seems to happen a lot with Lesley) I felt myself getting jealous and resentful of the way in which she would capriciously divert her attention from me to someone else.*

*But that same evening, back at my room, we made love by candlelight. Lesley hasn't always enjoyed sex but this time she really seemed to want me. Sometimes I feel we are like two children nestling up to each other for warmth and support.*

*Now that she's away, I feel a sort of love-sickness, a longing in my heart. I wonder how much of this is love and how much need. I often feel so lost and confused.*

May 20<sup>th</sup>.

*Have just got flight information re trip to Kenya. It turns out we'll be spending at least six hours in London between flights. This is great! Maybe I will be able to see David and John. After all, Reading is not far away. I've decided to write to them and propose this plan.*

May 23<sup>rd</sup>.

*Today I got my results. Fantastic!! My highest grade was in Carsch's course (I got an 'A' and 85%) and my lowest was a 'C' (62%) in that stupid 'History of English Language' course. My overall average was 72.4% (up nearly 10% over last year). I'm going to write to Mum and Dad, and the Drapers right away and tell them the good news.*

May 26<sup>th</sup>.

*I've had several letters from Lesley recently telling me about her problems. In particular, she's having difficulty with her French. As she puts it, 'I am so used to being a part of a conversation, making jokes and laughing. Now the only time I get past go with anyone is when I speak English, which utterly defeats my purpose, thus I remain silent ... silent.'*

Then she goes on to say that she's losing her self-confidence. That I understand. Her other problem concerns her job, being a hostess at Terre des Hommes, or 'Terre des Dumbs' as she calls it. She seems to feel that she is used there. She talks about how they (the administration) play around with their (the hostess's) hours, schedules and money ... 'as though we were puppets with wooden heads.' I don't know ... it seems to me that Lesley complains a lot. As she points out, 75% of the Montreal student population don't have a job at all. She should count herself lucky. Still, \$50 a week is pretty bad, half what we got last year at Expo.

May 29<sup>th</sup>.

I have just got my first pay cheque from Iain Weinberg. If I save most of it, I will have about a third of what I need for Crossroads. Things are looking up financially. I also got a temporary job with Recon Research Consultants today. I have to go to apartment buildings and question occupants about their parking requirements. Most exciting!

Re the Weinberg job, there's nothing I don't know about elites now. Military elites, business elites, sports elites, educational elites, power elites, ethnic elites, etc. etc. It all makes me very anti-elitist and hence anti my own background.

June 1<sup>st</sup>.

Today, I finally got replies from John and David. They both sound really annoyed at me. I think they have reason to be, although they really have no idea of what life has been like over here. Anyway, I'll let them speak for themselves:

Letter from David (extracts)

'You lucky bugger getting two months in Kenya. You will have a great time. You will be staying quite close to where my parents live, so you must see them and preferably stay with them.

Frances and I are intending to get married in September ... in Australia! Yes, we're emigrating! The journey is paid for by the Australian government (total cost to us being £10). Frankie's sister and brother-in-law live in Adelaide and will put us up to start with. I hope to do a Ph.D. at Adelaide University (depending on my results).

I must say this, Iain. It's all very fine writing, suddenly out of the blue, asking everyone to meet you at London airport and have a great re-union, but you haven't written for over a year. If you are going to cut yourself off from your old friends, you can't expect them to be friendly again when convenient circumstances arise. I think one has an obligation to keep in touch at any rate once a year.'

Letter from John (extract)

'Dear Iain,

I don't know what to say to you. Of course, I can understand how you've not felt the need to write this year, but what I can't fathom out is your attitude to our 21<sup>st</sup>. birthday present. All you sent was one measly postcard, and then when I reminded you of David's 21<sup>st</sup>. you couldn't even be bothered to send him a card – great!!

Until your letter, I had quite imagined a complete split with no more contact, except perhaps a card a year. You can't expect me to maintain a friendship if you aren't going to respond. I'm not making a martyr of myself, but if you want a friendship from me, it will have to be on a 50:50 basis.

Having said all that, looking forward to seeing you, and I really mean it.'

Entry in diary:

Well, what can I say? Guilty as charged. They're right, I should have written more. I have just

*been so wrapped up in Muriel, Lesley and my Expo friends on the one hand, and my academic work on the other, that I haven't thought much about my old friends in Britain. But my feelings haven't changed at all. If only they knew how badly I want and need to see them and keep their friendship.*

June 12<sup>th</sup>.

*Today I was in the newspaper. 'The Toronto Star' did an article with photos of Ontario students going on Crossroads. I am quoted as saying, 'last summer, I had the greatest time of my life working at the British Pavilion at Expo, so this year I decided to do something for others.' God! Did I really say that?*

June 13<sup>th</sup>.

*Only one week to go before orientation at the University of Western in London, Ontario. At last I know that I'll definitely be able to raise the \$500. There'll be little left over in the way of pocket money but at least I'll be going.*

*I feel so confused about Lesley. I feel I love her. I don't want to be away from her for a whole summer. Since I've been in Toronto I've had at least two letters a week from her. She's always coming out with these weird and wonderful anecdotes that delight and amuse me. She somehow captivates me with her eccentricities. In one letter, she talks of 'prostitute-hunting'. As Lesley puts it ... 'It all started by accident. One night, tromping down Parc La Fontaine after work, I discovered a room with red curtains. On further investigation, I discovered it was lit by red lights – for various other reasons, I realised it was a small brothel.' She then goes on describe her gradual discovery of other red-lit hallways in the area.*

*In another letter she goes on about her patented method for getting letters put in the mailbox. She sits on the balcony outside her room and when she sees a pedestrian approaching, she drops her envelope onto the sidewalk below. She then entreats the pedestrian 'to pop the 'accidentally' fallen letter into the nearby mailbox.*

*But then the selfish side to her always seems to surface. In one letter she talks about her relationship with someone called Dinah.. According to Lesley, Dinah is a 'problem child of problem parents' who latched on to her at work and spends her time unloading her problems. Lesley goes on to say that in addition to being unattractive, Dinah is 'too dependent and too weak.' She follows this by saying, 'the thing that makes me the most miserable with her is the fact that I know I could and should help her, but I want to be free - and I can't be with such a person clinging to me. I am filled with guilt.' Then she concludes, 'Ian, don't judge me harshly, it's not for me to save the world.'*

*Now where have I heard this before? Doesn't this sound a bit like Muriel in the Stratford restaurant? Why is it that in Canada, with all its freedoms, that so many people are always talking about wanting 'to be free.' Self expression becomes an excuse for license, self-restraint is seen as self-repression, and responsibility is continually confused with guilt, or feeling guilty.*

*What bothers me is that I am beginning to suspect that one day, Lesley may say that I am clinging to her. Already, I feel that somehow, despite her letters and her loving words, she has begun a process of drawing away from me, as if she has got all she wants. It's hard to know with her. We'll just have to see what two months of separation dos for us.*

June 15<sup>th</sup>.

*Today I got letters from both Mum and Dad. It turns out that Mum wants to come down to London and see me when I am at the airport. This really throws a spanner in the works. Now I am caught between two parties, Mum on the one hand, Dave and John on the other.*

*I get so guilty where Mum is concerned. I mean she ends her letter like this: 'I am so looking forward to seeing you but will understand if you would rather I didn't come*

down if you have made other arrangements.' And then Dad in his letter says; 'Mum is thrilled with the thought of seeing you. She really does get terribly lonely, especially when she sees most mothers surrounded by their children and grandchildren.'

Jesus! Here I am at University, because that was the one thing that was acceptable to both of them, and he has to make me feel guilty because I am not 'surrounding' Mum.

Anyway, now I think about it, maybe I'm not so different from Lesley - at least, not as far as parents are concerned. I feel Mum is dependent on me and I yearn to be free of that dependence.

\* \* \*

#### Conversation with Freud:

**BROWN:** *It's getting harder to talk to you.*

**FREUD:** *Why?*

**BROWN:** *I think I'm losing my sense of humour.*

**FREUD:** *Dat's O.K. I can be serious too. Relax and tell me about the summer of '68.*

**BROWN:** *It was terrible. I don't know if I want to talk about it.*

**FREUD:** *I understand, but it may help. For instance, vot happened at the airport?*

**BROWN:** *It's not so much what happened, it's more a matter of my feelings, my perceptions. I mean, there I was for a few hours back on home soil, or at least what was meant to be home soil. I mean, I am still meant to be British. But somehow it didn't feel like home. It felt like I was only passing through and then two months later, I'd be going 'home' to Canada. I'm beginning to feel a part of me changing, kind of withering away.*

**FREUD:** *And vich part of you is dat?*

**BROWN:** *Well the old part. The British part, the public school part.*

**FREUD:** *Vot happened at die airport?*

**BROWN:** *Oh, it was crazy. My mother was there with my Uncle Arth. And half an hour later, David and John turned up with their girl friends. I mean there were two fragments of the mirror right there. In one corner, my family life and in the other, my school life, with me rushing between the two, trying to connect them but unable to bring them together.*

**FREUD:** *You mean mumsy was sitting in one place and your friends in another?*

**BROWN:** *Exactly. And I think they were both upset. Both my Mum, and John and David wanted to see more of me but in the circumstances, it was impossible.*

**FREUD:** *Vas it gut ... to see them even though it vas for a short time?*

**BROWN:** *No ... well, yes and no. I mean it warmed me to see them and know that they cared enough to come and see me. But in another way, I felt distanced from them. That's what I mean about the part of me that's withering away. It was like they couldn't see much I've changed. They were still trying to relate to the old me.*

**FREUD:** *Hmm ...*

**BROWN:** *The same thing happened in Kenya when I met David's father and my old Housemaster at Sedbergh, John Begley.*

**FREUD:** *Go on.*

**BROWN:** *Well after about a month at Tarangan'ya - that was where our group was based - in the middle of nowhere close to the border with Tanzania, I spent a weekend at David's parents' home up in Sotik. He's a tea-planter and they have*

*a big plantation up in the hills there.*

**FREUD:** *And what did you think of David's father?*

**BROWN:** *Well, on the one hand, he was the father of one of my best friends - so I felt warm and respectful towards him. But in another way, I saw him in a more objective way, as a British colonialist, someone who had a privileged position over the blacks.*

**FREUD:** *And John Begley, what was he doing in Kenya?*

**BROWN:** *Well, he left his job at Sedbergh and after a while, he was offered a job, at an elite boy's boarding school in Nairobi, the 'Duke of York' school. The school was for whites naturally, with a few token blacks thrown in. So there was my old Housemaster part of the whole conspiracy.*

**FREUD:** *Conspiracy?*

**BROWN:** *Yes. It's like the research I was doing for Weinberg, like C. Wright Mills's The Power Elite, a conspiracy of the rich and privileged to keep down the majority. And as a British Army officer, my father had been part of it too. One of the reasons I'd gone to Africa was to check things out for myself. And what did I find? The blacks were not 'trousered apes' as my father had called them. I found them gracious, intelligent, highly motivated. The only way they were 'underdeveloped' was in the technological sense.*

**FREUD:** *You sound angry.*

**BROWN:** *Yes, I am. I'm angry with my father for lying to me, for distorting the picture, for being part of the conspiracy.*

**FREUD:** *Did you get on well with the black people?*

**BROWN:** *Yes. There was a group of about eight of us, six from the States and two of us from Canada. The black Kenyans seemed to like me despite the fact I was British ... Canadian, whatever ... I thought in a newly independent country that they would hate anyone who reminded them of the colonialists.*

**FREUD:** *Tell me more about the group.*

**BROWN:** *We lived in a thatched mud house. During the day we worked on constructing a physics laboratory for the school. In the evening, I taught English précis writing to the Intermediate students.*

**FREUD:** *And you got on well with the students?*

**BROWN:** *Yes. Especially one student called Harrison. I was giving him special tutoring. After a few weeks, he asked me to be his friend. That really means something to them. Friendship is taken seriously there not like in North America where everyone's your 'friend' and it doesn't mean anything. Anyway, after I accepted his offer, Harrison began to hold my hand, which is what the men there do - if they're friends.*

**FREUD:** *Where did he live?*

**BROWN:** *He lived at the missionaries' house.*

**FREUD:** *Missionaries?*

**BROWN:** *Yeah, Mr. and Mrs. Cooper - Pentecostal missionaries, from the States. They had adopted Harrison as their 'son', during school time. In the holidays he went home to his real family. He took me there to visit them before I returned to Canada. His father is a chief and has four wives. While I was there, they had a big feast with traditional Kenyan dishes like Ogali, which is a sort of starchy dumpling, Tilapea or dried fish, and a soup from fish bones called Mkhusi.*

**FREUD:** *Tell me about the missionaries.*

**BROWN:** *Oh, what can I say? Roy and Carol Cooper: husband – blond hair, blue eyes, cherubic-looking; seemed to be in a power struggle with the black headmaster, Mr Obiero, for control of the boys' activities; wife - very good to us - always baking things for us and helping out, but desperately unhappy - kept talking about wanting to return to the States. They of course had a beautiful house with oven and running water.*

**FREUD:** *Part of de conspiracy, ja?*

**BROWN:** *In a way, yes.*

**FREUD:** *Vere dey doing any good?*

**BROWN:** *I don't know. Probably not. The Kenyans have this word, 'harambee'. It means self-help. They want to help themselves, like the Tanzanians are doing. They don't want the imposition of foreign religions or moralities any more. Just in the two months that we were there, I could see, the influence we were having, and I wasn't at all sure that it was a good influence.*

*In one way, we were helping build the laboratory, but what were we really doing? We were dropping in for a short time and then leaving again just as we were getting to know the inhabitants. It wasn't like an exchange program where people like Harrison would come back to Canada and stay with us for a while. But having contact with us sure raised their expectations. They kept asking us if we could arrange for scholarships so that they could come to North America.*

**FREUD:** *You sound disillusioned.*

**BROWN:** *I am. I went there believing that I could be some kind of social reformer, and I came away doubting the whole idea. I am becoming suspicious of the whole idea of altruism.*

**FREUD:** *(sigh) Vell, dat's vot growing up is all about, ja?*

**BROWN:** *What?*

**FREUD:** *Becoming disillusioned.*

**BROWN:** *Oh great, thanks a lot.*

**FREUD:** *'De-mystification', isn't dat vot you sociologists call it? So, anyway, you flew back ... sadder but wiser. Something lost, but perhaps something gained. Back to Canada. Back to de Great White North. Back to Queens. And, back to Lesley. But tell me, vas she vaiting?*

**BROWN:** *This is what is hard to talk about. She didn't write the whole time I was there. I didn't get one letter from her.*

**FREUD:** *Did you write to her?*

**BROWN:** *Yes, of course. I wrote several letters, but each time, no reply. Day after day, mail would arrive and the members of the group would get all excited to receive stuff. Naturally. Everyone was homesick. As time went by, I felt sick at not hearing from Lesley. I felt utterly confused and heart broken.*

**FREUD:** *You needed to know dat she would be der ven you got back, ja?*

**BROWN:** *Yes, that's right. I needed an anchor. I don't know whether it was my love for her, or my need, but it hurt so much when she didn't write. Every day, the hurt got driven a little deeper. I became really depressed.*

**FREUD:** *You say you needed an 'anchor'; vot you mean by dis?*

**BROWN:** *I don't know, it's very confusing. Things are increasingly becoming complicated in my life. It's hard to explain. It's like a mirror cracking. I'm not sure of anything anymore. In my head, I feel I'm getting stronger and clearer, but in my heart or my soul, it's like the stresses are enormous, they're pulling me apart. I don't know where I belong or who I am anymore.*

## 13.

I walked up the steps to Lesley's flat on West Street. It was my first day back in Kingston. As I was about to ring the bell, I heard the unmistakable sound of Lesley's giggling laughter from within. For weeks, I had been waiting for this moment. For weeks I had wrestled with feelings of confusion and anger. Now, as I heard her laugh, an excitement and anticipation filled me.

The moment Lesley opened the door, I knew that everything had changed.

"Oh Ian, it's you. How are you? How was Africa? I wasn't expecting to see you today." She smiled and kissed me briefly. I felt a wave of emotion overwhelm me.

"I ... I've missed you. I really missed you." I moved a step forward and held her in my arms. "Why didn't you write?"

"Oh yes, I'm sorry. I started to many times but..."

"But when I was in Toronto, before I left, you wrote all the time. I don't ...."

I trailed off as suddenly a male voice from within the apartment called, "Lesley ... you coming back?"

"Who's that?" I asked suspiciously.

"Oh that's just Ted, Ted Bridgewater. You know Bridge don't you? He lives next door. He's taking some shots of me right now, I really should get back," She pulled back from my embrace.

"But, wait a minute. I haven't seen you for over two months. You didn't even write. I don't understand." I felt a sense of desperation gripping me.

"Ian, I'm sorry, I must go now. I would like to see you. In my own way, I've missed you too, but we need to talk."

"Lesley, why didn't you write, just tell me that?" I put my hands on her shoulders and peered at her intently.

"I can't right now. Call me sometime and we'll get together." And she turned away from me and disappeared into a back room.

It was a few days later that I met Lesley. We went for a walk. It was then that she informed me that she had had an affair while I was in Africa, and although it was now over, she wanted to be free. I felt stunned and sick. I reminded her of how much she had expressed her love for me only a few months previously. I asked her what had happened to this love. She replied that she still had love for me but that it was 'different' now.

My initial reaction to Lesley's rejection was one of shock and disbelief. How could this be? My heart had opened to her. We had just begun to experience things together. Our lovemaking had just begun to progress from awkwardness to the beginnings of a passionate shared pleasure. How could she reject me? Nothing in my previous life had prepared me for this kind of rejection. In my male friendships, there was an ebb and flow of affection and even shifts of favouritism amongst our circle of friends, but there were never any flat rejections. The only experience that bore any similarity was when Muriel walked out on me in Stratford. But even there, the differences outweighed the similarities. The essential difference was that with Muriel, I had not been emotionally involved. With her it was my body that went into shock, like a hound that had been stuck inside a bitch in heat, being pulled off and having cold water thrown on him. With Lesley, my heart was involved. I had experienced heartache before but never heartbreak. In the next few months, I went from shock and disbelief to anger and pain, and finally into a black and lasting depression.

However in that fall of 1968, it was disbelief that first characterised my inner state. I just could not accept that she didn't want to be with me any more. In my heart, there was one woman and only one possible relationship. I couldn't accept the destruction of something beautiful and tender and precious that had only just begun to bloom. I could not understand why she was doing this. And the lack of understanding only served to fuel the disbelief.



Day after day I went round to West Street, where I would walk up and down in front of her house. Other times, I would sit in the park across from her house, and in a kind of tortured trance fix my gaze on the front window in the hope of catching a glimpse of her.

A few times I phoned her but then hung up before anyone answered as I realised that the reason I was calling was because I wanted to see her, hold her, go back to what we had before.

I felt beside myself with emotional pain. The only thing that seemed to help was to keep busy. I began taking long walks beside the lake, hardly aware of the icy wind or the ever-accumulating carpet of red and yellow leaves.

It was after one of these walks that I returned to my room seized by a desperate need to expurgate some of the intense inner feelings I had towards Lesley. Without any forethought, I took a coat hanger and began twisting it. As I violently wrenched it this way and that, a figure emerged. It was of a man, his arm outstretched, his palms upturned in a gesture of pleading. I kept wrestling with the wire until suddenly I knew I was finished. Only then did I become aware of the red welts on my palms caused by the resistant wire. I took a piece of plywood and by bending a couple of nails over the feet, I was able to provide a base for my sculpture.

Still in an obsessed state, I immediately took it round to Lesley's house. My intention was to leave it on her doorstep. As I turned the corner onto West Street, I saw a couple climbing the front steps of Lesley's house. It was Lesley and Ted Bridgewater. Suddenly, I felt drained of passion. I slipped into the shadows and, after a moment's hesitation, turned back for home.

One day, about two weeks later, I was working in my room, when there was a knock at the door. I opened the door and there was Lesley. Almost exactly a year before, our relationship had started with a similar occurrence. As I invited her into my room, I remembered the girl-in-the-blue-stockings with her hair drawn tightly back and the mischievous eyes. Now she stood there, her long brown hair full and flowing over her shoulders, her eyes calmer, steadier. I yearned to know this emerging woman. Maybe she had changed her mind. Maybe she had come to tell me that...

"Ian, there is something you should know and I feel bad I haven't told you yet."

My hopes sank as I heard her tone of voice. She sounded serious. I lit a cigarette and gestured for her to sit down.

"I didn't write when you were in Africa because ... well, I was very involved. I had a relationship, an affair I guess you could call it that I didn't know how to tell you about."

"An affair? Who with?"

"With Iain Anderson," Lesley appeared not to notice my look of utter shock. She continued, "he came back from England and, well I'd written a few times after you gave me his address and he'd written back ... and, well things just went from there. It was summer and we just sort of floated."

'It was summer and we just sort of floated.' Those words kept coming back to me again and again as I tried to find some release for my gut feelings of betrayal and jealousy. It was bad enough that Lesley had been giving herself to someone else all the time I was pining to hear from her in Kenya, but an affair with Iain Anderson! This was a betrayal of fundamental trust. 'THOU SHALT NOT MESS AROUND WITH THY FRIEND'S FRIENDS' was written within me as a cardinal and unquestionable principle.

'It was summer and we just sort of floated.' Was it that simple? Was it really that innocent? Had there been no transgression? Were my values so very different from other people? Now emotional confusion became permeated by with moral uncertainty.

A few days later I received a letter from Lesley.

Some excerpts:

*'I enjoyed my afternoon with you. You are so stimulating, so aware. But too often you take life too seriously, and yourself too seriously. I feel that if you let go more easily sometimes, you would be happier.'*

*Regarding what you were saying about being alienated. I think most definitely it is Kingston not you that is the problem. People here just don't have the sensitivity or the*

*sensibility that you possess. You are an artist, an enthusiast in life. They aren't – they just get on. I don't know if you understand what I feel towards you, I shall forever have faith and trust in Ian Brown, and I cherish what passed between us. You have left me with a great part of yourself. 'Ever lovers, never friends'; is that how the song goes? And I see that - because for you what happened was not a natural involvement but a harsh break with what you considered dear. But please believe that there was no intention behind anything I did. I can't explain chemistry but somehow for me we lost it. I had my own tensions, you yours, and there was no meeting ground. Some of your feelings were intense, beyond my ability to help you work out. And what good is a relationship unless the share is mutual? Perhaps I saw too much of myself in you, my doubts, my fears.*

*My life in Kingston now is internally tumultuous, externally tranquil. My social life consists of Bridgewater - I see no other male. He is like an older brother. It is quite different from last year but I like it very much. I know where I stand with him, he with me. He knows I don't love him in a boyfriend-girlfriend sort of way, but it makes no difference. The honesty that was important to you and I, that I learned from you within the relationship, I could not function without now. I play no games. What can I say? 'We make advances towards humility'. (Louis Dudek)*

*You shall always mean something very much to me. You, a sense of purity of feeling, of emotion. But Ian, I know you could be so much happier if you let yourself be.*

*I owe you nothing. But I give you my love,*

*Lesley.'*

\* \* \*

During the break up with Lesley, I was living at 80 Clergy Street with two guys I had known in my first year in Residence. I had arrived back from Africa with only a short time to find accommodation in Kingston. So when Bob Levine asked me if I wanted to move in with him and Bill Jupp, I didn't hesitate.

As it turned out, it was a mistake. They were 'plumbers' (3<sup>rd</sup>. year Engineering students) and despite my dislike for labels, a month of living with them made me realise the extent of our incompatibility. There seemed to be little or no understanding or rapport between us. I felt like an outsider. I had no part in making decisions as to how the house should be run, buying food, arranging parties or how to fix up the house. Their world was one of macho toughness, competitive, intolerant of emotional expression or vulnerability, contemptuous of 'alternative' lifestyles or variety of taste. The key driving forces in their world were how to outperform your fellow-beings when it came to how much beer you could consume (and then subsequently, how grossly you could behave), and how much you could score, i.e. how many women you could lay, or get laid by. I only mentioned my break-up with Lesley to them once but that was enough. Their attitude was 'forget the bitch, there are plenty of other pieces of ass out there, go got 'em.'

In general, this situation only served to reinforce the feeling of powerlessness and depersonalisation I was already experiencing due to the break-up with Lesley. I began to yearn for a place of my own, a hole I could crawl into, somewhere that I could be away from pressure and expectations.

And then, towards the end of September, something happened that gave the final impetus to make me find a room of my own. During a Rugby practice, I fell awkwardly on the frozen ground and broke my wrist. As a result, I was in a plaster cast for the next two months. The irony was that I had just assumed the role as Captain of the Queens Rugby Team.

However, there was a good side to this misfortune. It neatly cleared up the identity confusion of whether I was a 'jock', or something else, i.e. embryonic sociologist / writer / musician. It was like failing to be accepted as a trainee pilot for the R.A.F. when I was eighteen on account of my eyesight. It let me off the

hook. I didn't have to make a conscious choice. It meant goodbye to Rugby, goodbye to jockdom, goodbye to proving-myself-to-father (at least in that area), goodbye to another aspect of the sense of obligation to be a 'good' Sedberghian.

But at the time, I wasn't aware of any good side. Instead my broken wrist seemed to be a physical symbol for what was happening on other levels of my life. Everywhere I looked, whether within myself or in my relationships or for that matter, the world at large, things appeared to be breaking apart. My links with family and my Sedbergh past were becoming increasingly strained. And, with this, deep cracks were developing in my sense of who and what I was. In my emotional self, the relationships with Pam, Muriel and Lesley had brought disillusionment and confusion. In the world around me, there were daily images of war, death, rioting and hedonistic excess: Vietnam, Chicago, Kent State, Haight-Ashbury, drugs. No one seemed to be able to agree on what was right. Everyone was carrying on their own particular fight for 'freedom'. Everything seemed contradictory. I saw what was going on around me but I understood so little of it. And I *had to* understand. I couldn't just sort of float along with the current. I had to hold on, keep my bearings and try to figure out what was going on.

The best way to do this, it seemed to me, was to pull back and enter a safe, controlled little world in which I could reflect and read and piece things together.

#### Diary Entries:

*Oct. 20<sup>th</sup>. 1968*

*Two days ago, I found my retreat, my 'asylum' (as R.D. Laing would call it). I said goodbye to the claustrophobic world of 80 Clergy Street and moved into my own two-room flat on Montreal Street.*

*Montreal Street is undoubtedly on the wrong side of the tracks. It is not on campus, nor is it located in the chic areas like West Street or the bohemian waterfront area around King Street. Instead, it is on a busy bleak link road that cuts straight north from downtown Kingston to the 401 Highway. There are few trees and gray-stone tenement houses loom old and decaying over one side of the street. My flat is on the third floor in an attic with sloping ceilings. There is only one small window overlooking the street. Across the street is the tarmac quadrangle of a Canadian Forces Armoury.*

*No one lives immediately below me, although there may be someone on the ground floor. There is no sign or sound of anyone on either side of me. After the rabbit warren of Leonard Hall and the intensity of on-campus living, this is a true sanctuary.*

*Right now it is seven o'clock on a chilly Sunday evening. I sit at my desk, the only piece of furniture in the room, and tap out my thoughts on the typewriter. I have discovered that although I can't write longhand, due to the cast on my right hand and arm, I can use my fingers to type. Right now I am typing by the light of four candles. Neither the heat nor the electricity has yet been turned on but even this seems positive at the moment given my desire to return to a simple Spartan existence.*

*This is the first time in months that I have that strange inner peace which is so hard to describe. I feel like I did on that first wonderful afternoon over a year ago, when I stood on the stern, of the Wolfe Islander and saw the all too familiar landmarks of Kingston disappearing in the distance. I feel detached, free, content. I can see my life in perspective again. I can catch up on and, hopefully, repair the past. I can plan and look forward to the future. I look about the room and all I can see is a vision of what could be. The torn wallpaper, the crumbling plaster, the cobwebs aren't depressing. On the contrary, the scene is exciting because it presents a challenge, a creative challenge. I can't wait to start cleaning and painting and moulding this environment into what I want.*

*Maybe in this place, I will be able to forget about Lesley, or at least accept what has happened.*

*At least for now the tempestuous storm within me has subsided. All is quiet. All is calm.*

Oct. 25<sup>th</sup>.

*With the exception of Carsch's class (more on that in a minute), I feel that I made the right decision switching to a Sociology major. I am taking two courses from Colin Tatz, a visiting Prof. from Monash University in Melbourne, Australia. In one of these courses, 'Sociological Theory', I am presently working on a seminar paper entitled 'The Dangers of a Positivistic Sociology - The Need For Humanistic and Philosophical Perspectives'. In the other course, entitled 'Intergroup Relations'; I am trying to consolidate my experiences in Kenya by working on a paper entitled 'Some Aspects of Nationalism in Kenya'.*

*The third of my four Sociology courses is called, 'Social Research Methods', with Professor Clark, one of my Profs. from last year. Although I like Clark and his easy-going manner, I hate the objective / quantitative / statistical approach of scientific Sociology. I am interested in the subject matter of Sociology, i.e. people, not the objective methods used to classify and categorise them, at least not when they been reduced to data on a curve. Clark has asked us to devise a statistical experiment as the basis for our term paper. Given that there was no way round this, I am hoping that I can at least link my experiment with the research I did on 'Creativity' last year.*

*And so to Carsch's course, which is listed in the course guide as 'Mass Communications'. It is meant to be, according to Carsch, an experimental class. However, no one as yet has any idea what the nature of the experiment is, presumably we the students, are the guinea pigs. There are eight of us in the class, all handpicked by Professor Carsch. On the first day, an uninvited student told Carsch that she had been given permission to join the class. Carsch retorted angrily that he was the only one who made such decisions, after which he ordered her to leave. So from the beginning, we were made to feel as if we were an exclusive and privileged elite.*

*Anyway, I am becoming increasingly uneasy about this class. After seeing what Carsch was capable of last year, I questioned whether I wanted to do another course with him, but in the end, I got talked into it. There is something very disturbing about the man. The other day, someone mentioned McLuhan and nearly had their ear bitten off. Then Carsch bellowed out that he never wanted to hear McLuhan's name mentioned again in his class. My feeling is that he doesn't have any right to do that. He can't suppress people's ideas and interests. I mean, what does he expect? The course is called 'Mass Communications' and Marshall McLuhan happens to be the accepted guru in that field. Besides, he's a Canadian, a local hero.*

*Meanwhile, it is still extremely unclear what Carsch does want us to do. All he has told us so far is that we are to go to the library, take out a book of folk-tales (each student a different country), choose a story and analyse its meaning. Henry Carsch and his magical mystery tour! Well we'll just have to see what happens.*

Oct. 28<sup>th</sup>.

*Have just finished painting the flat. The walls are a deep purple onto which I have painted a couple of abstract spiral-like murals.*

*Saw Mark Elliott yesterday. He is the editor of this year's student newspaper and is as busy and high-strung as ever. He informed me that I'd 'missed all the action' while being in Africa. In April, Martin Luther King had been killed in Memphis. In June, Robert Kennedy had been assassinated by Sirhan Sirhan. And then, in the wake of these terrible events, cities all across the States had undergone rioting, looting and fires set by mobs of angry and embittered blacks.*

*Without missing a beat, Mark quoted the black activist leader, Rap Brown, 'the white man don't like nothing black but a Cadillac. We must wage guerrilla war on these honkies.' To this he added that he was in the process of trying to get Stokeley Carmichael to come up to Queens to speak. In the next breath, he was telling me about his first acid trip and how he was*

sure he had managed to get Alan Watts to attend a symposium some time in February.

Nothing if not informative our Mark! Before he left, he signed my plaster cast and wrote the words, 'Kill the pigs' on it. Strange ... last year everything was 'Peace and Love' with Mark.

Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup>.

This cast is a hell of a nuisance. I spent yet another chunk of money to get the Sprite fixed up only to discover that I can't drive it properly due to my caste. I can't work the bloody gearshift. So, now I'm obliged to walk to and from classes every day. I'm beginning to skip some classes. I feel I learn more by studying at home anyway. I know the books I want to read. I know the themes I want to work on. Going to class seems to break the flow of the unfolding approach I want to take towards learning. Let things unfold in and of themselves, in their own way and at their own pace.

Nov. 6<sup>th</sup>.

Carsch is crazy! I'm beginning to rebel against what he's doing in that class. Here, as best as I can depict it, is what happened in class today.

SITUATION:

Today was the day for our analyses of our respective folk tales. Although everyone knows of Carsch's Freudian bias, I chose to give a sociocultural interpretation to my story. I was prepared to include psychoanalytical perspectives but not to restrict my analysis solely to such a methodology. Here is a rough account of the encounter that followed my interpretation.

DIALOGUE:

*Carsch:* Now Ian, you mentioned in your story that the protagonist was given three magical objects to help him in his quest.

*Brown:* Yes, that's right ... three golden apples, a cherry stick, and a pearl.

*Carsch:* (with a knowing smile to the class) Yes indeed. Three golden apples, a cherry stick and a pearl (quizzical look to me) ... but Ian, in your analysis you omitted any interpretation of the meaning of these objects - I say 'objects' but of course they are important symbols.

*Brown:* They didn't seem that important.

*Carsch:* (raising his eyebrows) Not important? They are clearly highly significant. What did you think they might mean?

*Brown:* I really don't know.

*Carsch:* (condescending) Now Ian, you are one of the brightest students in this class, but I'm afraid here we have an example of where your public school education blinkers you.

*Brown:* I'm afraid I don't follow you.

*Carsch:* You clearly don't see the sexual significance of this tale and this may have to do with your sexually repressive upbringing. Perhaps I can throw some light on your story. The apples are obviously referring to the male genitalia. The cherry stick is a symbol for the female clitoris, and the pearl is, of course, a drop of semen.

*Brown:* (mildly protesting) I think there are other ways of interpreting the story. I don't see why it has to be interpreted in the way you suggest.

*Carsch:* (cold) You don't. I see, well Mr. Brown, perhaps as this course progresses, you will begin to understand what I am getting at.

*That was it. But what I really feel is this. Carsch can point out to others that the reason I cannot see the obvious truth is because I am sexually repressed. He can try to explain why I am sexually repressed. He can generalise about my character and my background. He can do all of that. What he cannot do is dismiss my reasoning, just by saying his approach is right and mine is wrong. He cannot, whatever his bias, force me into a Freudian-straightjacket. That is illegitimate, and an unjust coercion of my intellect and will. It is plain wrong.*

*Nov. 9<sup>th</sup>.*

*It turns out that I'm obviously not over Lesley. I saw her the other day, arm in arm with Bridgewater. I felt tortured for the next few days and I finished up writing this poem:*

*To walk without knowing the distance  
To wake without greeting the morn  
To eat without tasting the food  
To read without seeing the page  
To cry without shedding tears  
To rack, to reason, to remember  
To change by trying to destroy  
To fail to forget*

*No - I will forget  
I will keep my pride  
I will be strong  
I will force myself  
To count my steps  
I will bind myself  
To the rising sun*

*I will laugh and live  
And love again  
I will live  
I will love  
Yet  
I will pretend*

*I want to live alone  
And think and work and write alone  
I want to prove Donne wrong that  
No man is an island  
I will be a rock!  
I will be an island*

*I will search  
I fear I will not find  
I will search  
I fear I will fumble and falter  
I will search  
I fear the memory will not die  
I will search  
I fear the heart will have its way.*



## 14.

One day, I realised what Carsch was up to. His experiment, whatever it was, required that he totally control the process. It was as if he had the role of a theatre director. But in addition to being Director, he was set on writing the script as well. To this end, he had chosen and assembled his cast of characters. However, what was really insidious was that he wanted to make sure that his characters all remain true to their parts. This, as I saw it, was the caste:

Kathy Wood:

Kathy has been given the role of 'Innocence' personified; English boarding school upbringing, therefore, *ipso facto*, sexually repressed; sweet, docile, naive.

Ruth Battle:

Ruth was meant to be the extreme opposite of Kathy; experienced, sexually liberated - Carsch assumed a knowing rapport with her.

Jane Kappler:

Sensuous, desirable blond sex symbol of the class; in reality however, Jane was frustrating Carsch because of her unwillingness to play her assigned role. Now, because of this, Carsch seemed to be re-writing her role. She was being portrayed as 'the bitch-goddess.'

Ron Morrish:

Ron had been ridiculed and persecuted from the beginning. Being the only Honours Psychology student in the class, he is castigated for being a behaviourist. He is caste in the role of someone who is dry, dull, humourless, pedantic, the very epitome of sexual repression.

Jim Kelly, and Glen Penwarden:

Both were huge strapping guys. Kelly looked like a backwoods logger, and Penwarden had the physique of a football player. Carsch related to these two as a squire would to two of his groundsmen. On one occasion, Crash had even told Kelly to his face that his intelligence was of limited means. When Kelly had protested, Carsch had snapped at him, "why else did you think I wanted you to be in this class?"

Ron Brunton, Hugh McRoberts and Barry Stoodleigh

'The peanut gallery' as they became to be called by some of us. They were putty in Carsch's hands. They hung on his every word, laughed at every joke (even if it was derisive of another student). They seemed to accept all aspects of his behaviour. They unquestioningly followed his methods, and they unhesitatingly yielded to his requests. Their bequeathed role was as loyal and solid supporters, the lumpen proletariat, the palace guard, the brown shirts. I saw them as prime material for Cult indoctrination.

Brenda Firestone:

Brenda was an exception. She was caste as herself. Carsch behaved towards her as if she was a real friend - no overtones or undertones. Brenda was 'earth-mother' - warm, sympathetic, understanding, uncritical, nurturing. In private, she was troubled by Carsch's behaviour towards others, but in class she remained silent



Diary Entries:

Nov 20<sup>th</sup>.

*It's funny. when I first moved into this flat, it was a sanctuary. But I wasn't in touch with my feelings for Lesley then. Now that I am, it is like a prison. The life of the senses seems barren. The richness of experience that I crave is replaced by the all-consuming life of the mind. I want to live Life, not study it. I want to be creative rather than analytical, insightful rather than logical, subjective rather than objective, and spontaneous rather than controlled and careful.*

Nov. 22<sup>nd</sup>.

*My 22<sup>nd</sup>. birthday. On my own all day. I was going to invite Frank and Marion over but they just left for Toronto. It looks like Frank is going to drop out.*

Nov. 25<sup>th</sup>.

*This whole thing with Carsch is coming to a head. In the last week, Carsch has been becoming increasingly offhand to certain members of the class. For instance, yesterday Kathy Wood questioned Carsch's interpretation of a particular folk-tale. They had a heated exchange, which ended with Carsch saying contemptuously that if Kathy could produce an alternative interpretation, he would, give her an 'A' grade on the paper, and perhaps even on the course. After class, a group of us met in the coffee shop. During the discussion, Ruth Battle announced that she was going to leave the class. She said she had spoken to Dr. Lele, Head of the Sociology Department, and he had agreed to let her into his class. I think I have reached the same point. For the last few weeks, I have been actively resisting him in class, but I am growing tired of arguing and not learning anything. I am also disillusioned with other students in the class (with the exception of a few like Ruth and Kathy) who privately agree that Carsch is doing unacceptable things, yet will not lend their voice in public opposition.*

Nov. 28<sup>th</sup>.

*Today I told Carsch that I was leaving his class. He looked shocked, and furious.*

\* \* \*

The first snows shrouded Kingston – whitening, sanctifying its gray forbidding penitentiaries, its host of churches, and its limestone centrepiece, Queens University.

Like a hibernating bear, I retreated deeper into the warmth and quiet of my cave, high above the busy thoroughfare of Montreal Street. As the semester drew to a close, I became immersed in preparation for writing up my term papers. Even more than before, lectures and seminars became an irritant and unnecessary interruption to the organised flow of my studying. As it was, I had tried to arrange my schedule so that I wouldn't have any classes on Mondays or Fridays. I began to further extend this long weekend into four or five unbroken days by missing all but essential classes.

I worked non-stop, reading, making notes, writing out quotes, thinking, reflecting. Compared with my first year, my study skills had become finely honed. Now I knew how to skim and scan and quickly get to the heart of the matter. I had learned how to efficiently cross correlate and cross-reference. And after much trial and error, I had found ways of effectively combining others' ideas with my own in what, hopefully, was a productive synthesis.

I saw virtually no one and had no social life worth mentioning. Once in a while, I would scurry out to the corner store and replenish my staples – Aunt Jemima pancake mix, maple syrup, bacon, eggs, coffee, tea, bread, butter, marmalade and grapefruit juice. Occasionally, on my return, I would bump into Lorne and Ginny at the foot of the stairs. Lorne was a lecherous looking, bearded sculptor who had moved into the ground floor flat

with Ginny, a fourth year English Literature student. As far as I could make out, their time together (which was considerable) was divided fairly equally between Ginny posing nude for Lorne and noisy bouts of fucking. When Ginny was away at classes, Lorne would wander around half-naked and fix himself snacks, like fried Polish sausage or salami sandwiches.

One evening, around the beginning of December, a visitor appeared at my door. It turned out to be my piano and guitar-playing 'freak' friend Frank Wheeler. Frank had recently dropped out of Queens ('this place gives you cerebral haemorrhoids, man!'), as well as splitting up with his girl friend, Marion ('I'm Richie Havens' ex, man!'). As a result, he was now spending a nomadic existence between Toronto ('that's where it's at musically, man') and Kingston.

"Hey man, it's good to see you. Is it cool if I crash here for two or three days?" The melting snow glistened on Frank's beard and his eyes twinkled. With his lank, shoulder-length hair, his beard and fine features, it could have been the Saviour himself who had just arisen from the frozen wastes below.

"Frank, it's great to see you. Do you want to hear the good news?"

"Lay it on me, man," responded Frank, coming into my cosy den and taking off his coat.

"Look, they took my caste off. I can play piano again."

"Far out, man, we can go down to the C.F.R.C. studios and play the Bechstein. Hey have you got any nosh? I'm starving."

"Yeah, I'll fix you something. Pancakes O.K.?"

"Pancakes? Wow, far out, I dig pancakes. And they'll taste even better after I ... " Frank was wrestling to get the side pocket of his rucksack open, "after I light up some of this choice Lebanese ... by the way, have you started yet, man?"

"No, but I think my will is weakening."

"Well, listen buddy, I don't want you to think I'm trying to talk you into it. I mean I think you should try it sometime. I'm not talking about dropping acid - although wow, man, that's another whole trip. Like I respect where your head's at, man. You do it your way."

As it happened, I overturned my long-standing refusal to take drugs, the following night.

Frank had been invited to a party and he had persuaded me to leave my studying for a while and come along too. The party was being given by members of the band he had been playing with. I never felt very comfortable at parties, but since the break-up with Lesley, I'd found that I just couldn't handle them. I stayed for about an hour and then told Frank that I was going to leave.

"Right on, man," said Frank, forever understanding and supportive. "I know where you're at. You're still cut up about Lesley! And I'm there too, man. Marion, my old lady, she just decided to split one day and go back to New York. That hurt, man. That hurt real bad. Hey, but listen, try some of this stuff before you go. It'll lighten your load, make you see things differently," and with that he held out a smoking joint.

For an instant the old debate started up. Should I or shouldn't I? But in the same way that the debates about whether or not to slur my consonants, and say 'elevator' rather than 'lift' and 'truck' rather than 'lorry', had eventually collapsed into an acceptance of the local culture and vernacular, this particular debate had run its course. What the hell if marijuana was a drug? What the hell if it really was 'the killer weed', the cause of reefer madness and countless other ills. Maybe I should trust the herd instinct for once, rather than my conscience. Maybe I *was* being over-conscientious. Besides, I didn't count Frank as one of the herd; Frank was special and he was my friend.

I took the joint and had several puffs, holding the smoke in for as long as possible, as instructed. Apart from the pungent odour and sharp bite on my lungs, I didn't feel anything. I had expected some immediate 'high'. That's what seemed to happen to everyone else.

After a few more puffs, I said farewell to Frank, who informed me that he'd probably be back before long. I set off to walk home. "I'm not stoned," I muttered to myself. In a way, I was disappointed, but somehow the fact that it hadn't affected me made me feel smug. The notion of drugs went right against my protestant ethic conditioning which stated categorically that any 'highs' in life should be the rewards of hard work

and discipline. The notion of instant unearned pleasure was foreign and thoroughly suspect.

With such thoughts in my head, I walked down Princess Street towards Montreal Street. I continued to mumble to myself, "I'm not stoned," by way of reassurance. Slowly, I became aware that despite my ritualistic denials, something strange and unfamiliar *was* definitely going on. My walking had developed a wonderful kind of springy rhythm to it. It was as if I had never really experienced the pleasures of walking before. Then I became aware that the street lamps had a kind of iridescent halo around them. Moreover, the light seemed to be flowing towards me in a continuous stream.

"I'm not stoned," I said, and suddenly burst out laughing at the stupidity of my denials.

I passed a restaurant and a heavenly smell of sizzling steak ravished my nostrils.

"I'm not stoned," I repeated, and again laughter bubbled up from deep within me.

It was only when I closed the door to my monastic cell that I admitted gleefully, "Shit, I *am* stoned. Fucking hell, am I stoned."

"The great thing about being stoned," explained Frank, "is that it cuts off the thought processes. All that frantic cerebral activity ... all that ... all that logical, analytical stuff."

It was about 2 a.m. Frank had returned from the party and had been delighted when I had told him of my experiences. He then took on the role of medicine man, and began explaining the properties of different drugs, why and when to take them, how to deal with the effects and side effects. It seemed like a big topic.

"Like with acid" ... Frank continued, "it's like Hendrix said ... 'electric ladyland' ... it's beautiful, man! ... a kaleidoscope of colours in your mind ... I mean, you experience yourself as ... well, as the Supreme Being, no shit!"

"That makes me think of a quote I heard the other day," I ventured. "From Herman Hesse - something about being in a magic theatre, a world of pictures, not reality. And then he has this character shout out, and this is the part I remember. 'Tonight, at the magic theatre, for madmen only, the price of admission, your mind.'"

"Wow, man, that is really deep. Phew!" Frank shook his head. "A world of pictures, electric ladyland. Hey it all fits. Hendrix and Hesse are definitely on the same wavelength. Far out!"

"Yea, but you know what bothers me? It's that definition of reality. I mean, that it's all in your mind."

"Well, the way I see it man, everything is true, but nothing is real."

"Hmm ..." I pondered the possible wisdom of Frank's remark. "Yes, but I don't think that's what Hesse is saying. He's saying there *is* a reality, but it's in your head not out there."

"No man, he's saying that what we see is not what is. And that the only way to see the movie of what *IS*, rather than the so-called reality of what isn't, is to check your mind in at the box office. You know, leave your logical cerebellum behind."

"You mean, like Rimbaud?" I chipped in, seeing a connection. "You know, his thing about how the artist has to dissociate his sensibility in order to see properly."

"Right on, man! Sounds good to me." Frank began rolling another joint with a manual dexterity and precision that always impressed me.

"It's kind of like R.D. Laing saying that schizophrenics are not sick at all. I mean, they're probably the ones who are seeing things the most clearly."

"No shit, man? Is that what the dude says? Far out. Wanna toke?"

"No thanks. You know, it's like I'm just beginning to see more deeply, and more clearly into the society I come from; the class structure, the inequality, the injustice - and the way that *those* realities are covered up and mystified. You see, for me, Frank, there *are* realities 'out there'. I mean, we're all meant to be one big happy family, with our T.V. quiz shows, and fast food restaurants, and age-old traditions..."

"The Great Plastic Society," Frank inserted.

"But do you see what I'm getting at?" I continued, feeling a sense of urgency. "I mean, we're all searching. We're all looking for what is real, what is true, what is just, what is beautiful. But the question is

how to go about doing it? Where to search?"

"You gotta go inwards man. I mean it's like Timothy Leary says ... 'acid is a short cut to enlightenment'. Everyone's saying it now. Alan Watts, the Maharishi, Yogananda. I mean whether your trip is acid, or Zen Buddhism, or meditation, or yoga, or whatever, it's still an inward path."

"I'm not saying it's not important to go inward," I said getting up to make some more tea, "although I'm not sure about the whole drug trip, what I am saying is that it's *also* important to look outwards, otherwise we get buried in ourselves. We lose sight of what's going on out there. I mean, if we want a better society, we've got to change what's out there."

"Maybe, but we've got to change our own head spaces first. Like when I was in San Francisco last summer. It was fantastic, man. In Haight-Ashbury, the hippie area, there were these love-ins. You know, you've got hundreds, maybe thousands of freaks all grooving on each other and the music and the dope. I mean that was people reaching out to each other. *That* was real community, man – real family. There's no question, society *is* changing. It's changing through the new consciousness. The Aquarian Age, man, we're all brothers and sisters, we can all share, there's enough for everyone."

"That sounds great Frank, but meanwhile what about Detroit burning? What about Martin Luther King, and Robert Kennedy? What about Vietnam? What about oppressive regimes that won't listen? What are you going to tell the poor ghetto black to do? 'Turn on and drop out?'"

"Wow man, slow down, let me digest what you're saying here."

"Well, let me just go with the flow. My juices are bubbling. I mean, I just feel we're living in crazy times. It's like everything seems to be in contradiction. You know, on one side of the Magic Theatre, on one side of the stage, we've got 'The Gentle People' with their denim pants and flowered shirts. And they're saying, 'hey, do your own thing, drop out, turn on, make love not war.' Fuck, I've heard that from Iain Anderson – maybe that's his rationale for fucking my girlfriend!"

"Yeah man, that was a bummer ..."

"It's OK" ... I swallowed my pain and strove to hold on to conviction and anger. "And then, in the centre, we've got 'The Conventional People' with their short hair and earnest expressions. And they're saying, 'the only way to succeed at anything (including changing society) is to work hard to achieve your goals, and getting a University degree is a good place to start. And then, finally, on the other extreme side of the stage, we've got 'The Fighting People' who demonstrate on the campuses of The London School Of Economics, the Sorbonne and Berkley. These are the people who demonstrate against the war in Vietnam in the streets of Chicago and New York and London."

"Now wait a minute. Who says you can't be both a freak and also demonstrate against the war?"

"Well maybe you can. Maybe there's no contradiction. But that's not how I see it. To me, there's just one contradiction after another. In the U.S.A., Leary and Watts say 'do your own thing'. Meanwhile, in China, there's a cultural revolution, where if you say or do anything even the teeniest bit out of line, you can get shot or sent to do forced labour. And then we've got other contradictions. For example, on one hand we've got people like Gandhi and Martin Luther King, and on the other, there is Malcolm X and The Black Panthers. One minute you hear 'all you need is love', the next it's 'kill the pigs.'

"I dig what you're saying, man," said Frank getting up and going over to the record player. "Maybe there's a way to integrate the gentle people and the fighting people. I mean, they're both against the same things, right?" Frank took a record out of its cover, checked the label, and then said: "you know what I'd dig to hear, man? That Jacques Loussier record you played me last time."

Around 7 a.m., after a whole night of talking, listening to music, playing guitars, and drinking endless cups of tea, Frank came up with a great idea.

"Hey, listen man, before we crash, why don't we go out and greet the sunrise and go and have a coffee at the Wellington all-night diner? And then, you know what? Remember what we did last time we rapped all night? We got a large container of strawberry yoghurt. That was far out. My taste buds do a tango when I think about it. That's a trip worth doing again."



## 15.

The Drapers' Company Commonwealth Scholarship, my meal ticket in Canada, was for a period of three years. Consequently, given that I was in the third year off a four-year Honours Sociology program, I was faced with a tricky decision. Should I apply to the Drapers' and see if they would extend my scholarship to a fourth year, or should I leave Queens after three years, settling instead for a General B.A.?

It was one of my Sociology Professors who suggested a variation to the latter option. He said that I was doing well enough in Sociology to consider applying for a Master's degree on the basis of three years work.

The more I thought about this idea, the more I liked it. My ego had its say. After all, I reasoned, my parents and teachers hadn't thought I would be able to get into University in the first place, let alone survive get a B.A. They had certainly never considered for one moment that one day I might rise to the rarefied heights of doing a Master's degree. Besides, with an M.A., I would be able to teach at a College level, or even join an international organisation like U.N.E.S.C.O. But in addition to my ego, Kingston had become unbearable and oppressive; I just wanted to get away.

I was intellectually bored, emotionally sick, culturally deprived and spiritually starved. I had developed fast in the scope and depth of my sociological knowledge and I felt ready to do a Masters. I had been able to reflect on my experiences at Sedbergh and articulate what I saw as the pros and the cons. Out of my perceptions and criticisms, I had become increasingly curious about other models of education. I had just read a book on 'Summerhill' and the pedagogical ideas of A.S. Neill. I had also found about a Canadian equivalent, forty miles from Toronto, run by a man called Bob Davies and called 'Everdale Place'.

On the surface, Sedbergh and Summerhill represented opposite ends of the schooling continuum. Sedbergh was traditional, authoritarian, conservative and boys-only, whereas Summerhill was progressive, democratic, liberal and integrated. However, what these two schools had in common was that they were both examples of what sociologists would call 'total institutions', namely a place that you live, eat, work, sleep and play.

Sociology had allowed me to make statements such as this: 'the community at Sedbergh was real and richly meaningful; the community was formed out of, and sustained by the intricate web of primary relationships, which in turn, are a product of the intense 24 hour sharing of all aspects of life; the community allowed the individual to develop his potential in a way that is impossible in the split home / school environments of day school students; it also allowed the various groups within House and School to be highly productive.'

The question then was if I was going to apply for a Masters, where could and should I apply? It was during the Christmas holidays in Ottawa, that Jim had suggested that I write to his friend Bruce Parsons, who was a Sociology Professor at Carleton University and ask his advice. I duly sent a letter that outlined my interest in four areas of Sociology, these being Educational Sociology, Mass Communications, Urbanology, and Race Relations. The reply was not encouraging. He told me that, without an Honours B.A., no Canadian University would consider me for a Masters.

It was then that I thought of applying to the London School of Economics. It seemed like a crazy idea but I felt I had nothing to lose. On the one hand, the thought of returning to Britain filled me with an apprehension that was hard to explain. On the other, the prospect of being at the famous L.S.E. was exciting. Ever since my first trips to see Joy and Jim, the L.S.E. had taken on a special meaning. Joy and Jim had gone there. I had met friends of theirs from Nigeria and India and Canada who were also going there. And then, I discovered that such people as John Kennedy, Pierre Trudeau, and Jomo Kenyatta had also spent time there. On top of all that, now in 1968, it had become a major centre of student unrest and active opposition to Vietnam and the British establishment. After seeing how scared many students had become in trying to stand up to the demagoguery of Carsch, it excited me to see the lack of inhibition that characterised the student population at L.S.E. At least, this is how I saw it at the time, from the other side of the Atlantic.

So, without further ado, and in the spirit of buying a lottery ticket, I proceeded with an initial application and waited to see what would happen.

Summerhill had been recommended to me by Brenda Firestone. When I first opened the book, I was immediately pre-disposed to like it due to the fact that the foreword had been written by Erich Fromm. Through his humanist philosophy, his synthesis of the ideas of Marx and Freud, his anti-authoritarianism and criticisms of the mass consumer society, Fromm was able to help me bring together many strands of my own thought and experiences. I read Escape from Freedom, The Sane Society, Man for Himself, The Art of Loving, and The Revolution of Hope. And then I read Summerhill. If Fromm's writings espoused values that resonated with my own, Neill's school seemed to be the living embodiment.

As a result of my interest in Summerhill, I got in touch with Bob Davies. In early January I hauled the Sprite out of retirement, filled her up, and set off for a visit. Unfortunately, Bob Davies wasn't there when I arrived. However, one of the teachers showed me around. The setting was rural and farm-like. There was a collection of buildings surrounded by fields and rolling hills. I didn't see much of how the school operated while I was there due to the fact that my visit was only for two or three hours.

The children were having a meal when I arrived. I sat down with them. There was no doubt that they were uninhibited and unrestrained, to which I found myself having a curiously mixed reaction. They were curious as to why I was there. In some ways, they gave me the impression that they were a bit self-conscious about being the guinea pigs of an experimental school. There seemed to be little or no sign of authority, and perhaps as a consequence, there was great debate over who should clear away the dishes.

In the end, I left with more questions on my mind than when I had arrived. Was *this* the answer? Did student democracy really work? Was a student-centred curriculum appropriate to 'fitting in' to society out there? Were self-expression and creative exploration worthy pedagogical goals in themselves - or did they need to be restrained by specific course objectives and some kind of imposed discipline? Should motivation to learn be purely an inner process of choice and will, or should it be backed up by a system of rewards and punishments? Did such a school really live up to its avowed aims of fostering co-operation without competitiveness? Was that even desirable? Was the spirit of competition really so bad?

Inevitably, my mind turned back to Sedbergh to seek contrast. It was very confusing. Despite the rigidity of that system, there were certain undeniable compensations. It was true, there *had* been a lot of competition at Sedbergh, but there had *also* been a pervasive spirit of co-operation and brotherly support. There certainly was not enough opportunity for creative expression and exploration, and yet nevertheless it happened anyway. In addition to the multitude of organised group activity such as choirs, orchestra, team sports, debates, etc.), there was plenty of evidence of individual free expression, *despite* the restraints of the system.

The impression I had got at The Everdale Place was that the freedom to look inwards for direction wasn't enough. There was also, perhaps, a frustrated need - namely, the need to receive guidance, direction, and the setting of limits from an external source. Ultimately, the questions with which I was left was, at what point does freedom become license? How does a system ensure that, as part of the educational process, it teaches individuals to take responsibility for themselves and each other?

Back in Kingston I re-entered my tightly controlled world, now becoming increasingly hermetic due to the fact that I was missing the majority of my lectures and seminars so as to concentrate completely on the writing of my papers.

I found myself working later and later into the night, until eventually I had reversed the usual day-night rhythm. By the end of January, I had settled into what was to be my work-sleep cycle for the next few months. I would work until around five or six a.m. and then sleep until about two p.m., at which time I would have 'breakfast'.

The more I became detached from the world, the more I began to inhabit a world of ideas and concepts. Increasingly, I became fascinated in the relationships between different concepts. In addition to reflection on the relationship between self-expression and self-restraint, I became interested in the relationship between personal rhythm and productivity. This, in turn, led me to think about the concepts of efficiency and effectiveness, particularly as they related to the input and output of information. I wasn't just thinking about these concepts, I

was actively experimenting with them. By missing classes, I was looking for greater continuity in the thought process. By studying later at night, when all was still and dark and quiet, I was minimising the threat of distractions. In effect, I was conducting an experiment on myself to determine the best possible way to learn, at least for myself if not for others. I felt I was becoming a well-oiled thinking machine.

In another sense, I wanted to get away from the fragmentary approach to learning where one was inundated with great chunks of unrelated information. Or, if there were links, they were not made explicit, nor was there time in the conventional scheme of daily lecture attendance to seek them out. Instead of this, I wanted to create for myself a holistic approach. I wanted to see and understand the whole before losing myself in the parts. More and more, I was beginning to see learning as a stretching of the contours of experience, the filling in of a cognitive map - one that could then be used to guide one to and through further experiences.

To this end of seeing the whole picture, I would get huge sheets of newsprint and map out the similarities and dissimilarities between, for example, Freud and Marx, with respect to certain topics and issues. Using a grid format, the information that I gleaned from different sources would be stored in the appropriate box under the appropriate heading. By reducing essential information to one sheet, my eye could rove around not only assimilating information, but also finding fresh connections and points of interest. Instead of the sequential, linear, and hence temporal nature of gathering information from a book, page after page, this 'mapping' method put information into a spatial dimension.

There was, of course, another force at work that pushed me towards cerebral activity and solitude. Much as I tried, I could not shake off or bury my feelings towards Lesley. The more I engaged in thinking, the less I left myself vulnerable to my feelings. But inevitably, from time to time, the feelings of pain, anger, bitterness, and longing fought their way into the forefront of my awareness.

One day towards the end of January, I bumped into Lesley. She seemed happy to see me and was effervescent in a way that reminded of the past. The reason for her enthusiasm, she explained, was that she'd just found her vocation – dancing. Along with Brenda Firestone's friend Sue Morris, she had started taking lessons with a well-known instructor named Judy Jarvis. There, on the icy snow outside the library, under the harsh glare of the fluorescent lamps, she showed me some of the steps she had just been learning. I watched, and inside my gut, I felt an aching pain. It amazed me that she apparently neither knew nor cared about how I felt for her. We said goodbye and I trudged home, whereupon I immediately sat down and wrote a poem entitled 'Masquerade'.

*Bloodied forms and reeling spectres  
Frolic through violent patterns  
Projected upon the shimmering heat  
Laughing, shouting and screaming  
Their slogans of pain  
For some  
The game of life is over  
The dance of death is on  
But in smoky, dimlit alleys  
There are dancers  
Who pirouette over soft, limp bodies  
Lying bloodless, dismembered, warm.  
It is an illusion  
Set mockingly  
Under the purple haze of a Hollywood sky  
There, the spectres play their parts  
Following their roles to the bitter end  
Free to giggle at their own gregariousness  
Suffocating souls for the hell of it*



*'After all,' they cry  
'Who needs bleeding-heart victims  
On their crosses?  
Better to ignore them and keep dancing.'*

Diary entries:

Jan. 27<sup>th</sup>. 1969

*I have been asked by Gord Vogt (one of my ex class-mates) to play the part of 'Peter' in Edward Albee's 'Zoo Story'. I've agreed to do it, although I'm not sure I'll be able to memorise the words in time for the performance.*

Jan. 28<sup>th</sup>.

*I actually ventured out of the house today. I went over to Brenda Firestone's house. I like her. She is sincere and open and empathetic. Although she often laughs and becomes enthusiastic about things, there seems to be an inner sadness to her. She said today that things have been getting worse in Carsch's class and that he has been coming on to her. She didn't elaborate. I feel a link with her, a kinship. I feel we are both seekers of the truth.*

Feb. 1<sup>st</sup>.

*Gord and I are meeting every day to rehearse 'Zoo Story'. I like the play a lot. It is raw and uncompromising - and very powerful. I get a strange feeling playing the part of Peter. It is as if the conventional and conformist Peter represents the 'old' me, and the rebellious Jerry corresponds to the emergent 'me'. I would prefer to play the part of Jerry, although I'm not sure I would do as good a job of it as Gord.*

Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup>.

*Bumped into Mark Elliott today. He was about to go out to the local tavern with Lorne and Ginny. He asked me to join them. I agreed. I stayed about forty minutes, until the impulse to return to my studies became too strong. While I was there, Mark talked about student politics. He is involved in some 'help the U.S. draft-dodgers' movement. It turns out that, like me, he is going to apply to the L.S.E. He'd probably fit in there better than I would. He's so ... so intellectual. I don't feel any space when I'm with him. I miss Frank. I should go down and see him in Toronto sometime soon.*

Feb. 4<sup>th</sup>.

*Amazing! Brenda came over today and told me that she is also going to apply to the L.S.E. That would be great if we were both there together. It was a nice meeting. I played Loussier and Oscar Peterson, and then we listened to Beethoven's ninth. She brought over some crackers and brie cheese and some beautiful dried flowers to brighten the place up.*

*Anyway, this evening after supper, she returned to give me a note that she'd written. She wrote the following:*

*'Just had to communicate my thoughts to you upon returning home from listening to music with you. It's difficult to convey thoughts in words because there is always a loss of meaning and a greater possibility for misunderstanding of the original thought experience. That you are a beautifully unartificial person is true, and because you are thus, I feel ecstatic. I can honestly say that you have returned to me some faith in mankind (don't want to sound dramatic -*

*I trust you can accept my thoughts in all sincerity). For in a world which one could epitomise by the saying 'Chicken Little was right', it is difficult to find spontaneous beings bursting with life and ideas such as you. I feel elevated when with you, as I'm sure others do. May you never lose such qualities - they are rare and irreplaceable.'*

Around this time, I told two of my professors, Tatz and Lele, of my intention to apply to the L.S.E. I also asked both of them for references. A week later, Colin Tatz gave me a copy of the reference he had written for me. I was flattered:

*'Mr. Brown is undoubtedly one of the best undergraduate students I have taught in the past five years. Highly intelligent, diligent, mature, and capable of original thought, Mr. Brown is singular material for graduate work. I teach him a third year course on Race and Ethnic Relations, in which he is close to the top of a group of 36, and a fourth year Honours seminar in advanced Sociological Theory - in which his two papers thus far have rated 72% and 78%. In this group, he is one of the top three students.'*

*Dr. C.M. Tatz.'*

With this boost from Professor Tatz, I started seriously to think about what it might mean if I was accepted by L.S.E. I began to feel very apprehensive, almost afraid at even the remotest prospect of going back to Britain. It's as if my guts were saying 'don't do it'. But meanwhile another part of me was being driven to return. I came to a realisation at least one source of this drive, after reading a letter from my mother. In the letter, she talked about my father's response to the possibility of my going to L.S.E.:

*'Daddy hates the London School of Economics because the students are forever making trouble. He says it is a school of communism. Have you thought of applying to Edinburgh, or St. Andrew's University?'*

This attitude, on the part of my father, incensed me. Instead of celebrating my successes, all he could do was splutter about yet another pet hatred. The more I thought about it, the more I began to feel that my three years in Canada had been like a training camp to prepare me to be able to deal with my father.

Before I left for Canada, I dared not confront him and stand up to his abuse. Now I felt able to defend both myself and, more importantly, my mother. I felt so much anger towards him. I wasn't naive any more. I felt I'd gained enough experience of the world to at least challenge his brash opinions and judgements, and intellectually I felt I'd grown to become his superior. I realised that if I returned to Britain, I would no longer be able to sit passively while he spouted his intolerant invective. He was no longer the only one who'd been in Africa. I had opinions about blacks too.

On a deeper level, I felt that returning to Britain would be tantamount to an intentional destruction of my old identity, so as to create myself anew – not the chameleon any more, more like the phoenix. If Canada had taught me one thing, it was how to choose and better determine what I wanted, what I wanted to be and become and do.

Such thoughts as these were further stirred up on receiving two letters, one from John Aitken and the other from David Lungley. John informed me that he was heading off to Kenya to engage in two years of Voluntary Service Overseas (V.S.O.). Meanwhile, David had already arrived in Australia to start his Ph.D. He wrote of some of his initial perceptions:

*'I don't like the poor newspapers, television and entertainments, the isolation, the lack of pubs, and the rain ... Australians are, on the whole, extremely friendly and nice people, but the climate imposes a slight apathy and casualness everywhere. In fact, despite how depressed I was with Britain last year, I see everything in a different light now, and I can see that if you choose where you live, it's a good country to live in.'*

David, it seemed, had experimented with changing his colours to fit in and had come to the conclusion that he couldn't or didn't want to. He had rejected the re-birthing experience of being an immigrant and, to his credit, had also decided not to occupy new territory with the narrowed vision and hardening attitudes of an 'ex-pat.'

For me it was different. I *knew* I'd changed. I'd allowed myself to change and be changed. Whether I liked it or not, Canada had been, and was still forming and re-forming who I was. Even if I returned to Britain, nothing would ever be the same again.

Diary entries:

Feb. 9<sup>th</sup>.

*Today, Gord and I performed 'Zoo Story' in front of a small audience in the Theatre department. Gord was terrific, however I don't think I was up to much. Maybe I don't have the acting potential that I always thought I had.*

*Carol Hitchcock came to see me (or was it Gord she came to see?). Carol, the great campus sex symbol, with her black leather jacket and her red Mustang. I think I'm going to summon up courage and ask her out. It's been too long without sex. I'm getting really horny again.*

Feb. 15<sup>th</sup>.

*Well, well, well. Another myth debunked. Carol Hitchcock, 'the great campus sex symbol', turns out to be the worst lay of all time. Last night, I took her out for dinner. The whole time she was cock-teasing me like she usually does. So, we get home, have some more wine, I light the candles and put on some raunchy music. Meanwhile, Carol takes the cue and willingly strips off her black leather jacket and jeans. What followed is what I would imagine to be a necrophiliac's idea of an orgy. Carol lay on her back, opened her legs, didn't touch me, didn't assist me to enter, didn't move her body or use her hands in any way, didn't talk, didn't do anything except lie there like a not-so-fresh fish on a slab of marble. After it was all over, she got up without a word, put on her jeans and black leather jacket and continued to listen to music, as if nothing had ever happened. So much for my attempt to find a replacement for Lesley. (I won't even mention Muriel!)*

March 10<sup>th</sup>.

*Work, work, work. Haven't been to a seminar in weeks. Cooped up in the attic reading, studying, writing term papers. I have just finished a paper for Professor Lele on, 'Social Change in Pre-Modern Japanese Society'. I am presently immersed in writing two papers; one for Professor Tatz is entitled 'Patriotism, Nationalism, and Imperialism as Ideological Factors of English Racism, Past and Present.' It is turning into a massive piece of work. So far, I have typed 26 pages and have still got quite a way to go. I am trying to draw together a lot of different strands, from history, literature, politics and sociology - from Victorian times to the present. What with this arsehole Enoch Powell and the present events surrounding him, it doesn't seem that hard to prove the hypothesis of a direct link between English nationalism and racism.*

*The other paper I'm working on is for Professor Clark and is entitled, 'The Effects of the Physical and Social Environments on Creative Expression - A Proposed Experiment'. Doing this paper is giving me much cause to reflect further on convergent and divergent thinking. I realise that what I've been struggling to do at Queens is be creative (i.e. 'divergent') while operating within an analytical (i.e. 'convergent') framework. I've had to do this because, unlike Frank, I haven't been prepared to drop out in order to be creative. The irony is that while kicking and screaming against a system that inhibits creative thought, I have - without even realising it - been learning to operate analytically. Now that I'm aware of this, my fear is that the two are inversely correlated i.e. the more I learn to become logical and analytical, the less I will be able to be creative. That does scare me!*

Towards the end of March, I went down to Toronto to see Frank. It was a nightmare. Mark Elliott lent me his Hillman Imp because the Sprite had kept on having mechanical problems.

As I drove along the 401, it felt good to get away and have a break from the intense cerebral activity. It was strange to see the world out there again - to be reminded that there *was* a world out there.

I arrived at the house on Gothic Avenue (near High Park), where Frank was staying. The whole street seemed to have been taken over by freaks. It was around 3 p.m. when I arrived. Frank wasn't there. I went for a walk in the park, and suddenly all the Toronto associations of Muriel, the poverty of Charles Street, and the last bittersweet meetings with Lesley flooded my mind. I felt disorientated and returned to the house. This time Frank was there. He seemed happy to see me but also preoccupied. He told me that they were having a big party that evening.

The party got going around 7 p.m. By 9 p.m., the house was crowded with hippies. Everywhere there was a colourful swirl of denim pants, flowered shirts, Mexican serapes, Navajo headbands, gypsy skirts, Edwardian velvet jackets, silk scarves, lace blouses, hats with feathers in the head bands. Everywhere, deafening music ... the Stones, the Doors, Jefferson Airplane, John Mayhall. Everyone was wearing a smile, everyone seemed to be stoned. There were little throngs gathered around whoever was crumbling hashish into a pipe or rolling grass in outsize papers, some of which were emblazoned with the American flag. Other people were handing around 'tabs' of L.S.D. and mescaline. I went into one room and there were fifteen or twenty people lying around on cushions. No one was talking. Everyone was smiling. People were looking at me. Knowing glances were passed around. They knew I was not stoned. They knew I was 'straight'. They were right; I wasn't one of them.

"Hey man, you wanna drop some acid?" someone asked me, Someone else giggled. I felt like an alien from another planet. I didn't belong, I didn't belong. Suddenly, there I was, Ian Brown, rugby-playing Sedberghian ... awfully nice chap but needed to loosen up.

"Where's Frank?" I was beginning to feel panicky. I couldn't find him. I went downstairs and look for him there. Suddenly, there he was, except it wasn't the Frank I knew. There was no warmth or sparkle in his eyes. 'Whatever plane he's on, he's not here,' I thought to myself. A girl with long black hair and dark rings under her eyes put an arm around him and said, "hey, you wanna do some more, man?" Frank looked up and saw me. For a moment, there was a spark of recognition in his eyes.

"Hey loosen up man, have a good time," he said. And then he turned and he was gone.

And I was in a magical theatre that I did not want to be in. I was in a Cabaret. I was in the Blue Angel. It was too bizarre, too unreal, too contrived. In one corner, someone blew bubbles and a small group looked on wide-eyed and open-mouthed, mumbling 'wow' and 'far out'. Another group passed around a bowl of cheese dip and each person, in turn, ritually put in his or her forefinger and licked it ecstatically. In a tiny broom closet under the staircase, a gnome-like hippie crouched beside the open door and wailed out blues riffs on a harmonica. From the kitchens came the sound of shouting.

"Get away from me. You're trying to destroy me. I know it. I can see it."

"Hey, come on man. This is me. I ain't trying to hurt you."

"Jesus, get him away from me. His face keeps melting into different shapes."

And suddenly, in a flash, I was out of the magical theatre and back in the real world, driving along the 401 in Mark Elliott's car, heading back to Kingston at two in the morning. About half way back, the engine started making funny noises. Then the oil and generator lights come on. I stopped the car by the side of the road. It was pitch dark and hellishly cold. In the distance I could see some lights. Thank God. I started walking. And I walked and walked, along the ribbon of darkness, guided by the pinpoints of light. After about forty minutes I arrived at a truck stop. I bought a quart of oil and set off back to the car. Finally I got there. I put in a quart and tried to start the car. The starter motor turned over, but the engine didn't start. I tried again. Nothing. I could feel my nerves stretch and my spirits drop. There was only one thing for it. Leave the car and get back to the truck stop. Mercifully, a car stopped and gave me a ride.

I felt shattered. All I wanted was to go home, just to go home. I called up Mark in Kingston. After a long time, he answered the phone. I told him what had happened and said that I would arrange to get his car towed to the truck stop. Then I asked him if he could take my Sprite and come out to pick me up. Just before I hung up, a thought suddenly struck me.

“Oh, by the way, Mark, just in case anything goes wrong with the Sprite, here is the number of the pay-phone.”

Around 5 a.m., as I was drinking my fourth cup of coffee in the all-night restaurant, the pay phone started to ring. I had almost been expecting it. I rushed over and picked up the receiver. It was Mark sure enough, sounding tired and pissed off.

“Guess what? The rad. on the bloody Sprite blew up around Napanee. I’m just going to leave it by the side of the road and hitch back. You’re going to have to do the same.”

Diary entry:

*The night is dark and I am far from home.*

*The night is dark and I am far from home.*

*The night is dark and I am far from home.*

## 16.

For months I had heard little or nothing about Henry Carsch. On occasion, Brenda Firestone mentioned that things were getting continually worse. My usual response was that I was glad I was no longer involved with the man.

Then one evening in April something happened that dragged me right back into the eye of the storm. It was late, around 10 p.m., when there was a knock at my door. I rarely had visitors and so I was surprised to find Jane Kappler, the attractive blond girl from Carsch's class standing there in an obviously distraught state.

"I had to come to see you, Ian! I have to tell you what's been happening with Carsch." She began to cry.

"It's just been getting worse and worse," she resumed, as I ushered her in. "Remember how he used to make fun of me. You know ... little digs about my being cool and aloof. But recently, he's been calling me a witch and a drug addict. And he says it like he means it. Now he's threatening to fail me on the course for no reason at all. I've had enough. I'm not going to take it any more. I'm going to write a formal complaint. I came here to see if you would support me."

That is how it started. On the one hand, the last thing I wanted to do was to start thinking about Carsch again, let alone spend time and energy getting involved in some kind of action against him. It was only a few weeks to final exams, and I felt I needed every spare minute to study and prepare. But, on the other hand, there was no way I could refuse. I'd seen what Carsch was capable of. It had outraged me to the point where I'd left his class, but this only after I'd failed other the other students to stand up to him.

Jane and I decided on two things, first that we would approach all the students in Carsch's class and ask them to sign a petition asking for some action to be taken against him. Secondly, that we would meet with some of the other Sociology Professors and tell them what had been happening.

In the following week we did both things. With the exception of one or two students, everybody signed the petition. It seemed that the supply of rationalisations and excuses for Carsch's behaviour had finally become exhausted. When we spoke to Professors Lele, Tatz and Clark, none of them seemed surprised to hear our story. Rather than defending Carsch or try to downplay our complaints, they came up with stories of their own. It was clear that Carsch had alienated himself within the Faculty as well.

On the advice of these three Professors, we submitted our petition to the University Authorities. There was little else we could do at that point but wait. As a consequence, I turned my mind back to my studies. If I was to have any chance of getting into L.S.E., I had to do really well in the final exams.

It was towards the end of April that it happened. To be exact, it was after midnight on the night before my final exam for Professor Lele. I had been working off and on all day and I was just about to call it quits and go to bed. Suddenly and unexpectedly, the phone rang. I picked up the receiver surprised that anyone would call me at that late hour. For a few moments, all I could hear from the other end was the sound of heavy breathing, slow and deliberate.

"Hello, who's there?" I asked.

There was no reply, only more loud breathing. I should have hung up there and then, but curiosity led me to inquire once again who was there.

This time there was a reply. A very high-pitched voice, with what sounded like a poor imitation of a Chinese accent said:

"This is your little Chinese lady friend. Don't you remember me?"

My first thought was that it was Gord Vogt or some other friend.

"Oh come on," I retorted with a laugh, "is that Gord? Stop screwing around!"

"I am your little Chinese lady friend," came the voice from the other end, straining to keep the pitch and still accompanied by heavy, laboured breathing.

“Is that you, Mark?” I asked, feeling myself beginning to tense.

My mind raced. If it wasn't Gord or Mark, who could it be? It wasn't Frank, I knew that. He would never pull a stunt like this. Besides, it had gone beyond a joke. This was sinister. Suddenly a cold chill spread throughout my body. In an instant, I knew who it was; of course, Carsch. The hooked nose, tight lips and snake eyes of Henry Carsch materialised in my mind's eye.

“Why are you calling me?” I asked, trying not to let my voice betray the inner fear I felt.

“I have something to give you.” There was a chuckle and then more heavy breathing.

I shivered with a sensation I'd never known before in my life. If I wasn't so sure it was Carsch, I would have already hung up and dismissed the whole episode as the work of some crank who'd just happened to pick my number out of the phone book. But it wasn't a crank call. It *was* Carsch, and I had to hear him out. I had to find out what game he was playing.

“And what is that? What do you want to give me?” I replied.

“A fly ba ...”

“What was that?”

“A fly ba ...” the voice repeated.

“I'm sorry, I don't understand.”

“A flight bag.” The voice consonants at the other end became momentarily more articulated, and then dissolved into another chuckle.

“That's a very strange present,” I said, beginning to feel an eerie fascination with this bizarre dialogue. An image of a rabbit transfixed by a swaying cobra flashed through my mind.

“There are things *in* the flight bag that I want you to have,” the voice explained.

I felt another shock quiver through my nervous system. Desperately, I looked around for my tape recorder. If only I could record this conversation. The man was crazy. What was happening was so off the wall that no one would ever believe me.

“Things that you want me to have,” I repeated slowly. “Such as what?” Visions of scorpions, snakes and tarantulas crawling under the door in the middle of the night assailed me.

“Oh, you will see.” The voice cracked out of falsetto, and for an instant, I could hear Carsch's normal voice. “When will you be home?”

I thought furiously. There was no point saying I wouldn't be home. I had to play out this little game.

“Oh, tomorrow evening I should be home.”

“Good, good ... I will see you then.” There was a click and the line went dead.

There was a silence, a great silence. I could hear my heart thumping. I sat there in a daze. Slowly I became aware of feeling, vulnerable, tremendously vulnerable. I didn't know how to protect myself against a man like Carsch. I had seen some of his negative powers, and it was not hard for me to believe that he had other powers that I had not, and did not want to see. For example, he had talked off and on about the occult. On a visit to his house the previous year, I had even seen what I took to be voodoo masks on the wall.

I had to speak to someone. I had to break the terrifying silence. I phoned some sleepy sergeant who listened without a trace of interest or concern to my account of what had just happened. By the end of the call, I felt I should get off the phone in case he started suspecting *me* of bizarre behaviour.

I checked my watch. It was nearly 1-30 a.m. This was crazy. I had my most important exam to write in all of seven and a half-hours' time. I needed sleep. I needed to clear my mind. I couldn't go to an exam room with my head filled with thoughts of Carsch, or what he might do to me.

I felt gripped by fear. Desperately I thought of who I could go and spend the night with. Lesley? No. Mark? No, not since the fiasco with his car. Frank was in Toronto. There was no one. Brenda? Perhaps, except she had indicated several times that she didn't want to be any more involved with the Carsch affair than she already was.

I lit up another cigarette and turned on the radio. A thought struck me. What if he was to sneak into the house tonight? I turned off the radio. I had to be able to hear footsteps on the stairs. But, I also had to sleep.

Finally, after twenty minutes or so of trying to figure out how to deal with the situation, I went into the bedroom and lay down exhausted. My bedroom was a tiny room with a sloping ceiling that was situated

to the left of the staircase at the top of the stairs. The head of the bed was right beside a floor-level window that had been painted white. As I lay there, the light on, my last thoughts before finally drifting off to sleep, were whether or not my head was silhouetted in the window, and if so, what an easy target it would make, should Carsch decide to abandon the flight bag idea and creep up the stairs instead with an axe in his hand.

I woke up the next morning around 7-30. I had slept for about five hours. For a few blissful moments, it seemed as if I had just woken from a bad dream. Then the reality of what had happened asserted itself.

I set off for the campus. As I walked through the cool spring morning, I became increasingly single-minded. It wasn't a case of suddenly switching onto the wavelength of sociology and tuning out thoughts and feelings concerning Carsch. Rather, I felt an intense surge of will-power that said, 'I WILL NOT let Carsch ruin my chances in this exam or for the future.'

I sat down in the examination hall and at 9 o'clock precisely, I turned over the question paper. My eye scanned the eight or so questions. I had to answer three of them. I searched again. In the past few months, I had concentrated my studies on Marx, Marcuse, Fromm, and a sociologist called Etzioni. I was sure there would be questions on them in the final examination. To my shock and dismay, I couldn't find one question that concerned these people.

For a moment, I could feel intense inner pressures begin to undermine my 'mental set'. It wasn't a case of being unable to answer the other questions. It was simply that if I changed the orientation of my mind at that particular moment, I was sure that I would become completely disorientated and all would be lost. It was like my mind was very finely tuned, and any readjustment would lead to excessive interference and hence loss of signal.

Without any further hesitation, I began writing. The first page consisted of an apology that I was not going to answer any of the set questions, as well as an explanation of why I felt it was valid to show what I *did* know and what I *had* learned, rather than be evaluated on my secondary interests. Then for the next three hours, I wrote furiously without a break. I was still writing when someone called out 'time'. I dropped my pen and shook my numbed hand.

I left the exam room with the feeling that if Professor Lele accepted my rationale, then I would do well, but if he didn't, then I might fail altogether. Goodbye third-year grade average, goodbye Drapers scholarship, and goodbye L.S.E.

Later that day, I spoke to both Professor Tatz and Professor Clark. I told them what had happened the previous night and they both seemed to believe my story. Professor Clark asked me whether or not I was going to wait in my house to see if anyone came. When I said that I was, he asked me if I would like company. I felt like hugging him. Clark was the perfect antidote to Carsch. To the extent that Carsch was scary, and spooky and mysterious, Clark was secure, solid and straight. I felt like a child, bruised and shaken by my father's tirades. Although a much darker figure than my father, Carsch and he did share the same emotional instability. And like my boyhood alternative father figures like Gregory Peck, Clark was who he seemed, consistent and rational from one moment to the next.

Around 6-30 p.m., I heard footsteps on the stairs. Once again chills descended my spine. Who was it, Carsch or Clark? I opened the door. There stood the tall, athletic figure of Professor Clark, a bottle of wine in one hand and a big bag of Chinese take-out food in the other.

"I figured we might as well have fun while we wait," he said in his slow, Californian drawl. "Listen, young fellow," he continued smiling, "don't you worry, if that nutcase shows his face here, he'll get more than he reckoned for, from me."

I glowed with warmth, and for the first time in about sixteen hours, I began to relax.

"He won't come, you know," said Clark as we tucked into the egg rolls and sweet and sour pork. "He just makes threats. He's too scared to do anything."

He was right. Carsch never did come.

When my last exam was completed, I had only one thing on my mind, and that was to get out of



Kingston as fast as I could. The incident with Carsch had shaken me up badly and I didn't want to chance either the possibility of bumping into him, or a repeat performance from my 'little Chinese lady friend'.

I went to Montreal, where I stayed with Joy and Jim in their suburban home near Loyola University. I needed their understanding and support. However, due to their marital problems, they seemed remote. When I related the Carsch incident to them, I re-experienced the intense fear I had felt the night he had phoned me. However, this time the experience was different, and in many ways worse. As I talked about what had happened, I could feel my body and mind reacting. It was what Frank would call a 'freak-out'. My body started shaking uncontrollably and my mind speeded up as thoughts and sensations bombarded my consciousness. I felt beset with some primal state of insecurity and dread. It was as if I still was living in a nightmare, one that had started with the break-up with Lesley and had continued unabated what with the party in Toronto and the incident with Carsch.

Everything seemed to contribute to the nightmare. My sister Joy was different then she had been in London. She seemed hard, almost callous in her behavior towards Jim. She told me repeatedly how she hated life in the suburbs. She acted as if she was utterly frustrated. Although I didn't want to admit it, it felt as if I was witnessing the death of their relationship. However, Joy did show concern at my mental state and she suggested that I see a doctor. For my part, I rejected the idea due to a still unwavering belief that I could sort out all my own problems.

I spent the month of May in Montreal. During this period, I attended the School of Modern Photography on Bleury Street. Although my heart was not really into it, the photography course was a new experience and one that helped get me out of my mind, or at least shifted the focus from inner reflection to outward perception.

Slowly, I began to feel a bit better. It was good to be back in Montreal. Also, it was reassuring to renew old Expo acquaintances. In particular, I was happy to see my friend Jerry Lach. We got together several times during which Jerry told me of his plans to go to London and work in theatre there. He suggested that if I did get accepted at L.S.E., we should think about sharing a flat together.

It was while I was in Montreal that I heard that I had been put on the L.S.E. waiting list, with a subsequent decision to be made following receipt of my third-year grades. I was really quite astonished to get this news. When it came down to it, I had never expected that I might get accepted.

From this point on, my life entered a phase of unsettling limbo, waiting to hear my course grades, waiting to see if L.S.E. would accept me. As it happened, I had arranged to visit my mother and father in Edinburgh. I had even bought a ticket, a return ticket. The question was would I need the return half. Was I going to come back to Canada? And if not in a few months, then when - if ever? If I got accepted by L.S.E., was this a final return to Britain, or would it be a one-year visit, following which I would 'return' to Canada? In any case, which was home, Canada or Britain? I didn't know any more.

At the beginning of June, I had planned to take the bus to Goderich, Ontario where I had been invited by Frank Wheeler to stay at his parent's house. It was the day before I left that my results arrived at Joy and Jim's house. Feverishly, I tore open the envelope. I didn't know quite what to make of what confronted me.

My results read as follows:

<i>35011 Fr:</i>	<i>Elementary French</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>E</i>
<i>92280 Soc:</i>	<i>Social Research Methods 65</i>		<i>B</i>
<i>92282 Soc</i>	<i>Social Change</i>	<i>95</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>92393 Soc:</i>	<i>Intergroup Relations</i>	<i>82</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>92480 Soc:</i>	<i>Sociological Theory</i>	<i>83</i>	<i>A</i>

Joy was there, and immediately said, "that's incredible, Ian. Ninety-five on one course and three 'A' grades."

"Yes, but I failed French," I replied.

"But you told me you that you might fail French. You said you never went to any lectures."

"Right. I'm not surprised I failed. I just don't know how that will affect L.S.E.'s decision."

“Well, you can always retake the exam. Besides, it’s the Sociology results that are important. When they see those, how can they refuse you?”

I looked at the sheet of paper again. It *was* incredible. Never in my life had I received marks in the 80’s. And 95 - that was ridiculous! Suddenly, the significance of the 95 hit me. Of course, that was Lele’s course. My three-hour ‘illicit’ exam paper, written while in an altered state, had been a hit. The gamble had paid off. Maybe Joy was right. What had seemed impossible had now become possible. Maybe L.S.E. would accept me.

\* \* \*

I stayed in Goderich from the 6<sup>th</sup>. of June to the 15<sup>th</sup>. The key events of that period are recorded in my diary.

Excerpts from Diary, 6<sup>th</sup>. - 15<sup>th</sup>. June, 1969:

*For a week I have been here with Frank in Goderich (a small town on the banks of Lake Huron). As I write this, the sounds of Chopin’s ‘Revolutionary’ Etude filter down from the room above. Frank really is an incredible pianist. We were brought together through music but now our relationship is based on a total communication that extends in all directions. Frank is a very good friend, a flowering rose in this desert of alienation. We shall, I think, be close to each other for a long time.*

*Yesterday was a beautiful day from start to finish. At 1-30, we set out to walk to Black’s Point. Most of my time here, so far, has been spent playing music with Frank, so it felt really good to get outside and do some exercise. After walking some two or three miles, we ran into a terrible storm. We were quite prepared to walk through rain but when two-inch hailstones (as big as golf-balls) started pounding our backs and heads, we rapidly took shelter in a nearby motel. In only five or ten minutes the storm had passed and we set off again in our sopping clothes.*

*However, what with the warm sun and gusting wind, our clothes were nearly dry by the time we reached Black’s Point. What a wonderful spot! Deserted beach, tall stands of trees, calm waters stretching as far as the eye could see. After collecting driftwood for a fire, we went for a bathe. I haven’t been swimming for at least a year, the water felt delectable. Then we made a superb fire and cooked hot-dogs on it. This must have been what Maslow calls a ‘peak experience’ because even the hot-dogs tasted like some gourmet dish. With our stomachs full and feeling thoroughly stoned on nature, we sat by the fire and rapped (as Frank would say).*

*At about 7-30, we set off for Frank’s house. After a fabulous walk along the coastline, past fantastic geological formations, we got caught in another storm. We eventually reached the back door of 192 Elizabeth Street at about 9-30.*

*I walked in the door, and there was Mrs. Wheeler saying something about my sister phoning with good news. On a slip of paper by the telephone was written, ‘L.S.E. – M.Sc.’. I couldn’t believe it. I rang up Joy immediately and sure enough, a letter had arrived that same day with the good news. My acceptance was, of course, conditional on my passing French in a supplemental exam, but that seemed a minor detail.*

*Not since the Draper’s result (the news of which came when I was working at a hotel on the shores of another lake, Lake Buttermere) has my mind been so totally blown.*

*London, L.S.E., England. It’s all so fantastic. My whole orientation is in a state of metamorphosis at the moment. The future is exciting, challenging, and possibly fraught with dangerous pit-falls. But the main thing is, whatever my doubts about being back in Britain (now that I’ve changed so much), or money (how to finance the Master’s program?), or parents, or whether or not I can keep my head above water at L.S.E. ... I must think positively.*

My flight to Britain had been pre-booked for the 4<sup>th</sup>. July. This meant that I had little over two weeks to get back to Kingston, pack up all my things and send them off.

Those last few days in Kingston were a crazy, disjointed time. There I was, back in my room on Montreal Street. But how things had changed. I opened the windows and raised the blinds. No longer was my attic apartment a monastic cell. I rejoiced. Thank God, I was finally able to get rid of Queens and Kingston. I was to be rid of Carsch. And I was to be rid of the bitter memories of Lesley.

In the last week of June, I received two letters of significance. One was from Hamish Blair Cunynghame and the other from David Lungley. The former was a reply to a letter I had sent before I knew of my L.S.E. result. I had informed him of my visit to Edinburgh and said that I hoped we could meet.

His reply was as follows:

*'My Dear Ian*

*I was delighted to hear from you and, of course, I should immensely like to see you while you are back in Scotland. I am going to fish in Sutherland from the 17<sup>th</sup> July to the 2<sup>nd</sup> August. If you would like to march over the moors and drink a lot in the evening, I should love you to come with me for say the first week. Think about it and let me know. I expect, however, that you may find it difficult to go away so soon after arriving home, but I don't see why you couldn't manage 2 or 3 days.*

*Yours aye,*

*Hamish B.C.'*

This letter left me confused. On the one hand, I felt, once again, the warmth and sincerity of the man, and of course I was flattered that he should invite me to spend part of his holiday with him. On the other hand, I had become increasingly critical and intolerant of the British 'Ruling Class', and I couldn't help but realise that Blair Cunynghame was clearly one of them. A month previously, I had gone to see the movie 'If', directed by Lindsay Anderson. The film was a damning indictment of the British, public school system. I found myself almost wholly in sympathy with its point of view. However, my affection and respect for B.C. remained, hence the confusion. In this matter, and in a growing number of other instances, I felt as if a widening split was developing between head and heart.

David Lungley's letter from Australia was long and thoughtful. In it were contained further impressions of Australian society, such as:

*'Australia is not a good place to live. Even if friends and relatives were to live there, the general atmosphere is complacent, materialistic, self-interested, and unaesthetical. Advertising is ghastly, road laws are ridiculous, police are unpleasant. Men are apparently superior to women, and Australians are very anti-British!*

*I was very interested in all you had to say about your last three years in Canada. You seem to be a bit disillusioned lately which doesn't surprise me at all. Exactly the same thing has happened to me. Excuse me if I am philosophical for a while but your own observations fit in so exactly with mine that I must discuss them.*

*When I think of the changes of attitude, beliefs, principles and so on, that have taken place in myself since leaving Sedbergh, and how much clearer I see life, and how much happier and more at peace I am as a result, I shudder. It grieves me that I was unable to make the best advantage of the opportunities and the friendships that existed there because I was so mixed up. At last, after much heartache and uprooting of psychological complexes, I feel completely stable, at ease with people, and I know more or less where I am going and what I am doing.*

*All I can say is Thank God fate treated me well and helped me sort out all these problems. Every person suffers ill treatments in their childhood to a lesser or greater degree, and the time it takes them to gain peace of mind is proportional to the amount of ill treatment. The quickest way to recovery, I think is through rebellion, and therefore I was just so glad when you said you had done nothing but rebel against childhood behaviour since being in Canada. At last I can understand why you didn't write last year and why you were hurt when John and I were annoyed. It's odd but even now, I know you so well that I can see exactly why you were so disillusioned. I can also see - though I'm not sure how - that soon you will break through into a clear daylight of understanding and peace, and the happiness that goes with it.*

*I have the deepest admiration and respect for you Ian, partly as a person with great artistic talent and a wonderful ability to make people laugh, but mostly as a courageous, and hard-working person with great consideration for other people and lack of selfishness. I have always thought this and I value our past friendship and that of the present and future very highly.'*

In the last few days before I left, both Joy and Jim, and Frank came down to Kingston to see me off. There was little to say. My mind had already flown ahead to London. It was an emotional wrench to say goodbye, but the excitement of going to L.S.E. seemed to outweigh everything.

On my last day in Kingston, I went to West Street to say goodbye to Lesley. In my diary, I wrote only two lines to describe the farewell:

*'as meaningless as the moth  
I just took the life of'*

The next day, July 4<sup>th</sup>. 1969, I took the bus to Toronto and boarded an Air Canada plane to London. My three years as a student at Queens University, and my youth, were over. I went, or returned (I didn't know which), as a confused young man, a mish-mash of conflicting attitudes, values, and beliefs.

Everything was shifting. A chameleon who doesn't know how to adapt to its environment any more has lost whatever protection it had.



**London, England**  
**1969-72**



## 17.

Hardly a homecoming. As the Boeing 707 winged over the mid Atlantic, my life seemed to be lacking anywhere I could truly call home.

"Why the hell am I going back to Britain?" I ruminated. It felt like the plane was going in the wrong direction. Go west young man, go west!

In one sense, I knew why I was going back... After three years of university in Ontario, I had been accepted to do a Masters degree in sociology at the London School of Economics.

Initially, there had been euphoria. Accepted by the L.S.E. of all places, the alma mater of people like Kennedy, Trudeau, Kenyatta, not to mention my brother-in-law, Jim. At the age of 15, I had taken the train down to London to attend my sister Joy's wedding to Jim. At the time, both Joy and Jim were at L.S.E. He was doing a Ph.D in philosophy, and she was taking a social work diploma. The strangeness and excitement of meeting their L.S.E. friends - a true international cast of characters - had made an indelible impression.

Another reason for the euphoria was that, against all odds, I had been accepted on the basis of only 3 years of a 4 year Honors degree. A wry smile flickered across my face as it occurred to me that perhaps the main reason for going back was to prove to all those (i.e. teachers and parents) who had doubted my ability to get a B.A., that I could go one better and get a Masters, *and* at a British university.

I sat back in my window seat, closed my eyes and tried to relax. At 22, I still had the manner and bearing of an ex public school boy, and yet this was overlaid by a pallor and a seriousness that had not been there prior to going to Canada. Over the course of three years at Queens University, Kingston, I had driven myself to succeed - not so much the first year, perhaps, when I played rugby for the College team and had as good a social life as many other 'frosh', but certainly by my third year I had become a total recluse so as to concentrate all my energies on course work. I secluded myself in an attic flat where I pursued a self-styled program of research and paper writing. I even gained permission and support from some of my professors to forego regular attendance of lectures. They seemed to recognize my need to set my own goals and proceed at my own pace.

I shifted uneasily in my seat.

"Maybe I should have stayed in Canada and done post-graduate work there. Maybe I shouldn't be doing post-graduate work at all - or at least not until I've had a break." Again, those uneasy thoughts.

\* \* \*

On my Résumé, 'home' was listed as Edinburgh. As the train passed through the outlying suburbs, my inner and outer worlds seemed enveloped in unrelenting gray. The leaden skies, the ashen color of the buildings - inwardly, vital energy slowly becoming asphyxiated. Did I know this place? Had I actually lived here in a past life? It didn't seem possible.

My mother picked me up at Waverly station. Who was this large woman who seemed so happy to see me? I knew her and yet I didn't know her. A flash of clarity dispersed the confusion for an instant, '*You* haven't changed, but *I* have.' I thought, 'I know you, but you don't know me. You can't - I'm a different person.'

"Well, I must say, you sound quite Canadian now." Was that an admonishment? I wasn't quite sure. At least she acknowledged some level of change.

As we drove up the Mound and away from Princess Street, the cobbled streets and greystone buildings looked antiquated, as stubbornly resistant to change as my parents.



Culture shock. The previous day, descending to Heathrow, it had been the patchwork quilt of fields; and at the airport, the smallness of the cars, the sudden absence of the ubiquitous Canadian smile, Burton suits, Marks and Spencer's sweaters, everything cramped and crowded. But here, in Edinburgh, it was more the shock of returning to a dead world, inhabited by the ghosts of the past.

I sat uncomfortably in my parent's living room. Despite jet lag, despite the long trip up from London, despite the fact that under the familiar face and figure I was not the son they knew anymore, despite everything, this was the time to appear 'normal'; it was time for the intake interview.

My father eyed me dubiously. Maybe it was the mustache. Of course, had I gone into the Army, as he had wished, a mustache would have been quite acceptable. But as a student ....

"The London School of Economics. That's where all the communists go, isn't it?"

There was a moment's pause.

"Dad, I thought you'd be pleased that I'd got into a Master's program," I ventured. I was still intimidated by my father, although I could sense that the time to 'answer back' was near at hand.

"We thought that perhaps you should have completed your fourth year at Queens," my mother added as she poured out the tea.

I searched momentarily for the reason behind the comment, and then was supplied it as my mother continued.

"After all, the Drapers Company had agreed to fund an extra year."

The Drapers Company of London were the centuries-old institution who had provided me with the Commonwealth scholarship to go to Canada in the first place. For three years, my mother had worried about me falling prey to the temptations of women or alcohol, but at least she'd known that I was financially secure. And for the five years before that, financial security at Sedbergh School had been bolstered thanks to a music scholarship. But now, the possible merits of a Masters were outweighed by the fact that this time there was no scholarship.

"I suppose you've read all about the riots and goings-on there," asked my father. "The world seems to be going completely crazy what with the hippies, the communists, and the situation in Rhodesia."

"Yes, Dad, I've read about it. But that's not why I'm going there. And Dad, I'm not a hippie, or a communist."

Why did they jump to conclusions? Why couldn't they see beyond distorted images and realize the *substance* of my achievement. I was aware of a growing feeling of resentment of having to prove myself to my parents. However, I wasn't yet ready to confront them (certainly not my father) with this feeling. Besides, I knew what my father's answer would be. I'd heard it enough times: 'in Life, you've got to prove yourself over and over again'. In theory I could accept this maxim. What I couldn't accept was the lack of credit or recognition for each time you *did* prove yourself.

\* \* \*

It was July 1969. I had one month in Edinburgh before going to London to take a make-up exam in French, my acceptance to L.S.E. being contingent on passing this exam.

For several weeks, my pattern was that every day I would head off to the Central Public Library where I would spend three to four hours studying the course material that I had all but ignored during the year. I had been immersed in sociological theory, educational philosophy and writings on creativity - basic French hadn't seemed to fit into the picture. I was sick of studying, but at least it got me out of the house.

Soon after arriving in Edinburgh, I had contacted Hamish Blair-Cunynghame. This man was chairman of the governors of Sedbergh, the boarding school that I had attended for five years. He was a kind, intelligent and sensitive man who had taken an interest in me in my last two years at school. He had taken me out for meals, during which time he had given me information and advice, and I had made him laugh. We always enjoyed each other's company. He knew that my life at home was not happy. My parents, because of their own problems, were far better at pushing and prodding than they were at supporting and guiding. He sensed this and took on a

mentoring role towards me. He seemed endlessly understanding and supportive.

However, despite the fact that I liked and respected him, in the last year of being in Canada I had begun to view him in a different light. It wasn't because of anything he had done, rather because of who he was, or at least what he represented. It was true, as I had told my father, I was not 'a communist'. On the other hand, a fair bit of my reading over the past few years had been to do with the pros and cons of different social and political systems. At the very least, I had come to seriously question Britain's role in Colonialism and Imperialism, and the rigidity of its class system (and the way in which it perpetuated unequal wealth, unequal opportunity, to say nothing of poverty for the 'underclass'). My head was a cauldron of questions and doubts, feelings and opinions, all seeking the bedrock of hard fact. I had been influenced by reading George Orwell's *Down and Out in Paris and London*, the early English reformers and social critics like Thomas Moore and Jonathon Swift, the socialist humanism of Erich Fromm, the writings of pacifists like Gandhi, Russell, Luther King, and Cesar Chavez. I was not a communist but I could hardly defend my heritage as a product of the British capitalist, class system.

Hamish Blair-Cunynghame was a very nice man. He was also Chairman of the Royal Bank of Scotland, and on various other boards of large corporate institutions. If I put on my political/sociological pair of spectacles, it was impossible to see him as anything other than a leading member of the British establishment, the 'power elite' - the apparent perpetrators, or at least perpetuators of so much inequality and injustice.

In June, shortly before leaving Canada, he had sent me a letter. In it he said the following:

*'I was delighted to hear from you and, of course, I should immensely like to see you while you are back in Scotland. I am going fishing in Sutherland from the 17th. July until the 2nd. August, and for the last four days I have Michael Thornley \* with me. I have nobody with me for the first ten days and if you would like to march over the moors - for my fishing is fairly energetic - and drink a lot in the evening, I should love you to come with me. Think about it and let me know. You may find it difficult to go away so soon after arriving home, but I don't see why you couldn't manage two or three days,*

*Yours aye,*

*Hamish B.C.'*

*\* Headmaster of Sedbergh School*

This invitation threw me into consternation. I would love to go on a walking/fishing holiday with my 'friend' Hamish B.C., but how could I betray my growing political conscience by hob-nobbing with a member of the establishment? It seemed like an issue of betrayal whatever I did.

My first meeting with Blair-Cunynghame, after returning from Canada, was for lunch at the Royal Caledonian Hotel on Princess Street. It was not like our meetings of old. I needed to show him that I had changed. I needed to explain to him *why* I had changed. And, given that my political 'spectacles' were now an extension of both my perceptions and my identity, I needed to intellectually challenge him. I had also decided to tell him that I couldn't go on the fishing holiday with him, even for a few days. I explained that I had too much work preparing for the French exam. It was very difficult. Emotionally, I didn't want to reject him as a father figure, but it was 1969 and figures of authority - both benign and malignant - were toppling everywhere. My questioning and criticism and rebelliousness had to find some active outlet. Several times he interrupted me. He seemed impatient as he challenged my point of view. As I left, I felt confused and sad. Something had been lost. Was it my fault?

A few weeks later, I received another letter from him. It was from the Scourie Hotel in Sutherland.

*'My dear Ian,*

*I hasten to tell you that immediately after that lunch of ours, I read an article to the effect that when a man clearly wants to talk, one must listen! I fear, having realized that you were different than when I last saw you, and conscious of the shortage of time, I really was too*

*aggressive. Please forgive me - I wanted to be sure that the qualities of humor, a capacity to detach yourself from immediate circumstances and take a long view, and common sense had not deserted you. They haven't!*

*I do hope you weren't too cross with me in retrospect - I meant what I said about wanting to continue our talk - you interest me very much now. Please, please, forgive my attack!  
Looking forward to seeing you,*

*Yours aye,*

*Hamish B.C.'*

Had *he* attacked me, or had I attacked him? I wasn't sure any more. Maybe we'd attacked each other.

But he was right about one thing. I *was* a man who clearly wanted to talk. My head was full of ideas, hypotheses and theories. I had been brought up in a family with not only a joyless and powerless script, but also a mindless one. As my father would say, "in the army, you're paid to follow directions, not ask questions," or one of my mother's favorites, "he who asks doesn't get." After being a compliant teenager, obedient to authority on the whole, in Canada I had learned to think for myself.

One of the things I most wanted to talk about was education. I was interested in all aspects of education, especially the epistemological, psychological, and sociological aspects. What is knowledge? How do we arrive at knowledge? What is the role of reasoning and logic? What is the role of creative intuition? In the realm of knowledge, what is possible, what is probable, and what is certain? How do skepticism and faith relate to knowing? What is beyond reason? What does that mean? How do we learn? How are we taught? What is the difference between instruction and education? Where might each be appropriate / inappropriate? How do schools foster creativity? How do schools block and suppress creativity? What schools recognize the need to encourage curiosity and creativity? How does education differ from one culture to another? How has it differed throughout history? etc. etc.

Underpinning my interest in this area was a deep-rooted sensitivity. I had something to prove. At school, I had been regarded as a good sportsman and musician, a nice guy with a great sense of humor, but possessing only average (if that) intelligence. I was determined that people see the 'new' me. In particular I felt the need to impress old friends.

One day in July, I phoned an old school friend, Peter Wolf. In the course of conversation, Peter told me that he was amazed that I had been accepted by L.S.E. He had tried himself, he told me, but had been turned down. The point about this was that Peter had always been in the top stream. He was regarded as one of the smartest, just as I was regarded as one of the slowest. He also expressed surprise because, as he put it, I sounded "so intellectual". After the call, I found that I was prickling with sensitivities. What did he mean 'intellectual'? Creative yes, intellectual ... no.

Here are some extracts from the letter I 'fired off' to him immediately after our conversation:

*'Dear Pete,*

*Seeing my sensitive spot has been touched so to speak, I am at present motivated to say a few words on such intangible matters as 'education', 'intellect', and 'creativity'.*

*What should the function of education be? In my opinion, education should not be a means of imprinting facts, value judgments, biases, proven patterns of thought, on passive, receptive individuals. The pupil knows nothing, the teacher knows everything. The teacher talks, the pupil listens. The pupil is denied the chance to engage in dialogue, and is also denied an outlet for originality.*

*In the U.S.A., in the last ten years, psychologists have become increasingly preoccupied with the concept of 'creativity'. They have tried to find its source, tried to analyze it into its component factors. Why the sudden interest? One of the reasons is that finally educators started realizing that so-called intelligence tests, like the I.Q. test, teacher-dominated*

*classes, and memory-orientated courses and exams, were not accounting for the Arthur Koestlers, Albert Einsteins or Marshall McLuhans of this world, people who were capable of seeing original relationships rather than regurgitating old ideas or hypocritically plagiarizing.*

*I.Q. tests measure one thing - a component, and only a component, of something that is loosely called 'intelligence'. Creativity tests measure a quite different function of intelligence, namely the ability to create.*

*At Sedbergh, I took Physics and Chemistry for three years (thanks to my father's mistaken belief that I needed it to go to Sandhurst!). Because I was so bad, so 'unintelligent', so dumb, so 'thick', and because there was so much pressure on me to pass my A levels, I didn't have the time or opportunity to do the things I really wanted to do ... e.g. read Eliot, Auden, Wordsworth, Blake, Ginsberg, Ibsen, Osborne, Freud, Nietzsche, Dostoyevsky, Hesse, Kafka, Camus, etc. etc. My creative abilities were channelled into playing the piano and good old sports.*

*Thanks to people telling me that I would never get A levels, let alone get to University, I really began to feel that I was unintelligent. It must have sunk deep into me because now I have a driving urge to gain more knowledge so that I can combine this with the creative abilities I've always known were there.*

*But no Pete, I am not an intellectual. I don't identify with people who have a high I.Q. Logic and 'linear thinking' are not my strong points. Neither am I good at the game of polemics - defending my 'point' or dissecting and attacking the other person's. These deficiencies may be my downfall at L.S.E., Who knows?'*

The fact was that even if I had not become 'an intellectual', I had become emmeshed in a cerebral world, whether I liked it or not.



## 18.

43 Lonsdale Road was in the heart of Notting Hill Gate. Notting Hill was like a multi-hued tapestry woven with marginal people, outsiders to the mainstream of British class society. To enter its domain was to enter the world of the 'counter culture', a world of gays, hippies, artists, and West Indians.

The gray deadness of Edinburgh was behind me and I had a new home in a colorful, vibrant new world. It was August. My French make-up exam was behind me and I had just moved in with two old friends from Montreal Expo '67 days.

Jerry Lach, Mary Addison and I had all worked as guides in the British pavilion. I didn't know Mary very well. She had always struck me as being very sure of herself. She was very assertive and expressive, and would reveal her emotions readily. With her wide smile, open and honest face and ample breasts, she seemed like the quintessential earth mother. She spoke loudly and often, her style of expression being most characterized by strong opinions and sentiments. Mary was also generous and big-hearted. She had a history of being burned by men that she felt she had supported - in this area she was vulnerable. But I didn't really see this side of Mary at first. What I saw was a strong woman, in touch with her emotions and not in the least afraid to express them. When she became critical or angry, she reminded me of my mother. Many times she intimidated me.

I knew Jerry much better than Mary. My memories of Jerry in Montreal were of a good-looking, intelligent and supremely confident guy who had every woman in the place watching him. He amazed me by carrying out simultaneous relationships with two of the most attractive hostesses without, apparently, either of them knowing, or at least caring. He and I were amongst several guides and hostesses who had rented a cottage in the country north of Montreal. That was where I got to know him better. For me it was a summer of sexual awakening. I lost my virginity and had several affairs and 'flings'. But I never felt I could 'hold' a woman. I was too insecure. I certainly never brought a woman up to the cottage. Jerry could not only hold a woman. he could hold two! Jerry always seemed in control. Even in areas where I knew I was stronger than him, for example musically, Jerry was able to hold an audience thanks to his charisma. He would sing a lot of Dylan songs, like 'Mr. Tambourine Man', and 'Like A Rolling Stone'.

Many times, late in the evening in front of a log fire, I sat there talking or playing with him while one of his two women curled up beside him, waiting expectantly, or so it seemed. After a while, off they would go leaving me doing calculations of the sort, 'if Jerry is getting it almost every night, then how many times will he get it this summer? this year?.....and what if he's getting it several times a night!.....and what if he's been getting it since the age of fifteen or so!?' At times like these, there didn't seem to be any justice. But at least I could seek solace in the fact that I too was getting it - just not so often, and not at the cottage. Where I *did* feel confident and 'in control', at that time, was in my humor and ability to make people laugh. At the end of 'Expo, I initiated and directed a Revue with satirical sketches and music. Jerry was also involved, and despite the fact that he had directed the McGill University 'Red and Black' revue twice, he deferred to me and let me run the show.

People had always told me that I should go into the theatre. I found it came naturally to take on different accents, to put on different personae, to change who I was. But my pattern had been to follow my will rather than my inclination. I had willed myself to pass my Physics and Chemistry A levels. If I had listened to and stood up for my interests, I would have done English and History instead. In Canada, I had given up a social life and driven myself to get a Sociology degree. And now something was pushing me to get my Masters, despite more natural inclinations.

Jerry, on the other hand, did what he wanted. He had not completed his B.A., and much to the chagrin of his parents (his father was an executive with Canadian National Railroad), he had come to London to seek his fortune in the world of theatre. One way or another, I was a bit in awe of Jerry.

Jerry and I were on a coffee break.

"Have you figured out how many props we need for 'Halloween'?" he asked me as he lit a Gauloise.

"Not much - just a chair and a coat-stand, stuff like that."

We were discussing a play that was in production at The Open Space, an avant-garde theatre on Tottenham Court Road. Jerry had been working there as stage director for a couple of months. In turn, he had hired me to stage manage a series of off-off Broadway plays.

"What about Liz, things working out with her?"

"O.K., I suppose .... she's a bit ..."

"A bit what?"

"A bit too much of a debutante for me," I replied, draining my espresso.

Liz had long black hair, red lipstick and a very pale face. She always dressed in black and had the speech and attitude of an upper-crust boarding school girl. If I felt intimidated by Mary, I felt both intimidated and repelled by Liz. She was just *too* British, too, too ... how should one put it? ... too solidly upper-crust. I was in metamorphosis. I needed to distance myself from my former world. I'd started to cut myself off from my roots. I'd started to accept the idea of becoming a Canadian, and reject the idea of being British. I measured people by how British or Canadian they felt to me. Because I was *choosing* to become Canadian, I found that I tended to feel secure with Canadians and more vulnerable with Brits. After all, how would someone like Liz see me? She wouldn't see me in the same way as she saw Jerry, who was so solidly Canadian. Compared with him, I wasn't Canadian at all. But on the other hand, she probably didn't see me as a Brit either. My accent had changed, so had my mannerisms.

"I kind of fancy her," said Jerry with his characteristic mischievous smile.

"You would," I retorted. "You know who I like? I feel a kind of chemistry between Marie Gorman and I." Marie Gorman was the American actress who was one of the two people in the play 'Halloween'. "Today she said she thought I should go into acting."

Jerry looked at his watch. "Well time to get back to work," he said as he stubbed out his cigarette. Jerry could direct but didn't have much acting talent. This was the one area he seemed unsure of himself.

It's not as if Marie Gorman was a student actress or a complete unknown. In local circles anyway, she was a somebody. She had even appeared with Ali McGraw and Steve McQueen in 'Goodbye Columbus'.

So for her to say that she thought I should go into acting was, well, flattering.

One day, after rehearsal, she invited me back to her flat. When I discovered that she had a beautiful baby grand, I sat down and started playing. She listened, clearly impressed, and after a while rolled a joint. The pungent smell of grass filled the room.

"Would you like some?" she asked me, when I took a break from playing.

"O.K." For most of the time in Canada, I had resisted taking any kind of drugs, although I had had one experience of grass shortly before returning to Britain. This was my second time.

I inhaled deeply a couple of times and went back to playing. It was then, as I was playing, that I became aware of the charge between Marie and I. It was strange because I wasn't really attracted to her physically, but despite this there was definitely sexual tension in the air.

In the end nothing happened. Something seemed to be holding us back. I enjoyed Marie's sense of fun but getting sexually involved might change things, and I didn't want that. Also, I was still very vulnerable following a disastrous break-up with Lesley, my girl-friend in Canada. As for Marie, she seemed to want me but for some reason that I didn't understand, she didn't make any move.

Two days later, Marie asked me to meet her in her dressing room at The Royal Court Theatre in Sloane Square, where she was appearing in something or other.

Again there was sexual tension. After she had changed, we went out for something to eat and from there back to her flat. This time, things began to happen. As we were kissing, she suddenly pulled back. I asked her what was wrong and she said that she was in torment because although she was very attracted to me, she was a lesbian and couldn't go through with it. Because of my own doubts, that was fine with me - it

let me off the hook. However, the incident did seem like *déjà vu*. In my first Christmas in Canada, I had gone out to Calgary to stay with my first girlfriend, Pam. I had been writing to her for over six years and the question that ran obsessively through our letters was how and when we would get together. The first part of that was taken care of when I got the Drapers scholarship to Queens University. The second part was solved when I took the train across Canada. All that remained was the consummation of our adolescent, and in my case, much delayed lust.

Outside the snow was soft and heavy. Inside Pam's cozy student flat, we drank the ceremonial bottle of wine, lit the candles and incense, and jumped into bed. Just as I was about to finally lose my cursed virginity, Pam rolled over and mumbled, "Ian, I'm sorry, I can't go through with this, I think I'm a lesbian."

Was there something about me that attracted lesbians? The sensitive, soft, yielding side to my nature perhaps? Come to think of it, Pam was an actress too.

Anyway, this time I *did* understand - it's always easier the second time. Marie was grateful and we parted happily.

The next day I was setting up for the 'Halloween' rehearsal when Charles Marowitz stormed in.

"Have you heard the news?", he said, addressing Marie Gorman. "Bob Howie has just dropped out of 'Halloween', he told me he's got a better offer back in the States. The shithead! How could he do that to me... *me!* Who the fuck are we going to get at this stage? The goddammed play opens in a week!" Marowitz had that combination of ego and histrionics that seemed so prevalent in the theatre world. I didn't like him, and Jerry couldn't stand him.

I watched Marowitz disappear off-stage, still cursing. Marie seemed deep in thought.

"What do you think is going to happen?" I asked her.

"You know, *you* could do it," she said, looking at me intently.

"You're kidding! Me?"

"Yes. You could do it. I know you've got it in you. I'd love to see you do the play." She smiled. I could see that she was quite sincere.

"I'm going to suggest it to Charles when he comes back," she continued.

Suddenly, my world was changing. L.S.E. and the world of books and ideas and intellectual analysis began receding from my mind like early morning dew in the sun. It was as if a door to what I *really* wanted had suddenly been thrust open. How could I not want to enter?

At that moment, two people entered the theatre by different doors. One was Charles Marowitz returning, the other was an actor called Lawrence Trimble who was appearing in one of the other off-off Broadway plays. As Marowitz saw him, he raised his arms and exclaimed:

"Of course, Lawrence can do it. Problem solved."

Deep within me, something recognized that this was an existential cross-roads, so to speak. What could have happened didn't. But then again, I didn't have the confidence or the clarity to try to make it happen. I could not legitimize 'becoming' an actor. Somebody had to do it for me. Somebody had to give me permission.

It was not long after that, Marie informed me that she was returning to the States. I felt sad to hear this. I had been happy when I was with her. She had given me confidence in myself. Now that she was leaving, the uncertainty began to creep back.

The day before she left, I wrote her a poem:

*'You say you see through murky haze  
a light not dim but bright  
you may be right  
I know it's there  
but do I dare  
to break  
down*



*primeval  
barriers  
to smash  
enforced structures  
to annihilate one personality for another  
you say I must bring forth that light  
you may be right, I wish I knew  
The innocence of faith is gone  
and now I question all I do'*

\* \* \*

Marie left, and the off-off Broadway season came to an end. Suddenly, I was unemployed, with very little money, and a great deal of confusion as to what path I was on. There were 'possibilities' of further involvement in the theatre; one of the directors involved in the off-off Broadway plays had mentioned the possibility of my playing piano for the University of Southern California Revue at the Edinburgh Festival. What an irony that would be; 'no Dad, I'm not a hippie or a communist, I'm not even at L.S.E., the good news is that I'm back here in Edinburgh as an unpaid pianist in the fringe festival.' There was another possibility of playing 'cello in an upcoming Open Space production. But again, it wasn't certain.

The only thing that seemed relatively solid was L.S.E., and the fact that I was meant to be starting there in a few weeks. I still hadn't heard the results of my French exam, and so one day early in September, I called long distance to Kingston, and after being passed from one person to another in the Queen's University registrar's office, I finally got what I wanted. I had passed. The call cost me £15, but it was worth it. Now at least I knew the way to L.S.E. was clear, *if* I wanted to go there.

Around that time, I went with Jerry to see the movie everyone was talking about – 'Easy Rider'. It was on at a cinema in Piccadilly Circus. The movie had an impact on both of us. Afterwards, we sat in a pub and discussed it.

"Hey man, that movie laid down some heavy stuff, you dig?" said Jerry mimicking the hippie talk of the movie.

"Yeah, like taking drugs all the time," I replied.

"Sure, but there was more to it than that," said Jerry. "How about when the lawyer ... what was his name? ... the actor I mean ... Jack Nicholson, how about when he says to Dennis Hopper, 'it's not just 'long hair' you represent to straight society, it's 'freedom'. That's what they can't handle. It's real hard to be free when you're bought and sold in the market place.'"

"But what's the 'freedom'?" I protested. Freedom to 'go back to the land' and starve yourself because you don't know how to survive? Freedom to roam around the country on a motor-bike using up your money, and when it runs out, selling some drugs so that you can roam some more?"

"On the road," like Kerouac said. "Nothing to tie you down, maybe that *is* freedom."

"Yes, but there are so many contradictions. Some hippies want to move on all the time, some want to go back to the land and set up communes in one place; some want to 'do their own thing' and be stoned all the time, and some want to rebel against the system."

"Well, we're all individuals."

"Then why is there so much pressure to be the same - grow your hair, say 'man' and 'far out' and 'groovy', smoke dope, wear bell bottoms..."

"That's just to look the same ..."

"Yes, but then if you don't conform, if you don't say 'far out' and 'groovy' and do drugs, then people lay a trip on you that you're straight. I mean, if a freak does that with me, he's doing the same thing as my parents when they assume I'm a freak because my hair is half an inch longer, only he's doing it in reverse." I was warming up.

This is what I couldn't accept with the hippies. In rebelling against the conformity and rigid expectations of straight society, they had come up with an alternative that, it seemed to me, had even more conformity and tight definitions of what was acceptable and what was not - despite all the bally-hoo about 'doing your own thing'.

What I hated was anyone making assumptions on image alone, whether that was my parents or your neighborhood freak. What I had loved at Sedbergh, was that our relationships were 'authentic', as the sociologists would say. They grew out of real knowledge and experience of the *substance* of who each other was. The image grew out of the substance, so to speak. If I proved that I was good enough to play rugby for the 1st. XV, *then* I would have the experience of playing for the team. And *if* I was accepted to play on a regular basis, *then* I would earn my colors. And that's where the image would come in. People would see me wearing the special colors of the 1st. XV on my sweater or tie, and they would know, *really* know what the image or symbol represented. But in the freak culture, you didn't have to 'earn' anything. Just because you wore a bandana, or smoked a joint, or said 'far out', on this superficial image alone, you were able to gain acceptance, respect, trust.

That said, there were some things from 'Easy Rider' that *did* resonate within me. The image of throwing away your watch stayed with me - how wonderful that would be! To get free of the constraints of time, with its goals, deadlines and associated pressures. The idea of getting away from 'the city' - having only been in London for a month or so, that really appealed. London was overwhelming. With its gargantuan size and complexity, its never-ending bombardment of high intensity stimuli, its utterly dominating presence - like a pagan God, omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent, it stifled my sense of who I was or what I could be. The city was a living entity whispering its persistent messages: 'why bother trying, it's been done already'; and having established that, 'you simply must catch this show ... or that exhibition' ... or, 'you mean you didn't know that ...'

Perhaps the thing that stayed with me the most deeply from the movie was the shock ending where both Dennis Hopper and Peter Fonda get blown to pieces by a southern bigot. You try to live out your definition of freedom, and you get crushed for it. The movie was, after all, only adding another image to the series of terrible events that took place at the end of the sixties: the invasion of Czechoslovakia, the My Lai massacre, Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy's assassination; and the ongoing social unrest of race riots, anti-war protests and campus demonstrations at the Sorbonne, U.C.L.A. and L.S.E. My conscience was seared. What was I going to do? How was I going to make a stand? Drop out like Jerry or Frank Wheeler (my best friend in Canada)? Stick at it, get my Masters, and *then* work within the system to try to effect change? Become politically active against the system now - and if so, how?



## 19.

It's hard to answer the question why did I finally decide to go to L.S.E. Ambition and gaining recognition were certainly part of it. 'Only *one* year', I said to myself, 'just hang in there for one more year and you'll have your ticket to security *and* freedom.' I needed to prove to my parents, my friends and myself that I could do it. If anyone asked me what I was going to do after getting a Masters, I replied that my eventual goal was to work for UNESCO. For me, this organization represented several of the things in which I most strongly believed; international development and reform in education, support for cultural initiatives, social action through cooperation rather than conflict - this last one, in particular, I wanted.

But the nagging doubts remained. Shortly before I made my decision, I met my sister Joy and her husband Jim at an Indian restaurant. They were on a visit from Canada. Jim, I learned, had gone through very tough times as a student at L.S.E., and even though he now had a job teaching at Loyola University in Montreal, he still hadn't completed his Ph.D. They listened to my accounts about how hard I'd been working academically, the fact that I'd had no real break in my studies, concerns about my financial situation, and then my enthusiastic reports about working at the Open Space. After all that, they suggested that perhaps the best idea would be to continue working in theatre and take a year off University.

Perhaps the deciding factor was meeting Brenda Firestone, a fellow student in the Sociology program at Queens. I had not known that she was coming to L.S.E., but one day in September, she called me and told me that she too had been accepted into the Masters program in Sociology. At least now I didn't feel quite so far out on a limb.

\* \* \*

Suddenly, everything had changed. It was as if my center of consciousness had shifted from the sensory realm back to the cerebral. For two months I had escaped from the world of books and ideas. There had been the excitement of The Open Space, where every day was different. And then there was the cocoon of Notting Hill Gate, where somehow I felt sheltered from the buffeting rhythms of the rest of London. In jeans and bare feet, I had explored Portobello Road, smelt the aromas of spicy pork sausages, jerk chicken, newly baked bread; walked amongst the outdoor fruit and vegetable stalls with their cockney vendors; looked in at West Indian shops - their Rastafarian occupants smoking the holy weed and listening to reggae; strolled through the dappled sunlight of Holland Park with its canopy of beautiful old trees and its usual dwellers, freaks, musicians and children.

At 43 Lonsdale, things seemed to be working out O.K. too. Jerry and I shared a room, and Mary had the other bedroom to herself. In the tiny kitchen, Jerry and I cooked up breakfasts of bacon and eggs and freshly ground coffee, while Mary would treat us to wonderful home made soups and casseroles in the evening.

But now my world had changed. It was time to return to the ivory tower, for better or worse. Unlike Queens, however, with its broad tree-lined streets and green spaces, L.S.E. was in the heart of London's concrete jungle, in a narrow street in Holborn. The surrounding area was definitely not a cocoon, rather a noisy, frenetic artery of London's inner circle, only a few steps from Trafalgar Square and Fleet Street. Stepping inside, was to become immersed in another kind of intensity - the rarified atmosphere of finely tuned critical intellects.

Despite my misgivings about re-entering this kind of depleted world, the first few days were encouraging. I managed to talk myself out of the mandatory 'Statistics' course (a subject that I loathed) on the grounds that I'd done a similar course at Queens. That left me with four courses to do. One of these, Sociological

Theory, was mandatory. Three to go. Eventually, I decided on Sociology of Education, Sociology of Literature (although I really had no idea what this meant), and Communication and Attitude Change (I thought that because the word 'communication' was in the title, it would only be a matter of time before we would be delving into the wonderworld of Marshall McLuhan, one of my intellectual heroes). In addition to these four courses, I was required to do a 'mini-thesis'.

Somehow, within this framework, I hoped to fit my *rea*/interests. These were:

(1) What were the most effective and efficient ways of learning? How could Guildford's model of 'the structure of the intellect' help find an answer to this question? How did the modes of creative thinking and critical thinking interact? Was it necessary to 'suspend judgment' to release creative thought (Parnes)? What were the differences between 'linear' and 'lateral' thinking (De Bono)? What were the implications of each? What were the ways in which different educational systems (e.g. Sedbergh, Summerhill, Steiner schools) blocked or facilitated intellectual/creative development?

(2) To what extent was social change deterministic as opposed to voluntaristic? Were there, for example, rhythms or cycles in social phenomena? How could one differentiate between linear trends, cyclical trends, and change that seemed completely arbitrary or due only to voluntary initiative (e.g. 'the great man' theory of history)?

I was very interested in the work of a Dr. Hans Jenny, a Swiss natural scientist. Just before I arrived in London, there had been a series of lectures at the Institute of Contemporary Arts called the 'Vibrating World Lectures'. Jenny had originated a field of research called 'Cymatics', or the study of vibrations. Axiomatic to Jenny's theories, was the notion that periodicity ("a tendency to recur at regular intervals" - Webster's Dictionary) is an essential and pervasive characteristic of the living and inanimate world. In other words, everything has rhythm. \*

This was fascinating to me. In the last year at Queens, I had experimented on my own 'biological clock' to see what rhythms and cycles could be changed, and which would be most conducive to learning and intellectual/creative production. I discovered that my rhythms were deep and broad, that I didn't like constant interruptions to the flow of a particular rhythm - interruptions from having to go to lectures, or answering the phone, or the sounds of busy traffic outside. As a result, I began to work later and later until I almost reversed the usual day-night circadian cycle; I would go to sleep at 5 or 6 in the morning and wake up at around 1 p.m. Whereas other people were experimenting on altered states of consciousness using drugs as their primary tool, I was more interested in the effects of changed rhythms, sensory and social isolation, different kinds of music (I had just discovered Indian music), yoga and meditation.

The program of the 'Vibrating World' lectures reflected the kind of multi-disciplinary approach in which I so believed. For example, in addition to Dr. Jenny, there was Dr. Brian Goodwin talking on 'Rhythmic organization of cells and embryos', Dr. William Goody on 'Rhythms and the nervous system', and Professor Waddington on 'Developmental patterns in Biology'. What also fascinated me was the fact that these four men all appeared to embody a crossover from science to art. In addition to being scientists, Jenny was a painter, Goody was a calligrapher and organist, Waddington had published a book on the relations between painting and the natural sciences (Behind Appearance), and Goodwin, a Canadian (!), was interested in the harmony observed in the behaviour of organisms, a harmony that resulted, he believed, "from an exceedingly rich hierarchical patterning of processes which occur on different time scales, as encountered in the more intricate forms of musical counterpoint." (from the program brochure) These were men I could identify with, and their ideas fascinated and excited me.

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\* A few months later, I found out that Jenny's work had been written up in 'The UNESCO Courier' (December 1969) in a long article entitled "The sculpture of vibrations". I bought the magazine and was overwhelmed with the amazing photos of the different patterns and shapes assumed by various liquids and solids when submitted to vibrations at certain frequencies.

I wasn't sure exactly how to apply ideas of periodicity, cycles and rhythms within the field of sociology, but I knew intuitively that there was a universality to these processes that applied to all phenomena, natural, historical, economic, psychological, *and* social. I knew that Toynbee, the historian, talked about cycles of history, and I had also discovered two sociologists (albeit, not very popular or credited ones), Sorokin and Gurvitch, who talked about cycles and rhythms with respect to social phenomena.

Underlying these interests was *the* fundamental question: to what extent is there order or chaos in the universe? Whether the 'object' of study was periodicity in plants, reoccurrence of earthquakes, manifestations of schizophrenia, the rise and fall of dictatorships, the motion of light, astrophysical phenomena, *or* patterns of culture, the goal of analysis seemed to be (1) to uncover whatever order existed, (2) to determine the nature of that order. What *kind* of organization existed?

My studies and reflections in Sociology had led me to a consideration of three possibilities as to how social change occurs. The first was voluntaristic change - change that takes place due to the will of those involved...e.g. the Cuban revolution instigated and led by 'the great man' Fidel Castro. The second was change that took place according to some innate cycle or rhythm. The third possibility, like the second, was also deterministic; change that took place according to a linear trend...e.g. traditional Marxist theory regarding the inevitability of Capitalism following Feudalism, and this in turn being followed successively by Communism and then ultimately Socialism. Taking the last example, why were the western capitalist societies *still* surviving *per se*? According to Marx, they should be collapsing by now. But then again, the events of 1968 suggested that perhaps things were evolving according to plan.

What about technological change? Surely this was a clear example of a linear trend. Given that the motor car had been invented, was it not only a question of time before societies that traditionally relied on slower forms of transportation adapted, and adopted this technological 'improvement'?

The writer that fascinated me in this area was the Canadian, Marshall McLuhan. McLuhan had just come out with his seminal book Understanding Media, and in my first few weeks at L.S.E. I was still avidly reading it. McLuhan did not just talk about technological advancement; he showed how different media affected people's sensibilities, or 'sense-ratios'. Cultures that relied on the radio were aural/oral - the radio was a 'hot' medium. Print based cultures, or people, were biased towards the visual sense. And T.V. had ushered in a tactile age, being-in-touch and a part of a 'global village'. Apart from anything else, McLuhan went straight to my heart because he was so sweeping, so full of unproven theories, so eclectic and outrageous in his ideas - a rebel giant in the world of shrunken cerebella.

Within the world of the intellect, *these* were my real interests, and they lived and breathed inside me because, like any passionate concern, they were directly related to my own experience. I had been deeply influenced by the attitudes, values, beliefs and customs of at least three very different cultures: Scottish culture, the microcosmic world of Sedbergh, and new world of Canada, Ontario, Kingston and Queens. In addition, there had been brief exposures to Quebecois culture, Kenyan tribal life, and a hitch-hiker's odyssey (with my schoolfriend David Lungley) through the countries of Europe. It was not just 'Les deux solitudes' of English and French-speaking Canada, there seemed to be a whole host of 'deux solitudes' that I needed to understand and, if possible, integrate: the worlds of art and science (and within me, the contradictions between my creative, intellectual and political 'selves'), the elitism of my educational upbringing vis-a-vis the classless ideals of Gandhi and Marx, and the roots of my identity in Britain as contrasted to the immigrant uprooting and transplanting that had started to take place in Canada.

It was as if I was aware of a tree that day by day sprouted new branches and stems and twigs. The tree was out there, but the tree was also me. Sometimes, I didn't know which part of the tree I really was. Was I the whole tree, or a particular branch, or the roots? *If* I was in fact the whole tree, and if I sustained - breathed into only one part of the tree, would those other neglected parts eventually wither and die? Was that something I wanted to happen? Kill off unwanted parts of myself?

It was October. No longer was I walking barefoot through Notting Hill Gate and Holland Park. The rain had come. London had turned gray, like Edinburgh.

To lift my sagging spirits, I bought a ticket to see my hero in the world of music, someone who bridged at least one of 'les deux solitudes'. While at Queens, I had come across the French jazz pianist, Jacques Loussier. His music was a revelation. He was the first person I had heard to bring together the world of classical music and the world of jazz. Like McLuhan, Jenny, Fromm, he was another ground-breaker, another synthesist - bringing ideas together rather than separating them into tiny categories

I went alone to see him at the Queen Elizabeth Auditorium. Here was this little Frenchman with his goatee beard, formally dressed in tails and black tie, taking us into the crystalline world of Bach, and then slowly metamorphosing rigid rhythmic and melodic structures into the flexible and dynamic patterns of jazz improvisation. As the evening progressed, I felt I was becoming one with the man and his music. I could feel intensely what it was like when he became playful, when he laughed at his own inventiveness, when he took off into another stratosphere of innovation - it was as if I had a telepathic link with him. Sometimes I knew what was going to happen before it happened. In this world, all the dichotomies and contradictions disappeared; logic and intuition became one, reason and emotion were inseparable, analysis and synthesis coexisted, linearity and cyclicity dissolved into a spiral of imaginative yet purposeful invention. It was magic, tribal magic that released the collective unconscious. We became connected. We became one.

After, as I went home on the tube, the magic spell began to wear off and my mind slipped back into its analytic mode. How could I apply McLuhan's ideas to what I'd just experienced? Was Loussier's music 'hot' or 'cool'? Why did it communicate so successfully? What were the variables involved? - the form of the music? The dress and behavior of the performers? The setting? The audience? What about volume as a variable? Why was ear-splitting rock so popular? Was jazz 'hot' and Bach 'cool'? What did 'hot' plus 'cool' give you anyway - luke-warm?

I could feel myself getting a headache.

Back at the ranch, Jerry was listening to Bob Dylan.

*'And what did you hear, my blue eyed son?  
And what did you hear, my darling young one?  
I heard the sound of a thunder,  
it roared out a warnin' ...'*

"How was the concert?" asked Jerry, as I settled down with a cigarette.

"Indescribable." I turned my head towards the stereo with a look of disdain. "How can you listen to that?" Jerry looked at me in disbelief. "The man's a poet. Have you listened to his words?"

"Not really, I can't get past the voice. Besides, I don't usually hear lyrics. I'm drawn to the rhythm, the quality of the music itself."

"You don't know what you're missing, man ... he's telling it like it is."

"Not for me," I said, getting up and starting up the stairs. "Not for me."

And the strains of 'It's a hard rain's a-gonna fall' kept drifting up to the bedroom as I returned to trying to figure out how to apply McLuhan to Loussier.

## 20.

I sat in the L.S.E. student pub with Brenda. I was trying to live off between £3 and £4 a week, but out of this I had budgeted a pint of Younger's Tartan a week..

We were half way through the semester and things were not going well for either of us.

"I'm scared to open my mouth," I said. We were discussing the one course that we had in common, Sociological Theory.

"I know, me too. There's such a cut-throat atmosphere."

"There's no room for original ideas. I mean there's a set way of doing it here. First, you have to have a point of view. Not several points of view, just one. Next, you have to further your point of view by being able to quote relevant people in the field. Then it's open season time on what you've said, and everyone's doing their best to shoot down your argument. And the only way you can stop them from doing that is by defending your point of view ..."

"Right, and the only way you can do that is by knowing all these theorists inside out," chipped in Brenda.

"There! You see, that's a case in point," I said animatedly. "You just expanded on what I was saying. It's sort of like we're exploring something together. That never happens in our class."

"You know what I think," said Brenda. For a moment I was lost. Brenda had deep brown eyes and was extremely intuitive and empathetic. Sometimes I felt attracted to her.

"No, what?" I replied, snapping out of my reverie.

"I think that often people make their arguments, and they don't even believe in what they're saying. It's like an exercise in logic."

"Yeah, the emphasis is on how much you know, how broad your base of facts, how accurately you can regurgitate them, and how skillfully you can use them to undermine other people's ideas." It reminded me of the arrogance and patronizing attitudes of some of the more intellectual types at Sedbergh, and, come to think of it, that even applied to people like Peter Wolf. They were always trying to show that they knew more than you did.

"Let me buy you another beer," said Brenda suddenly. She smiled and reached out her hand to touch mine.

"Sure, thanks a lot." I felt a surge of warmth towards her. She was my Canadian buddy and we were somehow going to get through this shit together.

I never quite knew whether there was a sexual undercurrent to Brenda's touching. She *did* touch a lot. But then, I'd seen her do that with just about everyone. I figured she was just a tactile kind of person.

"What are your other courses like?" inquired Brenda, running a hand through her short brown hair.

"Well, there's 'Sociology of Education', with Dr. Clifford-Vaughn."

"What's he like?" said Brenda.

"That's what I thought when I first heard the name. Actually, he's a woman, and despite the name, she's French, with a doctorate in eighteenth century French education from the Sorbonne. Talk about a teacher-orientated class! Her seminars are like a court of law. If one student wants to say something to another student, they can only do it with her permission. She is continually passing judgment on what is right or wrong, or rather who is right or wrong. I am going to give a paper soon on how educational institutions block creativity – I'm not looking forward to it."

"Better wear your armor," laughed Brenda. "What about your other courses?"

"Well, there's 'Communication and Attitude Change', where all the other students are Psychology students. It seems that there's a lot of overlap with their other courses so at least they know what's going on. The prof. is a guy called Raven, a high-powered Behaviorist from the States. Right now I feel it would take me a year's solid reading in experimental psychology to even understand, let alone be interested in what he is saying. And then in my last course, 'Sociology of Literature', we spend our time trying to define what the hell that title means. I'm out of my depth here too. The other students seem to be incredibly erudite. You know, they all seem to have



comprehensive knowledge about Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Mann, Lawrence, Stein, Woolfe, James ... you name it. And the prof., Professor Swingewood, is a died-in-the-wool Marxist. He spends his time annihilating everyone except his hero, Lucien Goldmann. He told me the other day that he'd been meaning to get around to read McLuhan, but hadn't as yet."

Brenda reached out her hand again and squeezed my arm.

"You've got such great ideas, Ian. You're so creative. You know who I should introduce you to? Do you remember someone at Queens called Ellie Epp?"

"I don't think so."

"She was in the film department. There's something wrong with one of her legs and she walks with a noticeable limp."

I did remember her now. The few times I had seen her from a distance, she had struck me as a strong, yet rather mysterious woman.

"How do you mean 'introduce' me? Is she in London?" I asked surprised and curious.

"Yes she is. She just arrived. She's going to study film at the Slade School. I think you too might have things in common."

\* \* \*

I got off the tube at Kentish Town. When I had spoken to Ellie on the phone, she had suggested we meet for lunch at a pub near where she was living. It was a bright, sunny day in November. There was a crisp Fall atmosphere, the kind that always made me feel alive and renewed.

After a short walk, I found the pub. I saw her immediately, in the courtyard. I recognized the long, dark brown hair, drawn behind her head, and the same black leather jacket I had seen her wearing at Queens. She was so striking, so different from anyone else around. In addition to the jacket, she was wearing a purple shirt and a dark blue, wide-cord, ankle-long skirt. As I approached her, I was aware of her pale face, intelligent brown eyes, and expressive, sensual mouth.

We talked for a long time, and the more we talked, the more I became fascinated by her. I couldn't read her easily, that was for sure. She wasn't 'typical' of any of the usual categories of women I was used to. She wasn't sophomoric like so many of the Queens girls. She seemed to have maturity and experience. And yet there was a little girl quality to her at times, an exuberance and excitement. She could be intellectual, but she was not 'an intellectual' - rather, her persona seemed to be that of 'the artist', reflective, playful. She drank beer like a trooper and although she said she didn't usually smoke, she asked me for one of my Gitanes. There was a provocative, challenging side to her. But above all, I was struck by her strength and independence.

Eventually, she suggested that we go for a walk on Parliament Hill Fields, the huge rolling stretch of parkland adjacent to Hamstead Heath. As we walked, I tried to adjust to the reality of her pronounced limp. Whatever the problem was, it clearly didn't bother her in any way, or didn't appear to. Although ungainly, she was able to walk as fast as I could, and at no point did she refer to her leg. After a while, I relaxed. It didn't bother her, it didn't bother me.

We were hungry and Ellie suggested we go to an inexpensive Greek restaurant in Soho called 'Jimmy's'. At Jimmy's, over dry red wine and dolmades, Ellie told me many things about herself; she told me that she was an existentialist ... she believed you could become anything you wanted to ... her favourite film was '8½' by Fellini ... her parents lived in Sexsmith, Alberta in the Peace country ... they were Mennonites ... she had hated Queens but had loved studying film ... she'd had an affair with the film Prof.

And then, as we sipped espresso, we exchanged ideas about many things. She told me she liked Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Camus. In poetry, she liked Rilke and Roethke. Then I asked her if she *had to* choose between Truth and Happiness, which one would she choose? She looked me straight in the eye, and with great intent said: "Truth - always, always, always."

And then suddenly she said: "enough talk, let's go back to your place."

We paid the bill and headed straight for the tube. Twenty minutes later, we were at 43 Lonsdale Road. Jerry and Mary were both out. I could feel the tension between us, but I wasn't sure how quick to move.

"Let me show you around," I said.

When we reached the bedroom, I was suddenly aware of Ellie's hands on my hips. She turned me around, and without a word unbuckled my belt and unzipped my jeans. Then she fished out my cock and as I stood there, gave me the first blow job I'd ever had. There was no hesitation, no squeamishness. She seemed to know exactly what she was doing, and she seemed to love every minute of it, especially the final moments.

Ellie and I started to see a lot of each other after that. A week after meeting her for the first time, it was my 22<sup>nd</sup>. birthday. To celebrate I took her out to a French restaurant in Bayswater.

After, we returned to 43 Lonsdale to spend the night together. On arriving, we found Jerry and Liz, my stage assistant from Open Space days, together in the living room. After introductions and chatting for a while, Jerry took me aside in the kitchen.

"Are you and Ellie planning to spend the night?" he asked.

"That was the idea." I said.

"We've got a problem," Jerry continued, looking concerned. "Liz and I want to stay here too, and it's not going to work if all four of us share the bedroom."

"Oh, I don't know," I said, smiling.

"Right, 'Bob, Carol, Ted and Alice' ... no thank-you."

"O.K., Ellie and I can sleep here in the living-room," I replied.

"O.K., but I don't know how Mary's going to take all this. Since I started bringing Liz back, she's started acting funny."

I knew what he meant. Not only did Mary not have a man at that time, she was also clearly attracted to Jerry. They both played it down, but it was there. Now that Liz was on the scene, it was hard on Mary and she had seemed vulnerable. Still, it was my house as well as hers and Jerry's. I *did* have a right to bring Ellie back and spend the night with her.

But Jerry was right. I could tell by the look on Mary's face the following morning that the situation of Jerry and I bringing women back to the flat was creating tension.

\* \* \*

Although things were going well with Ellie, the situation at L.S.E. wasn't improving.

I read my paper on 'how schools block creativity' in Dr. Clifford-Vaughn's seminar and nearly didn't finish it. I had planned to lay the foundation for my argument by giving information on Guildford's 'structure of intellect', and the research of people like Torrance and Parnes - in other words, to 'define my terms' as one is meant to - to differentiate between, for example, I.Q. and Creativity Quotient. *Then*, I was going to look at the sociological implications of this information in terms of the educational system. In the middle of talking about Guildford, Clifford-Vaughn interrupted me and in a caustic voice said: "Mr. Brown. you are hardly dealing with Sociology here, this is Social Psychology!" I was stunned. I started to explain what I was trying to do when she interrupted again with a lecture about the importance of 'disciplinary boundaries'.

"We are specialists, Mr. Brown. Let us not forget that. We can show interest in others' fields, but let us not enter them. They have their domain, we as sociologists have ours."

After this incident, deep disillusionment set in. How could I adapt to this archaic and stifling system?

About this same time, a further disillusionment took place. I was in the student pub having my weekly pint. Behind me, there were three students talking.

“Are you going to the demo?” inquired one.

“Yeah, probably. What time is it?”

“It starts at 2 o’clock.”

“By the way, what’s it for?”

“I dunno,” said the original speaker. “But I’m going anyway.”

This incident made a deep impression on me. How could people show active support for things they didn’t believe in, hadn’t thought about, didn’t even know about? It seemed so mindless, and irresponsible. Was this typical of ‘student activism’?

At least I was beginning to make a little money. I had started teaching English on a private basis to a Mr. Yanagi. I had responded to an advertisement on the L.S.E. post-graduate notice board, and it turned out to be from a Japanese diplomat, Mr. Yanagi. Once a week, I would go to the Japanese Embassy and for an hour or so Mr. Yanagi would practice his conversational English with me. The first couple of times I went, we stood outside the room ushering each other in. I soon learned that Japanese custom was to be strictly respected! There was no way Mr. Yanagi was going to precede me. I may have been a young student, but I *was* his teacher.

I had also started teaching once a week at an elementary school in Kensal Rise. This was a ‘depressed’ area north of Notting Hill Gate. There was no colorful, bohemian atmosphere here, just an unrelenting, grim landscape of crumbling buildings, survivors of the Victorian age and the industrial revolution. Opposite a gasworks, which you could smell for miles away, was the grimy red brick building of Kensal Rise school. This was the ‘other’ London, one that increasingly I wanted to know.

I was an idealist, my head full of what could or should be. I knew this and I wanted to become more of a realist. I was rebelling more and more against a too perfect way of looking at things. I wanted to immerse myself in reality, however ugly that might be. I wanted to see life ‘from both sides’.

The first two times I went to Kensal Rise school, reality came as quite a shock. The special ed. 7 year olds that I was given were somehow different from the creative souls described in A.S. Neill’s Summerhill. Like many before, I entered my first classroom as a teacher full of ideas of ‘freedom’, individual learning styles, enhanced creative expression, student-centered classes, the virtues of being non-authoritarian and non-threatening and non-punitive, showing the students that I was their ‘friend’, etc. And like many before, I found that given my desire *not* to have a teacher-run autocracy, and my lack of skill as to *how to* create a democracy, what I in fact ‘created’ was an overly liberal, *laissez-faire* atmosphere -one that ultimately had far more to do with a *student*-run autocracy than its dreaded alternative.

Other realities had changed too, whether I liked it or not. Like my economic reality, for example. Before, I had been the scholarship boy, never really having to think about money too much, certainly not having to worry about it. Now, I was poor and finding out what it meant to be poor. I needed books for my courses, but I didn’t have the money to buy them. What to do? For quite a while I wrestled with my conscience. I kept thinking about Raskolnikov in Crime and Punishment. He was a student. He needed money. He did what he felt he had to do. He killed a miserly old woman for her money. Granted, he was stricken by guilt afterwards. Yes, he went too far. But that idea of *relative* morality, as opposed to absolute standards, kept running through my head.

Maybe it was wrong to kill for money, but what about stealing when it was for a good cause, and when there was no other way? I was being influenced by Ellie’s existentialist ideas - no essences or absolutes, each person exists alone in a purposeless universe defining his or her existence through the exercise of free will.

I didn’t really agree with the aloneness of the individual idea. And I didn’t agree with the idea of the universe being purposeless. But the emphasis on free will and not being afraid to use it to change your environment - that was interesting, that was radical.

In the end I made an existentialist choice. I decided to appropriate or ‘redistribute’ from the L.S.E. library or bookstore such essential texts that I might need. The only other time in my life that I had ever stolen anything, was in Toronto two years earlier. During a brief but intense period of poverty, I had stolen the odd newspaper so that I could find what jobs were available. On both occasions, my actions felt ‘wrong’ by an absolute standard, and ‘right’ by a standard of survival.

Buried under all the growing confusion of who I was, where I was going and what I believed in, I knew what I wanted. At least, in my heart I knew what I wanted. Like Jerry, or Ellie, or my musician friend Frank or my dancer friend Suzie in Canada, I wanted to be working in a creative medium, as part of a community of caring, sharing people. But where? And how? And when? And most important of all, was I paying attention to what was in my heart?



## 21.

It happened one evening after supper. Mary and I were in the flat alone. She was reading a newspaper. I had just finished a bowl of her delicious home-made soup and was about to go upstairs to do some studying, when suddenly she got up and screamed:

"I suppose you just left your bowl there! You take it for granted that I'd clean it up ... well, fuck you!"

And with this, she came at me and beat her fists on my shoulders and chest. I was in complete shock.

"Mary, what's happening? I'll do the bowl later."

"Oh, sure, sure! That's what you and Jerry always say. 'I'll do it later'...manāna, manāna! I make special soups for you, I cook, /do the cleaning up. I don't get any fucking gratitude!"

Mary's face which had been white with fury was now full of frustration and pain.

"Mary, I'm sorry, I'm out most of the time. I'm finding it really hard going at L.S.E. I really appreciate your cooking. I'm sorry if I haven't been pulling my weight in the house ... how about we go to the pub. Let me buy you a drink." I didn't know what to think. I liked Mary. She *was* a caring and generous person. But I didn't feel I deserved this explosion of anger.

In the pub, Mary blamed Jerry and I for various things, but slowly came around to what seemed to me like the real source of the problem.

"You know it's not that easy coming down to work in the morning and finding you and Ellie on the Chesterfield. Or hearing the two of you, or Jerry and Liz fucking at night. And as for Liz, I don't know what he sees in her. She seems cold and selfish to me. And she's so young, so immature."

And then Mary cried, and I was reminded of my mother again; her tremendous caring, her awful vulnerability, and her deep, deep pain that came out in heart-rending fits of crying. And I wanted to comfort and escape at one and the same time.

I went to sleep that night, feeling shaken and fearful for the future.

The next day, I told Jerry what had happened and he seemed very concerned.

"Christmas is coming up," he said. "We should buy her something really nice, so that she feels appreciated. I feel guilty about Mary."

I didn't feel guilty. I felt concerned and I cared, but I also felt unjustly attacked. However, I agreed with Jerry's suggestion.

\* \* \*

I was in the bath with Ellie. It was mid-afternoon. I knew Mary was at work and wouldn't be back for several hours so no problem there. Ellie had her head at one end of the bath, and mine was at the other. We had just finished fucking and I felt open and tender towards her. Slowly, I soaped her body, starting at her neck and moving downwards - her shoulders, her back, her breasts, her cunt. I soaped her right leg, and was about to do her withered left leg when she stopped me.

"Don't," she whispered.

It was the first time I had ever really seen Ellie looking vulnerable. Sometimes, first thing in the morning, or right after making love, there was a hint of it, but almost immediately she raised her guard. I joked with her about how she was putting on her suit of armor to go out and face the day. I joked but it hurt me in a way to see her withdraw so quickly into her 'selfhood'.

But now she was looking shy and uncomfortable, and vulnerable.

"Please don't," she repeated.

"I'd like to," I said, feeling that I wanted to show her that I accepted *all* of her, including the parts of her she wanted to hide.

"You don't mind?" she said, her quick brown eyes searching my face.

"Ellie ... I love you. I care for you."

She took my tousled head to her breast, and suddenly, I was crying - in tears for the first time since I was a young boy. The pressures that had been building from years of rigid emotional restraint swept aside any resistance. I felt so alone, out in the dark and far from home.

"I need you. It feels so good to hold you." I was still crying, the tears wouldn't stop. Crying out years of pain; the pain of our family with its anger and blame, guilt and shame; the pain of separation from my real home - the community of Sedbergh, and the consequent experience of feeling homeless; the pain of being betrayed and rejected by my first love, Lesley; and now, the painful experience of not knowing what I was doing with my life, feeling that I was on the verge of losing control.

And then I sensed that Ellie was getting uncomfortable with my crying. It was as if at first she welcomed this deep opening up, but then witnessing my pain became too much and she wanted it to stop. She wanted me to become 'a man' again.

As I got out of the bath, I looked around for my male armor, but it didn't seem to be there.

\* \* \*

I had a deadline. My supervisor, Professor Swingewood had told me that the outline for my 'mini-thesis' had to be handed in by the middle of January. I had decided that doing a thesis on 'rhythms' and 'cycles' was too way out for the Sociology Department at L.S.E. and that I would be better off doing something that connected McLuhan's ideas on media to the field of education. At least I could rationalize that McLuhan's ideas belonged to a legitimate category of Sociology - namely, 'Mass Communications'. It *was*, it seemed to me, within 'disciplinary boundaries'. However, the problem was that I desperately needed resource material. It was not easy to find books on 'Mass Communications' in the L.S.E. library. It was true that I had ripped off a couple of useful books from the bookstore but that was about the limit of what my conscience could handle.

In the end, I compiled a list of thirty-three books that I felt I *really* needed in order to prepare for my mini-thesis. I had I sent off a letter to Foyle's bookstore on Charing Cross Road with the titles of these books. I had no idea how I would pay for even some of them, but at least I could check their availability. Included in the list were the following:

- ❖ Education through Art, Herbert Reid
- ❖ De Bono's book on linear and lateral thinking
- ❖ The Act of Creation, Arthur Koestler
- ❖ Against Intepretation, Susan Sontag
- ❖ The Creative Process, Bernard Ghiselin
- ❖ Permanance and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose, by Kenneth Burke
- ❖ The Silent Language, E.T. Hall
- ❖ Studies in Human Time, G. Poulet
- ❖ Symbolism: its Meaning and Effect, by A.N. Whitehead
- ❖ Aspects of Form: A symposium on form in Nature and Art, L.C. Whyte (ed.)
- ❖ Towards a Psychology of Being, A. Maslow
- ❖ ABC of Relativity, B. Russell
- ❖ Creative Evolution, Henri Bergson
- ❖ 2000, H. Kahn
- ❖ Character and Social Structure, C.W. Mills

The Phenomenological Movement, (2 volumes) ed. H. Spiegelberg.  
etc. etc.

And the stream of consciousness was beginning to burst its banks. Anything to free myself from imposed boundaries. Climbing the tree of knowledge. Getting lost in its branches. High off the ground, getting lost. Can't see my way, getting lost. Selling my soul for knowledge. No nourishment from my roots. No roots. Cut off. Drifting into the mists, the clouds, high above the ground. Wanting to get down, not knowing how. Little lost boy.

\* \* \*

Enveloped in clouds of marihuana smoke. A fat joint being passed down the line. Hoots of laughter. Jerry and I were at the Electric Cinema in Ladbroke Grove. Jerry had insisted that I take a break from my studies, and Mary a break from her work, and that the three of us go to see that classic, 'Planet of the Apes'.

'Easy Rider' was one thing, 'Planet of the Apes' another. It belonged in the category of what Jerry affectionately called "good 'B' movies". The theory was that these kind of movies were so bad that they were good, especially when accompanied by the wonderful weed.

The Electric Cinema was the cultural Shangri-La for London's freaks. Everything was set up to be an inversion of conventional attitudes and values; the choice of movies, the fact that they were never on time, the open sharing of drugs, the minimal admission charge, and as a perfect irony, the fact that the owner and master of ceremonies had short, cropped hair - an inversion of the inversion.

This was not my world. I felt distanced and alien to it. But then L.S.E. didn't feel like my world either. I felt my inner and outer sense of belongingness shrinking - my sense of who I was receding to a vanishing point.

Jerry rocked with laughter. The figures on the screen seemed absurd to me, their speech distant and almost meaningless. The hippies on all sides of me were a dense, formless block of alien matter. The smell of the grass was extraordinarily pungent. Jerry's laughter was ringing in my ears. I felt engulfed. I had to get out. I had to escape.

Back in my room, I stared blankly at McLuhan's Understanding Media, and pondered whether or not the Electric Cinema was a 'hot' or a 'cool' medium /environment, or whether, in fact, there was some deeper meaning to 'Planet of the Apes'.

\* \* \*

*"And I was green and carefree, famous among the barns  
About the happy yard and singing as the farm was home,  
In the sun that is young once only,  
Time let me play and be  
Golden in the mercy of his means,  
And green and golden I was huntsman and herdsman,  
The calves sang to my horn,  
The foxes on the hills barked clear and cold,  
And the sabbath rang slowly  
In the pebbles of the holy streams."*

Ellie and I sat beside a road. In the distance, incongruous and astonishing, were the massive rocks of Stonehenge. While we waited for a ride, Ellie read to me from one of her favorite poets, Dylan Thomas. The poem was, 'The Force That Through the Green Fuse Drives the Flower'. It seemed an appropriate choice. We were both feeling young and in high spirits. It was the Christmas holidays, and finally, thankfully, the L.S.E. semester had ended.



Ellie had suggested that we spend Christmas with two Canadian friends of hers, Don and Olivia. Some relative of Olivia had a house in Porthcawl, Wales, which they had offered to her for the Christmas vacation. We had planned our route to go via Stonehenge as Ellie had been so keen to see it.

We were heading for the Welsh coast, and for that reason too, Dylan Thomas was appropriate.

“Tell me about Don and Olivia,” I said.

“Don’s at Oxford, in his third year of a doctorate program.”

“What’s he studying?”

“He’s doing a thesis on some aspect of psycho-linguistics. He’s into Wittgenstein and Chomsky.”

Ellie had talked about Wittgenstein before, but always in a rather cryptic way, as if you could only understand philosophical ideas if you were a ‘trained’ philosopher.

“What about Olivia?” I asked.

“Oh, she’s intelligent, sensitive - like him.....like you, like me.” Ellie threw me one of her enigmatic smiles, her eyes twinkling in the morning afternoon sunlight. “I think we’ll have a good time, as long as you can get your head out of thinking about L.S.E.”

I learned something about Ellie and I in Porthcawl. It happened on Christmas day, the day after we arrived. We were staying at a bed and breakfast, close to the beach and not far from Don and Olivia’s house, which was situated on a country lane the other side of town.

We had gone over to their house in the afternoon and spent a couple of hours chatting and getting acquainted. Olivia had put a pork roast in the oven. Don and I were concluding a long commiseration about life at University, when Ellie suggested that she and I go for a walk before our Christmas meal.

I agreed, and we set off down the lane through a thick fog.

“What do think of Olivia?” Ellie asked suddenly.

“I like her...Don too.” It was true. I had liked them both. Olivia seemed a bit wild, a free spirit, visceral rather than cerebral. She evoked a resonance in me - a sense that this is who and what I really was, spontaneous and visceral as opposed to detached and cerebral.

The narrow road with its high hedgerows dipped down past massive oak trees looming through the mist. Ellie seemed deep in thought. I felt uneasy.

“I liked Don. It’s really nice to meet a man I can talk with - I mean about everything, not just ideas, but also the differences between Canada and Britain, and what he wants to do with his life...”

“Yes, I thought you’d get along.” Ellie’s voice seemed distant.

Suddenly, the roar of an invisible fighter jet, pierced the eerie calm, and then, in an instant it was gone, leaving the shroud of silence to descend once again into the enveloping fog.

The road was level again and to our left was a large field. The fog was so thick that it was hard to make anything out but there was something there. I strained my eyes to see. There was a large shape, completely motionless. I held Ellie’s arm and pointed towards the shape. Together, we peered into the distance.

And then, either our eyes adjusted or the fog lifted because slowly the underlying form of a white horse emerged, as if from the white cloud of smoke produced by a magician’s wand.

Ellie gave a little gasp and whispered, “damn, I wish I’d brought my camera, I’d love to capture that.”

We continued to watch, and for what seemed like an age, the horse stood there motionless, like a statue of white marble. And then it happened. Suddenly, for no apparent reason, the horse came to life, snorted, whinnied, and galloped off into the mist, only to emerge again in contours of flowing rhythm. I felt elated, like my spirit had become infused with that of the horse. I was free, unbound, soaring.

Ellie said, “let’s go.”

We walked back in silence. Part of me was still flying with the horse. Another part of me was empty and anguished, as if there was a terrible pit inside me. And I was searching to understand what had just occurred. Then it came to me. I was reflecting on how much Ellie liked ‘still life’ pictures when the French translation ‘nature morte’ came to mind. She had liked the horse much more when it had been like a marble statue. There *was* something

about Ellie that wanted to capture life and render it still. 'Nature mort' - literally, 'dead nature'. She followed her existentialist ethos and 'chose' to be free and spontaneous, but deep down she was afraid. She would be free and spontaneous so long as she wasn't vulnerable to its consequences, so long as she was in control.



## 22.

Like Ellie, Don had specialized in Philosophy. They both spoke the same language, the current focus of which was the Logico-Tractatus by Wittgenstein. Unlike Ellie, Don was able to see the relevance of Sociology and the connections between the two fields.

Like me, Don was having an identity crisis. In a letter he sent me, following our Christmas together in Wales, he said: "I may leave Oxford and teach, or write, or play bar-philosopher working in some country pub. These are all possibilities. So I ask what do I want to do? That means, what do I want to *be*? ...to turn myself into? And that question is rather easily answered, *unless* I also want that to be some kind of continuation or maturation of whatever I have now already become. I used to want to be 'the philosopher', now I just want to be myself. But this is the hardest thing is to be - much easier to hide behind 'identities'."

I also wanted to be myself, and more and more, that did *not* feel like being a sociologist at L.S.E. However, to my surprise and consternation, Don arrived at a different conclusion for me than he had for himself.

"Your trials at L.S.E. sound like 'avoidance'. Although I can't see what you, with your superbly imaginative intelligence, could get from a guy who has zipped himself into the tin soup-can of competence, and whose imaginative output could be transcribed onto the head of a pin with a chisel," ..(he was responding to my comments about Swingewood)... "there *is*, however, a challenge at L.S.E., and that is within yourself. That challenge will never go away as long as you live, because you put it there and you have to face it. It means so much to you at the moment that it's eating your heart out, right? Even if you drop out, it'll never go away; instead, it'll just be a slow *pirhāna* of your soul! Mostly what your crapping on the L.S.E. means is, 'hey baby, it's got nothing to do with *me!*' ... rather crude advance rationalizations for inability to face the prospect of personal failure."

\* \* \*

Ellie and I had agreed to meet at Jimmy's for lunch. She had recently started at the Slade School of Fine Art which was close to Soho. As a result, Jimmy's was a convenient meeting place for both of us. I had just left a 'Communication and Attitude Change' class at which I had understood virtually nothing.

We ordered something to eat and I lit a Gitane.

"I got a letter from Don," I said, feeling an ambivalence towards Ellie. He thinks I should tough it out at L.S.E."

"Well, Don's pretty perceptive." I felt a stab of vulnerability when she said that. I knew she admired Don's intelligence. She understood it, she valued it. In my case, I wasn't so sure. A week earlier, after having sex, I started to tell Ellie about some of the ideas I was trying to work into a mini-thesis proposal. She was more interested in resuming sex. When I pointed out that I felt a real need to discuss what I was doing with her, she said, "I'm not interested in Sociology, and some of your ideas are just too way out for me, besides ... I can do without your mind, but I can't do without your body." I was the dumb kid who'd made good, or at least was trying to make good. Right now I was struggling like hell. Don had given me affirmation with his comment about my 'superbly imaginative intelligence', why couldn't Ellie? She had her vulnerabilities, how people saw or felt about her leg, for example. I was very secure about my body, but not so about my mind.

"I want to see Ken Russell's movie 'Women in Love', " I said, changing the subject. "Would you like to come?"

"O.K, that movie's on our list of required viewing."

Things had changed between Ellie and I, since Christmas at Porthcawl. There was an undercurrent of adversity that had not been there before. I first sensed it after our Christmas dinner. Olivia was playing out the free, unattached woman, laughing and dancing like Isadora Duncan in her dance of liberation. It was as if she was

saying, 'I am with Don, but I am not his partner. I am my own person. I do not belong to anyone or anything. I am free and open to whatever the moment might bring.' Olivia wanted to be like Isadora Duncan. To be thought of as 'a partner' only highlighted a lack of ultimate freedom. As she danced, she flirted with both Don and I. I could see that Ellie was jealous. She wanted to be like Olivia but she was also threatened by her. Olivia's name had not been mentioned since that time.

I was deeply affected by the movie 'Women in Love'. The various scenes from the movie resonated inside me like overlapping waves.

We walked up the steps from Notting Hill Tube station in silence.

"Ken Russell is so self-indulgent," said Ellie, as we reached the street level.

"What do you mean?" I replied, feeling her comment slashing through my reverend contemplation, like a knife through thin fabric.

"His style is over-explicit, too lush, emotionally overwrought."

Only a week ago, Ellie had called me 'ingenuous'. I hadn't understood the word. 'Frank', 'artless', 'without guile' said the dictionary. Yes, that was it; Ellie wanted form over content, subtle disclosure (or was it concealment) over simple, straightforward openness.

"I think he was faithful to the novel. That's how Lawrence wrote it." In truth, I hadn't read the book, but I *had* skimmed it along with various other novels, in a desperate attempt to catch up with my classmates in the 'Sociology of Literature' class.

"I thought the film was incredible," I said, challenging Ellie, "rich in ideas and really getting down to the reality, the basic conflicts between men and women."

Ellie stopped in her tracks. "Why don't we continue this discussion in the pub?" She said, gesturing to the 'Sun and Splendor' across the road.

"O.K., if you want." It occurred to me that this might be a precursor to Ellie saying she didn't want to spend the night together.

"So what are these realities of men-women relationships that you're talking about?" Ellie gave a little smile and ran a finger around the rim of her glass of beer.

"The different experiences, different attitudes, different perceptions. The eternal power struggles. The nurturing yet stifling aspects of a relationship or marriage. The game-playing, the disloyalties."

"For example?"

"Well, with Gudrun and Gerald, it's literally a struggle to the death. Early in the film, he says 'you struck the first blow', and she replies, 'yes, and I shall strike the last.' And she does."

"How?"

"By having an affair with the German artist, the sculptor."

"Why shouldn't she? He was incapable of loving her. He admitted to that himself."

I lit another cigarette. My stomach was churning. Ellie was being hypocritical. Her ideas were one thing, her emotional self another. When we'd been at Porthcawl, she'd felt jealous of Olivia. She'd sensed that there was a kind of kindred spirit attraction between Olivia and I. That was something beyond her control. Ellie was like Hermione in the movie, trying to reduce spontaneity and vital energy to 'art' and the medium of words, trying to capture its essence, like the white horse.

"Why shouldn't she?" I replied. "Because it was calculated to hurt him. She did it blatantly, cruelly - in front of him, knowing that she would destroy him."

"He was just a weak man. He didn't have to walk off into the icy wastes." Ellie's gaze was cool and measured. She didn't destroy him. He *chose* to destroy himself. She was a powerful woman, and he couldn't stand it."

"He was a powerful man and *she* couldn't stand it," I countered, not altogether sure that this was true. "She resented his power. She had to find a way to ferret out his vulnerabilities. She manipulated him."

"She didn't manipulate him. She took pity on him. Don't you remember? She says that in the movie. And

then she says, “try to love me a little more and want me a little less.”

I stubbed out my cigarette and took a drink of beer. I felt as if I was defending Gerald. Why? Why did his character resonate so strongly within me? Was it his intensity, his brooding power? Or was it his lack of finesse, his crazy mother, his terrible need for unconditional acceptance? Was that it?

Like Gerald, I despised the German sculptor. I also saw him as ‘a rat’. Their game-playing was not bound by a code. They had fun, yes, but at Gerald’s expense. Their games were intended to hurt him. I hated that kind of game-playing. I hated it more than anything in the world. My father had done it incessantly, with my mother and my brother in particular. I had open wounds because of witnessing and experiencing this kind of emotional abuse.

Ellie was putting on her coat.

“I’m taking the tube back to my place,” she said coolly. “By the way, I’m not pregnant. I thought you should know.”

“What do you mean?” I replied in shocked tones.

“You know I want to have a baby. I’ve told you.”

“Yes.”

“Well, I stopped taking the pill for a while.”

“You never told me about that.”

“You didn’t need to know. It’s my choice. I want to take complete responsibility for the baby. You should be flattered that I want you to father the baby.”

“You don’t want me to ‘father’ the baby,” I said, feeling a burning anger welling out. “That’s just the point. You want me to sire your baby. *You* want control.” I lit another cigarette and inhaled deeply. “I’m not a fucking stud, you know. I don’t want a baby unless I’m part of the decision to have one, a part of the raising of the child. You had no right to do that.”

“I have a right to do what I want with my body,” retorted Ellie. And with that she stood up and turned abruptly. And then she was gone. For a moment I saw her limping determinedly down the street, the collar of her black leather jacket turned up and her purple cord skirt flapping around her boots.

The pit in my stomach had become deeper, and the ship of my soul was cut still further adrift from any familiar moorings.

\* \* \*

Adrift. Adrift in a sea of ideas. Adrift in an ocean of turbulent feelings. Adrift in a gaping hole of vulnerability. A black hole, somewhere out in space. Familiar landmarks disappearing. The inner map of knowing becoming blurred and confusing. Needing something to hold on to, something to secure me from being swept away.

As control of my life in London slipped further away, I began to look for ways to escape my situation.

At the beginning of February, I went to see Ann Bohm, the registrar of L.S.E’s graduate school. At our meeting I requested that I be switched from the M.Sc. program into the M.Phil. program (a dissertation only program), my rationale being that in this way I could focus on my evolving ideas and interests, and not be split between four courses and a ‘mini-thesis’. Ann Bohm’s response was tough and unequivocal. ‘Of course I couldn’t be transferred to the M. Phil. program (emphatic wave at my file), I didn’t even have an Honors degree...and what was more, the Sociology M.Sc. program was more flexible than any of the other Master’s programs.’ Realizing that I was not getting anywhere with this topic, I pointed out that I felt that my thesis supervisor, Mr. Swingewood, and I had very little in common.

Two weeks earlier, I had met with Swingewood to present the proposal for my mini-thesis. I told him that I would like to apply some of McLuhan’s ideas. As my topic, I suggested the following: ‘a study of the efficiency and efficacy of information-transferral with respect to media in education’. Without exactly crushing my idea, Swingewood said that he had not yet read McLuhan, and didn’t really understand the basic method or goal of my proposal.

As for the latter request, Ann Bohm said that she would give the matter some consideration.

Another way of escaping was to look at ways of getting back to Canada. Part of me felt that I should never have returned to Britain in the first place and that the sooner I got back to Canada the better.

My eyes turned to Montreal. I'd had a happy time in Montreal in the summer of '67 during Expo. Joy and Jim were in Montreal. Even though their relationship appeared to be breaking up, at least they were both there and I felt close to both of them. They were my family and Canada was my country. I needed to get back there. It was the best approximation of where I belonged.

I hit on the idea of applying to C.B.C. I wrote them a letter inquiring about the possibilities of employment in the area of film production, only to receive a reply stating that the trend was towards contracting out and that there were very few vacancies with the company.

As the rhythm of the feeling of being swept away heightened and increased in tempo, the awful realization hit home that for now anyway, I was stuck, marooned on awful old blighty.

I looked for ways to anchor myself. One sure way was to get a piano. A piano! My spirits rose at the sound of the word. Each piano I'd ever played had given rise to nothing but positive experiences. A piano was a playmate to joyfully explore new places with, a friend to pour out my troubles to, a lover with whom to share my lust. A piano - the wisest of all counselors, one who could understand the deepest rage, one who knew how to light the way out of the cul-de-sacs of craziness. The piano, a godhead from which to merge with the holy spirit.

So one day I went to a used piano store in Putney and bought a nice old upright for £20. A few days later, on a sunny Saturday morning, the piano movers arrived at Lonsdale Road. The only way to get it in, they decided, was to hoist it up the outside of the building and through the window into the bedroom that I shared with Jerry. This was achieved by positioning two long 4" by 4"s vertically, one on the inside wall and the other on the outside, and attaching them by means of two long bolts. Then a pulley was attached to the outside block, around which went the lifting cable. As Jerry and one of the men kept an eye on things from the bedroom window, the other two men and I started to hoist the piano. Things went fine until the piano was suspended 30 or 40 feet off the ground, just under the window.

Suddenly, there was a loud cracking sound followed by a shout. I jerked my head up just in time to see the block on the right side slamming down in a leftwards arc, nearly decapitating both Jerry and the piano mover. "Cor blimey," said the head piano mover beside me, "the lower bolt came out ... start lowering for gawd's sake!" Slowly, ever so slowly, we lowered the piano, hoping and praying that the one remaining bolt would be able to hold the strain. Finally we got it down, and as we all got out our cigarettes, the chief started telling us how in all his years of piano-moving, he'd never seen anything like it, and how if the piano had fallen, it would have been like a bomb exploding, with fragments of wood and metal flying around like bullets. It was like a physics equation: "each one of those strings has got x pounds per inch tension, and there are x number of strings, and if those strings which are attached by pins to a cast iron sounding plate which in turn is held secure with a wooden frame, if the whole lot was to fall x feet at 32 feet per second ... cor blimey mate, we'd all be dead."

Maybe there was an allegory there somewhere - that the piano was not just heart and soul, but also a highly strung material entity that needed to be firmly on the ground, not adrift in the air. Or maybe the moral of the story had to do with the need for support when you have one bolt loose. If there was an allegory, I didn't get it at the time. I was just very grateful when half an hour later, we did finally manage to get the piano into the bedroom.

In any event, my attempt to anchor myself at Lonsdale Road was short-lived. A few weeks later, Ellie told me that she had been to see a flat in the Parliament Hill Fields area of London. She said she really liked it and that we should think about moving in there together. We would have our own room, she explained, and share the kitchen, bathroom and living room with the other occupant of the flat, a guy called Roy.

I didn't know what to think. On the one hand a decision had to be made about Lonsdale Road. Even though I'd just had the piano moved in, Jerry, Mary and I had not yet decided to renew the 6 month lease which expired at the end of February. Things had not improved since Mary's blow-up before Christmas. She seemed more and more on edge. Jerry and I rarely saw each other. All in all, there was not a good feeling about renewing the lease. Maybe the idea of moving in with Ellie made sense. It would be lovely to share a room, or more specifically, a bed every night. I appreciated her asking me. I felt wanted, needed, nurtured.

However, I didn't feel like uprooting to another part of London. I had grown to like Notting Hill Gate, and even though I didn't see much of Jerry, I relied on his friendship. Above all, I wasn't sure what I was getting into, in a set up that involved sharing a flat with another man. Who was this guy Roy anyway? I told Ellie that I wanted to see the flat and to meet Roy before I made a decision.

A few days later, Ellie and I took the tube to Kentish Town. On the way, Ellie told me a little about Roy. She said that he had come to Britain from South Africa to meet R.D. Laing and David Cooper. He was, apparently, schizophrenic, and had joined Laing and Cooper's experimental treatment program. In the process, he had become part of a circle of their friends and associates, a circle that didn't make distinctions between 'therapist' and 'client'.

After emerging from the underground, we walked the short way to St. Alban's Road. There, in a top floor flat, of a house named Heath Lodge, I met Roy. He was dressed in a sheepskin jacket, was unshaven, and looked ill. When I asked him about Laing (one of the 'in' writers at the time, along with Castaneda, Eldridge Cleaver, Allan Watts, Herbert Marcuse, and others), he told me how his life had changed the day that he read an article about Laing in a South African magazine. He had taken the next plane over, and had immediately set off to find Laing on arrival in London.

He showed us around the flat which consisted of a living room and kitchen downstairs, and a bathroom and two bedrooms upstairs. The living room astonished me. Everywhere I looked were bookcases with volume upon volume of philosophy, psychology, literature and art. I soon learned that Roy was into Chomsky, Wittgenstein, phenomenology, Satre, Rilke, Roethke, and tantric art ("the only thing I can handle right now is looking at Yantras and mandalas"). Although a sizable rack of records was visible, Roy informed me that he had just given away most of his record collection, and was thinking about doing the same thing with his book collection.

He seemed to have money, but it was clear that he was neither a student nor did he have a job. As we talked, I became more aware of his ever present smile and his soft voice. His Afrikaner dialect alone threw me into confusion. This was the voice of white apartheid, the voice of the most hated form of exploitation in the world. But that in turn became part of Roy's explanation of his schizophrenia. He too, in his own way, was a victim of apartheid. He didn't agree with the system in which he had been brought up. He couldn't live with it. He couldn't fight it. He couldn't stand being seen as the same as all the other whites. It drove him crazy. He'd had to escape.

I didn't trust him. I found him polite but evasive, intelligent but 'unreadable'. What was his code? Did he have one? As we left, he said that he hoped that we would decide to move in.

We walked back towards the tube station. I could feel Ellie's enthusiasm and my own confusion. The flat was nice. The rent was reasonable. No doubt about that. Our room was spacious. Ellie was acting like we were newly-weds - in some ways anyway. But, there was something wrong. It wasn't just that I didn't trust Roy. I didn't trust Ellie either.

I felt like Gerald with Gudrun.

In the end, I 'chose' to move in with Ellie. Or should I say, 'I' chose. Perhaps the contradictions of meaning lie more with who or what 'I' is meant to be, or willing to do at a particular moment in time, than in the notion of choice itself. In fact, it was the part of me that needed Ellie's warmth and support that made the choice. She had offered to share a room, share a bed. Yes, the rest of me had uncertainties, but it was worth a try. Mary, Jerry, and I had decided not to renew the lease at Lonsdale Road. Jerry was going to move in with Liz.

Mary was going through a terrible time and had decided to live alone. I didn't want to be alone. Somewhere within me I was terrified of being still further cut off from my surroundings. Everything considered, moving into the St. Alban's Road flat was worth a try.

From the beginning, it was clear that interaction with Roy was going to be unavoidable. He didn't have a job. Most of the time he was 'around'. I tried to be friendly with him, but I felt extremely uncomfortable. I needed to feel some boundary, some indication that Ellie and I were a couple-unit, and he was a single-unit. When we were in our room, the boundary was of course there. When we first moved in, it was even there in a verbally acknowledged way. One of the first things that Roy said was, "I'm happy to have the two of you living here, it's like a family, you as mother and father, and me as the child." A strange comment perhaps, but at least one that affirmed Ellie and I as a couple.



It was early March and there were the first stirrings of Spring - sun, showers, and the tips of crocuses and daffodils emerging from the ground. For me, Spring always brought an unstable energy, like the nights before a full moon. You could feel it in the air, the unpredictability of energy seeking new forms, different patterns. Like the rhythms of a Van Gogh painting, this energy swirled around me, outside the house, inside the house, and within me.

Ellie's birthday came on the 6<sup>th</sup>. March, a Friday. In the morning we both stayed in. I was supposed to have a class at L.S.E. but for a couple of weeks I had hardly been near the place. Outside the spring showers washed away the grime of winter. The rhythms of nature, charged and purposeful, swirled around the window, seeped through the cracks, then crackled through our bedroom like electric currents.

Roy was out. He'd been away since the previous morning. I felt as if the flat was *our* cozy nest, just ours. We made love, then had a long, lazy breakfast with fresh croissants and coffee. I felt closer to Ellie than I had for quite some time. So what if Ellie and Roy could talk about Wittgenstein? So what if they shared an interest in Rilke and Roethke? That was O.K. I could handle that. Ellie and I were lovers. That was a fact. Besides, I was a Scorpio and she was a Pisces, like Burton and Tayler. We were both water signs. We had that in common. We were meant to be compatible.

I gave Ellie a present, a cute little troll doll with long hair - something to hang above the bed, perhaps.

We were listening to Vivaldi on the stereo when Roy entered. He was wearing his black leather jacket. Under one arm he held his motor-cycle helmet, and in the other he carried a bunch of yellow flowers. They were wrapped.

"Happy birthday.... these are for you.... mimosa, your favorite." Roy smiled, and looking awkward, handed the flowers to Ellie.

"Thank-you. They're lovely. How did you know ...?"

"I just knew ...", Roy trailed off and looked at me for an instant before disappearing into the kitchen.

*How* did he know? I was left pondering that question. Had she told him and wasn't letting on, or did he have amazing powers of intuition? In any event, it was like they were sharing some intimate secret. Then again, maybe Ellie hadn't meant 'how did you know that mimosa was my favourite flower?'; maybe what she'd meant was 'how did you know that it was my birthday?'

I didn't know. There was so much that I didn't know. But I did know one thing. Whatever 'boundary' that might have existed, didn't seem to be there anymore.

## 23.

On the 10<sup>th</sup>. March, I went to see Anne Bohm for a second meeting. I had not been to any classes or seminars for several weeks. The period of frantic stuffing in of intellectual material had been followed by a period of benumbed inertia. The only way that I could see of regaining any kind of control was to say 'no' loudly and clearly. I couldn't handle L.S.E. any more. The pretense had to stop.

I told her that I had decided to leave L.S.E. and asked for my £30 (registration fees) back. To my astonishment, she was absolutely charming. She told me that she had talked with Dr. Martin, the head of the graduate Sociology department, and that on the basis of their discussion, she was now prepared to let me into the M. Phil. program. Before I had time to respond, she told me to 'go away and think about it.'

My resolve to quit vanished. The hopes of turning failure into success sprung up again. An M. Phil! Bigger, better than an M.Sc. - half way to a Ph.D. Wow! Wouldn't that be something! Maybe now I had the freedom and the support to pursue my own ideas for research.

Throughout the worsening situation at L.S.E., I had kept up my weekly teaching jobs. Every week I went to the Japanese Embassy to teach English to Mr. Yanagi for one hour. Amidst the chaos of the rest of my life, I found sanctuary in the austere silence and polished oak floors of the Embassy. I could have been in a Zen Monastery.

Every week I would wait in an anteroom until Mr. Yanagi, impeccably dressed and groomed as always, would appear and lead me down a hallway to our appointed room where ensued the ushering ritual. Apart from the formality and ritual, which were both familiar and comforting to me, there was a simplicity and purpose to my relationship with Mr. Yanagi. He wanted to improve his English, and almost anything I did with him helped in one way or another. It was a stress free job. I didn't have to worry about curriculum or materials or methodologies. Mr. Yanagi seemed to be completely appreciative of whatever suggestion I had to make.

One day Mr. Yanagi asked me out for dinner. We went to a very expensive Japanese restaurant. He showed me how to use chopsticks and the right way to drink sake. I remember thinking, 'if only he knew what my life was really like!' There he was, the wealthy, elegant diplomat - middle-aged and with a family; and there was me, confused, lost, without money, and yet despite all that, his *sensei*, his teacher - worthy of respect. With Mr. Yanagi, there was a delicate interplay between student - teacher roles, and an older man (mentor/'father') - younger man relationship. In fact, in addition to respect and appreciation, Mr. Yanagi seemed to like me.

As we left the restaurant, the warm rice wine still suffusing through my veins, Mr. Yanagi turned and said: "You know, we Japanese have reputation for hard work. Is true. But must have pleasure some time. Good food, good company relax. Like sap. Branch have no sap, become dead and snap. We have good time. Thank you for coming."

And for a moment my soul stood still, wondering, comforted.

In contrast, my other teaching job, at Middle Row Junior school, was anything but stress free. Here the teacher was *not* automatically revered. Here was the inner city world of the 'blackboard jungle'.

I had been working with four special ed. children. There were two West Indian seven year olds, George and Lazarus, and two white boys with Irish sounding last names. Not only did all of them have serious reading problems, they were all, I was informed, 'intractable behavior problems'.

Since the beginning the group had given me a hard time. I had been trying to apply a 'Summerhill' approach (lots of empathy, understanding, trust, choice - a minimum of rules and imposed discipline, emphasis on the student taking responsibility for his/her learning, etc.).

Gradually all four boys began to take advantage of this 'soft' attitude. First, there was a subtle probing of my defenses, a checking out of my responses to minor challenges to routine and authority. When it became clear that I wasn't going to punish such infractions as loud burping, inappropriate talking or gestures of

boredom/non-compliance, there was a shift into more serious infractions.

The more I tried to focus on *really* meeting their needs, e.g. to improve their reading skills, the more their focus narrowed to the serious business of testing my limits. I felt like a martyr to my cause, a victim of their 'unfair' behavior. What I didn't realize was that I was also a slave to my ideals.

Over the weeks and months, feelings of frustration and resentment had grown stronger and stronger. In a different context, it was the same as L.S.E. In both situations, I felt I had so much to offer, and yet I was being frustrated in my attempts by factors that seemed beyond my control. Dammit, I was doing my best for them. I was trying to see the potential in each of those kids, and overlook the rough edges. I understood they were from poor immigrant families with all kinds of economic and social problems. I understood that they had cause to have anger and distrust. But why didn't they make it easier for me? I had enough problems of my own. I didn't need any more. It made me angry.

During February, I could feel the tension building. Increasingly, I felt nervous about going to teach. I tried to share my concerns with one or two of the other teachers, but they always seemed too busy to really have time to listen. Besides, I really felt that I should be able to cope with the situation myself.

One day, at the beginning of March, shortly after moving into the St. Alban's Road flat with Ellie, things came to a head. I was working with Lazarus, trying to get him to write some letters from the alphabet. George, who liked to tease Lazarus, started saying things like, "that's no good", "that's not how you do it". I told him several times to sit down and get on with his own work. George complied belligerently only to get up again to repeat his taunts. After this happened several times, I could feel that my patience was shot.

"Sit down, George, *right now!*" I shouted. I could see Lazarus flinch out of the corner of my eye.

"Why should I?" said George, jutting out his jaw defiantly.

For an instant I froze, flooded with memories of my father. 'Do as you're told', 'don't answer back', '*never* answer back!' Then suddenly I exploded. Leaping out of my chair, I grabbed George and hoisted him to his feet.

"Don't you talk to me like that!" I said, beside myself with rage.

George was crying but still defiant. "You ripped my shirt. I'm telling my Dad on you."

I looked, and sure enough, his shirt was torn at the shoulder seam.

Suddenly, all the adrenaline drained from my body. I felt utterly spent, ashamed and yet still angry.

The next day, I met George's parents in the office of Mr. Pittman, the principal. Naturally they were upset and wanted an explanation. I told them that I had tried my hardest to help George but that I didn't know how to deal with his sabotaging behavior. When I said this, they seemed to soften a little. They admitted that he could be difficult but added that it was part of my job to know how to handle problems like that. I agreed. Then I apologized and offered to pay for repairs to the shirt. George's mother said it was nothing, and that she'd already fixed it. And then they were gone.

Mr Pittman, a man whose face was like a battlefield of inner scars, seemed to understand, and simply advised me 'to lay down the law at all times'.

Outside, I took a deep breath and my lungs filled with the polluted air from the gasworks. It was like a World War I landscape, dirt and decay, jagged lines and shattered shapes, a few lost and forlorn survivors here and there.

I took the British Rail train eastwards from Kensal Rise, across the urban blight, towards the greener expanses of Hampstead and Parliament Hill Fields. It was a short cut I had discovered that saved a lot of time from a much less direct route by tube. Still shaken by what had happened with George and the subsequent meeting with his parents, I got off at Gospel Oak station.

I walked back up Highgate Road to St. Alban's Road in a daze. I had so much anger that had been held in by my ideals of fairness. I took shit from others and didn't feel justified in rejecting it because I had been indoctrinated to be more considerate of others' feelings than of my own. I held in the anger, held it in until one day something catalyzed the underlying lava of resentment, and suddenly the tight lid of control was blown off and I exploded in rage.

Ellie was alone in the house.

"Where's Roy?" I asked, immediately aware of his absence?

"He's gone away for three days," mumbled Ellie, lying stomach down on the carpet reading a book.

"Why?"

"How should I know?" She took a grape from a plate beside her and popped one into her mouth.

"Something about having terrible nightmares and the need to exorcise his private demons."

Ellie turned her face up to look at me. Her brow furrowed.

"Are you O.K.?" she said, sounding concerned. "You don't look too good."

"I had a bad day at Middle Row yesterday. I'm not quite over it." Ellie had been out until late the previous evening and I had not had the chance to tell her what had happened with George. Somehow now was not the right time either. I felt too vulnerable. "I think I'm going to take a bath."

Later, after supper, we talked. I told her what had happened. I told her how I was on the edge of quitting L.S.E., and how I couldn't stand much more pressure. I said that I felt there was something going on between her and Roy and that I wished she would acknowledge it if that were the case. Ellie flatly denied that anything was going on.

"You're my man. I'm not interested in anyone else."

I knew she wasn't telling me the truth. I knew what I'd seen and heard and felt. Why couldn't she tell me the truth?

What I really needed in my relationship with Ellie was consistency and predictability, to offset the awful pressures I felt with respect to the situation at L.S.E. But failing this, I needed honesty. I needed the facts, even if they hurt. I did not want or need intrigue and deceit. I couldn't bear it. Memories of Lesley flooded me. Lesley had been my girlfriend in Kingston. While I had been in Africa for two months, in the summer of '68, she had carried on an affair with a trusted friend of mine. I kept expecting to get a letter from her but none ever came. When I met her back in Kingston, she informed me that our relationship was over. It was only two months later that she told me about her affair. I was devastated.

"Why don't you tell me the truth?!" Suddenly the pain pushed through, like long shards of ice being thrust into the warm, pulsing blood of my heart. The ice instantly melted and I began crying hysterically, the rhythm of my heart and lungs pushing out the pain, pushing it out and away.

"I can't stand the pressure," I cried over and over again.

Then I felt an overwhelming urge to get out and get away. I walked out into the rain, still crying. Ellie ran after me in her nightgown.

"Ian, where are you going?" she cried out. "Come back. Please."

Feeling like I was acting out the script of some movie, I said 'no' and kept walking. After a while, I checked my pockets to see if I had any money. Finding that I had £1, I headed into the pub that was nearby. I had to slow everything down and collect my wits. What was I going to do now? Where was I going to go?

In the pub, I felt like people were looking at me. How could the intensity of what I was feeling inside not be visible in my outward appearance? I yearned for some kindly soul to approach me and say something like, 'you look like you need some company, let me buy you a beer'. Isn't that how it would happen in a movie? But people remained in their groups, chatting and laughing with what seemed like great animation, and I felt alone, utterly alone - like a character from one of the existentialist novels that I had been so quick to spurn, Sartre's *La Nausée* or Herman Hesse's *Steppenwolf*, for example.

Who could I call? I tried to get hold of Brenda but she wasn't in. I knew Brenda was also having problems keeping her head above water at L.S.E., but our respective struggles seemed so personalized that we hadn't been able to give each other much support. Or was it that I hadn't really tried to reach out? Maybe I'd been so wrapped up with my relationship with Ellie and my own situation at L.S.E. that I hadn't made the effort to stay in touch. I tried again. No luck.

There was one other person I could call - Mark Elliott. Mark and I had shared a house in Kingston for a while. He, like me, had been on a Commonwealth University scholarship at Queen's. He was from London originally and had recently returned from Canada with his girlfriend Ruth. About three weeks previously, Ellie and I had gone down to his parent's country retreat in Dorset. Mark was a recent 'radical' to hippy crossover, and this was very

evident on our visit as we watched him roll endless joints and learn how to make leather pants and jackets. Mark was not into self-sufficiency. His relaxed life-style was supported by his parents' money and tolerant attitudes. I felt critical of him and yet we had always helped each other out in Canada. Now, I felt I needed him.

Mark was there. I told him what was happening and he immediately said that he and Ruth would drive over and meet me in the pub.

As it turned out, they were leaving first thing the next morning to go to Davos, Switzerland ... "to do a spot of skiing". They were spending the last night with Mark's parents, and for that reason Mark told me that he couldn't invite me to spend the night.

"Why don't you go back to your flat?" said Mark, as they prepared to leave. "You don't have to sleep with Ellie."

"No," I replied. "I'm not going to do that."

"O.K., but you need a place to sleep tonight. How about trying Brenda again?"

I took up Mark's suggestion and this time I got a hold of Brenda.

A few minutes later, I returned to the table. "Brenda says I can spend the night at her and Greg's place."

"Good," said Mark, sounding relieved. "But listen," Mark reached out and put his hand on my shoulder, "if things get worse, like I mean if you do go ahead and drop out of L.S.E., and if you're freaking out, what with L.S.E. and Ellie and everything, why don't you come out to Davos and join up with Ruth and I. We'll be there for the next two weeks. And then we're going on to Morocco. Why don't you come? Get away from it all?"

"Maybe."

"O.K ... come on, we'll give you a ride to the tube station."

\* \* \*

Suddenly, the rhythm and tempo of events had speeded up. Everything was changing. The craziness of Spring was all around. Things were fizzing, popping, bursting. One event caromed into another.

I had promised my mother that I would come up to Edinburgh on the weekend of March 13<sup>th</sup>. As the morning sun shone in the window of Brenda's flat on Southwark Bridge Road, I realized that the last thing I wanted to do was make a trip 400 miles north. I didn't have personal experience of disembowelment but the sensation in my guts that Saturday morning seemed like a fair approximation.

I called to check things out. My mother sounded anxious. "How is L.S.E., darling? Have you been studying hard? And your girlfriend, Ellie, how is she? Are you two thinking of marriage?" I had not told my mother that we were now living together. "Perhaps you'd like to bring her up to Edinburgh so that we could meet her - we have two spare bedrooms now that Robin and Joy are both away." I listened and said little. It was hard to get a word in with my mother at the best of times. And how could I tell her now, now of all times, what was really happening? I said that I would definitely come, and that I might bring Ellie, depending on her schedule.

I spent the rest of the morning with Brenda and Gregg, drinking coffee, smoking, talking. The sun shone in. I became aware that I was feeling calmer. Somehow the energy was different here. This was the urban core of London, full of warehouses and factories. There were no trees or grass or flowers outside. Was that why I felt a brief respite from spring fever?

My thoughts drifted to Roy. A week earlier, he had entranced Ellie with an account of how he felt that Joyce's organic description of Dublin might be applied to London. Something about how Hampstead was the brain, the heath and Parliament Hill fields were the breasts, the City of London was the guts, the Thames was the genitals, and south London represented the legs, the sturdy support. Ellie had liked the image, especially the fact that London was portrayed as a woman. Maybe there was something to it. As I listened to the traffic heading across Southwark Bridge, I was aware of being separated, insulated from the nervous energy

north of the river. Momentarily, I felt more grounded.

And then Ellie called. I said I didn't want to speak to her. Half an hour later, she called again. This time Greg (an old friend of Ellie's from Queens, and another L.S.E. graduate student) and she talked for quite some time. Again, I repeated that I didn't want to talk to her. Later, she called a third time. I relented and took the receiver. She said, "I'm sorry." "I miss you." "Come back."

When I returned that evening, Ellie was out. But on the table was a note:

'Ian, I feel flattened by the thought of how thoughtless I've been. How stupid. How tactless. It seems incredible that I didn't realize what pressure you were under, that I didn't smother you in care and cherishing. You are my man; we wanted to live together. I got distracted by my own immediate problems, my own moods. I held myself back from you.'



## 24.

Friday, the 13<sup>th</sup>. of March. On the train to Edinburgh with Ellie. Momentum building. Downward spiral. I don't know how to control the course of events. Somewhere in the Midlands I go into the washroom and masturbate. I don't know why. Maybe to remind myself of my body chakras - to force the center of consciousness away from the chaos and down to the healthy root of my being. Such a need to feel grounded, attached firmly to Mother Earth, not spinning away like a kite whose string has snapped. Memories of the last train journey that Ellie and I had taken. We had slipped into the men's washroom and had enjoyed a glorious fuck, me sitting on the toilet seat and Ellie straddled on my cock facing me. That was something we had in common - a sense of adventure, a rebellious spirit. Through most of our relationship, it was our sexual energy that had connected us, supported us. Now, there was a rift. I had no idea how to reach Ellie across the gaping chasm of my vulnerability.

"Hello, Mum. This is Ellie." And I could see her registering Ellie's gimpy leg and my shabby attire. I could feel the judgements as she took in my Army Surplus jacket, purple Marks and Spencer's polar neck, jeans and battered Hush Puppies.

We went in to see my father. He could hardly bring himself to talk to me, but was polite to Ellie.

Two days passed in a painful blur. Reduced to an image of sitting in the dark, cramped kitchen while my mother talked politely to Ellie. A couple of times I tried to talk about L.S.E. - prepare them for the worst, squeeze some measure of understanding or support. But they couldn't hear me. They talked; anecdotes, opinions, judgments. They asked pointed questions but didn't listen to the answers. They spoke volumes in negative body language. They left no space. The energy of their unhappiness devoured any invitation to open up. So I gave up the attempt. I became mute and concentrated my energy on how not to upset my parents, and how to contain and deal with my own inner turmoil.

Shame, shame, I was being shamed. Why? Why, when I so desperately wanted and needed to make them proud of me, to gain their acceptance, to make them happy? I felt like an outcast in my own family home. I felt unloved, abandoned. I needed to be 'the child' more than Roy. I wanted a break from taking responsibility. I needed to withdraw from the battleground. I felt I had no armor and no weapons. I was stripped bare, open, helpless like a baby. But not innocent. Guilty of ... of something. In the dock with my mother and father as judges. The verdict is in before the trial starts. 'After all we did for you, how could you let us down like this?' The line is spoken over and over again in every possible way, as if they cannot trust that I have heard them unless they repeat their message ad infinitum.

And the terrible truth is that they didn't even know what was really happening. It was all pre-cognition and post-cognition, assumption and deduction. There was no gathering of the facts, no cognition of the here and now reality. They didn't know the details of what was happening at L.S.E. or with Ellie and I. In their eyes, I was a hippy, a socialist, a drug-taker, an irresponsible student directing my attention towards a girlfriend rather than towards my studies. Their message was everywhere - spoken, unspoken and ingrained in my memory. 'You could have gone into the Army', 'you could have gone into business', 'you could have studied something worthwhile at University', 'you could have become a nice, well-dressed young man', 'look at you now ...'

Thankfully, there were one or two moments of escape. We walked around St. Giles Cathedral and Ellie took pictures, 'capturing' antiquity. We went to a pub or two. And then, after some kind of goodbye, we were on the train south again.

And the trip to Edinburgh vanished into thin air, as if it had never happened, irrelevant as it was, or seemed, to the main stream of events. Space compressed, time took flight like frames of a movie being run at too high a speed. The blur continued on into the next week.



Now it is Monday, the 16<sup>th</sup>. March. I am in the present, being swept along in a current of events that I cannot control. The piano is moved from Lonsdale Road to Heath Lodge. After it's in, I improvise for quite a while. Roy and Ellie listen. Now I *do* feel like the child ... playing for Mum and Dad. They approve. Now I am no longer the child. For a moment, I am Ellie's 'man' again. Roy says, "I don't know what *you* have to worry about if you can play like that." Is this a compliment, I ask myself? Ellie has to go to the Slade School for a class. She says 'goodbye' to me, and smiles at Roy.

Something jumps up inside me. A flash of anger. Time to confront Roy. "Is anything going between you and Ellie?" I ask. "No", he replies. "Oh, come on!" I say, caught in my frustration. "Listen, I don't need this," he says and walks out the door.

Later that evening, Ellie returns. "Where's Roy," she says innocently. "Gone out somewhere," I reply. Is it my imagination or does she look disappointed? We eat something, listen to some music and go to bed. For the first time in two weeks, we have sex. It is wild, but I feel she is fucking Roy not me. Back come the tears. Ellie asks me why I'm crying. I don't explain. I don't feel safe sharing my vulnerabilities with her anymore.

Tuesday, the 17<sup>th</sup>. at 10-30 a.m. I go for an appointment with Dr. Martin. I lay out a smorgesbord of thesis ideas: the relationship between rhythm and productivity; the relationship between harmony and creativity; the relationship between artists and political pressure groups as consciousness-changing avant-gardes; the psychological effects of different media as a determinate of creative ability.

My hope is that Martin will show some interest and become my tutor. But he tells me he has too many students already, and that the only person he could think of who might be interested is a Mr. Steuer. He explains that Mr. Steuer is an econometrist, but one with an alter ego. He is, according to Dr. Martin, into Zen and mysticism.

Next day, I go to see Mr. Steuer. He is an American. But of course! What self-respecting British academic would be into such flaky stuff as Zen and mysticism?

I repeat my grab-bag of thesis ideas. He seems reasonably interested and says he is prepared to be my tutor. "But why," he says, leaning forward and adopting a more eager tone, "why don't you write a book with ideas like that, rather than a thesis. You don't need to be at University to explore the kinds of things you're interested in."

It turns out that Mr. Steuer thinks that my ideas are a kind of mish-mash extrapolation of various trendy, peripheral cults, and that my best plan would be to write about counter-cultures - in the manner of Theodore Roszack.

I sit there benumbed, my weary brain trying to figure out if this is encouragement. I decide that it is really a polite form of brush-off; 'sorry, Bud ... you don't make the grade ... you're too way out, even for me.'

And suddenly, in a flash, I know that this is the end. I had needed real support from him to keep hanging in there. I hadn't got it. I feel like I am falling off a high scaffolding, the structure of society itself. I am still attached by a cord, but like a suicidal bungee-jumper, I have the urge to cut the cord and embrace the downward plunge. Finish it. Finish it, for Christ's sake!

That evening, at Heath Lodge, the scene becomes yet more like the climax of Women in Love. I am playing out the part of Gerald, Ellie is Gudrun, and Roy is Loerke. The atmosphere is fraught with tension and intrigue. Ellie gets fresh water for the mimosa. Our triangle is an aphrodisiac for Roy and Ellie. For me, it is an arrow-head burning its way through my heart.

The next day, on the 19<sup>th</sup>. of March, I go to see Ann Bohm for the third and last time. I tell her that I've decided to leave L.S.E. This time, she is resigned. I say that I want to return to Canada. She says that I would probably be better off back in Canada. I wonder what she means by this remark. She says she accepts my decision and that she will write a letter of explanation to put in my file. I say I don't care if she does or not. She says it would be better for me in case I apply to L.S.E. or some other graduate school in the future. We shake hands. I leave her office, walk downstairs, and out of the building. The cord is cut. I am down. I have done what lots of others have done. I have 'dropped out'. I am free to go my way, and at that moment 'freedom' is the terror of not having a clue which way to go.

Eventually, I go to the National Union of Students Travel Office on Euston Road. There I get information on travel to Switzerland and Morocco.

In the early evening, I head off back to Heath Lodge. My blood is up, as they say. It is time to have it out with Roy and Ellie. I want the truth at whatever cost. They are there. I tell them I want to talk. They agree. Roy opens a bottle of wine. I tell them that I have quit L.S.E. and that I can't handle any more pressure, that I need to know what's happening, that I need the truth. Ellie repeats that 'I'm her man'. Roy talks about how nice it was when we first moved in. There is talk of 'cooperation', 'love'... how love is not 'exclusive' or 'possessive'. Ellie repeats to me what she had said on previous occasions - that she and Roy are like 'kindred spirits' but that ours is the 'special' relationship. I repeat what I have said privately to Ellie - that even though Don was another of Ellie's 'kindred spirits', I never felt threatened by him. Unlike Roy, he recognized, both verbally and in his behavior, that Ellie and I were a couple. Ellie had given some verbal affirmation of us-as-a-couple but her behavior seemed at odds with her words.

I offer Roy a Gitanes. He takes one. As an afterthought, I offer one to Ellie. She takes one too. The only other time that I've ever seen her smoke was the first time we met. I light Roy's cigarette and then Ellie's. She draws in the smoke and then blows it in my face, a mischievous look on her face.

The seriousness, the talk of 'relationships' is over. This is playtime. Ellie smiles at me. Slowly, coyly, she puts on Roy's motorcycle helmet. I know all I need to know. A deep burning rage wells up from within. I want to smash her, smash him, smash the expensive stereo equipment. But years of conditioning hold me back. Instead, I break down crying. "Why are you doing this ... why are you doing this?" I repeat several times.

Another end. Another death. Have to go. Have to get out. Get away. Get away from all this. I run out of the house. It is late. Cold, cold. Dark. Bright lights ahead. Where am I going? Where can I go? Who's out there? Who will listen? I flash on earlier, happier times and think of the only school friend whose number I have in London. I call Peter Wolf and tell him I am in an emergency situation. I ask him if I can stay the night at his house. He sounds cool, distant ... but he agrees.

I stumble onto a tube to St. John's Wood. Late. The London night people appearing like phantoms to claim the underground and the deserted streets overhead. I find his house. He lets me in. He looks shocked at my appearance. He looks embarrassed as he briefly introduces me to his friend as 'someone he used to know at public school'. He offers me a coffee, and then I am alone. For a few hours, before blessed sleep blots out the day, I listen to him and his friend discuss ideas for a film script they are working on.

In the morning, I mumble thanks to Peter and return to Heath Lodge, feeling a morbid curiosity to find out what has happened while I've been away. Ellie's and Roy's rooms show no signs of having been slept in. The flat is empty. On an impulse, I phone Don and Olivia's place in Oxford. Don sounds warm and concerned: "Ian, hello ... yes, they are both here ... asleep." I feel that finally I have been given the gift of clear, honest, direct truth. So I was right. I thank him and hang up.

I feel the pain dissolving into a strange calm. There seems to be only one recourse now. I go to the Y.H.A. office and buy a rucksack. Then I go to the bank and withdraw the few pounds that remain in my account. Another thought strikes me. I call up the Immigration department of Canada House. "I was in Canada for three years as a student. I want to go back," I tell them. "You can't just 'go back'," they tell me, "you have to make a proper application for immigrant status."

O.K. ... O.K. ... all I know now is that I have to get out of London. The only thing that makes any sense is to go to Switzerland and link up with Mark and Ruth.

I go back one last time to St. Alban's Road. The phone rings. I nearly pick up the receiver. Maybe I've got it all wrong. Maybe I *am* 'special'. Maybe Ellie really wants me. Maybe this whole thing with Roy was just something she had to work out of her system. With L.S.E. and everything, I *had* been hard to be around. But then despair hits me. I know better than to answer. Slowly, methodically, I pack my rucksack. I feel only emptiness, confusion, pain. I am driven by instinct not reason. Half an hour later I find myself at Victoria Station.

I stand there, in the middle of the station, unable to move, my will paralyzed. Where to go? How to go? Everyone rushing around ... so purposeful, so .. so single-minded. And I am flooded by freedom of choice. So many choices, so many options. A ticket all the way to Davos? Or save money and go only to Zurich? Or save even more money and get a ticket to Paris, and then hitch-hike? At the age of 19, before going to Canada, my schoolfriend, David and I hitch-hiked all round Europe. But this is different, so different.

Rooted to the spot. Milling crowds engulfing me. They are so big, so many, and I am so small. In order to choose, 'I' must exist. But 'I' don't exist. 'I' is a joke. But there is something there, whatever it is. I got this far. I made it to Victoria Station. That was a choice. I acted on that choice. So choose, for goodness sake! Choose! It doesn't matter, just choose somewhere. Just get going, get moving.

I buy a ticket to Zurich. Just before I pass through the barrier, I phone Ellie in Oxford. Just .... just in case I was wrong. She says, "good luck on your trip, Roy and I may be getting married." O.K. ... enough ... *no mas* ... leave.

Go through ticket barrier. Know I have to speak to someone. See a woman, almost a girl, struggling with two big suitcases. Go up and ask her if I can help. She smiles and says, "yes, please." Then I ask her if I can sit beside her on the train to Paris. I tell her that however strange it may sound, I have to talk to someone. To my surprise, she seems to understand. Her name is Françoise.

## 25.

*Little Bo Peep has lost her sheep  
And doesn't know where to find them,  
Leave them alone, and they'll come home  
Bringing their tails behind them.*

Flying through a nightmare to Switzerland. A blur of events, a time warp. Spiraling through a black hole, unseen, unreal in all aspects but the inner horror. Screaming across a bridge of despair, like in Münch's painting.

What is 'a breakdown'? Is it panic? Hysteria? Withdrawal? Tears? Screams? Is it exploding anger? Depression? Collapsing identity? Annihilation of the ego? Raw vulnerability? Or is it, a disintegration of the thinking process? A breaking loose of the feeling process? An emergency of the spiritual process, rich with potential? Are delusions voices in the head? Are they necessary conditions? Is 'a breakdown' breakthrough? Breakthrough to the light? Breaking through encrusted patterns and petrified routines? Breaking through layers of maya?

Standing paralyzed in the middle of Victoria station, like a motionless bird poised for a long flight through the dark night. The real flight was not to Switzerland and Morocco, but through a nightmare of uncharted states of consciousness. It was a flight that continued long after I got back from Morocco.

One of these states involved becoming reduced to being a passive receptor, as opposed to an actor. The barriers and defenses, both emotional and cognitive, that normally filter out unwanted stimuli, collapsed. What then took place was the phenomenon of 'flooding', a heightened awareness of sound and light and feeling due to extreme sensitization of the nerves. The flooding by intense sensory input and an unrestrained flow of ideas became too much, and there was a need to escape, insulate, withdraw.

Like a white star collapsing into a black hole, my sense of who I was, my underlying matrix of identity, went through a process of splintering, fracturing, disintegrating. I was left aware of many 'I's', and no 'I's', a quivering jellyfish of vulnerability, unable to move myself back to the safety of the all-embracing, amniotic universe. Cytoplasm. Whatever identity I was aware of seemed to be a negative mass of ingested shame and feelings of utter failure.

Little Bo Peep. Lost her sheep. Lost her way. Lost her marbles. Lost her wits. But like the sheep, not really lost - just overwhelmed, exhausted, disorientated.

\* \* \*

Outer events reflect the inner state. In my disorientation, I take the wrong train at Calais and go to Lausanne instead of Zurich. Trying to make the best of the situation, I hitch-hike through the southern part of Switzerland, through Montreux and Martigny. When I am let off in Brig, high up in the Alps, close to the Jüngfrau, I am told that the pass ahead is blocked with snow. The only way to Zurich, and from there to Davos, is to retrace my steps to Lausanne and take the northern route. Trying to create some certainty in the chaos of my mind, I decide not to hitch-hike any more, but instead to buy a train ticket all the way to Davos, via Lausanne and Zurich.

Spend the night in Zurich railway station. My interpretation of what I see alternates between Marxist and Freudian concepts. Whereas the city is rich and antiseptic, a sugary coating to the bitter pill of capitalism all around, the station at night seems like the anus of an anal-retentive society. The excrement hole, the vomit hole. It is a scene from Bosch or Breughel. The misfits and rejects gather here - drunks, homosexuals, prostitutes, all clinging to the slippery orifices of this great putrid organism. I try to figure out whether I am one of them. I feel like shit but am not yet shit. But as I tune into my surroundings, I realize that they

are not shit either. They are people, trying to survive despite the shit. I am approached by a nice-looking blond haired guy. "Would you like to go for a coffee?" he says. "No, thank-you," I reply, feeling shocked. He smiles pleasantly, says "O.K.", and moves off. For some reason, I feel a bit ashamed.

Over at the news-stand, I pick up a Sunday Times. In the sports section, I see the headline 'Scotland's great 14-5 win over England at Murrayfield'. I take a quick look and see that two of my old Sedbergh team-mates, Alistair Biggar and John Spencer, have each scored a try. Boy, if they could see me now!! Shrivelled further by shame.

Time to write my diary. It is becoming a necessary daily exorcism. I go into the cafeteria and order a tea. The waitress is pretty. I make a feeble attempt to flirt with her. Forget it, she's not interested. But then she disappears and returns a few minutes later looking like she's put on some make-up. For an instant my spirits rise, then I am flooded with feelings of anger and humiliation evoked by memories of all the talk about 'love' and 'cooperation' between the three of us. Why didn't I fight for Ellie, for us, for myself? Was she not worth it? Were we not worth it? Was I not worth it? There had been conflict - yes, but not cooperation. There had been hypocrisy rather than truth and honesty. And there had been scheming and betrayal rather than love and support. Give me a break!

In my diary, I write: *'I must read Hemmingway and Nietzsche - especially the former for his recognition of the razor-edge aspect of life, and the resulting necessity to experience those things which constitute the quintessence of life.'*

I have only one book with me. It was lent to me by Brenda before I left. It is called The Big Sur and The Oranges of Hieronymus Bosch by Henry Miller. Brenda was sure that I would like it. I take it out of my rucksack and start reading. Strangely, I feel much better after thirty or forty minutes reading. I even get a little sleep before the morning comes.

The next day, in Davos, I touch base again with the outer reality. Popping out of my black hole, I meet up with Mark and Ruth. They are staying at a hotel and seem to have lots of money. They tell me that they have been going skiing every day. They say they plan to stay another four or five days in Davos before setting off through France and Spain to Morocco. They ask me where I am going to sleep. I reply that I have no idea. They tell me that I can spend one night in their hotel room as long as I find a place for myself the next day. I say, wearily, that I will look for a part-time job and a place to stay first thing in the morning.

*Diary entry: 26-3-70:*

*'This morning I was recommended to visit a house called Pravignan to see a Herr Sciarmella about a place to stay. I was told that this gentleman had a Laager where the impoverished ski-bums could stay for a fraction of what they would have to pay at a hotel. Herr Sciarmella turned out to be a corpulent Italian with a strong face softened by gentle eyes and a warm smile. He was wearing a house painter's white trousers with sufficient paint smudges and frayed patches to give him a professional look.*

*Herr Sciarmella can't help me as regards the Laager .... "tout occupé" ... "mais un moment s'il vous plaît" ... phone call ... "venez avec moi."*

*We drive down the hill across the main street, across the railway track and turn up a slushy lane. At the end is a dilapidated wooden chalet. A man appears, embraces Herr Sciarmella, and I am introduced to Signor Serèno Secchi. He is lean, tanned, deeply lined ... hawkish, but then the eyes ..., kind, compassionate, generous. We enter into his house, 'Waldhaus'.*

*So far, it has been established that Signor Secchi is an architect/builder/painter/artist/writer and musician. I believe it. I am offered a drink ... "whisky?" ... "cognac?" ... "campari?" ... "thank-you, campari" ... "mit wasser?" ... "non, merci, je voudrais l'essayer sans l'eau" ... "ça va?" ... "oui, ça va" ..*

*The two ex-patriot Italians are very close. In the car, Herr Sciarmella said, "Signor Secchi is a very good man ... we are very good friends" (and as he says this, he touches his heart)... "he makes some money and then spends it on food and drink. He likes to live well. Son and daughter both married. Wife is in Davos with other man. Herr Secchi alone."*

*On the door into the living room is a large photo. In it are Signors Secchi and Sciarmella, both looking younger. The latter is resplendent in a dinner jacket and white bow tie as he stands beside an elderly lady. He is singing (possibly opera, with his magnificent chest and posture), and behind him, looking handsome and very Latin, is Signor Secchi with accordion outstretched.*

*So we have a few drinks and Signor Secchi says he would be very happy if I stayed at his house for as short or as long time as I want. We agree on a minimal 'rent' and he shows me where I'll be sleeping.*

*If this is not enough, he tells me that he knows a hotel where I may be able to get work as a dishwasher. He takes me there. Within half an hour I have a job, as a potato peeler as it turns out, effective immediately. Signor Secchi takes his leave and I start peeling potatoes.*

*And now, looking back on this amazing day, my heart is full of joy and gratitude. I am living again. I dance. I kiss the grass, the sky, the mountains. The lines of pain and deadness around my eyes have vanished. My mouth moves more naturally into a smile. The laugh is there to be provoked or evoked. The fragments have become reintegrated. I am whole again.*

*People can be beautiful. God bless Signor Sciarmella, and Signor Secchi with his unquestioning openness and trust, his generosity and friendship. God bless Dragon, the Yugoslavian dishwasher (who said that "all the people in the world are good"), and Tomas, the Spanish floor-cleaner, and the girl in the restaurant who gave me a glass of milk for free. And God bless those poor bastards (of which I have been one for far too long) who shut the doors to Life with their ideas and fancy theories.*

*Tomorrow, I ski in the morning, I peel potatoes in the evening, and I sleep in a house full of good vibrations at night. I am content.'*

\* \* \*

I was a potato peeler in Davos for three days. It wasn't long before I was seeing things through the eyes of a sociologist again. The pecking order in the hotel was clear for all to see. At the top was the 'gros bonnet', who was either German or German-Swiss. At his side were his deputies, the French or Italian-Swiss sauce chefs. Under their command were the 'entremettiers' (in charge of soups, vegetables, and sweets), the rôtisseurs (roast, fried and grilled meats). Then came the waiters - mostly Italian-Swiss. At the bottom of the pyramid were the 'lumpen-proletariat' - the floor-cleaners, dishwashers, delivery people and kitchen helps (including potato peelers), who were usually from the 'lesser' countries such as Yugoslavia, Spain, Greece and Turkey. To have a kitchen help from Britain was unheard of, which was fine by me.

No generalists here! In the 'brigade de cuisine' as developed by Georges Auguste Escoffier, there was only room for specialists. Ah ... disciplinary boundaries - Dr. Clifford-Vaughn would have felt right at home. The experience put me in mind of George Orwell's descriptions of hotels and restaurants in Down and Out in London and Paris.

And then it was time to leave. Mark and Ruth put away their natty ski-suits, got on their hip suede pants and fringed jackets, and we were ready to roll. I said a heartfelt goodbye to my friend Signor Secchi (who felt like a friend even though I'd only known him such a short time), and off we went.

On the way to Lausanne, we passed a home called 'Mimosa'. The pain came flooding back. I sat in the back of the car fighting back tears. Maybe I hadn't given enough. Maybe I hadn't been patient enough.

Maybe Roy was right about 'fear being realized'. Maybe if I'd had more faith, shown more love and less fear and pain, maybe I would still be Ellie's 'man'. But is that even what I wanted? I needed love, yes, but did I want *her* love? Did I want her to be *my* 'woman'? And what the hell did that mean anyway? But I missed her. I wished she was with me.

I could feel the pit of despair opening wide. We stopped in Lausanne for lunch. After we'd eaten, I offered to pay and Mark and Ruth accepted - 18 francs that I could ill-afford. If it left me resentful, why did I offer, I wondered.

I was beginning to feel more and more disconnected. Why was I going to Morocco? It didn't make any sense. Maybe I should be getting back to London. Retrieve the situation before it was too late. Get back there. Get Ellie back. Get back into L.S.E. You're going in the wrong direction. But was I? I'd just be going back to the source of all the pain. The wounds were too fresh. I needed time.

In an attempt to shift my thoughts to something else, I bought two books - A Moveable Feast by Hemmingway, and The Poorhouse Fair by John Updike (one of Ellie's favorite authors). A cursory glance at their writing styles plunged me further into feelings of despair. I had decided that I wanted to be a writer, either doing what Steuer suggested, or else fiction writing. But I couldn't write like these two guys, as different as they were from each other. It's like when I listened to Oscar Peterson or Jacques Loussier, it quickly squashed any delusion I might have that I was a 'good' pianist.

I feel the familiar feelings of inner shrinking. I am tiny and fragile. I am a jelly-fish. One better, perhaps, than a vegetable.

"I'm going back to London," I announce to Mark.

"Oh, wow ... it's really bad, is it?" says Mark.

And the tears start up - tears that just bring further feelings of humiliation. Ruth becomes flustered and sympathetic. Mark become fatherly.

"Let's drive to Geneva before making any decision," he says with some authority.

I take my rucksack out of the car and walk off, still crying. I feel somehow irretrievably committed to a self-destructive course of action, like Gerald as he starts trekking off through the snow. Mark catches up with me, takes my arm and gently leads me back. And that is what I need, to be led back, or led forward, or led anywhere, just so long as someone is leading me. What was that hymn, 'through the encircling gloom, lead thou me on'? Is God dead, as the existentialists said? God knows. I sit in the car sobbing while Mark starts the car. This is too humiliating. I don't want to be led. I'm not a child. "Just a minute," I say, gaining a strand of sanity from the assertion. "I need to be on my own for a moment." I get out of the car again, and go to the restaurant washroom. Thank God for washrooms. Now *there's* a thesis topic: 'The washroom as Asylum - a practical (and cost effective) application of R.D. Laing's ideas.' Relief of aloneness. I feel a fearful rent in my soul. I had allowed myself to be psychically transported back to London, the source of the pain. Not a good idea. Time to seal over the wound again. Time to cautiously extend a foot forward again. Time to compose myself.

I go to sleep in the car and wake up in a new world. No longer the concrete and steel and urban cleanliness of Zurich and Lausanne, but a new enchanted realm; mountains, fields, tractors ... a small town of wood châteaux ... an outdoor fête drawing life from these dour Swiss people ... young people sprout from the ground ... three children in a field form a triangle ... they appear to be playing something ... the light is soft and diffuse ... the sounds are sweet ... mother earth yielding, accepting, supporting; and I am the little kid sitting in the back seat as Daddy drives, a look of concentration on his face, and Mummy makes occasional remarks about the scenery; and now I am the court eunuch ... the Eunuch of Istanbul ... humiliation becoming abdication becoming emasculation. Sitting, crouched in the back seat, neither heard nor seen - except for the occasional quick glance through the rearview mirror. I have abdicated my responsibilities for my past, or present, or even future actions. Why should I take any blame? 'Mum, Dad, I didn't know any better ... honest.'

Ruth hands me a chocolate bunny. Of course, it is Easter ... and I guess, this being Switzerland and all. Now I am the bunny ... the Easter bunny, being prepared for sacrifice ... huge hands are removing the beautiful red ribbon from around my neck ... they are not rough ... they are doing it delicately, gently, almost ceremoniously ...

and then, mesmerized, I see huge, open jaws appearing, saliva dripping, drooling, tongue lolling expectantly ... oh no, you couldn't! You wouldn't! Aaaahhhhhh ... and I bite off the head of my rabbit self, now getting a perverse pleasure as I see myself as one of those power-crazed ogres in Grimm's Fairy Tales, or Saturn in Goya's painting, savaging naked bodies, dismembering helpless limbs, huge teeth ripping into human flesh.

Softness of landscape. No more snow and harsh dark blue sky. I am the reincarnation of Gerald, born into a gentler, more androgynous world - no, not Gerald, but Gerald and Birkin combined, an interanimation of their two souls, as John Donne would say. Warm golden sun dissolves the horror, chases away the ogres of the night.

Mark makes a comment about the film 'Joanna'... the need they all had to go to Morocco ... and the images return ... the amiable, aristocratic Englishman, the child-woman Joanna, the white cotton dresses, the flaming sun going down over the ancient deserts. The sun, the sun, we're following the sun. We're going to Morocco.





Following the sun, through Avignon, Provence, and into Spain. And then, in the unpredictable interplay between inner and outer, suddenly, unexpectedly, and brilliantly, the light floods into my inner darkness. The event took place in the Youth Hostel of Lérida, in northern Spain. It was evening and I was on my own. According to our established pattern, Mark and Ruth found themselves a hotel and I located the youth hostel. I sat in the courtyard of the hostel, smoking and reading randomly from Miller's book The Big Sur And The Oranges Of Hieronymus Bosch. Suddenly, I hit a section that drew me in with an almost magnetic pull. What I read was so important to me at the time, that I would like to include lengthy excerpts.

In the pages that I read, Miller is having a passionate discussion about 'choice' and 'fate' with an astrologer friend named Moricand.

Miller starts things off:

*"What is the most important - peace and joy, or wisdom? If to know would make you a happier man, which would you choose?"*

*I might have known his answer. It was that we have no choice in such matters.*

*I violently disagreed. "Perhaps," said I, "I am still very much of an American. That is to say, naive, optimistic, gullible ... I am a product of the land of plenty, a believer in superabundance, a believer in miracles. Any deprivation I suffered was my own doing. I blame nobody but myself for my woes and afflictions, for my shortcomings, for my transgressions. What you believe I might have learned through a deeper knowledge of astrology, I learned through experience of life. I made all the mistakes that it is possible for a man to make - and paid the penalty. I am that much richer, that much wiser, that much happier, if I may say so, than if I had found through study or through discipline how to avoid the snares and pitfalls in my path ...*

*... Every so often I revolt, even against what I believe in with all my heart. I have to attack everything, myself included. Why? To simplify things. We know too much - and too little. It's the intellect which gets us into trouble, not our intelligence. That we can never have enough of. But I get weary of listening to specialists, weary of listening to the man with one string to his fiddle. I don't deny the validity of astrology. What I object to is becoming enslaved to any one point of view ... I abhor people who have to filter everything through the one language they know, whether it be astrology, religion, yoga, politics, economics, or what ...*

*... We all want to extract the full measure of life. Must we go to books and teachers, to science, religion, philosophy ... to take the path? Can we not become fully awake and aware without the torture we put ourselves through!?"*

*"Life is nothing but a Calvary," he said. "Not even knowledge of astrology can alter that stern fact ... life is perpetual struggle, and struggle entails sorrow and suffering. And suffering gives us strength and character."*

*"For what? To what end?"*

*"The better to endure life's burdens."*

*"What a woeful picture! It's like training for a contest in which one knows in advance he will be defeated ... life as a burden, life as a battleground, life as a problem, these are all partial ways of looking at life. Two lines of poetry often tell us more than the weightiest tome by an erudite. Knowledge weighs us down; wisdom saddens one. The love of truth has nothing to do with knowledge or wisdom ... the sum of all knowledge is greater confusion. The intellect runs away with itself. Mind is not intellect. The intellect is a product of the ego, and the ego can never be stilled, never be satisfied. When do we begin to know*

*what we know? When we have ceased to believe that we can ever know. Truth comes with surrender. And it's wordless ...*

*... [There was] a moment in man's evolution when he lost faith in himself. Or, to put it another way, when he lost his wholeness. When he wanted to know instead of be. Schizophrenia began far back, not yesterday or the day before. And when man split, he split into myriad fragments. But even today, as fragmented as he is, he can be made whole again. The only difference between the Adamic man and the man of today is that the one was born to Paradise and the other has to create it. And that brings me back to the question of choice. A man can only prove that he is free by electing to be so. And he can only do it when he realizes that he himself made himself unfree. And that to me means that he must unvest from God the powers he has given God. The more of God he recognizes in himself, the freer he becomes. And the freer he becomes, the fewer decisions he has to make, the less choice is presented to him. Freedom is a misnomer. Certitude is more like it. Unerringness. Because truthfully there is always only one way to act in any situation, not two, not three. Freedom implies choice, and choice exists only to the extent that we are aware of our ineptitude. The adept takes no thought, one might say. He is one with thought, one with the path ...*

*We talk about fate as if it were something visited upon us; we forget that we create our fate every day we live. And by fate, I mean woes that beset us, which are merely the effects of causes which are not nearly as mysterious as we pretend. Most of the ills we suffer from are directly traceable to our own behaviour ... there is no mystery about disease, nor crime, nor the thousand and one things that plague us. Live simply and wisely. Forget, forgive, renounce, abdicate ... peace and joy ... I say it's ours for the asking ... le bel aujourd'hui."*

Miller's writing - both the ideas and the style - was intoxicating to me. It was like the music I loved the most. Variations on a Theme. Beethoven 'cello variations on a theme by Haydn. Dixieland jazz improvisations. Extemporizing Bach as in Jacques Loussier. Variations on a theme - an upward spiral of repetition and change, returning to the source while developing the message. Like Indian ragas, with the energy of life, the kundalini, the chi, deeply grounded, emanating from the roots, and then slowly spreading upward through the trunk, while at the same time pulsing outward through the branches and leaves, lifting upwards, but always connected to the trunk ... and then after the expansion and the climax, the journey inward and homeward back to the roots.

This writing was pure and true and bursting with the rhythmic energy of life, with both its dazzling symmetries and puzzling contradictions. It was uplifting because, like melody and rhythm and harmony, it connected and blended the myriad fragments into a flowing, joyous whole. It was the language of the soul, reassuring, validating, reconnecting one to the godhead - an intertwining of the word and the spirit.

*Diary Entry: 2-4-70*

*'My immediate response to reading by Miller was illumination, inspiration, joy, and a desire to reach out to others. The joy that I used to have, the joy which has gradually become enmeshed by more and more strands of doubt and confusion, that joy just burst through its bonds. I have been defeating myself for too long, causing my own despair, projecting it onto others, pursuing goals which are not inwardly mine. To hell with what others want or believe!! Or what they have or don't have. I can't write like Updike, or Miller for that matter, but why should I want to?! Why don't I remember what I have, listen to my inner voice and follow its calling, do what is right for me. If only one could keep this light clear and bright all the time.*

*My immediate impulse is to write to Bob Davies of Everdale Place (the Ontario school based on A.S. Neill's 'Summerhill' model). Now it all makes sense - why it turns out to be Erich Fromm and Henry Miller who are the ones that endorse A.S. Neill's book. My favorite sociologist and my favorite writer supporting my favorite educator - there really is such a thing as 'kindred spirits.'*

The next day we reached Madrid, where we spent two days. The effects of Miller's writing stayed with me and I had a good conversation at breakfast with Mark about intellect versus emotions (Koestler) as compared to spirit (Watts and Wilson).

Madrid. Another big city with big city rhythm. Does nothing for me. I visit The Prado - a vast mausoleum of paintings. I don't like places where vital energy and spirit is captured and contained inside cases and cages and frames. Places like museums, galleries, concert-halls, galleries, zoos, classrooms. I wander around by myself. Renaissance paintings in dark earth tones surround me: Anonimo Español (1450) - saints with millstones around their necks being drowned or decapitated, burned or beaten ... expressionless faces, an abundance of incubi and succubi floating around; El Maestro de Arguis - devil and angel weighing human souls on balance scales; Escuela de Van Eyck - 'La Fuente de la Gracia' - the font of all wisdom, emanating as a waterfall from God.

We leave Madrid. I am happy to go. We climb over the mountains which helps put things in perspective - at least for a while. Then descending, we finally reach Granada. This is truly a new world. My previous homes have all been in gray towns: Edinburgh ('Auld Reekie'); Sedbergh (gray walls, gray skies and gray slate); Kingston, Ontario ('The limestone city'); and London (admittedly more color than the others). Here, amidst a barren yet magnificent landscape, the only gray to be encountered is in the mountainous cliffs surrounding the city. The earth is a rich red and the town is full of beige colored turrets and towers, and white-washed walls and red-tiled roofs. Granada, the great Moorish fortress town, whose population in the 12<sup>th</sup>. Century was twice its current level. A magnificent and dramatic place, as proud and beautiful as an El Greco painting or a flamenco dance.

And we follow the sun southwards and eventually reach Algeciras, the gateway to Morocco. No turning back now. I buy a Spanish guitar (my only real purchase except for food and a couple of books). However, I soon find that unlike my last trip around Europe, when I was 19, I do not have the confidence to play it. It is a vivid reminder of how much I have changed in four years.

I am feeling tension with Mark. I resent his control, his money. Every night he and Ruth stay at a hotel, and I go off in search of a youth hostel. We are a little microcosm of the class system, transporting it with us wherever we go. Ruth is completely bland. She is careful not to challenge Mark. However, neither do I, a fact which is producing growing disgust with myself.

We give a ride to two San Francisco freaks. Despite my skepticism about hippies in general, I have yet to meet a Californian that I didn't like. They really do seem to be 'beautiful' people with their immediate and unquestioning acceptance of who you are.

Everyone seems excited about making the ferry crossing to Morocco.

"That's where it's at, man," says one of the freaks. "That's where everyone's going. There's a place on the coast, man, called Essauara. You can live there for next to nothing. Beautiful beaches, friendly natives, no dope hassles ... communes man, lots of communes, free love, sharing, people with heightened consciousness' ... real good vibrations ... Paradise from what I hear."

\* \* \*

For me anyway, Morocco was like a trip into hell. Morocco was where the inner and outer nightmare became one.

At first, it wasn't so bad. There was the usual excitement of travel through unexplored regions, the sensory enrichment that came from passing through northern Morocco, through Rabat and Fez, on our way to Marrakesh. A fragmented dream, yes, but not yet a full-fledged nightmare.

Fragments, fragments ...

... Kind-eyed Moroccan in Marrakesh wearing Canadian plaid jacket, offers his services to make coos-coos for some Americans, if one of them opens a restaurant for him in the States ...

... Californian freaks, European hippies, Canadian drop-outs, all espousing the philosophy of 'peace 'n love man', 'be groovy not greedy', 'money's not where it's at, man'. And the stark contradictions ... the line-ups at the American Express office, calling to Dad back in the States to send some cash. We'll send you the good vibes, Dad - you send us the cash. And I cling to the stoic philosophy of 'self-reliance' that I was brought up with, by my

parents, by my school - values that were then reinforced by reading people like Emerson and Thoreau. And I recoil from the indulgence, the escapism, and the hypocrisy ...

... There is a very sensual atmosphere, completely unlike European or North American culture. The freaks are attracted by the exotic, and erotic 'feel' of the place, as were gay writers like Orton and William Burroughs before them. Because everything is so cheap, freedom to 'be' (i.e. not work) can be bought. The freaks 'choose' not to see the underlying rigid social order, and work-to-survive daily life of the average Moroccan ...

... Smell of hot coffee and deep-fried doughnuts, freshly baked bread, cinnamon and thyme, and of course the omni-present 'kif'.

Fragments, some good, some not so good, but more and more I am popping in and out of my black hole of identity, disappearing into the crisis of who or what I am, what I have become, what I am meant to be doing, where in hell I am supposed to be going.

And then we get to Essauara. Our destination, the end of the trip, the promised land. And what I find is a cul-de-sac, a fetid backwater of beached dreams. The clock stands still and entropy proceeds almost visibly.

Mark and Ruth find a hotel. Even at Moroccan rates, I cannot afford a hotel room. But through the grapevine I am introduced to a crazy Scottish guy with short hair (!) who thinks that he is the Devil. He lets me stay in his small flat. At night he disappears wearing a black cloak. Perfect. I have entered the gates of hell itself, and someone from my homeland is the gatekeeper.

Trying to be 'the writer'. But nothing comes. Blocked, barren as the Saharan sands to the south.

Walks to Diabet (where all the communes are meant to be) ... see wild hippies living in the woods ... the commune people seem suspicious, inbred. There is an air of heavy inertia everywhere. The freedom of non-work becomes the bondage of how to get through the day. There may be 'free love' - I don't know, I'm certainly not a part of it. In Diabet, there is also, apparently, rampant venereal disease.

Time stands still, like one of Dali's bent clocks, lying stripped of its purpose on the desert sands.

Days pass. Doing nothing, being nothing, becoming nothing. I go on a four day fast. Why not? It costs nothing. I eat nothing. And I gain a sense of purpose by submitting myself to a test of self-restraint amidst all the self-indulgence.

Apart from 'doing drugs', reading is the other popular pastime. The supply of books within the community is constantly in circulation. At least this works well. I read Tom Wolfe's The Pump House Gang (with its chapter on McLuhan), Zorba The Greek, and Soul On Ice.

Weeks pass. And then one day, I know that I've had enough. If this is the great amoral, anarchistic hippy ideal, get me out of it! There is no code, no norms, no structure. Anything goes. Everything is acceptable. There is no discrimination, in the best and worst sense of the word. White magic is groovy, but then so is black magic.

This is a lost community. Maybe, just maybe, I perceive it as a lost community because I am lost myself. Maybe the subjective reality determines all. Maybe it's all a projection - hell is in the eye of the beholder. Maybe, in reality, everyone is having a wonderful time. But I don't think so.

All the time, I am haunted by a quote from Rimbaud written on the dingy wall of a Marrakesh hotel. It went something like: 'the prerequisite for artistic perception and creation is a complete dissociation of the senses.' Well, if that's true, I figure that despite not being able to write anything, I must, by definition, be on my way to becoming a great artist.

So, sometime at the end of April, somehow I manage to get out, to extricate myself from the hell of the here and now, like a fly from a lump of molasses. I have no idea what Mark and Ruth have been doing, or when they plan to return. It doesn't matter. I don't really care. I take a bus to Casablanca. There, I am told that the S/S Leopard is leaving that very day, and that it won't sail again to England for another two weeks. It turns out that I don't have enough money for a ticket. The clerk makes a deal with me. Seeing my guitar, he asks to look at it. Then he tells me that if I leave it with him as collateral, he will give me a ticket, and two weeks later I will be able to pay the balance and redeem my guitar at Southampton. I agree.

As I stand on the boat, feeling like I've just been in a B movie remake of Bogart's movie 'Casablanca', I take out the letter I received from Ellie a week earlier. It consists of a watercolour painting entitled, 'wet sad tulip

for Ian - where are you?', and an anonymous quotation:

*'Love is a profound urge to preserve and extend life in all its manifestations - a reaching out for union with all living forces that protect, comfort and sustain. It includes love of mate, family, friends, work, humanity, God - all the wonders of the mind and spirit. It is acceptance and affirmation of life in its totality.*

*Love is all of one piece, growing out of a healthy self-regard. What man does to others, he does to himself. This spirit of mutuality, this capacity to give and receive is love's keynote. Impossessive, those who truly love go about this business of living, knowing that everyone has a right to his own integrity; they know that life is so infinitely varied that dependence for personal fulfillment upon any single individual, or upon any one thing is a delusion. Hence rejections, real or fancied, can be borne more philosophically.'*

Once again, a feeling of utter disgust filled me. I pulled out my diary and wrote:

*'Don't throw this shit at me! Everyone knows what should be. Everyone wants to be able to love, to give it and receive it. Thank-you for pointing out that I am possessive, dependent, deluded and unable to love. Thank-you for at least admitting you rejected me, and no, sorry, I haven't yet learned how to bear it ('it' being denial, deceit and betrayal, as well as rejection) philosophically. Maybe reading Wittgenstein would help!'*



## 27.

Life after Morocco lost some of its surreal quality. However, it still proceeded in fits and starts unlike the smooth, orderly plot and character development of a good story 'line'. Life, it seemed to me, unlike a novel or a movie, did not have a 'line'. For most people it was perceived and experienced on several levels at once. Events did not occur consecutively, but rather in overlapping clusters. Try as you might, you could not control the tempo and rhythm of Life. Nor could you control when the unexpected occurred to complicate or throw off whatever rhythm you had established.

In the novel, the phase of 'life at L.S.E.' was over. In real life, it turned out there was one more page in the chapter - an epilogue.

I arrived back in England feeling like I'd made a terrible mistake in leaving L.S.E. - that I'd let the pressures of what was happening with Ellie influence my decision as to how to best deal with the situation at L.S.E. The truth is that I was terrified about the future. I was having withdrawal symptoms from my cold turkey exit from 'straight' society.

Within a few days of returning, I was on my way to an appointment with Mr. Steuer. As I entered the office, I felt like the prodigal son, ashamed of his misadventures and pleading to be taken back into the fold. I was guilty of wasting my opportunities. 'If I could only have hung in there for six more months', I reasoned, 'I would have had a Masters, and the world would have been my oyster'.

I had hardly begun my confession before Mr. Steuer, cut me off abruptly. He informed me that he had written to me in Morocco, that he was disappointed that I was back so soon, and that all he could do now was to tell me a story.

The story went something like this:

'Once upon a time in Japan, there was a young man who was an accomplished swordsman. Although already skilled at his art, this young man decided that he wanted to be the very best swordsman in all Japan. He had heard of a Master Swordsman, an old Samurai, who lived far away in the mountains. The young man made up his mind to seek him out.

After many days travel, he eventually found the old man.

"Master, will you teach me all the skills of swordsmanship?" asked the young man deferentially.

On hearing this, the old warrior slapped him and told him to come back the next day.

The next day the young man returned and repeated, "Master, will you teach me all the skills of swordsmanship?" Again, the old man slapped him and told him to return the following day.

This went on for several weeks. Every day, the same thing. Gradually, the young man became more and more frustrated. One day, his frustration turned to anger. As the old man once again slapped him, he drew his sword and took a fighting stance. On seeing this, the old samurai did likewise. There ensued a tremendous fight. Neither man gained the upper hand. It seemed as if whatever advantage the old man had because of greater experience and skill was offset by the young man's vigor and determination. In the end, both men dropped their arms, exhausted. Then the old samurai picked himself up, turned to the young man, and said: "Go now, I have taught you all I know.'

I looked blankly at Mr. Steuer.

"I don't see how this relates to my situation," I began. "Could you explain ...?"

"I'm really very busy," snapped Mr. Steuer. "I must ask you to leave now."

"But ..."

"Goodbye."

So I left - unenlightened and unappreciative of the pearl of wisdom that had just been cast before me. This time I hadn't closed the door to L.S.E. - they had closed it.



On the 10<sup>th</sup>. May. I went down to Southampton to pick up my guitar from the clerk on the S/S Leopard, as arranged. At first, everything went smoothly. I gave him the £15 balance on my ticket and he gave me the guitar. I started walking off towards the dock gates. Suddenly a car chased after me and about four or five Customs officials jumped out. They bundled me into the car and took me back to a nearby shed. There I was questioned while the guitar was inspected. Presumably, they thought I had hidden several pounds of grass or hash inside. In the end, I had to pay duty on the guitar and I was allowed to go.

What happened in Southampton was a shock. It challenged the 'good boy' part of me that was outraged that anyone would suspect me of being dishonest.

There were a couple of more shocks in quick succession. Shortly after this incident, I received a letter from my mother. It contained a cheque for £25 with instructions to go and buy myself a new suit and a new pair of shoes. The letter concluded with the comment, "please don't sink any lower, Ian."

Then a few weeks later, I heard from my father. Ostensibly, his card was a reply to a long birthday letter that I had sent him. This letter had been an attempt to convey to him what I believed, as unambiguously and uncritically as possible. On some level, I was reaching out to him for understanding and support.

His reply:

*'Thank-you for your card and letter. Most thoughtful of you to remember such an insignificant occasion. We drove down to Peebles. had a splendid lunch, then sat in the sun overlooking the Tweed. Also had a very happy family celebration. It is most agreeable, especially for me now that I am in bonus time, to be surrounded by brothers and sisters, their children and grandchildren, all so happy, contented, and prosperous. I share their pride and happiness and revel in the laughter and gaiety of youth - a real tonic. We miss, on these occasions, the gay and gallant boy who lays at Casino. I like to think that we never consciously let the side down. (My emphasis) The weather here has turned cool again but we get the odd spot of sunshine.*

A.D.B.'

I stared at these lines for a long time, in disbelief. 'The gay and gallant boy to whom my father was referring, was the other 'Ian' - Iain, to be exact. Iain Cumming, only child of my Uncle Arth and Auntie Doris, had gone to Sandhurst during the Second World War, and then, on his first posting, to Monte Casino in Italy, had been instantly killed by enemy gunfire in a fierce battle. I had been compared to him before, but in a positive way, similarities being noted appreciatively. This was below the belt. This was bullshit.

Diary entry that evening:

*'You've done it this time, Dad. I've tried to do things your way, Mum's way. I've worked like crazy to meet your expectations. No I didn't go to Sandhurst, but I did get through University with flying colors. I tried my best in London and things fell apart. I needed your support. I needed you to fucking LISTEN, just for once. I wrote to you from the heart. So what do you do? You write me this bullshit that doesn't respond to anything I said, and then attempts to lay a monumental guilt-trip, twisted, unfair, undeserved, uncalled for, a projection of your hang-ups - your stuff about having been a failure as a soldier, a failure as a father. You always compared yourself to Uncle Arth - by building him up to be such a hero, with his V.C. and M.C. ('it was nearly his second V.C.') and then putting yourself down. That's your trip! Don't fucking lay it on me!!'*

\* \* \*

At the beginning of May, I moved into a large flat at 35 The Cut. This street connected Waterloo Bridge Road with Blackfriars Bridge Road. The street was famous for, amongst other things, being the address of The Old Vic Theatre. I had found the flat through an ad in the New Statesman. The flat was occupied by two female social

workers, a Mary Herron, somebody called Val, and a Canadian guy named Jack. I got the flat after being interviewed by Mary and Jack.

I felt grateful and excited. Finally I had a room of my own. And I liked the concept - my own private space combined with shared common quarters like kitchen and bathroom. Not only that; looking in *The New Statesman* had been a brainwave. It had put me in touch with like-minded people, working people (not hippies or students), people my age who had leftist leanings and who were on the fringe of the 'alternative culture'. The rent was cheap, less than £4 a week, plus 5 shillings for gas and £1 a week for food. Even the location was good - on the south bank of the Thames, separated from painful memories and linked to the world of theatre, and possibly my future path.

The nightmare of L.S.E., Ellie, and Morocco was over. To hell with the past. To hell with university. To hell with my father. Time to start anew. Time to reach out.

At the top of my list of things to investigate were training options for theatre, and film or T.V. I made enquiries about R.A.D.A., L.A.M.D.A., the Drama Centre, the Royal College of Art (for T.V. and film), and B.B.C., and as a result of these, I put in written applications to L.A.M.D.A. (The London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art) and B.B.C. At the same time, and on a completely different wavelength, I looked for ways to get back to Canada. Brenda was particularly helpful and suggested that I write to her father, O.J. Firestone, a well-known economist in Ottawa who had both good contacts and quite some influence.

My first letter to Brenda's father was pompous and convoluted.

*'I think that it is a truism to say that the problem that confronts Brenda and I [Brenda was also in a state of crisis at L.S.E.], as well as many other people that I know, is trying to find a means of self-actualization. This problem, I think, intensifies in the case of creative individuals who feel that they have received sufficient 'training' and want to start developing and expressing some of their own ideas. Then there is the problem of what medium of expression i.e. artistic or intellectual, creative or analytic, the world of ideas or the word of people ... , and so on, in a seemingly infinite progression of dichotomies ...'*

(and on the appeal of working for an organization like C.B.C.)

*'The possibility of horizontal mobility between different and yet artistically related activities is appealing to one who cannot, or has not, yet decided whether he is a musician, a director, a writer, an actor, a journalist, or a sociologist.'*

Somehow, despite the tone and content of what I wrote, Mr. Firestone deciphered the essential message that I was interested in the possibility of working in Film or T.V. Not only that, he replied promptly and said that he was willing to help. He asked me to clarify my interests in T.V. and mentioned three areas:

- (a) the creative side (including writing),
- (b) being an assistant to a producer,
- (c) being a trainee producer.

He said he would forward my reply to his letter to a Mr. Griffiths, President of Bushnell Communications. It turned out that amongst other holdings, Bushnell controlled Granada T.V. of the U.K.

The other person I reached out to was Hamish Blair Cunynghame. My letter to him was essentially to ask for a letter of reference. However, given the upheavals in my life and my inner state, I felt I had no right to ask for a reference without first filling him in with what had happened. The result was another attempt to filter my pain and confusion through a screen of explanation and justification:

*'This enormous range of choice at the moment seems to constitute a tangled undergrowth, a web of enormous complexity, that is trapping rather than liberating me. At present I feel I am qualified for nothing, that all doors seem to be closed, that somehow what seemed to be a diverging path full of light about a year ago, has become a closed room, dark and claustrophobic.'*

His reply came a few weeks later:

*'Dear Ian,*

*If I can do anything to help you I certainly shall, but I really think it would do much more good if we could manage to have a talk together before I commit myself in a concise form as a referee. I should rather do this because at present I don't really find it very clear from your letter to know just for what you want my reference. I have a hunch that what you want is my advice. I may as usual be impertinent in this respect but at any rate, it would not do us any harm to see each other.'*

## 28.

As the spring began to merge into the summer, I began to feel I was settling down in my new home at The Cut. That is, until one day I received an unexpected phone call.

Jack answered the phone.

"It's for you, Ian ... someone called Françoise."

"Who?" I asked, drawing a blank.

"Françoise, she says she met you on the train to Paris."

"Oh, Françoise!" I felt my heart lift. Yes, Françoise who had been there when I needed someone to talk to.

Françoise didn't say much on the phone other than she was in trouble and could I meet her. A few hours later, I was sitting across a table from her in a coffee shop in West Hampstead.

She *did* have troubles, no question of that. They included:

- (a) being four months pregnant,
- (b) no job (told to get out by her employer, who also happened to be the father, when she broke the news),
- (c) no money,
- (d) no place to stay,
- (e) hadn't eaten properly for days,
- (f) a visa that expired in a week,
- (g) unsympathetic and impecunious parents in France.

I listened to her story. There seemed to be only one thing to do. I invited her back to The Cut.

We slept in my room, in separate beds. The first night neither of us slept much. Françoise was distraught. She kept repeating that she wanted to have the baby, but then in the next breath saying that it was impossible. I didn't know what to do, what to say. I tried to comfort her. She asked me to stroke her stomach, to feel her baby.

So many things were all happening at once. Here was someone with a aching need, asking for me to be the comforter, the nurturer. This was something I was good at. I liked to nurture and be nurtured. I had wanted Ellie to let me play that role at times, but she had always been so independent and self-sufficient. But this was different. Françoise was vulnerable in every way.

"Do you think my baby's beautiful? Do you think I'm beautiful? Stroke my baby, please." And I stroked her baby, sharing her pain and pleasure." The next day Françoise was even more distraught.

"My visa expires on the 31<sup>st</sup>. May. I have to go back to France before then," she said. "What am I going to do?"

"You're sure your parents won't help you," I said hopefully.

"Mon dieu! Non, non. They couldn't accept it. I can't let them see me like this."

"Is there anyone else you could stay with in France?"

"No, only my parents."

It seemed to be a problem with no solution, except one.

"Have you thought about an abortion?" I asked tentatively.

"Yes ... but I want the baby. Besides I don't have the money." Françoise looked trapped, like a snared rabbit. Her eyes brimmed with tears as she looked from side to side, as if seeking help from somewhere. The previous night she'd gone into spells of turning her head from side to side, rhythmically, for a long time, banging her head on the pillow as she came down. I wondered if she was in some kind of catatonic state.

"Would you like me to make some inquiries?" I asked.

"I don't know. Maybe. If you think so."

I called several places and eventually found a clinic that would carry out a 'safe' abortion, even at this advanced state of pregnancy. The cost was £80. I told Françoise that it was up to her, but that if she wanted to go ahead, I would lend her the money.

Four days later, I accompanied Françoise to the clinic. I waited about an hour and then she appeared, white-faced, numb, speechless.

As we reached the front door of The Cut, Françoise squeezed my hand and in a small voice said, "thank-you for being there."

\* \* \*

The door opened and Hamish Blair-Cunynghame ushered me in to his flat on Mansfield Street. Some time previous, he had replied to my letter and had agreed to give me an hour of his time.

"Now, how can I help you?" he said, quickly coming to the point.

"Well, I wanted to explain to you something of what's been happening in my life ..."

"And you would like me to write you a reference. Can I ask you who this would be intended for?"

I recoiled from his tone of voice. He seemed so cool and detached. It was only a year ago that he had asked me to go fishing with him for five days in the north of Scotland. And when I had left Sedbergh, he had given me a reference that I could use at will.

"Well, I am applying to both B.B.C. and Bushnell Communications in Canada."

"Perhaps this would be a good time for you to tell me what happened at L.S.E. and what you've been doing since." Blair-Cunynghame took off his glasses and leaned forward. "As briefly and clearly as you can," he added.

It was when I was explaining how inflexible I felt L.S.E. was that he interrupted me.

"You know, you can't always blame the institution. You have to take responsibility for your choices."

"I *am* taking responsibility for my choices," I said, resenting the interruption. "I haven't asked my parents for a cent. I don't owe the government anything. Since I left L.S.E., I haven't gone running to anyone for help. I've tried to cope with the situation on my own." I could feel my anger rising up. I was tired of being told that 'the institution' was O.K. and that I wasn't. It was like what Ken Kesey said in 'One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest', or C. Wright Mills in The Power Elite.

"Listen, Ian. I understand that you've gone through a difficult time. You're feeling things out, and that's alright. It's even alright to rebel and 'drop out' for a while. But then, you have to put your life back together again, and seek your place in society."

"That's what I'm trying to do." What was the man talking about!? I had applied to B.B.C., Bushnell, even L.A.M.D.A.

"But you seem so angry. What happened to your sense of humor?"

Yes, that's what he'd liked so much in me before, my 'sense of humor'. I was the jolly court-jester. I was Peter Sellars and Spike Milligan rolled into one.

"How can I keep my sense of humor when my father is enraged about the whites losing control to the blacks in Rhodesia? How can I keep my sense of humor when I open the newspaper and read about the Biafran war, the My Lai massacre, the Ohio State and Kent State shootings? They were just students like me - following their conscience. Someone's at fault there. Someone's to blame."

"There are good people, and not so good people in every strata of society. You have to sort out the chaff from the wheat." Blair-Cunynghame sounded earnest now. He had lost his coolness.

"It seems to me that sometimes whole groups of people act in a certain way. I searched for 'good people' at L.S.E. but in the end it seemed as if there was a general reluctance to support and encourage my ideas because they just didn't fit in - they were outside the mainstream."

“I understand that your hopes were dashed. But you have to move past that. Past your anger and bitterness.”

“I’m trying to be true to my conscience. I’m trying to sort out right from wrong. I mean, look at all those people out there, demonstrating for what they believe. I don’t just want to follow the herd ... but then sometimes I feel guilty. Why am I not out there? I mean, if you really believe in what you’re doing, you should be prepared to back up your beliefs with action.”

“What kind of action? How far would you be prepared to go?” I could feel that Blair-Cunynghame had drawn back into himself again.

“Well, do whatever it takes to be heard. People don’t listen unless you make enough noise. Beat drums, march in the streets, do ‘sit-ins’, throw rocks if you have to ...”

“Throw rocks?” His tone of voice hardened.

“If that’s the only way to attract people’s attention, to show what you feel.”

“Well, there are a few things that you and I have disagreed about. Would you throw rocks at my window to make your point?”

“If I had to ...”

In my mind I felt clear. In my stomach I felt sick. I knew I had gone too far. Rightly or wrongly, I had tagged him as a member of ‘The Power Elite’, and thus as ‘part of The Problem’, namely the evils of Capitalism. And for his part, he saw me as a turncoat; I had been reared to join his class. He had taken a personal interest in me. He had encouraged me, supported me, listened to me. He had even suggested that I join one of the companies of which he was Chairman, B.O.A.C. or The Royal Bank of Scotland. He had been like a father to me. But now I had challenged him one too many times.

“Well, I have to get ready for my dinner appointment. I’m afraid I cannot give you a reference at this time, but I wish you well in your searching.”

As I heard his door close, I knew that I would probably never see him again. I never did.

\* \* \*

There had been just too many shocks. I turned my gaze firmly back to Canada. How to get back as soon as possible? That was the question. I went to the Canadian Embassy and found out that it took a minimum of three months to process an application. They also told me that I had to apply in Britain and that I had more chance of being granted immigrant status if I had a job, or at least strong job prospects.

In July, Françoise returned from France. She moved into my room at The Cut and we became lovers. I tried to help her find a job - waitressing, office work, anything. As usual, it seemed as if I had conflicting aims. On the one hand, I was trying to disentangle myself from ties to Britain so as to get back to Canada, on the other hand I was becoming more involved with Françoise.

As far as getting back to Canada was concerned, I continued to look to Brenda's father for help. At the beginning of August, I got a letter from him saying that he had spoken to Mr. Griffiths of Bushnell Communications. Apparently, Mr. G. was planning to make a trip to Britain in September and had tentatively agreed to see me at that time.

Sometimes I felt like Life was one big interview, with someone else evaluating your worth as an individual. Certainly that year felt like one interview after another. Steuer, Bohm, Martin, Steuer again, Mary and Jack at The Cut; even my meeting with Blair-Cunynghame was a kind of interview - to see if I was worthy of a reference. Now there were two more interviews coming up: one at The Canadian Embassy, to determine whether I would be granted immigrant status, the other to check out my suitability for employment with a large Canadian Company.

I had my immigration interview on the 27<sup>th</sup>. August. Here is the entry in my diary for that day:

*‘THE big interview at The Canadian Embassy. Françoise accompanied me. Sat in the waiting room smoking Gitanes for what seemed like ages. Finally I’m shown in. I show them letters from O.J.*

*Firestone and Griffiths, as well as my grades from Queens. Told them I'd been a guide at the British Pavilion at Expo '67 and that I speak adequate French. Told them my brother-in-law had recently got a job as a Professor of Philosophy at Loyola University in Montreal. Didn't tell them that Jim and Joy have just separated! Then they tell me that there is a healthy economic situation in Canada and that there shouldn't be any problem. After a brief interview I was granted 'Independent Immigrant Status'.*

PLANS: (1) to get a charter ticket for the beginning of October, some time after my interview with Griffiths,

(2) to pack my trunk,

(3) prepare Françoise for the fact that I'm going back (this is not going to be easy!)

It was exactly three weeks later that I had my interview with Mr. Griffiths. This time Françoise did not accompany me. We had become close and she was finding the prospect of my leaving difficult and painful.

Diary entry: 17<sup>th</sup>. Sept. 1970

*'Mr. G. and I had a nice friendly chat this morning, in a nice sunny office in the good old Granada building on Golden Square. Mr. G. is a nice, friendly President with a permanent Pepsodent smile. Mr. G had even thought to bring along his chief executive officer, a more serious looking man who sat a couple of degrees out of my angle of vision. Everything is going just fine. The armchairs are extremely comfortable, the air-conditioning hums sweetly. Miss Bedsocks brings in coffee and biccies.*

*"Careful, dear, don't drop that now," says Mr. G. with a wink at me. Miss Bedsocks giggles.*

*"Isn't she great?" adds Mr. G. as she leaves.*

*"Do you mind if I smoke?" I ask boldly.*

*"No, of course not. Go right ahead."*

*Friendly chap, this Mr. Griffiths. As I light a Gitanes, I turn my head a fraction and catch a glance of Mr. Chief Exec. making notes. I wonder what he's writing? 'Longish hair, beard, aggressive, unstable? Smokes French cigarettes. Nice suit though...'*

*"Now why did you not complete your Master's degree, Mr. Brown?"*

*God, this one's going to be a millstone round my neck for the rest of my life. I get into something about academic coercion. More and more these days, I'm feeling, 'hey if you poke me buddy, I'm going to poke you back ... I'm going to put things in black and white because, you know what, I don't fucking care anymore!*

*Anyway, they must have picked up on my vibes because in what seems like less time than it took to stub out my cigarette, Mr. G. is saying, "well, Mr. Brown, you see, it's like this ... er, Bushnell just doesn't have any vacancies open at the moment ... and, well, there's a terrible economic situation in Canada right now ... yes, Government cut-backs in grants and subsidies ... and, er, of course we have Canadian students, some of them with Master's degrees, and what can we tell them?"*

*Mr. G. looks at his Chief Exec. Officer and together they rise. "Probably your best plan is to stay in Britain and get training in Film or T.V. here."*

*And suddenly Miss Bedsocks appears, right on cue, summoned perhaps by a bell under the table, and I am ushered out.'*

The bridge back to Canada just got blown up! Maybe I should tell both the Brits. who want me to move back to Canada and the Canucks who think I should stay here that I have decided to move to Upper Volta, or Lower Moldavia, or somewhere like that. Somewhere out of sight!

There was nothing stopping me from returning to Canada - except my own feelings, I had my immigrant visa, I could return at any time. But the interview with Griffiths, and the failure to create a positive impression left me feeling crushed. I decided I should stay in Britain for six months for my peace of mind, and in that time determine my next move.

The greatest need that I felt was for a safe, quiet place away from it all - an 'asylum', as R.D. Laing would call it. I needed to let my mind slow down. I started to devise ways of escaping from the over-stimulation. If only I knew somebody who had a cottage in the country somewhere - somewhere I could just 'be', and / or start doing some serious writing. In the absence of that, I looked for more immediate remedies.

The thing that I most wanted to escape was the endless and all-pervasive noise. Outside there was the noise of the trucks and cars on The Cut, and further away, on Waterloo Bridge Road and Blackfriars Bridge Road. This was mixed in with the daily cockney street chorus of shouted directions, loud gossip and raucous laughter. As a third layer of sound, there was the rumble of trains, the high-pitched roar of jet engines overhead and the occasional wail of police and ambulance sirens. The fourth layer of intrusive sound came from inside the house. With five occupants in five rooms, there was the inevitable chatter and different sources of music that one might expect. To combat this relentless cacophony, that seemed magnified to the point where it was like emery paper on my nerves, I hit on the solution of using ear plugs. This worked quite well. The plugs dampened the sound to tolerable levels.

The other thing that I had to cut down on was the obsessive quest for knowledge. I vowed to read only one book at a time and decided that my focus to start with would be on Marxist theory.

One day, Val and Mary showed me the way up to the roof. They would go up there on occasion to sunbathe. This became a favorite place of escape. I would go up there with my cigarettes, a coffee, my ear plugs and a blanket, then lie down and gaze up at the sky and imagine I was somewhere else. I even started fantasizing about building a little shack up there, which would serve as my hermit's retreat, or 'asylum'.

But, as with everything, there was the contradiction. On the one hand, I wanted to escape. On the other, I wanted to confront, to immerse myself in social reality, to see life from the other side. I was never completely comfortable with the idea of 'escaping'. It depended what you were escaping - or what was helping you to escape i.e. drugs.

One Saturday, on a balmy Fall evening up on the roof, the topic came up with Mary Herron:

"Do you want a toke?" asked Mary, holding out a fat joint of grass.

"No thanks, I don't really like doing it ... plus I've had bad experiences the last couple of times."

Mary thought for a moment and then said: "Hmm, you might be better off with something like meditation or yoga. Maybe I should introduce you to my brother. He's coming down from Edinburgh next week."

"He lives in Edinburgh," I said, interested.

"Yes, he's at the University. He joined up with S.I.M.S. up there about a year ago."

"What does that stand for?"

"Student International Meditation Society, I think. It was started by the Maharishi, you know, George Harrison and all that bunch."

Of course I knew who she meant. The name immediately conjured up the image of the laughing, giggling, irrepressible, long-haired yogi who had been in the news so much. For a second, I flashed between this image and that of another long-haired, bearded man, albeit one with a much more serious expression - the man I was reading so much about, Karl Marx. It seemed to me, on reflection, that meditation qualified, like religion, as an 'opiate of the masses'. More contradictory images flashed through my mind: students putting flowers in the barrels of soldier's rifles, and a guru on a hill contemplating the flower in his hand. Wasn't meditating just another way of



escaping from reality? And as for George Harrison and all those rich weirdos who'd flown to India to see him, most of them were into drugs – 'Lucy in the sky with diamonds' and all that rubbish. Although not saying as much to Mary, I rejected the idea.

About a week later, Mary called me down from my room one evening.

"Ian, I'd like you to meet my brother."

"I hear you're at Edinburgh University," I blurted out, immediately struck by the fact that the guy in front of me did not look at all like a hippy.

"Yes, I'm studying Philosophy there."

Nor did he have the air of an intellectual, or 'a philosopher'. He spoke slowly and calmly. There was a quiet air of authority about him, and no trace of pretension. We talked for a while about various things. He told me about meditation without trying to sell it to me. The more we talked, the more I felt drawn to him. Here was someone who was British, but who was also somehow 'classless'. There were no tell-tale traces of wealth, privilege, or superiority. His hair and clothes were non-descript and his speech was devoid of any cultish mannerisms, and yet he had poise, composure, strength.

A week later I attended my first meeting at the S.I.M.S. center. The technique of meditation was explained to a small group of us. Then we were encouraged to ask any questions that we might have. I said that I didn't want to become someone who sat on a hill in a blissful state all the time and never acted in and on the world. To this, the 'initiator' replied that meditation didn't take you away from any particular interest. Rather, by calming you and clearing you, it made you more effective and efficient in whatever you did. So if, for example, you were a political radical, you would simply become a 'better' political radical through meditating, more decisive, better able to put thought into action. The man was very persuasive. I decided to pay the £20 initiation dues and proceed.

Each of us was then taken aside individually. When it came to my turn, I was asked a few questions including my birthdate. Then I was told that I was going to be given a 'mantra', that had been selected personally for me by the initiator. I was told that this mantra was mine and mine alone, and that I should not tell anyone what it was. The mantra was then whispered in my ear and I was told that this was the end of the initiation and that I was free to go.

I soon found out that meditation was not a panacea, but it certainly helped in the area of calming the mind. As I got used to the daily practice, I could feel how it slowed my whole metabolism and produced a deep, steady pattern of breathing. Meditation seemed to help restore the deeper rhythms, to allow the instinctual wisdom of the body to effect its healing. I loved the way that the repetition of the mantra slowly soothed the rapid-fire chatter of the mind.

But still, despite the ear plugs and meditation and forays to the roof, there was a need for a more complete escape. I kept returning to the idea that somehow there must be a way to rent a cottage in the country. There had to be some kind of magazine or paper that advertised such places. I started to make inquiries and eventually found out that, indeed there was such a periodical. It was called 'Dalton's Weekly' and was available at most newsagents. I went out right away and bought a copy. There, county by county, were all kinds of listings. I quickly realized that the further the location from London, the cheaper was the rent - which of course made sense. In the end I found a listing for a farm cottage in Devon for £15 a month. As it happened, Stuart Varney, one of The Cut's occupants, had recently completed his B.A. at L.S.E., and, like me, wanted a place to escape to so that he could write. I told him about the cottage in Devon and asked him if he would like to go in on the deal with me. Without any hesitation, he said 'yes'.

Two days later, I hitch-hiked down to a place called Bradworthy in North Devon. After veering further and further away from the main roads, I located the cottage just outside a sleepy little village with one pub. It couldn't have been better. The 'cottage' was in fact one half of a large farmhouse. There were two bedrooms, a kitchen, a

bathroom, and a living room with a large wood stove. And there was silence, utter silence. I paid the first month's rent on the spot.

Back in London, the question became how to survive economically, now that I had two homes to support. I had to make sure that my income would cover the £14 monthly rent for my room in The Cut, as well as the £7.50 rent on the cottage in Bradworthy (my half) and my share of the bills in both places.

I needed part time work, a job that would allow me to work for a while, make enough money to cover expenses, then let me disappear for a few weeks to Devon. But it also had to be a job that I could resume at will, when I returned to London. This seemed like too much to hope for. But right away, Stewart said that he'd heard of an agency called 'Rentastaff' that employed people on a casual basis. Shit jobs, admittedly, and at shit wages, but at least they were short-term, in plentiful supply, and allowed the freedom to come and go.

A few days later, I went to the agency, which was located beside Charing Cross station, within walking distance on the other side of the river. This time there was no interview, no Miss Bedsocks, no potted plants - just a dingy office, and a line up of men who looked like they'd stepped out of a photo about The Great Depression. Behind a counter, a couple of sleazy looking guys asked a few brief questions and then handed out cards with addresses on them.

On my card were the words,

'ANNING, CHADWICK & KIVER,  
West Thames Street, London Bridge:  
wanted immediately, I de-stapler'

I was told that I should start the following morning.

Entering another world, another time. The global village of Notting Hill, the radical chic microcosm of The Open Space, the ivory tower central nervous system of L.S.E., the gasworks urban blight of Kensal Rise, the arterial noise of The Cut, and now another chamber of London's organism to traverse, to explore, to be engulfed by.

West Thames Street. The world of Victorian dockland. Jack the Ripper territory. Narrow empty streets, hemmed in by hulking red-brick warehouses pitted with grimy broken window-panes. A world, seemingly forsaken, awaiting only the execution of the wrecker's ball.

The sign said, 'Anning, Chadwick & Kiver'. The first impression I received as I entered the building was of an unbearable stench that made me want to throw up. Someone at Rentastaff had told me that Anning, Chadwick & Kiver was a fur warehouse, so I figured the smell might have something to do with the curing process. This turned out to be the case. As I was led to my workplace, I was taken through a large room where the curing of the skins took place. The smell was so overpowering that I had to hold my breath. There were quite a number of workers and as I looked around I realized they were all women. For the first time in my life I became the object of catcalls.

"Allo darlin', comin' to work with us, are you then? Goin' to get the fur flyin', is that it? You can get my fur flyin' anytime, darlin'."

White-faced, sallow complexions, hollow-eyed, curlers-in-hair Cockney ladies. The genuine East-end article. Desensitized, and yet still alive and perky in their resilient beings.

Leaving them behind, I was taken into a room full of already cured furs.

"Your job, until the Persian Lamb show next week, is to take the staples out of all these price-tags. This is all you'll need."

And with that, I was handed a long-handled screw-driver and shown a corner of the room that contained stack upon stack of Persian Lamb skins.

For the rest of the week, that was my job - for nine hours a day, 'de-stapling' furs with my screw-driver.

The following week, there was the big Persian Lamb show. About four times a year, there was a show that featured one particular kind of fur such as mink, sable, fox. These shown attracted an elite group of

international buyers, whose itinerary took them between the major selling centers such as Montreal, Leningrad, New York, Stockholm and London. The buyers struck me as cartoon caricatures of 'Capitalists' - fat, cigar-smoking, pin-stripe suits, fur-collared overcoats, loud and autocratic in manner.

For the three days of the show, my job changed from de-stapler to 'go-for'. I had to bring certain selections of furs to display when directed to by a particular buyer. It was a bit like doing a practicum for 'Exploited Labor 101'

"Boy, bring me lot 597, and hurry up about it!" said a cigar-chomping Capitalist.

The Marxist literature that I had been reading began to take on a much deeper meaning.

I felt like I was in a time warp. This was Dickensian London. I couldn't believe it was 1971. If only places like L.S.E. had on-site learning like this. And the first people to experience them should be the arm-chair Marxists like Swingewood, followed by the arm-chair Zen Masters like Steuer. Think of the thesis titles one could create: 'Zen and The Art of Curing A Fur' or 'The Sound Of One Fur Dying'.

I trudged back and forth all day with sets of Persian Lamb skins. 'Hey boy, get this, get that', 'Yassa boss, massa, right away'. By the end of the day I could hardly contain my anger. I started thinking about Blair Cunynghame; yes, dammit, I'd been right to challenge him. There was no way I should feel guilty about that. Capitalism was a death culture built on exploitation of people, of animals, of the land and its resources - driven by greed and lack of caring for inequities and inequalities. Fuck it! Why did the workers take it?

On Friday, I picked up my weekly pay check for £13 (which worked out to about six shillings an hour). A couple of pints of beer an hour is about what I was making, and that's about what was needed to keep going. At least I was getting the rent paid off.

As I practiced my meditation in the evenings, I kept reminding myself of what the initiator had said - meditating and feelings of anger were not necessarily contradictory. I just had to find a way to channel my anger.

\* \* \*

Françoise returned from France in October. She told me that she'd had problems getting through Customs because of the number of visits that she'd made to Britain, as well as her lack of a job. Then she asked me if I would do her a big favor. She wanted me to write her a letter posing as a prospective Au Pair Guardian, so that on her next trip back she would have less hassle getting into the country. I said I'd have to think about it.

I was very confused by my relationship with Françoise. I knew I liked her and cared for her, but I didn't know how involved I should get, or more to the point, I didn't know how to reduce the involvement I already had. Initially, I had wanted to help her out. Then I had asked her to stay. Now I felt I was getting trapped by her dependency on me and my own indecision. On the other hand, I could feel that I was rationalizing the relationship on the basis of a sense of failure of my previous relationships with women. Always, there was the specter of my parents' disastrous relationship. I so wanted to learn how to make things different, make things better. I felt I had to prove my ability to help, to support, to be a good mate.

One thing that bothered me was that I felt I could not be angry with women. Why hadn't I got angry with Ellie - why hadn't I told her to fuck off. Why hadn't I shown her my rage about her relationship with Roy, her betrayal of me? I had vowed not to be like my father, that was the problem. He had been angry at my mother so much of the time. It had seemed so wrong, so unfair. She had always appeared so defenseless. I had to be different.

One rainy cold day, I came back from work and I found a postcard waiting for me. It was from Ellie. On the front was a painting of 'Le Lit' by Toulouse-Lautrec. On the back was written:

*'Ian, when I saw this in the Louvre, I missed you so much that I wanted to send it to you on the spot, but was shy to. Anyway, forgive me if I'm out of order in sending it now. We will be friends eventually?'*

No, I didn't understand how to be with women, not at all.

I spent the first two weeks of November at the cottage in Bradworthy by myself. It was during that time that I embarked on a mammoth forty page letter to Jayant Lele, one of my Sociology professors at Queens. I felt the need to detach myself from the present and try to make some sense of where I'd been in the previous year or two. Lele was head of the department, and it was he who had encouraged me to go to L.S.E. I liked and respected him. I also felt I owed him an explanation as to why I had dropped out of L.S.E.

I settled into a steady and productive rhythm. Up by 9, 15 minutes meditation, breakfast of toast, marmalade and coffee, writing in the morning, lunch, afternoon walk, back between 4 and 5, light the wood stove, have supper, listen to music or play guitar, meditate, bed. I felt I was reclaiming myself.

After my money ran out, I returned to London. There was a letter from The Old Vic awaiting me, offering me employment as an usher. Within a few days, I was ushering in the evening, and back to working for Rentastaff in the day.

My job at The Old Vic, however humble, gave me the opportunity to see some of the great plays, done at their best by some of Britain's finest actors and actresses. In the first two weeks, I saw Maggie Smith play the lead in Hedda Gabbler by Ibsen. Here, once again, as in 'The Blue Angel', was the dark side of women, the destructive force coming out of the oppressiveness of their role and position. Another play I had the opportunity of seeing night after night was an adaptation of The Idiot by Dostoevsky. Watching this play rekindled my love affair with Dostoevsky – one that had started with reading Crime and Punishment in Montreal. There were several things about the character of 'The Idiot' that made an impact. Firstly, I was struck by the simplicity, naivete, and essential goodness of the man. I felt a resonance with the trusting, uncritical Sedbergh 'me'. But within the idiot's simplicity lay the seeds of vulnerability; in the openness to the world, there were few if any defensive shields. There seemed an inevitability that such a character would get hurt in one way or another. But what of the 'me' now? Who was I becoming?

One thing was for sure. Any possible connection with 'The Idiot' was fast disappearing. I was determined to find knowledge, through both books and first hand experience. It started dawning on me that the Faustian theme of selling your soul to the Devil for knowledge seemed to fit with an alarming precision. It *did* seem that the more I stuffed ideas into my mind, the less nourishment my soul received. As in the Garden of Eden, simple demarcations between right and wrong, began to get fuzzy. Temptation to 'experiment' became stronger, and just about everything became fair game for questioning and scrutiny.

\* \* \*

Diary Entry: 6/12/70

'Finances:

<u>Monthly Expenses</u>		<u>Income</u>	
<i>Rent (The Cut)</i>	- £13.00	<i>Old Vic (ushering)</i>	£15.00
<i>Electricity</i>	- 15/-	<i>Rentastaff</i>	£50.00
<i>Gas</i>	- 10/-	<i>Teaching</i>	£ 4.00
<i>Food (kitty)</i>	- £3.00		
<i>Rent</i>	- £6.50		
<i>+ Rent / food for Bradworthy</i>			

*A Day in the Life:*

*6.00 a.m. Alarm pierces my dreams. Sense the cold. Hear the damned morning traffic on The Cut, and Waterloo and Blackfriars Bridges. Snuggle down.*

*Put on my work boots and jeans. Have a hard-boiled egg, toast and a cup of instant coffee. Leave before anyone else is up.*

*6.30 a.m. Waterloo station. Rush hour madness. Take the tube east to Plaistow. Frosty, can see my breath. Walk through east-end urban squalor, the salmon pink of the rising sun trying to penetrate the smog. Already the smell of fermenting hops intermingled with the Auschwitz death smell from the glue factory.*

*7.30 a.m. Usual confused gathering of casual workers at the Bass Charrington warehouse. It's getting close to Christmas so I've been 'promoted' (?) from stacking wine crates to being a driver's mate. Most of us are having our first fag of the day while we await further orders. Here comes Colin. He signals to me. That's good – I've been his mate for three days now and it doesn't look like I've done anything to alienate him.*

*11.15 a.m. Colin and I having a late breakfast of greasy bacon and eggs somewhere in Whitechapel. We've been delivering crates of wine for over three hours. Colin being quite friendly today. He's asking me questions – trying to figure me out. It's easier for me to tell him about three years in Canada than it is to talk about my life at Sedbergh and my upbringing. Oh Canada – forever neutral in people's minds.*

*2.00 p.m. We make an unscheduled stop at a pub near Euston.. Colin unloads about 4 crates of wine. When Colin comes back to the cab, he says, "if you can keep your bleedin' mouth shut, there'll be some of that for you to keep you merry at Christmas." Whatever you say boss. Sounds good to me.*

*4.30 p.m. Foreman says I can leave. No more work for the day. Punch out my time card. I like this job. Get to move around, get to see the sights of London, have unscheduled coffee breaks, and have worthwhile fringe benefits ('liquid capital', one of the better inventions of modern capitalism).*

*6.00 p.m. Back at The Cut. Françoise is working for a few hours at the Young Vic Restaurant across the street. Stuart is back from his Rentastaff job. We talk briefly about our plans to spend Xmas at the cottage in Bradworthy. Stuart grumbles about how long it will take him to save up the money for the Triumph 650 cc that he wants to get for his round the world trip next year.*

*6.45 p.m. Cook up some sausages, have a quick shower, and get into my usher's outfit.*

*7.30 p.m. Have made the transition from mingling with a confused mob of down and out misfits to politely ushering the perfumed and bejeweled elite of London society to their plush burgundy seats. I wonder what they will make of 'The Idiot'. I am treated like 'the invisible man', and that's how I feel; 'they' have no idea who or what I am. I feel like a spy in the Czar's court.*

*11.00 p.m. Exhausted. Brief cuddle with Françoise and go to sleep.'*

\* \* \*

“Why did you let him stay at The Cut?”

The question came from Jerry as we walked into the village of Bradworthy to buy some milk and bread. He was referring to Iain Anderson who had stayed with me for a few days earlier in the month.

“I don’t know. I don’t know whether to regard him as a friend any more.”

“A friend! After he went with Lesley behind your back?”

Lesley had been the love of my life at Queens University. Two summers ago, when I had been in Kenya, she had had an affair with Iain who had been one of my buddies at Expo 67 in Montreal.

“What would you do?” I asked Jerry as we passed the cows in the field adjoining the cottage.

“I would have nothing to do with him,” responded Jerry as he lit a Gitanes.

“Yeah, but we have things in common.”

“Like what?”

“Well, politics mainly. He’s become more radical and so have I. He’s working for an underground newspaper and I’m interested in starting one.”

As we walked into the farmyard, we could see Francoise and Liz through the window, sitting across the kitchen table.

“If Liz ever tried anything like that ...”, Jerry trailed off. The thing was that I could never imagine anything like that happening with Jerry. It was almost as if he and I were opposites as far as women were concerned. Jerry would make it very clear that Liz was *his* woman by showing at every opportunity that they were a couple. And yet he did it in such a way that he didn’t appear possessive. If he left Liz and I together for half an hour, there was *never* any hint of distrust or suspicion. On the other hand, I was so anxious to re-write gender roles, that I would de-emphasize my ‘partnership’ with Francoise. In the process, however, I could become vulnerable and this in turn could lead to distrust and jealousy. In the case of Francoise, Jerry and Stuart, this was kept at a minimum due to the fact that none of them were game players. Francoise was open and friendly but she didn’t flirt. It was the same with Jerry and Stuart. But even at the best of times I felt an underlying tension and anxiety about the whole dynamic of having a partner. I was struggling to understand myself, and I certainly didn’t understand women. There were other factors; where in my life were there role models of successful partnerships? Not at home, not at a boy’s boarding school, and not in the short term affairs of University life. The closest I’d come to it, was the relationship between my sister Joy and her husband Jim. But the latest I had heard about them was that they were about to separate.

“Francoise and I were discussing dirty dreams,” said Liz as we entered the kitchen. “They were quite vivid and, how can I say, bizarre.” Francoise giggled as she gave me a hug.

“Where’s Stuart?” I asked.

“He’s out in the back, chopping firewood,” replied Liz. “He’s a *real* man.”

That was the thing with Liz. She *was* a game player. It would make me feel insecure, but Jerry didn’t seem to mind. Like Stuart’s girl-friend, Pippa, Liz was an ex Girl’s boarding school type – rich parents and used to getting what she wanted. She would dress in black, and what with her long black hair, pale face and fire-hydrant lipstick, she reminded me of Eleanor Bron in the movie ‘Women in Love’. I found it hard being alone with her. Her manner, inflection and attitude all made me wince.

The Christmas of 1970 turned out to be happy and enjoyable for everyone. We cooked a huge turkey, drank the Mouton Cadet wine donated courtesy of Bass Charrington, sang songs around the wood stove, went for walks in the countryside and had worthwhile discussions.

Mentally though, I continued to hang on by a thread.

*Extract from Diary, Jan 1971:*

*‘You have spent your whole life climbing up one of the main foundations of that crazy complicated scaffolding that is called the structure of society – and that foundation is called ‘the educational system’. And such is your need for recognition and acceptance that you realize you could just keep climbing up this foundation forever, oblivious to other ways of being. Of*

*course, it's not just lack of perception, it's mostly fear – fear of losing the arduously attained foothold. What if you slipped? What if you fell?*

*Your thought has been conditioned to the vertical dimension ... anything worthwhile has to go up, up, up ... no-one in their right mind would even think of crawling down the scaffolding, or, God forbid, leaping off into the unknown.*

*But you know what? That's what you just did. You just jumped off, knowing perfectly well that you were equipped with neither wings nor parachute. Isn't that right? Isn't that what you did? Did you just jump? Was it voluntary? Or were you pushed? If it was voluntary, did you know what you were doing? You probably don't know, right?*

*Anyway, there you are now, still alive, on the ground, underneath the massive structure. And as you begin to wander around, from time to time you strain your neck upwards, you see pipes and tubes and pulleys and walkways that you'd never even noticed before. And suddenly it hits you, like a ton of bricks. You're free! You are free to do what you want. You can do your own thing. But what is your own thing? Well, it's not academic studies, that's for sure. You know that much now. Your thing has to be creative, like, like film.*

*You want to make films. O.K., O.K. ... but you don't know anything about making films ... so you have to learn about it ... O.K. O.K. ... but where? And as you peer upwards again you see way up in the tangle of scaffolding a sign that reads 'film studies'.*

*Well, sheeit, man! Society just won't let you do your own thing down here on the ground. It's just cold and gloomy down here. But what's the option? Start climbing back up on a different part of the foundation? Fuck that man, it would take me years to get back to where I was before I jumped.*

*Is there anything you could do right down here on the ground, even if it is cold and gloomy. Well heck, yes. You could start writing. All you need is a piece of paper and a pencil. You could be self-reliant, just like they taught you at Sedbergh. And you know that Miller is right when he says that nobody would write unless they had failed, unless they felt the need to rid themselves of the poison of their experience. O.K. so he's talking about 'creative writing', but isn't it possible to be creative at College? Shouldn't it be?*

*You cannot trust your intellect a second time. It has fucked with your values and beliefs. You cannot be everything to everyone. You cannot play all roles. You cannot have a thousand identities. You should not try to be a chameleon. That just led to confusion then implosion. Humpty Dumpty – strike 1.*

*Why not stop everything. Take some time. Gradually you will start to be able to make some basic distinctions. It is true that you jumped off the scaffolding. But it is an illusion that you are in a black hole. That's just a place you go to in your mind. Don't look up at the structure above you and worry about how or where to scramble on again. Don't even look around. First, just sit down where you are, and close your eyes. Look inwards. Find and seek to re-integrate your self.*

*Simplify. Separate absolute from relative. Trust, or at least respect the other 'I's' – instinct, intuition, imagination. Seek meeting-points between these impulses and your intellect, and try to let values and beliefs coagulate around these points. Then, perhaps, you won't feel so paralyzed. From these firm nuclei of consciousness, you will be able to rebuild an identity that you can inhabit in the outer world – an identity of cellular scaffolding, a strong safe place from whence to seek your niche in the structure of society.'*

Essentially, my writing at that time was all about trying to understand what the hell had happened to me and my life in the whirlwind events of the previous few years. I needed to somehow connect the Sedbergh schoolboy (whoever he was) to the writer / laborer / drop in the present (whoever he was!). I needed to explain myself, to myself and to others.

So in the cottage in Devon, the early part of 1971 was spent writing two very long letters, one to Joy and Jim (quoted above); and the other - a 51 page 'mini-thesis' letter to my old Sociology Prof./mentor at Queens, Dr. Jayant Lele. In my last year at Queens, I had been involved in a student action to complain about the behavior and actions of Professor Carsch. Towards the end of 1970, I had received a letter from Dr. Lele saying that there was to be a formal investigation and asking me for a full account of my experiences with Carsch. The first 13 pages of the letter dealt with the way in which Carsch had harassed and coerced students and the incredibly damaging results that these actions had wrought over a time period of one to two years. The second section of the letter dealt with my theory of the learning process and how it had applied to me as a student at Sedbergh, Queens, and most recently at L.S.E. This inevitably led into a section on what, in my opinion, had gone wrong at L.S.E. In particular, I reflected on what seemed to me as being the gradual disintegration of my socialized values as a result of the three years I had spent in Canada, and the influence of theorists that I had been exposed to during my course on 'Social Change' (with Lele) and subsequently. In particular, I had been influenced by the writings of Karl Marx.

Extracts from Letter to Lele, March, 1971

*'I think the impact of such a radically different environment (Queens, Kingston & Canada) resulted in a strong reaction to retain my old identity. In addition to religiously keeping up contacts with old friends in Britain, I hung on to the public school values of a healthy body and a clean-cut appearance. At the same time, I was enjoying the freedom of being away from my family and a confining school and class environment. This, coupled with a material freedom afforded by a generous scholarship, led to a clash between my former somewhat stoical outlook and a tentative new identity. In my second and third years at Queens, I gradually pulled away from parents and old school friends in the U.K. It was hard. On an intellectual level, I was becoming more aware of the negative aspects of the English educational system, and public schools, in particular. Yet, on an emotional level, I didn't want to betray deep loyalties.*

*However, when I read about 'free schools' such as Summerhill, I felt there was, perhaps, a meeting point between old and new. On the one hand, there were the same ideals of actualization of human potential as there had been at Sedbergh, but without the authoritarianism.*

*But then, as I started to come to terms with Marxist thought, I began to see my interests in Summerhill as being bourgeois, utopian and escapist. I became aware of the political argument that you cannot reform educational institutions without first changing the structure of society itself, and according to Marx, that could only happen through revolution. My experiences of teaching in an 'underprivileged' school in a poor part of London, have only hardened my political views.*

*I cannot say I have become 'a Marxist'. However 'politically sexy' that may sound, it is much too glib and unsubstantiated. The truth is that when I left L.S.E., I felt a breakdown of identification with society or its institutions, ideologies or groups. My self conception had deteriorated to the point where I saw myself as a bunch of incongruous roles stuffed into a brain, like so many moldy potatoes in a sack. Or to use another image, I saw my mind as a battle-ground for warring tribes, each with their own perspectives and values. Result? Paralysis. Dissolution.*

*I am very confused. Am I a writer or a teacher? Am I a Canadian or a Brit? Am I middle class and bourgeois, or am I bona fide member of the 'proletariat', now that I have started working in factories and warehouses? Am I a Marxist or an Anarchist? Am I an insider or an outsider? Do I stand for tolerance and pacifism or the overthrowal of 'repressive tolerance' and the inevitability of violent protest?'*

Out of this confusion, a few things were clear.



Extracts from a letter to my mother, Jan. 1971

*Thank-you for the Christmas presents of shirts, socks and the food parcel. Thank-you also for the clipping about becoming a Probation Officer. I understand your concerns with respect to my 'security' (or lack of), however at present, the last thing in the world I want is this kind of security.*

*You may find it strange or self-centered, but what I want to do is cut myself off from the expected pattern associated with someone of my background and education. I want to develop as an individual, not as in the past, along the lines set down by someone else. When people ask me, "what do you believe?" or "what do you want to do?", I often find it hard to answer. For too long, it hasn't been necessary for me to know what I believed or what I wanted to do because I have been able to shelter under the auspices of the various institutions that I have attended. Only twice have I proved my integrity as an individual; once in deciding not to go into the Army, and the other time, in deciding to leave L.S.E.*

*Now is the time to find my true self. I am rebelling against 'proving myself' according to others' standards. If I have to prove myself, then I want to do it according to my own criteria and capabilities. Perhaps the 'failure' of L.S.E. will be a kind of liberation from continually living in the future, continually 'delaying gratification', as the sociologists say. What a myth! As soon as you have slogged your way to the end of the rainbow, the pot of gold magically removes itself to the end of another rainbow. I'm fed up chasing rainbows.*

*At present, I am trying to find my own voice through writing. I have found ways of sustaining myself so that I can pay for food and accommodation and yet still allow time for writing. I am content in this.'*

## 31.

I had been down at the cottage in Devon for a week or so. It was early on a Saturday morning. I had arisen, get the wood stove going, and was warming my insides with some freshly brewed coffee. As I thought about my writing for the day, there was a knock at the door and Gwen told me that there was a call for me. There was no phone at the cottage but I had an arrangement with Bill and Gwen that I could use their number for important calls. It was late February and there were a light sprinkling of snow on the farmyard outside that somehow dignified the minefield of cow patties. Inside Gwen and Bill's warm kitchen, there was a smell of fresh baked bread.

I picked up the receiver. It was Françoise. I knew she was due to return from France and I had been expecting a call.

"Are you calling from The Cut?" I asked.

"No, I'm in Folkestone." Her voice was trembling. "There's a problem with the Customs people."

I could feel my skin crawl. Françoise had been away in France for a couple of months. Before she left, she had told me that she had used up her quota of visits for the year. She couldn't bear the thought of having to remain in France and had asked me if there was any way that she could legitimately return to Britain. Short of marrying her, the only thing that I had been able to think of was for her to tell the authorities that she was returning as an au pair girl. I felt like a social worker. On the one hand, I didn't want this level of involvement with Françoise. On the other hand, like it or not, I *had* become involved and I didn't want to feel guilty for not helping her. After all, she had helped me when I most needed it – on the train to Paris, after I had freaked out and left L.S.E. I had helped her to get an abortion. And we had, for better or worse, become lovers. In the end, I sent a letter postmarked Bradworthy to her address in France. In the letter, I posed as a married writer with one child and briefly outlined my acceptance of the arrangement of having her as an au pair girl. I figured that this would be enough to satisfy the people at Customs. I was mistaken.

"What's happening?" I inquired nervously.

"They're telling me that I have to register with the police in Devon in order to get an au pair card. What should I do?"

I thought furiously, visions of jail cells looming in my mind. "O.K. ... you can't get from Folkestone to Devon easily. You might as well go to London, spend the night at the Cut. That'll give us some time to think. I'll call you around 9 p.m. from the pay-phone and we'll talk again."

"I'm scared. I don't want to go back." Françoise sounded desperate.

"Listen, baby ... we can figure this out. One thing at a time. First, take a train to London."

"I missed you, Ian. I'll call you tonight." She hung up and I reached for my pack of Gitanes tobacco. As if things weren't bad enough anyway! How the hell were we going to get out of this one?

I spent the day trying not to panic. I realized that we were going to have to keep playing out the charade. Françoise would have to come down to Devon the next day and she would have to go to the police in Holsworthy (there was no police station in Bradworthy) and hopefully they wouldn't ask her too many questions.

The next day, I hitched a ride the ten or so miles into Holsworthy where I met Françoise. We sat in a poorly lit restaurant. I couldn't believe that this was happening. Here I was, feeling like a criminal, hatching plans to break the law. Once again that middle-class mantra chimed in ... 'but you're a good boy, you've never ever had any trouble with the police.'

"If they ask you, tell them what I said in the letter - that I am a writer, married with a young child, and give them the address of the cottage. If they ask you, you can say that I ... and 'my family' ... are renting the cottage. I'll wait here while you go to the Police Station. Oh, and don't give them Bill and Gwen's phone number, whatever you do."

Half an hour later, Françoise returned. She looked pallid and shaken.

“They told me that they are going to deliver the au pair card and my passport to you at the cottage.”

“Oh my God! I should have known. When? When are they coming?”

“They didn’t say.”

I tried to quell the butterflies in my stomach. “O.K. ... it doesn’t make sense for you to come back to Bradworthy with me. That would involve explanations and more lies to Bill and Gwen. You’d better go back to London and I’ll stay here and wait for the police.”

\* \* \*

Back in the cottage, I tried to gather my thoughts. The first problem was that I had no idea when the police would arrive. In an hour, in a day? Secondly, there would be no warning. I did not have a phone and we had not given them Bill and Gwen Coles’ number. That meant that I had to expect a visit. The biggest problem was the fact that ‘the cottage’ wasn’t a cottage at all. It was half of Bill and Gwen’s farmhouse, and unfortunately, it was the half furthest away from the road. What I realized fairly quickly was that if I didn’t intercept the police first, they would naturally go to the nearest front door, which would then be answered by either Bill or Gwen. Game up in a flash! So, the problem then became how to make sure that I did manage to speak to the police *before* they got to the Coles’ front door. This meant only one thing. Constant surveillance of the road outside. Fortunately, there was an upstairs window that overlooked the narrow road that wove its way between high hedgerows out of Bradworthy. I placed a chair beside the window along with vital supplies such as tobacco, diary and writing notes. And I sat there for the rest of that day, peering out at the road, tensing whenever I heard the sound of a motor, panicking when it occurred to me that the police *could* conceivably come from the other direction, in which case I would only catch sight of their car at the last moment. I was terrified to leave my guard post, whether to make a cup of tea or go for a crap. I felt trapped and sure that I would be caught. It was only when it got to around 6 o’clock in the evening and was dark outside, that I felt I could relax somewhat. It seemed unlikely that they would come outside business hours. The first priority was to warm up the house, the second was to get something to eat. Then, it was quick dashes back to my window whenever I heard the sound of a car. It grew later and later and finally I went to bed, setting the alarm to 7 a.m. in case they came early the next morning.

Two days went by and still no sign of a police car. I felt sick with anxiety. On the third day, I devised a plan. I had finally come to the conclusion that the chances that Bill and Gwen would see the police car and possibly go out to meet it were great enough that I had to find a way to tell them in advance. I decided to tell them that if they happened to see me rushing out to meet the police, not to worry, that they were bringing Françoise’s passport which had had to be ‘stamped’. They had met Françoise at Christmas and knew that she was my girlfriend. As long as they didn’t find out that she was supposed to be an au pair for my imaginary wife and child. I decided I would go over to talk to them later that day. Then, it occurred to me that I should ‘sweeten’ the situation by offering Gwen one of the two apple crumbles that I had baked that same day. But by the time I had made the crumbles, it was nearly 5 p.m. I had a gut feeling that the police would not come that day, but would turn up the next day, which was a Friday.

It was around 10 a.m. on the fourth day that I picked my way carefully through the cow patties and knocked on the Coles’ door. Gwen invited me into the kitchen and was delighted when I presented her with the apple crumble. Just as she was thanking me, I caught sight of a police car pulling up outside. I hadn’t had a chance to tell her anything so in the split second that I had, I told her that I had been expecting the police and that I had to go out to talk to them for a second. “Something about Françoise’s passport”, I mumbled as I opened the door.

I approached the police car, trying to give the impression that I was not in any undue haste. I managed to get there before either of the two policemen had time to get out.

“Hello, my name is Mr. Brown. You must be looking for me. I believe you are bringing the papers of Françoise, my au pair girl.” As I said this, I thought to myself. ‘the game is up ... I am 24 years old ...

there's no way they are going to believe that I am married with one child and have the need of an au pair girl'.

The policeman in the passenger seat smiled as he rolled down the window. "Here you go, Mr. Brown, everything's in order. Have a nice day." He handed me a brown envelope, rolled up the window, and the car backed into the farmyard for a second, and then sped off towards Bradworthy. My body felt limp as four days worth of adrenaline finally drained out of my nervous system. This truly was 'Theatre of the Absurd'. I didn't know what was real anymore. How on earth did we manage to get away with this?

Two books I was reading at this time seemed appropriate in that so much of their content had to do with what was reality and what was illusion.

Some excerpts from Psychotherapy East and West, by Alan Watts:

*'The whole technique of liberation requires that the individual shall find out the truth for himself. Simply to tell it is not convincing. Instead, he must be asked to experiment, to act consistently upon assumptions which he holds to be true until he finds out otherwise. The guru, or teacher of liberation must therefore use all his skill to persuade the student to act upon his own delusions, for the latter will always resist any undermining of the props of his security. He teaches not by explanation, but by pointing out new ways of acting upon the student's false assumptions until the student convinces himself that they are false. He must be tricked into insight.'* (p.50)

In the case of aiding and abetting Françoise's return to Britain, I had not told the truth. I had written a letter to the authorities that contained false information. Because I was so imbued with the notion that lying was wrong, I had assumed that I would get caught. The assumption that I had held to be true was that those who lie will be punished. But I had found out otherwise. I had been "tricked into insight". The 'insight' was actually a further intensification of a raging internal debate between 'absolute values' and 'relative values', which had first been brought to a conscious level by reading Dostoevsky's Crime and Punishment. I had begun to rationalize that *under certain circumstances*, stealing, lying, or even violence might be understandable and acceptable. Sedbergh had inculcated me with absolute values but I was learning that even if they were good and 'true' values, they were not reflective of the way that the majority of people in society acted. And as far as surviving hardship, they did not seem helpful.

Reality and illusion – one of the key topics of the sixties. Did dope take you *to* reality or *away* from reality? If you tolerated one reality, for example apartheid in South Africa, accepted it as 'the way things are', how could you ever create another and better reality?

The other book was Aldous Huxley, 1894-1963 (ed. J. Huxley).

*An extract from an essay entitled 'Shakespeare and Religion':*

*'Our business is to wake up. We have to find ways in which to detect the whole of reality in the one illusory part which our self-centered consciousness permits us to see. We must not live thoughtlessly, taking our illusion for the whole reality, but at the same time we must not live too thoughtfully in the sense of trying to escape from the dream state. We must continually be on our watch for ways in which to enlarge our consciousness.*

*We must not attempt to live outside the world which is given us, but we must somehow learn how to transform and transfigure it ... one must find a way of being in the world while not being of it.'*

Huxley continues with a quote from Shakespeare:

*'Hotspur, as he is dying, sums up the human predicament with a few memorable words:*

*"But thoughts, the slave of life, and life time's fool;  
And time, that takes survey of all the world,  
Must have a stop."*

It felt like I was spending most of my time straddling the knife-edge of the human predicament – how to be in the world, not of it. Needless to say, it was not a comfortable place to be. However, as I read Huxley's conclusion, he seemed to be pointing to one way out of the predicament.

*'Thought, in other words, is Life's fool. Thought is the slave of Life, and Life obviously is Time's fool in as much as it is changing from instant to instant, changing the outside and the inner world so that we never remain the same two instants together. Thought is determined by life and life is determined by passing time. But the dominion of time is not absolute for 'time must have a stop' in two senses, from the Christian point of view in which Shakespeare was writing. It must also have a stop in the last judgement, and in the winding up of the universe. But on the way to this general consummation, it (time) must have a stop in the individual mind, which must learn the regular cultivation of a mood of timelessness, of the sense of eternity.'*  
(my emphasis)

\* \* \*

I had been meditating for several months. Although at first I was suspicious that this was another form of drug taking ('religion is the opiate of the masses' etc.) and hence led to illusion and away from reality. But the more I did it, the more I came to appreciate that the act of sitting quietly with eyes closed, letting thoughts come while slowly beginning to repeat a *mantra*, had amazing effects. It *did* stop time, it *did* give a sense of eternity, it *did* allow you to move beyond the dichotomies and contradictions to a sense of wholeness. After 20 minutes of meditation, I felt not only more grounded within myself but more centered in my relations to the outside world – less vulnerable, less reactive, less overwhelmed. Despite my fears, the act of daily meditation had not converted me into a vegetative hippy. It had, on the other hand, given me glimpses of peacefulness and greater clarity of purpose. It did seem to be the answer to intellectual left-brain excess. I loved the simplicity of the technique, that it could be done anywhere, anytime, without need for any props. It made me aware of simple, powerful realities like my breathing and the beating of my heart. I was still aware of the clamor of my thoughts and of the sounds of the outer world, but now it was as if I had a filtering mechanism. I no longer felt so invaded. There was a greater sense of intrinsic self, a self that didn't rest on ephemeral definitions of one's identity. I was beginning to realize that meditation was also a perfect companion for writing and certain routines were evolving as to when, how, and where I did both activities.

The other way to effectively stop the thought process was music. One evening, about a week after the incident with the police, after I had done my writing for the day and meditated, I took out my guitar. Instead of working on songs, I found myself altering the pitch of the strings to an open tuning and just letting the music within me find its own form. This is what I liked to do on the piano, open-ended piano improvisations. Since my time at Sedbergh, these improvisations were usually colored by either classical or blues harmonies and rhythms. But along with meditation, I had been exposed to Ravi Shankar, and I was finding increasingly that the music in my soul sought expression in the idiom of a *raga*. Rather than the dry, deadening language of concepts and ideas driven by relentless analysis, this was the language of the senses, of the body, of the heart, of the spirit – it was the language of Life. One of the first things I did on returning to London, was to go to a shop in Putney and buy a piano (Ellie had convinced me to sell her the other one for £15).

I was on the bus going up to Edinburgh. My mother had sent me money at Christmas expressly to buy a suit and a good pair of shoes. Despite misgivings about ‘selling out’, I had gone ahead and done as she had asked. Following the collapse of my plans to return to Canada and to get a job with Bushnell Communications, I had followed Mr. Griffiths’ advice and I had applied to B.B.C. for a ‘Program Trainee’ position. I had rationalized buying the suit envisioning the possibility of an interview and remembering that I hadn’t known what to wear at the Griffiths’ interview. Like everything else in my life, my purpose in going to Edinburgh at that time seemed contradictory. On the one hand, I wanted to show off my new suit – this was equivalent to showing off the ‘me’ that my parents wanted to see. But conversely, I needed to show them my post-L.S.E. independent / rebel self.

The long trip was made less tedious by the fact that I got talking to an interesting fellow sitting next to me. He was about my age, and had the appearance of a hippy – long shoulder-length hair, baggy pants and sandals. He explained to me that he had “dropped out of the system”. He said he used to do drugs but had renounced them when he got “turned on to Christianity”. He said he had been visiting friends in London and, after I told him a bit about myself, he gave me the names of three organizations that he thought might interest me. The first one, especially, *did* interest me; P.N.P. (People not Psychiatry). In the months that I had been with Ellie in the flat in Parliament Hill Fields, Roy Chisholm had talked often of his contacts with R. D. Laing and David Cooper. For all those people, like me, who thought they were going crazy, there had to be some empowering alternative to the kind of system depicted in ‘One Flew Over The Cuckoo’s Nest’. The other two organizations were ‘Resurgence’ (a Journal of the 4<sup>th</sup>. World) and the London School of Non-Violence based in The Crypt, St. Martin-in-the Fields. When I asked him where he was going, he told me that he was living in a monastery on an island in the Clyde near Largs. In some ways, he seemed like a kindred spirit. When we finally reached St. Andrew’s Bus Station in Edinburgh, I thanked him for his company and the good conversation. He had helped make me feel less isolated, less desolate.

\* \* \*

I had never before been in my parents’ presence as ‘a failure’. With the exception of a couple of failed O levels, and a failed A level, my life had been a series of successes. I had gone to Canada after a successful five years at Sedbergh and I had returned with a B.A. and an acceptance to a Masters at L.S.E. Both my mother and my father seemed to be in a state of deep shock and shame about what had happened to me.

In the kitchen, as she prepared supper, my mother was full of warnings and dire tales from the family history book. In particular she told me about her sister, Adelaide. My mother’s eldest brother, William, had been an epileptic and was prone to seizures. My mother explained that Adelaide’s job, as eldest sister, was to take care of William, especially at night if he had a seizure. It had been an especially difficult childhood for Adelaide, and although it seemed that things would work out when she went to a school of Physical Education in Liverpool, she had suffered a breakdown at around the age of 22 and had been asked to leave. She was taken back to the family home where she withdrew from everyone. According to my mother, Adelaide had “psychic powers”. She played with a ‘Oija’ board and practiced water-divining. One day she had a huge row with her mother and Grandsie (as I called her) moved out of the house, leaving Adelaide living by herself. The family then went to the authorities to help deal with the situation. First they got a court order to get Adelaide to make payments owing on the house. When the court order was torn up, they tried to get Adelaide certified. Apparently Adelaide barricaded the doors. The court then sent a social worker to try to negotiate. Adelaide seemed to like this person and invited him in for tea, after which she sent him on his way! Eventually, the authorities had to break in and Adelaide finished up classified as ‘a schizophrenic’ and spent the next 30 years incarcerated in the Royal Cheadle Home in Hoylelake.

The story of Adelaide was followed by warnings about drink, drugs and venereal disease.

During supper, my father and I engaged in some forced conversation in which he told me that my Uncle Arth had just had a heart attack followed by an emergency operation.

"I called the hospital earlier today. They told me he pulled through. I asked how he was being treated. The nurse said he was receiving VIP treatment. Quite right too. Highest decoration in the land.\* The nurse sounded so thrilled."

Then, inevitably, the conversation drifted around to what I was doing. I gave a brief version of what had happened at L.S.E. and was in the middle of explaining my jobs with Rentastaff when suddenly my father snorted, stood up and left the room, muttering something about how, after all my expensive education, I was working "as a General Laborer".

I had been waiting for this moment. It had been completely predictable. I had finally reached a point in my life where I was clear that I no longer needed to be afraid of standing up to my father. I was young and strong whereas my father had become old and feeble. He no longer seemed like a tyrant to me, rather he was a pathetic figure, almost blind from glaucoma, and a desperately unhappy man.

I finished my meal, helped clear up, and announced to my mother that I was going through to the living room to talk to my father.

My father was in his armchair.

"Dad, I'd like to talk to you ..."

"Not now, I'm resting."

"Look, I ..."

"Get out of here, you bearded ape!" My father exploded and this vitriolic exclamation was accompanied by a shower of spit.

I recoiled but stood my ground.

"No, I'm not going to leave." I stood in front of him, facing him squarely. "This may come as a surprise to you but I'm not afraid of you any more. You can insult me all you want about being a bearded ape, or a general laborer, or a socialist, or a hippy, but it's not going to change what I do." As I finished this response, I felt a huge weight lifting off my shoulders.

There was a long silence. Finally my father said, "there's some beer in the cupboard, can you get one for yourself and bring one for me?" His voice was soft and low with no trace of the usual frustration, anger or sarcasm. I brought the cans of beer and poured them out into two pewter tankards.

"You smoke, don't you? You can have a cigarette if you want. I finally gave them up a few years ago but I miss them." My father's face seemed emotional in a way that I had never seen before.

"Of course, Arth never drank or smoked. That's why your mother has so much respect for him. But for us lesser mortals ...", my father trailed off.

"In many ways, I have failed your mother, and, I suppose, you children as well."

My father took a drink of beer. His eyes were almost glued shut from the effects of the glaucoma. His mouth drooped down, revealing his lower teeth when he talked. His nose seemed to have become red and misshapen. But there was a beauty in his vulnerability. He was consciously and willingly letting his defenses drop. I couldn't believe it. I felt my own heart opening in response.

And suddenly he was talking and talking in a wonderful flow of feelings and memories that rang true and authentic. There was no pretense. The pomposity had gone. There was a humility that was extraordinary for me to witness.

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Uncle Arth had been decorated with a Victoria Cross for Bravery during the Second World War.

He talked of his life in the Army, how he'd been happiest as a young officer camped out in the bush in Nigeria or on the plains in Iraq ... how because of the war and military service, he and Mum didn't see much of each other ... how humiliating it had been to return to Britain at the end of the war and not be able to find a job ... how he despised those who had not served their country but instead had got rich from the war effort ... how he'd always been so proud of me and couldn't understand the changes I'd gone through since being in Canada.

I wanted to hug him. I wanted to be hugged by him. When we finally said goodnight to each other, I felt an intimacy that made my spirit soar. I went to bed hoping, even trusting that this was an enormous breakthrough and that things would be different with Dad from now on.

The next morning at around 8 o'clock, I heard my father moving around. Normally, I would not go near my father at this time of the morning. It would be asking for trouble. But I had woken up still feeling lightness and warmth from the previous evening. When I heard the living room door open and the sound of his footsteps coming down the corridor towards my bedroom, I opened the door and said, "good morning Dad." My father didn't look at me and kept walking down the corridor. As he passed me, he muttered something like, "don't know what I was saying last night ... lot of tommy-rot ... just forget what I said."

My heart sank. The door that had been opened somewhat slammed shut. Somewhere, deep inside, I knew that it would never open again. My father had blown it.

On my return to London, I needed to get back to earning some money as soon as possible. I went off to the Rentastaff office and they told me I could start working right away at the Bass Charrington Bottling Depot on Sugar House Lane, in East London. The next morning, I got up at 6.30 a.m., had a bite to eat and took the tube from Waterloo on the northern line, changing at Embankment to the District Line, 15 stops east to Plaistow. It was mid April and although warmer than Edinburgh it was still nippy. As I walked towards my destination, I could see the West Ham Football Stadium in the distance. This part of London seemed to be a desolate industrial wasteland, full of belching factories and low, featureless warehouses. I could not see any residential housing or shops. The thing I was most aware of that first morning was an overwhelming, nauseous stench in the air. I later found out that the smell was coming from a glue factory where animal parts of one kind or another were 'melted down'. An animal Auschwitz – somehow fitting in view of the saying that 'fear is the glue that holds us together'.

Inside the bottling depot, I was shown where the punch clock was and my duties were explained to me by the West Indian foreman. I had to stand at the end of a conveyor belt for eight hours a day, remove bottles of wine and put them in cartons, which in turn I had to put on pallets. I soon discovered that, like Charlie Chaplin in 'Modern Times', I became part of the machinery. I could not leave my post for any reason (even a pee) because if I did, the bottles would jam up against the guard rail and chaos would result. It was demeaning, soul-destroying work, even worse than my previous job for Rentastaff of 'de-stapling' price tickets from furs. As I worked, I looked around. Despite the presence of the foreman, a couple of workers were sitting, back against a pile of cartons on a pallet drinking from a bottle of house wine. I noticed that I was one of only two or three white workers, the others being mostly Pakistani. My wage for the forty hour week was £18 which translated into nine shillings or 45 newpence an hour. There was nowhere to escape at a job like this, nowhere except into your mind. Given my state of mind, this was no escape at all. If schizophrenia means 'split mind', then I was truly schizophrenic. The biggest and most agonizing split was between whether I should be in Britain or in Canada. The one identity that I could assume that made any sense to others or myself was that of 'the writer'. "I'm working here to gain experience, so that I can understand more about how society works, so that I can see the other side of life for a while." The trouble was that my 'writing' was much more pre-occupied with the past than the here and now. So in reality, I was not devising plots and refining characters as I hauled bottles off the line. Instead I was obsessively agonizing over who I was and where I should be and what I should be doing.

Later that week, I was asked by Mary Addison (formerly my flat mate with Jerry in Notting Hill) if I would like to work Friday nights and Saturday lunch time at the restaurant at which she was working as a cook. The name of the restaurant was the Shillobeer and it was located on Edgware Road, not far from Euston Station. I accepted as I wanted to save up money so that I could go to France with Françoise in the summer. It turned out that the Shillobeer was a gay restaurant and, just as I was a minority white at Bass Charrington, I was a minority



heterosexual at the restaurant. But at least I was treated well and fed very well. Plus, it was my first introduction to gay culture. These were old-style gays who had little identification with younger gay rights crusaders. There was Gino, Colin and Malcolm. Of the three, Colin was the most outrageous. He was 'married' to Malcolm and the two of them were also involved with an antique furniture shop in Notting Hill. They had what I suppose you could call a marriage of convenience because it certainly was not monogamous. Every Saturday, Colin would regale the kitchen staff with colorful stories of who he met in the public toilet the night before, who he'd fucked, what it was like, how big the guy's cock was, etc.

Colin was slim, blond, fine boned and very beautiful in a feminine way. I could imagine that had he been born twenty years later, he might well have chosen to have a sex change. He and Malcolm teased me about my preferences and several times asked me to drop my pants, "just to have a look". What fascinated me was how their lives seemed to revolve around bipolar extremes, down and dirty sex on the one hand, and fine art on the other. The topics of conversation would range from cruising in Bayswater to Wagnerian opera at Covent Garden, from orgies in the bath house to the aesthetics of interior decorating and gardening. There was little talk of romance. All three were in co-habitational partnerships in which their emotional needs were met. But they had 'open marriages' that allowed freedom of sexual encounter. That didn't mean there wasn't jealousy. Malcolm, the 'husband', was forever sniping at Colin with jealous recrimination. In one way, I was repelled by the bourgeois excess of their lives. In another way, it was a great antidote to my self-denial and the conscientious monogamy that had accompanied my relationships with Lesley (at Queens), Ellie, and now Françoise. There was a deep repressed part of me that yearned to bathe in sensual delights. At times, I felt envious of them. I wished I could have unlimited sex with numerous women.

Gino was the owner of the restaurant. Being Italian, he had a pedigree that led to a certain world weariness with the childish exuberance of his British co-workers. He was a Roman, after all, what did he *not* know about sex, romance, fine food, music, art and literature? Gino and Mary did the cooking while Colin and Malcolm were the waiters. Mary was adored by all three. She was a sister, a mother, a daughter and a friend all rolled into one. Mary was 'off-limits' as far as teasing or sarcasm went. They all knew that Mary had been through a rough time and they were sensitive to her needs and her vulnerabilities.

\* \* \*

At the beginning of May, I went down to the cottage in Bradworthy for the last time. Françoise's three month visa expired at the end of May, and she planned to spend the first month or two making some money working in a cheese factory in her home town of Grigny, near Lyons. The idea was that I would go to Aix-en-Provence in the south of France in June and she would join me there, or else we would make visits to see each other. I had bought a portable Olivetti typewriter and had made up my mind to live the life of a writer for a while in the warm, embracing milieu depicted by Cezanne and other Impressionists.

I only spent one night at the cottage, just enough time to gather up some of my things, clean the house, pay the final rent, and say goodbye to Bill and Gwen. Bill had rarely said much to me previously. Gwen seemed to be the talkative one and Bill was usually working out on the farm somewhere. However, we got talking when I handed him the rent check. He told me about what it was like to work with cows – how they recognized the vet by the pace of his approach, and how he and Gwen adjusted to the rhythm of the cows. That was what I loved about people in the country, they were attuned to natural rhythms. It was a world that was as far from the world of the Bass Charrington bottling plant as you could possibly imagine. Bill left me with a poem that went something like this:

*The sexual urge of the camel is greater than anyone thinks  
And whenever the urge is upon him  
He jumps on the back of a Sphinx  
Now the Sphinx's excretory channel  
Is stuffed with the sands of the Nile*

*Which accounts for the hump on the camel  
And the Sphinx's inscrutable smile*

Feeling sad, I waited on the outskirts of Bradworthy for a ride. After a while, a well-kept old Wolsley stopped. The back window was rolled down and from within came a heavily accented Italian voice:

"Excuse me, ees thees Bradworthee?"

"Yes," I replied, and a face appeared at the window. I found myself looking at a rose-cheeked, fine-featured woman who had clearly been very beautiful in her day.

"Thank-you." She gave an instruction to a man who I assumed was the chauffeur, and the car purred off down the narrow road.

Twenty minutes later, the Wolsley returned and stopped in the same spot beside me. The Italian lady's face re-appeared at the window.

"Where are you going? Would you like a lift? Jump in."

She saw the wild flowers I had picked to take back to Francoise.

"Flowers for your lady friend? ... but you must pick some violets ... we pick some together ..."

And as we trundled down the Devonshire by-roads, she kept up a delightful flow of observations and opinions, like a Mediterranean sunburst.

"I live in Guilford ... my husband works at Oxford ... no, I'm not Italian – Viennese ... I'm down here looking for a farm ... not for pigs or cows ... we just want to play around ... some horses perhaps ... you are a writer? ... I know you'll be successful ... your face .... strong character ... broad-minded ... Allan, let's stop here ... I see a nice place for lunch ... you will have some lunch with me, won't you? ... get me a newspaper ... the Daily Express, not one of those socialist newspapers ... there we go, chicken sandwich and Guinness for you, ham sandwich for me ... what was I saying? ... oh those socialists ... Harold Wilson, Wedgewood Benn ... that owl-shaped looking man ... what's his name? ... George Brown ... petit bourgeois ... semi-detached minds, all of them ... they're all hypocrites, they want money and position too ... I'm not snobbish but you've got to have fun ... be happy ... don't you think so? I think so ... we were wild at the Academy of Fine Arts ... lots of Americans there ... they're broadminded those Yankees, but why do they have to print warnings against smoking ... I can't understand it ... drugs are far more dangerous ... I'm from an aristocratic family ... you know, we appreciate the finer things ... oh, this is where you have to get off ... lovely to talk to you ... don't work too hard now ... goodbye ..."

And so I said goodbye to Bradworthy, the cottage, and Devon wondering whether I was a hypocrite for accepting a ride with a Viennese aristocrat who didn't like socialists.

\* \* \*

My last week at Rentastaff was not at the Bass Charrington Bottling Depot but back at the Anning, Chadwick and Kiver fur warehouse. They were having a mink show this time. Surrounded by the skins of countless dead animals, I wondered what Marx had to say on the subject of the whole-scale colonialist slaughter of beaver and mink, fox and sable.

*Diary entry – 21<sup>st</sup>. May, 1971*

*'Pick up my last pay check from Rentastaff office. Tell them I'm leaving. They ask me if I would be interested in a job behind the counter. I say 'no' and leave feeling offended by the credibility I had accrued with these capitalist lackeys.'*



I took the train on the 1<sup>st</sup>. of June, a few days after Françoise had left. From London to Paris, from Paris to Marseilles ... gray skies giving way to sunshine ... blue-suited railway workers wearing black berets and smoking industrial strength yellow-papered Gauloises ... why are French men better looking than British men? ... Marseilles to Aix-en-Provence ... outside the sensory seduction of Matisse blue skies, Renoir red poppies, Roman viaducts, Elysian fields ... *Ely's Ian?* ... reverie ... bittersweet memory ... waves of pain ... Ellie and Ian ... could it, should it have worked? ... and now swept away on another adventure with another woman, the wounds still fresh from Ellie and barely healed from Lesley ... what was I doing? And like so often, when the internal chaos started to become too great, I turned to reading material to escape. I opened the book of the moment, The Necessity of Art – A Marxist Approach by Ernst Fischer, and turned to the pages that had so excited me a few days earlier.

Finally, a coherent definition of 'reality', a clear explanation of the contradictions between form and content. I re-read the following passage with utter pleasure and awe:

❖ ***On the two mutually contradictory tendencies of nature and reality:***

*'What Goethe calls the 'vis centrifuga' and Hegel calls 'repulsion' is the tendency of particles of matter to fly out into the infinite at constant velocity – the tendency towards evaporation and dissolution. This tendency is counteracted by the 'vis centripeta', the Hegelian 'attraction', the tendency towards association, unification. the forming of groups, the agglomeration of energy.*

*Both tendencies operate in all organized ordered matter: the conservative tendency, the 'tough persistence; the clinging to a form of organization once it has been achieved, inertia: and the revolutionary tendencies, perpetual movement, the inability to remain at rest, the continuous change of state.*

*Without the infinite contradictions of these two tendencies and without the constant removal of contradiction by the states of relative equilibrium attained by matter and energy, there would be no reality, since reality is just that: a state of suspended tension between being and non-being, in which both being and non-being are unreal and only their incessant interaction, their becoming is real.' (my emphasis)*

❖ ***On the dialectical relationship between form and content – in the inorganic world***

*'This can be observed very precisely in crystals, i.e. in the structure of solid, ordered matter. What we call 'form' is only a specific grouping, a specific arrangement, a relative state of equilibrium of matter; it is the expression of the fundamental conserving and conservative tendency, the temporary stabilization of material conditions. But 'content' changes incessantly, at times imperceptibly, at other times in violent action; it enters into conflict with the form, and creates new forms in which the changed content becomes, for a while, stabilized once more. We might define form as conservative and content as revolutionary.' (my emphasis)*

❖ ***On the dialectical relationship between form and content – in the organic world***

*'In the organic world, heredity is the conservative tendency, and variation the revolutionary one. In human society, which has risen above nature and evolved its own laws, we may generally recognize the conservative tendency in the relations of production, that is to say in the forms taken by production, and the revolutionary tendency in the productive forces, i.e. in the developing, forward-thrusting economic content of all social formations.*

*Always and everywhere the form, structure, or organization that has already been attained offers resistance to the new – and everywhere, the new content bursts the confines of old forms and creates new ones.' (my emphasis) (Necessity of Art, E. Fischer, Pelican, pp. 124-125)*

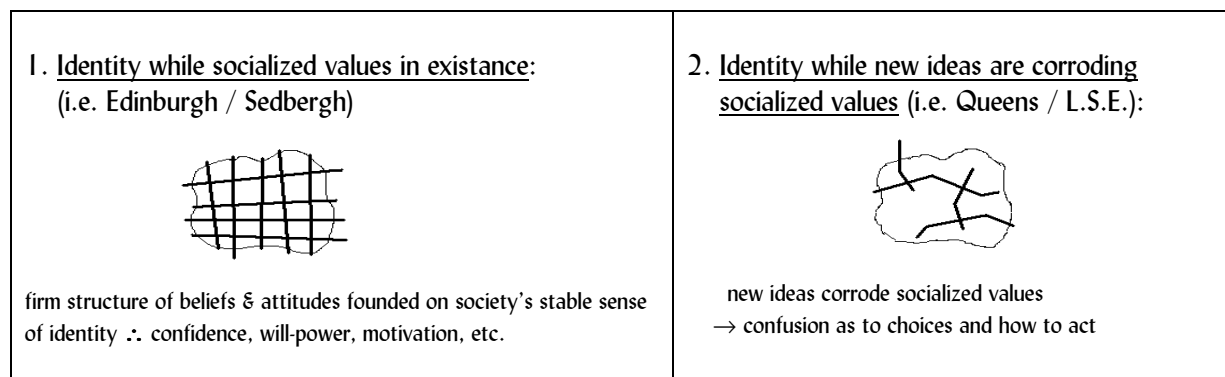
At last I felt I had a cognitive road-map to see where I was going, I had the conceptual tools with which to analyze and understand almost anything. For example, take the cultural schizophrenia I had experienced between the British roots part of myself and the Canadian emergent part. Could this not be seen as a battle between form and content? On the one hand, there was my very formal upbringing with its strict moral code, rigid class structure and ancient traditions. On the other, there was three years of living in the New World with its informality, greater opportunities for the disadvantaged, and the wealth of information and challenging ideas I had gleaned there at University, all intermingling and interacting to produce explosive content. My mind and my soul felt like they had been, and still were, the battleground in which this content had burst its confines in an unstoppable chain-reaction.

What about relationships with women? My conditioning told me that honesty, kindness and loyalty were values to be held high not just with men but also with women. But my experience with Lesley, Ellie and now with Françoise, had taught me that the sexual and emotional dimension with women completely changed the dynamics. It just wasn't the same as the code governing my relationships with men. With men there *was* a code of honesty, kindness and loyalty, but there was not exclusiveness. With Lesley, Ellie and Françoise, on the other hand, I had made a commitment that had inevitably led to a sense of emotional and sexual loyalty, i.e. monogamy. According to these standards, Lesley had betrayed me by having a relationship with a friend of mine, Iain Anderson. It's true, we had not been living together. But we had been 'going steady'. Ellie and I, on the other hand, had made the decision to live together. Her 'elopement' with Roy had surely been an outright betrayal by anyone's standards.

The 'form' of my emotional and moral make-up was a nest whose function was to nurture and conserve the evolving relationship, to protect it from outside threat. However, the 'content' of the cultural milieu at that time was full of highly charged anarchic ideas like 'free love' that kept pushing and pressing outwards on the 'moral' form that contained them. The morality of Ellie's existentialism seemed to be amorality, although she had never owned to this. A few hours before she took off with Roy, she was still denying that there was anything between them, and affirming that I was "her man".

Another area to which I could apply Fischer's Marxist ideas on the dialectic between form and content was music. When I listened to Jacques Loussier, his music burst the confines of formal Bach. Even better, by integrating classical and jazz forms, it revolutionized both forms and created a new hybrid. When I listened to Ravi Shankar or Ali Akbar Khan, their classical Indian *ragas*, while having strict forms of which I knew nothing, vastly expanded the parameters of all the musical forms with which I was acquainted. There was a revolutionary effect for me – an exciting, liberating release from restriction.

My social world had been radically re-formed. The upbringing given me by my mother and father, my formal education at Sedbergh, had been challenged by new ideas and new experiences from within. In fact, my social world and my identity had not been completely 'reformed' – things were still too fluid and uncertain for any form at all. Page 50 of the 51 page letter that I had sent to Professor Lele, summarized my thoughts on this subject with a diagram that looked like this:



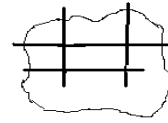
3. Identity after socialized values have been destroyed (i.e. now!)



paralyzed relativism

4. Identity in state of reconstruction

A new inner scaffold on which to ascend:



gradual reconstruction carried out by careful testing of potentially authentic values and attitudes by direct experience, with prior selection and consequent assessment by the intellect

When I had been in Edinburgh, the Calcutta Cup of Rugby between Scotland and England had been on T.V. It so happened that two of my former 1<sup>st</sup>. XV team members were playing – Alistair Biggar for Scotland and John Spencer for England. My father was thrilled. This was something positive he could tell Auntie Margaret and Elizabeth to offset the shameful saga of L.S.E.

I, on the other hand, was attracted and repelled at the same time. The 'Ian' from picture #1 above was attracted – 'hey, my old buds from school ... I'm proud just like my Dad'; 'Ian' from picture #2 was confused and conflicted – 'well, I did play with them but that's not a world I belong to any more'; the 'Ian from picture #3 didn't want to have anything to do with watching the game – it felt too threatening, too painful.

I guess the question was, had I become informed, reformed or deformed? Herr Professor from 'The Blue Angel', the Hunchback of Notre Dame, and other demons were aparitions who lurked in the shadows.



## 34.

I set off to France by train at the beginning of June in high spirits. Unlike Morocco, this trip was planned. I knew where I was going. I knew why I was going. And I knew that Françoise was going to join me before too long. In my rucksack was my brand new Olivetti typewriter and in my hand was the guitar that I'd bought in Algeciras. It was time to put those creative ideas into action.

Diary: 11<sup>th</sup>. June, 1971: Aix-en-Provence, France

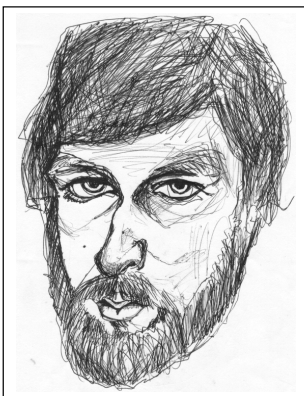
*'I am living at 5 Rue Jaubert, Aix-en-Provence – just down the street from Cézanne's house. This is a room without windows. I have only been here for a few days. I was staying in the University of Marseilles' Cité Les Gazelles Student Residence (chambre 5.066), but at 6 francs a night, it was too expensive. I was living on bread and honey because there were no cooking facilities and the cafeteria prices were too high (e.g. café au lait was 1 franc, pastries 60 centimes, croissant 50 centimes; even butter cost too much – 50 c. for 2 'pattes du beurre'). Poverty isolates you. The less money you have, the more you retreat from those public places that require you to spend. I begin to understand why public libraries and parks become the homes of those who are down and out. Henry Miller would be solving the problem by begging and borrowing and sponging. One way or another, he would be making sure that he did not go without wine, women or song. I can't do that. The 'self-reliance' ethos is too firmly entrenched*

*This was supposed to be a trip to Paradise after the hell-hole of the bottling plant in East London, but now I'm not sure if I haven't gone from one hell-hole to another one, or maybe the hell-hole is in my mind (the 'amorphous mess') and I carry it around with me wherever I go. I am 'free'. I don't have to get up at 6.30 a.m. and put in 8 hours at a dehumanizing job, selling my labor at rock bottom rates to another capitalist exploiter. Maybe Erich Fromm was right when he said:*

*"Freedom, though it has brought him (modern man) independence and rationality, has made him isolated, and thereby, anxious and powerless. This isolation is unbearable." (my emphasis)*

*(Escape From Freedom, Erich Fromm, Discus, 1968, p. viii)*

I looked in the mirror and I don't see a happy, free man. This is what I saw:

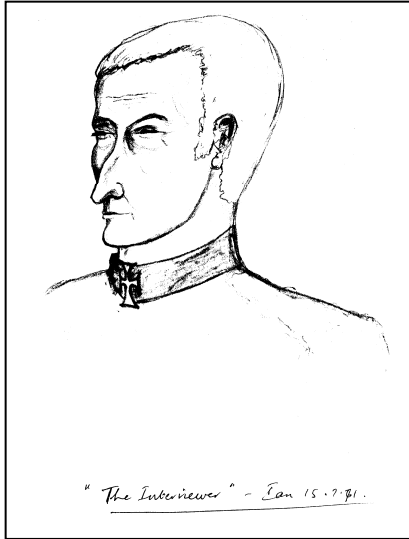


or, on a worse day, the eye of the soul looked more like this

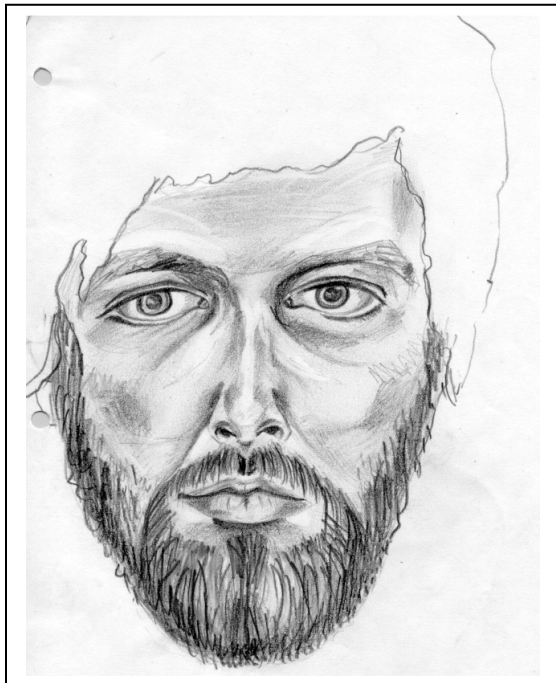
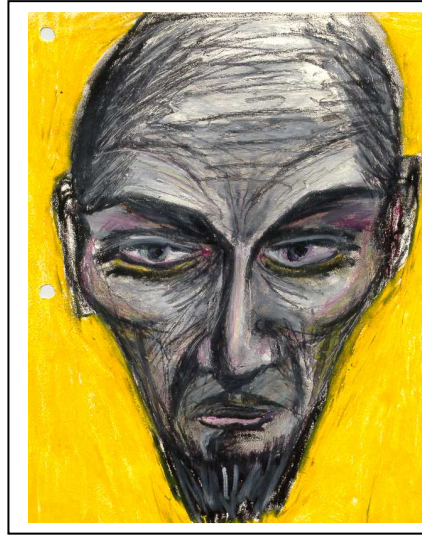




on the nightmarish days where I didn't even see the four walls of the room without windows, and I was only aware of the black pit within, this is what I saw:



*or*



and this is what I wanted to see:

I drew when I couldn't write – and that was often. I had the content. I had the raw material for writing: perceptions, ideas, feelings, experiences, incidents, drama, suspense, conflict, interesting characters ... but I didn't have the technique of knowing how to contain this torrent of words in a container, in a form, in a structure. Back to the scaffold.

Finally, I made a start with my writing (other than diary-writing, which didn't count). I took the most rigid form I could think of, the alphabet, and started exploring what I could squeeze into that. This is what I finished up with:

## One Man's Alphabet

**A** is for America, where everyone is Alienated and everything is Ambivalent. So much so, that some people, who are sometimes Anarchists and sometimes Astrologists, are trying to find an Absolute Alternative. In fact, anything which may be less Absurd.

Which brings us to **B** and Sammy Beckett who made a point of saying that there's really no point to anything, so why get your knickers in a twist? But not everyone had the patience to keep waiting as long as him – too Bloody Boring.

You only have to ask Castro or Che and they'd soon tell you that if he's perceived the Contradiction, he would have had to politicize his Consciousness. He would have seen that Capitalism's at the bottom of it all. Yes, it's Corporate Capitalism that has killed Creativity and meaningful Communication, even if Chomske didn't see that.

But it sure seems as if that mean old Dialectic is to blame for giving us all Dichotomies and Dilemmas to deal with. Between the anti-thesis and the syn-thesis falls the paraly-thesis.

Of course, Energetic Einstein didn't see it that way. If everything is relative, then equating one thing to another becomes a farce, unless you can find something constant, as in  $E = mc^2$ .

And what can you say about that man Sigmund Freud? I tell you, if it hadn't have been for him, we would never have had all these F-ing Freaks, or whatever you call them!

**G** is obviously for dear God who, incidentally, received a telegram the other day saying, "Lord, we are tending to Your holy Word – and Your holy Weed." Quite possibly from one of those Hash-High happy Hippies.

Apparently, from what I hear, these Hippies have rejected **the Institution** (whatever that means!) and **the Intellect**, in favor of the Imagination. Actually, from what I've been told, it's not so much some sort of 'God-in-the-clouds' they're seeking, rather a fellow freak like Jesus. Someone with whom they can identify. And who knows? Maybe they have something. After all, Jesus was into Love and Peace long before anyone else, man. And like, he wasn't as much of a ..., a moralist as his Dad.

Which brings us to **K** and the unholy powers of Krypton. You see, it's not just God, even Superman is fallible, dude. To say nothing of Neitzsche and the Will To Fail, man.

What about **L**, you may ask? Well, **L** is lasciviously, yet laconically, for Laing and Leary. One brother provides the diagnosis. The other provides the prognosis, you dig. Who needs the lactic in lactic acid? But hey man, they ain't bourgeois, Liberal, shrink drop-outs neither, know what I mean. They are po – li – ti – cal - ly a-ware, yes! Which means that they know a 'system' when they see one.

Like Marcuse man, R.D. says the System can make us abnormal, which means 'normal', right. Marcuse says the System makes us uni-dimensional, which means Mystified, which means, man, the silent Majority ... you know what I'm saying here? Hey, there's no end to those M's: Miller, McLuhan, Maharishi, Mao. Quite a line-up, huh? Probably never been classified together before. But that's class distinction for you. They've all got something to say. Herb thinks you shouldn't be tolerant – it's repressive. The Maharishi thinks you should be Meditating. Hey, don't knock it. It beats Mediating which is what you get when your Marriage is Mush. Mao and Miller think you have to be destructive before you can be creative. Maharishi and Miller think you have to transcend to see the reality. Marcuse and Mao want to descend to ground level to see things from a proletarian point of view. Meanwhile, back in Toronto, McLuhan thinks it's all cool as we inevitably see more ear to ear, or 'ere to there for that matter as we all get squeezed into the global village. Yes, M

is for all kinds of groovy things like Materialism and Madonna, Madness and Myth, Magic and Mistletoe, Marijuana and Mother.

**N** is reserved exclusively for Richard Nixon, Mrs. Nixon, Julie Nixon, and all Nixons everywhere.

**O** is for Onanism, Onassis, Oz, Ono and Oral ... hygiene.

You know what **P** is for, man. Peace, man, Peace. 'Give Peace a chance', that's what I say. At least that's what I used to say. Now it's 'Power to the People'. Yeah, that's what I say now. That's just the trouble, according to Phillip. 'They've got too much cake these days. Spoiled rotten. How's about a re-allocation? What about us?' he says. 'Power to Liz, that's what I say.'

That's right. **Q** is for Queens and Quiche and Quasars. Those Quasy scientists – they've now got radio telescopes so powerful that they can listen in to the birth of the Universe.

Of course, all that really matters is **Rhythm**, man. Rhythm, that nexus of permanence and change, that serendipitous synthesis of order and spontaneity, the quintessential coordinate of existence. Periodicity and pattern. Creative renewal. The harmonization of Time and Space and Energy into a cyclical spiral. Yes, what can you say about **R** that hasn't already been said? It's not just rhythm, dude ... like R is up there with 'm'. We got Revolutionaries, Radicals, Renegades, Rebels, Reformers, Republicans Reactionaries, Rastafarians. I mean the list just goes on and on.

**R** can, in fact, be expressed as a mathematical equation. We could say

$$\text{Rhythm} = \frac{\text{Eros}}{\text{Thanatos}}$$

As it happens, the remainder of the alphabet can also be expressed arithmetically. Let me show you. (*On chart or blackboard*) So ...  $R = \frac{\text{Eros}}{\text{Thanatos}}$

$$\text{Now S is for Schizophrenia which} = \frac{[E/T]}{2}$$

$$\text{T is for Truth which} = \frac{[E/T]}{2} \times 2$$

$$\text{U is for Unity which} = \frac{[E/T]}{2} \times \frac{2}{[E/T]}$$

$$\text{V is for Vice which} = \frac{\text{Thanatos}}{\text{Eros}}$$

$$\text{W is for Wisdom} = \frac{\text{Eros}}{\text{Thanatos}} \times \infty$$

$$\text{X is for Xenophobia which} = \text{Thanatos}$$

$$\text{Y is for Yin and Yan which} = \frac{\text{Eros}}{\text{Thanatos}} \times \frac{\text{Thanatos}}{\text{Eros}}$$

And last but not least, we have **Z** which is for Zen which = ? / ?

Waiting for a letter from Françoise set off painful memories of being in Kenya for two months and not receiving a letter from Lesley. I had been in Aix for about 10 days. I had called Françoise after I moved to Rue Jaubert and she had said she would write.

It was a Monday morning at 6 a.m., after a bad night's sleep, that I decided spontaneously to hitch-hike to Grigny. The sky was blue, the air was fragrant, as I headed north.

The truck driver asked: "where are you from?" and I didn't know how to answer.

I am from the Land of Mind, I think to myself, with all its hazardous mindfields and other assorted booby-traps. Outside, outside the truck, outside my mind, I am vaguely aware of the natural beauty that drew Cezanne, Van Gogh and the other impressionists: fields of lavender, olive orchards, vineyards interspersed with cypress forests, limestone plateaus and terra cotta roofed villages perched high on the banks above the majestic Rhône.

But my sense impressions are short-circuited by the inner current of ideas. This is the hell of solipsism. I have felt it in Sartre's La Nausée and Camus' L'Étranger. I dislike and reject their ideas and yet reluctantly accept that they are a better reflection of my inner state than is Miller's world of sensory delights.

There are many dimensions to this hell. There is the hell of waiting. Waiting for the letter that doesn't come. There is the hell of dissociation - not knowing who you are or where you are. A place of multiple personalities, all of which, and none of which, seem to fit you. This was the opposite of Carpe Diem – seize the day for Time is a-flying and Death is fast approaching. No, in this world, Time was frozen, or dissolved, or melted like Dali's clocks, in a desert of the imagination. Time became meaningless in the inverted world of Escher's staircases. Time was not a winged arrow, but a swamp of sinking sands in which you were trapped and could not move. There was no movement other than the sensation of slowly being pulled underground by some unseen force ... sinking into the depths under the scaffold, into the recesses ... hiding in shame and fear like the Hunchback of Notre Dame or Herr Professor.

Past Avignon, north into the industrial heartland of France. Gone the palette of colors - the reds, purples, blues and yellows; replaced by the monotone gray of highways, factories and warehouses.

I am standing at the door of Françoise's house in Grigny. It is at 57 Rue de Bouteiller, a drab street lined with worker's row houses. The door is opened by Madame Cresson. She looks tired and worn. She seems impatient. Perhaps Françoise has never mentioned me. Françoise appears behind her and looks shocked to see me. I am invited in. Françoise looks ill-at-ease. Fortunately, we can smoke. Everyone in France smokes, or so it seems.

After a quick cup of coffee, Françoise suggests that we go for a walk. We walk, like strangers, face to the cold blustery wind.

"I missed you," I say, putting my arm around her.

"I'm surprised to see you. I thought you'd be writing in Aix."

Was she happy to see me? I couldn't tell.

Another dimension of hell. The hell of vulnerability, the hell of not knowing if you are liked or loved or accepted. The ever-present anxiety that you will be rejected again, that there will be another betrayal. I don't even know why I have a relationship with Françoise. It just happened. One thing led to another. Was it chosen or was it pre-scripted? I *had to* speak to her in Waterloo station. I *had to* help her when she was pregnant and without money or place to stay. Freedom to choose was proportionate to your assets, your degree of security. I was learning that there was a world of poverty under the scaffold and that in this world, choice and freedom were both something of an illusion. Survival was the reality. You did what you had to do. I'd had to save Françoise in order to save myself. I needed her warmth and support.

"Where do you want to go?" Her voice penetrated my thoughts.

I could feel frustration seeping into the vulnerability and anxiety. The incident in Bradworthy with the police had pushed me towards wanting to emphasize our independence from each other. Françoise leaned on me too

much. I needed to help her be more assertive.

“Where would *you* like to go? You decide. You know the town. I don’t.”

But deeper than the influence of any incident, was the great fear of not wanting to be dominating like my father. I did not know how to have a successful relationship with a woman. I had had two failures. There were no positive models to which I could refer. My parents’ relationship was a hell of incompatibility and emotional distance. I had seen my sister’s relationship go from intimacy to coldness and strain. My brother’s marriage was in the process of breaking up. At Sedbergh, all the relationships had been between males. The only other relationship I could think of was Jerry and Liz, or Frank and Marilyn in Kingston. Jerry was like a beneficent dictator. He ‘gave’ Liz lots of space but ultimately, he called the shots. It seemed to be a formula that worked, but it was not one that I could follow. Neither was the drug-laden lifestyle of Frank and Marilyn. What I *was* clear about was what I *didn’t* want. I did not want to be like my father. So even though I wasn’t a hippy, I had bought into the anarchist values of my generation with respect to property. I didn’t want to possess anyone or anything. For this reason, I was very interested in communes and cooperatives. I viewed the situation at The Cut as a kind of commune, or at least, commune-in-the-making.

I didn’t want to be possessive. The trouble was that despite this wish, I often had intense feelings of possessiveness. These would be accompanied by distrust, suspicion and jealousy. But these were feelings that you were not supposed to have. NO-ONE admitted to jealousy. It wasn’t just uncool, it was inadmissible.

“I think we have become distant from each other.”

I recoiled at the directness and honesty of her remark. But suddenly, I felt better, as if this simple remark had magically evaporated all my frustrations. It was like a terrific weight had been taken off my shoulders, the weight of feeling that I was the sole guardian of TRUTH and HONESTY.

It was true. We *had* become distant from each other. But the irony was that the truth of her assertion set me free. Suddenly I felt *less* distant from her.

“I missed you.” I felt a surge of warmth and affection and turned to hug Françoise. My sweet, innocent, vulnerable Françoise – so different from either Lesley or Ellie.

“Oh baby, I missed you too.” Her eyes misty, her fingers twining through my hair.

And suddenly we are in the present, in the glorious here and now. I emerge from the underground into the sunshine. We are in a park. The birds are singing. Mothers are pushing babies in strollers. An old man on a bench is breaking open a *baguette*, the smell of freshly baked bread is intoxicating.

Françoise begins to talk about herself. I am receptive. She is aware that I am receptive. I am aware that she is aware. She smiles. I smile. She hugs me. I kiss her. We laugh. I want to affirm her, honor her – her existence, her essence. And the more I do this, the stronger I feel. I am in touch with a source of joy and peace deep within. There is no hell. That was just a bad dream. Life is beautiful. Doubt, anxiety, uncertainty vanish.

Then I talked ... in a streaming, rushing, pulsating torrent of words, like Miller when he’s on a roll. ‘Illuminate’ – that was the word I used over and over again. I felt that Françoise and I were both filled with light, and that we were in harmony with light.

“It’s like there are two sides of the coin in everybody,” I blurted out. “It’s the Yin-Yang thing. There’s virtue and there’s vice, There’s creation and there’s destruction. There is life and there’s death. There is ‘YES’ and there is ‘NO’. They are inseparable. They are mutually interdependent. And together they constitute one, unity. You cannot stand in judgement of one part. That’s what I do, and I shouldn’t do it. It just leads to fragmentation of the self, it just blocks the natural integrating processes of faith and love.”

And I didn’t want this wonderful life-affirming current to switch off, to switch back to the negative influence of doubt and fear. I didn’t want it to go. I didn’t want to lose it. I wanted Life everlasting, world without end, but no amen. So I kept saying to Françoise, “do you feel it?”, “can you see it?”, like some religious fanatic, possessed by the holy spirit. And perhaps foolishly, in my desire to hold on to this peak experience, I began to push the energy away from the here and now and into the future.

“You promise, Françoise, you promise that you will draw, that you will paint, that you will do it every day, that you will believe in yourself?”

And that night, we made love and the ship of our relation sailed on calm seas.

I returned to Aix on a high. There was no way I could bury myself in *la chambre sans fenêtre*. I decided to go out to a bar and celebrate. Françoise had told me that she was going to stay in Grigny for another couple of weeks to save up some more money, and then she would join me in Aix.

As I walked down Rue Jaubert, I felt light, buoyant. I felt like ‘the writer’. I felt like Miller. Before visiting Grigny, I had avoided walking the streets of Aix. I had felt crushed by the expensive shops and restaurants, by the weight of cultural heritage. Who was I to call myself a writer when even the streets bore names like Avenue Victor Hugo, Boulevard Emile Zola, Boulevard Pierre and Marie Curie. I felt like a fraud. I wasn’t even writing anything legitimate like a novel or a play. I was just writing in my diary. But in Grigny I had found my muse. Now, I *was* a writer.

After a while, I found a restaurant-bar called La Palette. There was a poster outside for a band named ‘Roy somebody and his jazz-blues babies’. That was good enough for me. Dimly lit inside - only one other customer. The proprietor and his wife seem friendly so I decide to stay. I order the cheapest thing on the menu, an omelet. The proprietor suggests that I try the ‘taube’ instead. He explains that taube is hare cooked in wine and is a Provencal specialty. Sounds good. Turns out to be very tasty and more importantly, there’s lots of it. Only 4 francs 50 centimes and it comes with bread and a glass of wine. Eventually the friendly proprietor and I get talking. He speaks a little English, about as much as I do French. He tells me that he’d worked in an Irish pub in Manchester for a while.

Soon the small talk turns to politics. He tells me he is a ‘royaliste’. He believes that monarchy is the best system for France. ‘How quaint’, I think to myself. “But how can you reintroduce monarchy?” I ask him. “Weren’t all the royals guillotined during the Revolution?” He looks at me quizzically and proceeds to inform me that there *is* a French king and his name is Le Compte de Paris – sixty years old with eleven children and about to marry his daughter.

And then we are on to Philosophy. Despite his mediocre English, he explains to me very articulately that he doesn’t believe in Liberalism, Egalitarianism, Idealism, Marxism, Democracy, Corporatism, Socialism, or Fascism (because of the democratic angle). What he does believe in is Aristocracy. I ask him how an Aristocratic system would work in the 1970’s. He says that if, for example, I was the 10 year old son of a bricklayer, and he was the 10 year old son of an aristocrat, we would go to the same school, but even if I did much better than him academically, it wouldn’t matter because we would be destined for different kinds of jobs anyway. He conceded that equality was OK in theory – it just didn’t work in reality.

Another man enters the restaurant and comes over to our table. It turns out to be the owner of La Palette and a good friend of the proprietor. He speaks English with a strong German accent.

The discussion shifts gear again. I am no longer perceiving these ideas as being quaint – ominous would be more like it. The owner weighs in. He produces a circular put out by the ‘gauchistes’ which contains a list of eight men that are condemned to death for their ‘fascist, racist activities against Algerians. He proudly points out his name on the list. “Mais oui”, he says, “of course there is an innate inequality between blacks and whites”.

I am beginning to feel that I am back in Hell again, a different kind of Hell. Is it possible that these people actually believe in what they’re saying.

Another change of gear. Now we are in high. The owner’s voice is louder, more strident.

“I am a member of L’Ordre Nouveau. Maybe you’ve heard of it.”

I’d heard of it all right. It is the ultra right, fascist movement in Europe.

“I believe in Nationalism. I’m proud to be German. My friend here is proud to be French. You, I hope, are proud to be English. I don’t like the Chinese, or the Negroes, or the Arabs. I don’t like Hippies either. They are *drougistes*. They are *les lâches*. You’re a writer, eh? I have a story for you. I was a member of the Foreign Legion for ten years ... a member of the O.A.S. ... in prison for several years ...”

\* \* \*

Back in my room, I read a letter from my brother to my mother which she had forwarded on for me to read.

*Ocean View Hotel,  
534 Musgrave Road,  
Durban, Natal,  
14/4/71*

*'Dearest Mum,*

*I have to talk to someone and you are the only one I can turn to. You must know the truth about me. Since Avril asked for a divorce and has finally been granted one by me, all meaning has left my life and it has become hollow and empty. The only reason that I could hold a job down was so I could give security to my wife and child. Now I have no security and no-one to give my love to. I cannot hold a job more than three months. I have been out of work now since the 18<sup>th</sup>. March and have no will left to start again. My money is nearly gone and although my hotel bill is up to date, I have three weeks before the next one. R90 suddenly seems like a lot of money. I have put adverts. in the paper but no-one seems willing to take a risk with me*

*I seem to fall ill when I am at my lowest ebb, and for the past three weeks, I have been coughing and very sick inside. I went to have a check-up and the doctor became very concerned after taking a blood test and doing glandular tests. I know that I need a rest and treatment but I cannot see myself staying here much longer. The medical fees, although kind to the Bantu, are murder to the European.*

*Mum, I hate to ask you this, as you have helped me so much in the past, but can you help me with my fare home? There, I can live quietly and regain my strength and peace of mind. You can say that as a man I should not go to pieces, but I feel so weary and tired and desperately want to rest. You must forgive me if I sound sorry for myself and I know I must fight my own battles.*

*I am saddened to hear of Joy and Jim's troubles. I wonder what the real problem was behind the scenes. I have held back my own to you, as you, like all Mums, worry about us kids. I feel I have been away too long. My love to Dad with my deepest prayers that his sight will not go entirely. Oh Mum, I love you both so very much and feel like a little child in your wisdom and understanding. Do look after yourselves and forgive me.*

*I remain your ever-loving son,*

*Robin'*

Was there a curse on the Brown family, I wondered? Or perhaps it was the result of an extraordinary configuration of planets that was wreaking havoc with those born under a bad sign. Or perhaps it was just the inevitable consequence of foolish choices?

Extracts from a letter to Mum: 27/6/71

*'You seem to believe it impossible to make a living from writing unless you hit upon a character like James Bond, but success and money are not the factors that are motivating me to write at the moment, rather what Klee calls 'internal necessity'.*

*You say that you would be much happier if I had a job that offered training for a career providing future security. I would love to do what makes you happy, Mum, however through trying to make you, Dad, and others happy, I have myself become very unhappy. I don't blame you or Dad. You wanted 'the best' for me. Between the two of you, you wanted me to enter music competitions and youth orchestras, be on rugby and cricket teams, take science subjects so that I could get into the army. Sometimes I feel you wanted me to be a little superman.*

*I think I did quite well; I got some scholarships, I won some music prizes, I was on the 1<sup>st</sup>. XV in rugby, I was head of the Cadet Force, I got a B.A., and I got accepted for post-graduate study. But to what purpose? Why? Did it ever make you happy? Did your anxiety ever lessen after yet another mile-stone in Life's awful drudge of a journey was passed? Did you ever show me that you were happy by congratulating me on these successes? No, it was always. "you're getting on ... you're nineteen ... what are you going to do? ... soon it will be too late ...". The thing is, Mum, your lack of faith and belief in me as a person (quite apart from your son) resulted in a frantic obsession to prove myself to you. After all, isn't that Dad's mantra ... "in Life, you have to prove yourself again and again and again."*

*SECURITY – that is what is important to you, Mum; material and emotional security. But a job that gives you money but which does not fulfill you, cannot be said to give you emotional security. What about the institution of marriage? You have told me, quite apart from showing me, that you have been unhappy in your marriage. Look what is happening to both Robin and Joy at the moment. How can I believe in marriage!*

*What is happening today is that a lot of young people are looking for alternatives to certain traditional institutions like the educational system, marriage, and the family. One alternative to marriage is the commune. Communes come in all shapes and sizes; from anarchistic 'free-love' communes with no emphasis on whose child belongs to whom, to highly structured, puritanical communes, whose foundation rests on rigorous discipline and restraint. There is every permutation you can think of. But there are certain common features. I suppose one of the most fundamental beliefs is that every person needs more than one other person to complement them. A commune offers a means by which people can enjoy the benefits of other people without feeling restraint or repression. That sounds like emotional security to me.*

*You have asked me to conform. Mum, in the past I haven't asked you to accept my attitudes or beliefs – I wouldn't expect that. By the same token, I don't think you should expect me to accept yours. What I have asked, what I do ask, and what I hope for, is that you will accept me and believe in me as a person, as a human being. Accept me for what I am rather than only accept me if I make myself into what you want. I believe that if you did accept me in this unconditional sense, you wouldn't try so hard to change me, and you wouldn't suffer so much anxiety. It works the other way round as well. If I accepted you more, I wouldn't try to change you. I am aware that it is as easy and prevalent for the young to be hypocritical as their elders.'*



Extracts from letter received from Mum:

*'Dearest Ian,*

*Thank you for your long letter. Don't think that I don't understand your desire to work out your own destiny – I do. But being a mother, I cannot help but be deeply concerned with your welfare, health and future happiness. Don't despise my concern – it stems from a deep sympathy and love. This you should value. I am very proud of the way you have tackled life so far, and very much regret if you feel we have expected too much of you. I have never approved of the system of education which lays such importance on exam passing and the awful strain they bring about.*

*Should parents make their children opt out? It is a big decision and closes so many doors. Robin never passed an exam. I enclose his last letter which gives me much heartache. He cabled me last week saying that he was desperate for money. He says he is on the street and without a job. Daddy and I think that he may be having some kind of breakdown and we both advise him to come home as soon as possible. At least here he will have food, medical care, a roof over his head, and a chance to sort himself out.'*

Extracts from letter from Robin to Mum and Dad: 28/6/71; Durban

*'Dear Mum and Dad,*

*Many, many thanks for the money which has come at a most vital time. I have, after many years of negative feeling and philosophy, come down to earth with a very hard bump, and for the first time I have been forced to take a good hard look at myself. Dad, when I first left home, you said something which I have only now really understood ... 'you can fool others, but the only person you are really fooling is yourself'. I have wallowed in self-pity and it's therefore not surprising that people have turned away and what friends I have had, have finally found me too overpowering and gone off disgusted. My professional job-hopping, as a friend of mine put it, is not conducive to a happy marriage and this is why Avril got out in order to make me face myself.*

*For the past 2 weeks, I have been trying to sell deep freezers, so far without success. But it has been a great experience and I know that after surviving this lean period, I will make a success of selling which is the hardest but most rewarding profession in the world. Success motivation has finally pierced my shell and the necessity of providing a stable and secure position in this beautiful world.*

*I have been a very stupid, selfish and inconsiderate young man and now I am 28, this WILL change. When I come to Edinburgh, you will see a new son.'*

\* \* \*

Françoise arrived in Aix on June 22<sup>th</sup>. and found herself a room – with a window! - not far from Rue Jaubert. Our plan was to do our respective writing and drawing in the morning, get together and go out in the afternoon, have supper together and then see what the evening brings.

I was not in good shape to welcome her. I had been feeling apathetic and frustrated by my inability to write. Rather than follow my natural tendency to pull myself together and 'get organized', I was experimenting with Miller's quietism – namely a passive, go-with-the-flow attitude. This translated into being willing to follow the voice that said, 'if you feel depressed and/or can't write, then accept that feeling and stay in bed until you feel the energy to do something'. But then inevitably, after a while of such experimentation, the sense of shame would become overwhelming and I would leap out of bed and find something trivial to do, like making a coffee, having something to eat, or venturing outside for a walk. The problem was that these activities were so ephemeral and purposeless. What was T.S. Eliot's line from the Prufrock poem about measuring life with a succession of coffee spoons?

I was also reminded of a 'classic' sociology treatise that had been required reading at Queens – Suicide by Emile Durkheim, in which he said there was a direct correlation between rate of suicide and degree of 'anomie', or lack of structure in your life. If I made a coffee, ten minutes later I'd drunk it and was left with the feeling, "OK you had your coffee ... you can't have another one right away ... what now?" Or, if I went for a walk, I'd realize that it was the same walk I'd taken a hundred times before. I was not walking TO any place. I was not power-walking for exercise. I was not even walking with my consciousness alive to my surroundings. It was a walk from a void, through a void, back to a void, and forever within an internal void.

The day before Françoise arrived, I had gone for an especially long walk into the country. By the time I got back, I thought I had 'killed' at least five hours. To my horror, it was only 2.30 in the afternoon. I forced myself to read from The Courage To Be by Paul Tillich. I didn't really have the mental energy to grasp all that he was saying, but even seeing words like 'courage' and 'faith' in print helped somewhat. Then I 'celebrated' the infusion of a few sparks of energy by masturbating which in turn motivated me to get up and wash myself and have an après-sex coffee and cigarette. And so it went.

What seemed really important was to not start cooking supper too soon. Seven o'clock was the time that had been set for supper. This was usually the high point of the day and served as one of the main supports to whatever flimsy structure I did have. The meal was usually a rattatouille of courgettes, onions and tomatoes. Cooking, anyway, was occupational therapy. So many things to do. Wash the vegetables, light the solid fuel tablets, fill the saucepan with just the right amount of water. Add the vegetables. Add salt and pepper. Slice some bread.

What I didn't know was how life would change now that Françoise had arrived.

Extracts from diary: 24/6/71:

*'It was Françoise's 21<sup>st</sup>. birthday today. The evening meal was scrumptious! Of course 2 francs each gives you a lot more food than just 2 francs to eat alone. We had paté and bread, courgettes au gratin, lentil salad, country fried potatoes, wine and tarte aux fraises. Wow! Then we went to see 'The Go Between' dubbed into French.*

*Yesterday, on the other hand, was terrible. We seemed unable not to frustrate each other ... caught, trapped in so many knots it's unbelievable. Sensitivities, doubts, recriminations ... both of us trying not to hurt each other. Sometimes I find that I want to antagonize her, and that really bothers me. Last night she told me that she has always been a sado-masochist .. e.g. burning ants with a magnifying glass, wanting to be hurt herself, willing it to happen.*

*After having supper at her place, we decided to come back here to make love. I had to wait for what seemed like a long time on the street while she found her cap. When she finally joined me, I vented my frustrations by telling her that it drove me crazy when she suddenly cut off and became silent, like in the middle of a conversation. It somehow felt like a withdrawal of support. In turn she said that she had always been terribly afraid of not being able to talk ... that her parents had never wanted to listen to her. She said that her fear was that she only had so much inside of her to talk about, and if she did talk, it might all spill out and there would be nothing left ... she would be an empty vessel, a lifeless body. She said that sometimes she desperately wanted to talk but was afraid because she thought that 'les autres' would think that she was stupid, unintelligent or whatever. She said that if she did start talking, she had to continue uninterrupted, otherwise she might lose what she wanted to say. Likewise, if she wanted to remark on something someone else had said, she couldn't keep it in until they had finished.*

*As she was telling me this, she became more and more depressed. I became concerned that she was going to have one of her fits. Her eyes looked very frightened and helpless. She glanced around nervously and started at any noise. I tried to hug her but her body was limp and she didn't seem to want me that close. So I busied myself with something and when I turned towards her again, she was smiling and looked like a little child,*

radiantly happy and innocent. Today she told me that she thought that she was going mad but whereas before she might explode into crying or screaming, this time she had crossed some boundary into a peaceful and secure place of illumination and warmth.

Anyway, then she told me that she really wanted to make love. By this time, I was becoming freaked out myself because I couldn't make out real from illusory. I didn't know what was going on in her mind.

At first it was good. She was talking to me and telling me how she wanted me to kiss her when suddenly she became lifeless. Literally ... her body seemed cold and dead. But her face was still calm. She indicated that she didn't want to do it anymore but said that she still had 'the light'. She still seemed like a child, but strong and sure within herself. I was very confused and in two minds. On the one hand, I felt that she was truly in some kind of mystical state. On the other hand, I was terribly afraid that she had in fact 'gone mad', crossed some line like I'd seen Herr Professor in 'The Blue Angel' do, and that there was nothing I could do to help. She wanted to go home so I walked back to her place with her, treating her very gently as we went. As I said goodbye, I left my spare set of keys with her ... just in case.

Today when we had her birthday meal and went to the movie, she seemed fine again. She said she remembered everything. She couldn't explain it but said that she still felt strong and clear. We went back to her place after the movie and started to make love. She was anxious about her landlady so we came back here. It was long and good, so good. Eventually I came but continued to work her with my fingers. She began moaning in a way that I'd never heard before. It became louder and more intense and then ... she came! She had two orgasms. She told me it was the first time. I am so happy for her.'

Extracts from diary: 25/6/71:

'Last night I had an extraordinary dream.

... I am at Kingsburgh Road\* ... outside number 30 is a light blue 'Baby' Austin with its engine running ... i think that Françoise, Jerry and Liz are just up the road ... decide to pick them up ... get in, press down on the accelerator ... car keeps picking up speed ... can't find brake pedal with my foot ... it seems to be missing ... i can't slow or stop the car ... it goes on and on, just missing other cars that i am forced to overtake ... very hair-raising ... road becoming more modern with roundabouts and flyovers ... just as we are coming up to an intersection, i find the brake pedal ... car slows, goes up a hill, turns round to come back ... and suddenly I am on a bicycle ... come to some railway tracks ... train is stationary on the tracks ... I lift the bike onto the train through the open door of a freight car, with the intention of jumping off the other side and continuing my bike ride back to Kingsburgh Road ... but the train starts moving ... 'oh no', i think, 'not again' ... i shout out loud, LET ME OFF' ... the guard appears and is friendly and understanding ... he says they will let me off at the next railway crossing ... he gives me a map of how to get back to Kingsburgh Road ...

... don't remember any more except being on a country road with hedgerows and beautiful wild flowers ...

Today, I related the dream to Françoise. She said that she thought that the 'Baby' Austin might have been a symbol for 'our' baby. When she said that I felt shocked and flattered and terrified.'

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\* 30 Kingsburgh Road was the address of the home in which I was brought up in Edinburgh.

## 37.

The summer almost over. Experiences, memories, feelings, fragments of identity tumble around like clothes in a dryer, round and round – rising, whirling, falling. Rentastaff was like groveling on the ground beneath the scaffold. Morocco was being lost in the desert. And Aix was the continuation of the nightmare in ‘la chambre sans fenêtres’. Now, back at The Cut in London, dreaming of communes, desperately searching for a life-line. Françoise in Grigny working at a shit job at the ‘Imprimerie Montel and Co.’ in Givors.

### Extracts from letter from Françoise: 7/8/71

*‘Dear sweet little Ian,*

*I was very disappointed, hurt and sorry to read that Jerry was not keen on the idea of the commune ... I can’t really suggest what would be the best thing for you to do next year. But I do think the idea of Canada is a very good one. Just the fact of going to a place you have liked and where you felt together can only do you good. At least it can clarify your view about where you want to be.*

*As for me, thank you for suggesting that I come too. I just love the idea but I think the most important thing for me right now is my art. I am going to write to John tonight.*

*I started work last Monday at this printing house in Givors. They publish ‘Playboy’ type magazines. My job is to pile magazines or put them in envelopes and make parcels. All of that requires a lot of skill, you know. One should be able to put together 5000 volumes in 9 hours. If you are talented enough to do more, then you get 5 centimes more per hour. I’m afraid I’m at the rate of 1000 a day. I was trying to force it but my piles kept falling over. So I’ve decided to follow my own rhythm.*

*I work from 6.30 a.m. till 12, and then from 1.30 p.m. to 5 p.m. It’s terribly long, especially in the morning. There is no break at all. And I am not allowed to smoke (none of the women can). So I get a delightful pleasure when a male come in and I get a whiff of his Gauloise.’*

### Extracts from letter from Joy: 22/8/71

*‘In reply to your question about whether or not you should come to Canada, it is almost impossible for me to say. Happiness and peace of mind for me is not so much the country or city, but my life situation. If you are really involved in your writing and want to sell your work, I should say that Canada and Montreal are not the place. There is very little money floating around and I quite honestly think you would find it hard to get a break.*

*The last two years have been tough for you, Ian. I can sense and identify with your agony. Do what you intuitively feel is best. If you feel that Montreal is the place, then come. Unfortunately, I shall not be able to offer much physical support, only moral.’*

Spinning further out of control. Is there no limit? Where does God step in and mop up the situation? Anne Bohm and Françoise say ‘go back to Canada’; Mr. Griffiths and Joy say ‘stay in Britain’. I feel unwanted.

Françoise talks about John. I don’t want to hear about him but pretend that I do. Before going to France, Françoise had found work as a waitress at a counter-culture restaurant called the ‘Square Pigeon’. The restaurant also served as a gallery for local artists. There she had met a tall, gangly guy named John Sanguine. John, although uncoordinated in speech and movement, was talented as a graphic artist. He seemed to be attracted to Françoise and was supportive of her art. For my part, I felt insecure and jealous and didn’t know how to handle it, especially in view of the fact that John was trying to put together an underground magazine. It was this project that had loosely drawn me into the picture, in my capacity as ‘a writer’. We had already had several meetings, including one

with Jerry, to discuss how we might proceed.

It was so paradoxical. I had tried in different ways to support Françoise, to help her get a more solid base in London, to be less dependent on me. Now, when she was finally beginning to achieve that goal, I floundered in my own insecurity. Compounding this insecurity was the fact that Jerry, Liz and Mary were formulating ideas to start up their own restaurant, a process that had excluded me. And when I had approached them with my pet counter-cultural project, setting up a commune, they had said they weren't interested. It hurt because I had helped Jerry and Liz get started making leather pants, and shortly after had invited Mary to come and live in The Cut. Privately, Jerry admitted to me that he felt I had been betrayed but that his hands had been tied because Liz and Mary were against me being involved in any group project with them.

One evening, towards the end of August, I had come home to The Cut, to find Mary entertaining Jerry and Liz to dinner. I encountered Mary in the kitchen and couldn't conceal my feelings of being excluded. Anger and tears welled up and I went up to my room and slammed the door. Much later, when I ventured out, I found a note in Jerry's handwriting beneath the door that said:

*'if nothing else  
know that we  
try  
to care  
to care to try'*

Extracts from letter from Françoise: 21/8/71

*'My beautiful, beautiful Ian,*

*I don't know what to say about your letter. It was so good to hear what you feel. How silly you are to think that I like John more than you. I laughed so much when I read the first part of your letter. I never expected you would have suspicions about that. And I cried because it really hurt me to know it made you unhappy and I cried because I was so glad you told me you wanted to be with me and have a commune with me and want me to come to Canada.*

*Oh my little baby, I like you so much. I am very, very honest with you. You see I don't want you to know that I like you at times. When you wrote to me and said you didn't know whether to go to Canada or stay in England, I answered by saying 'go to Canada'. I really forced myself but I thought that way you wouldn't feel imprisoned by me. Honestly Ian, that is true. And I hoped so much that you wouldn't, at least not on your own because it would be really bad if you went and I stayed here. I need your presence. I want to be with you.'*

Extracts from diary: 30/8/71:

*'Today I returned to The Canadian Embassy. I am told that I will have to re-apply as I have waited more than one year, and that this time, I will have to apply as a 'sponsored immigrant'. A week ago, I heard that Joy and Jim had finally separated. Maybe now I won't even be able to get accepted as a sponsored immigrant. Rejected by Canada. Marooned on this fucking island forever?'*

Letter to Joy: 17/10/71:

*'Dear Joy,*

*Many thanks to you and Jim for being prepared to sponsor me. I appreciate the fact that despite your separation, you are prepared to go to the interview as his wife.*

*There is so much to talk about. Most of my writing seems to go into letters. I have a feeling that this is going to be a long one.*

*I have been thinking a lot about Mum recently. In trying to write a play, tentatively entitled 'The Interview', I have been drawn more and more into reflection on childhood days, and in particular the relationships within our family. When I was in Canada, I started to feel confused about who to address my letters to. Somehow, 'Dear Mum and Dad' seemed false. Why? Because there is no 'mumanddad'. There is Katharine Brown (ne Eastwood) and Douglas Brown, who happen to have a marriage certificate. That has always been their problem and our legacy.*

*My relationship with Mum is very different from that with Dad and it would be quite wrong to confuse the two. Of course, there are areas in common, for example, much that involves older generation values and attitudes versus that of the younger generation. Both of them are hopelessly out of touch with changes that have taken place since the war. But where they are different is in their relative degree of willingness to adapt. In fact, as we both know, that has always been Mum's professed philosophy – a kind of Social Darwinism. The trouble with Mum is that she has adapted so much to life with Dad that, in my opinion, she became a kind of yielding, absorbent punching bag for Dad's rigid and overbearing character.*

*Ironically, I believe that much of Dad's perversity, rancor and mental sadism may derive from the frustration he feels at this 'softness'. Mum has often said that she wishes she could be more like Auntie Margaret, i.e. counter his barbs with humorous detachment and rebuke when necessary. But Mum doesn't know how to play Dad's games; even if she did, I don't think she would want to. The result is that they take each other deadly seriously. Dad involuntarily (it may seem voluntary) becomes the sadist and Mum the masochist. She soaks up his aggression, represses her own feelings, and passes on her anxieties and depressions to us.*

*In this aching chasm of intimacy between our mother and father, Mum becomes a vampire to her children. She desperately needs their affection and continually makes them feel guilty for not providing enough. So, the misery is passed down the line of command. Morale suffers. We feel imprisoned. We complain, we protest, we develop our own anxieties and depressions. We know we have to break out, for our own sanity. We run away. We escape.*

*Mother feels terrible pain at this injustice. What has she done to deserve this abandonment? Did she not give us everything? From a place of love, she tries to cover up what she feels. Instead she internalizes. Her suffering threshold is high. But eventually she can't take any more. Breakdown. Hospital. Recuperation.*

*Meanwhile Father, tragically aware of his own destructive behavior, engages in massive self-hate. He even expresses his death wish from time to time. Occasionally he tries to ease his guilt ... "Ian, here is some money ... go and get your mother a box of chocolates." He escapes from the unbearable present into the past he knows and understands. He watches show jumping on TV. His face softens as he watches the horses. He reads books about the war. He sucks on strong white peppermints as he tries to give up smoking.*

*As his children, we hate him for the way that he projects his frustrations and failures onto us. It used to be that Robin was the scapegoat. Then it was 'Dirty Dick' and 'Long John'. You and I were protected to some extent by our scholarships and successes at school. Things have shifted. Now, I get to experience some of what Robin went through. However, traditionally my role has been to be the 'go-between' in the spark-filled vacuum that was our parents' marriage. For what I needed to see was parents who were united. When I was a child, I didn't want to have to divide my loyalties. So, if keeping the peace helped, I would be a peace-maker; if I had to be a diplomat and mediator between warring parties, then so be it; if I had to be the music therapist who brought healing music, then that was what I'd be.*

*Like my mother, I had to learn to adapt. I was afraid of my father – better to mould myself into the expected image than risk his wrath. It wasn't just a fear of rejection, it was also because I felt that if I didn't do what he wanted, he would feel that I was siding with Mum – that I was betraying him.*

*That was the situation with the decision about the Army. I begin to realize that like Mum, I am over-adapted to what others want or expect of me. So while in exile in another country, I begin to rebel. I begin to learn that my training has been in self restraint, whereas what I need to explore is self expression. I begin to understand the relationship between form and content. Ernst Fischer, a Marxist historian, talks about two tendencies that operate in all ordered matter; the conservative tendency (the clinging to a form of organization once achieved) and the revolutionary tendency (the inability to remain at rest). As he puts it, "content changes incessantly ... and everywhere the new content bursts the confines of old forms and creates new ones."*

*Our family had a rigid hierarchical form. You and I did our best to 'fit in'. Robin was the misfit. All three of us burst out and away from the stifling and stagnant situation within the form. In the case of Mum and Dad's marriage, the image seems to be one of Dad bursting with rage and frustration and Mum bursting with anxiety. They were both rebelling against the form but could not, or would not change it. Intimacy dried up, energy became bogged in routine, and tensions turned hard and sinewy and developed intractable 'knots' (as R.D. Laing puts it). There was as much implosion as explosion.*

*It seems to me that the conservative tendency is all about staying IN, and the revolutionary tendency has to do with getting OUT. The prefixes 'in' (or 'im') and 'ex' manifest those meanings in words like in introvert / extravert, inhibit / exhibit, impress / express, etc.*

*I want to stay in where it is warm and comfortable and I feel safe. I want to build a nest and take care of those within.*

*I want to go out where it is fresh and challenging and I feel free. I want to move, I want to stretch, I want to breathe, I want to flow and fly and jump and jive. I want to explore and express and explain and expand and excite and exult.*

*And I want to loosen the body's wisdom that knows already how to balance in and out in the way it combines the two in RHYTHM. The in and out of relationships, of play, of dance, of breathing, of sex; the input and output of information and work. I love rhythm, the ordering of Time.*

*And I want to seek the ordering and balancing of spatial elements that is HARMONY.'*

From Scaffolds to Fences – A Story

I live in a house with my Mummy and Daddy. We have a nice garden. Daddy cuts the grass and plants flowers in the borders. Sometimes Mummy comes outside and cuts some tulips or daffodils to brighten up the house. Once in a while she gives me some flowers to take to Miss Ogilvie at school. I don't like Miss Ogilvie though because she makes me read books when I want to play.

Often I don't like to stay in the house because Daddy shouts at Mummy a lot and makes her cry. I like to play in the garden. Sometimes I pretend I'm an airplane and I run round and round with my arms spread out going 'eeaaaarrrrooommm'. Sometimes I pretend I'm a Red Indian. I climb the tree and shoot arrows over the house. If I shoot one over the fence by mistake, I sneak over really quickly and get it back before anyone sees me. I am really curious about what's on the other side of our fence. I get excited at the thought of going there. One day I ask my Mum if I can go. She's not too happy about it, but in the end she says I can go so long as I go through the gate, make sure to close it, stay on the path and come back by tea time.

The next day is sunny and my Mum makes me a sandwich and says I can go. It's a lovely day and I feel so happy skipping down the path, not knowing what will be around the next corner. On both sides I can see lush meadows and behind them rolling hills. I want to go there and explore but I remember my Mum told me to stay on the path.

Suddenly, in the distance, I see a fence – just like the one round our house, only longer. I go as far as the gate. Then I start to feel a little scared so I turn around and go back. In the house, I feel proud of myself for making the trip. But I'm also glad that I'm back. Besides, it had started to rain and I was getting wet.

It isn't long before I want to go out again. This time I feel a little surer of myself, a little safer. When I get to the lush meadows, I can't resist the temptation to take a little look around. Next thing I'm running, jumping, and following my dancing feet. I come over the brow of a hill and there below me is a big red house. In a field outside the house, I can see lots of boys playing some kind of game. Then an old man with a beard comes out and rings a big bell and all the boys go running into the house. Then he sees me and calls me over. I'm really scared now, but I figure I'd better do as he says.

When I approach him, I can see that he has a kind face and that makes me feel better. He asks me whether I've come to join them. After I tell him a bit about myself, he explains that the big house is a special school where boys live all the time. He says that they have a jolly good time there, and play lots of games, and learn lots of things, and by the time they leave they have become young men.

I am so excited that I run all the way home to tell my parents about it. They ask me all sorts of questions. Then they have a big argument and Daddy gets angry and Mummy goes into the kitchen in tears. Mummy tells me that she thinks that it is a good idea for me to go to this school but Daddy thinks I should stay at home and continue with Miss Ogilvie.

For many weeks it seems like nobody wants to talk about it and I am not allowed to go off on my own. But one day, to my great surprise, my Mum tells me that they have agreed that I should start at the big red house school. I don't know what to think at first. I am scared at leaving my home but at the same time excited.

At the school, I love all the games and the friendships and even the teachers. I feel very happy at my new home and it becomes more and more difficult to put up with things when I go to my parents' house in the holidays. I always feel good to get back again. The teachers allow us to explore all the valleys, lakes, forests and mountains for many miles around the school. They tell us that Life is full of challenges and that we must toughen ourselves in order to face and overcome them.



Years pass. Gradually I get stronger and more confident. The land itself becomes my friend, my ally, my home. One day at the limit of my wanderings, I find another fence, like the one before but more imposing. On the other side everything looks desolate and uninviting. I don't want to go there. I am happy where I am. But alas! One day I am told that the time has finally come for me to leave. I beg them to let me stay but they say that it is impossible. They tell me I must go. I say I don't know where to go. I am told that I have a choice; I can either go through the gate leading back to my parents' house, or I can take the gate leading out to the waste land beyond. I really don't know what to do. I feel so confused. I know that my parents have missed me all the time I was away so I feel I ought to go back to see them, and this is what I eventually decide to do.

As I am walking slowly along the path, I meet a rich merchant riding on his donkey. He is very friendly and asks me where I am going. I tell him everything, pointing out that although I am going back to my parents' house, it isn't what I want to do. He listens attentively, and when I am finished, he says that he has a plan. He tells me that beyond the waste land there is a lake, and in the center of that lake, there is a large island. On this island, he says, is a wonderful civilization, far in advance of anything I have ever experienced.

He tells me that I still have much to learn and that on this island, everyone is allowed and helped to learn all they want. Then he tells me that if I am interested, he will show me the gate that leads to this island. I expect him to tell me there is a boat that I must take to cross the lake. 'There are no boats', he tells me. 'You must swim to get to the island. This will be a test of your determination.' Then he says that if I am successful in reaching the island, I can be assured that he will have left instructions with the inhabitants as to how to take care of me.

I trust this man and decide I am up for the challenge. He tells me to jump on the back of his donkey and off we go. After much travel, we reach the gate to which he has referred.

The rich merchant tells me that he must leave me here and he departs wishing me good luck.

I swim and swim. I don't think I'll make it but my years at the big red school has taught me never to quit. Finally I make it. As I stumble out of the water, the ground hurts my feet. It is only then, as I look around, that I see that the island is a flat, concrete slab, stretching as far as the eye can see. What is even more extraordinary is that there doesn't appear to be anything on the surface – no houses, trees, animals or people. Failing to see even a fence, I suddenly feel a sense of great freedom.

But then a great voice sounds forth, saying; 'though you see them not, this island hath rules which must be followed. This is The Island Of Symbols. Here, what is, is not ... what is not, is. Here, all objects in the phenomenal world have been replaced by symbols. If ye wish to perceive the Truth, ye must first enter the Realm Of Symbols. But heed my words, if ye stayest as ye art now, ye shall never have clear vision.'

And I am afraid and cry out; 'oh master, whoever you are, wherever you are, I am indeed desirous of knowing and seeing what is. Tell me how I may enter the Realm Of Symbols.'

And the voice replies, 'ye must leave thy body, and seek that part wherein rests the Realm Of Symbols. Sit down, get comfortable, turn your attention inward, and begin the search. Use your imagination.'

I begin to ask how and where I should look, but there is no answer. The voice has gone. There is nothing for me to do but obey the command. I sit down, as if for meditation. But instead of intoning my mantra, I visualize saying goodbye to my body and going through some kind of gate into my interior self. At first, scattered thoughts hold me back, binding me to my here and now consciousness. But then I begin to see the gate more clearly. I go through it and suddenly I see myself, or perhaps feel myself, within my body. I sense I am in one of the chambers of my heart. Where is this Realm Of Symbols? What did he mean? I search as I pass through the heart area. Past tense muscles and pumping arteries, I head upward away from the noise and confusion.

Then it is cooler. I am in a cavern with glistening stalactites and stalacmites connecting and strengthening roof and floor, marbled pillars interpenetrated and highlighted by occasional shafts of brilliant sunlight flashing down through the jagged openings in the roof. This cavernous grotto is so beautiful and so enchanting that I do not want to leave. But I remember my quest and press on. Suddenly, at the far end of the grotto, I come across a huge oak door, set into the rock face. Surely this is the entrance to the Realm of

Symbols. I try the door and it swings open easily.

There, to my amazement, is the same scene that greeted me on arriving at the island – an endless vista of flat concrete. For I moment I think I am outside myself again. But then gradually, the more I look about me, the more I begin to see that this is not the same featureless plain.

In the distance, there seems to be a ... yes, a fence, a garden fence. I run forwards to see if my eyes were deceiving me. No, it is a garden fence, just like the one I encountered before. I walk along the perimeter of the fence looking for a gate. Eventually, I find one, and rush through it expectantly. But there is only more concrete, flat, gray concrete with yet another fence in the distance. I can even see another gate. But I don't want to go through it, not yet. I want to explore. I want to find something. So I start running around the track between the two fences. The track is either circular or oval-shaped, like a race-track for horses. Suddenly I see someone running towards me.

As I get closer, I begin to see that the other person approaching looks just like me. It *is* me but this 'me' is wearing rugby clothes. We pass each other. I can't look at him. Who was that? Was that really me? Where's a gate? ... i saw one a while ago ... didn't i? ... i'm sure i did ... oh, but now i see one ... and another one ... and now there seems to be lots of gates ... which one should i take? ... come on, make up your mind ... you're free to choose ... no-one's telling you what to do.

Still running, i rush through the next gate i see. And i'm through the gate ... and there's more concrete ... and over there is a fence ... and lots more gates ... all identical ... and i'm running faster now ... round and round and round ... and i can see someone again ... someone is running towards me ... i feel terror ... i don't want to meet him ... i don't want to pass him ... but there is nowhere to hide ... but at least i don't recognize him ... or do i? ... he's wearing army battledress and a beret ... looking for a gate now ... need to break away ... don't want to meet him again ... here i am ... through the gate ... more concrete ... faster ... faster ... round ... round ...

And now i see them everywhere ... playing the 'cello, talking to my parents, reading a book at a desk ... all in different clothes ... army uniform, R.A.F. uniform, dinner jacket, dress kilt, blue shirt and shorts, blazer, donkey jacket ... and all with the same face ... my face ... all running around the track in the opposite direction to me ... faster and faster ... now the fence appears to be nothing but a succession of gates ... everything is beginning to become blurred ... i can hardly breathe ... i am no longer aware of my feet touching the ground ... i am being tossed around ... like a cork in a whirlpool except that the direction is upward .. it's more like i'm in a twister . spiraling upwards and inwards ... tighter and tighter circles ... faster and faster ... and suddenly, the force leaves me and i am at a point in space ... suspended ... all is calm ... all is still ... suspended and motionless ... held 'twixt heaven and earth ... 'twixt spirit and body ...

Is this the Realm Of Symbols? And then I look down, and far below I see the structure of the fences I have just left. At first, I see the concentric circles of the fences that had contained me, but then, as I keep looking, I begin to see contours appearing. It is amazing, as if I am watching a spider's web through a camera lens whilst the image is slowly focused. The web is intricate, incredibly intricate. In addition to countless fences, there are interconnecting radials spreading out from the center.

I am suddenly struck with the idea that if I can memorize the layout from this vantage point, then I shall have learned all there is to know. But this turns out to be impossible due to the fact that the more I study the web, the more intricate it appears to become. Eventually I decide that the only way I can really learn about the reality down there is by going back down again and experiencing it from ground level. Bit by bit, fence by fence, radial by radial, I will come to know the totality of the reality.

No sooner have I wished to be back on earth than the spiral force reappears in the form of a helter-skelter. I take a cushion and set off on an exhilarating descent. When I get to the bottom, the helter-skelter vanishes and I am back on concrete again. But when I look around me, I can hardly believe my eyes. The concrete surface which was smooth, is now broken and cracked and gives the impression of a sea of crazy-paving. The neat circular garden fences have given way to a hideous entanglement ... a jungle of criss-crossing, colliding verticals and horizontals. Broken bits of garden fence jut into high red-brick walls with pieces of jagged glass jutting out at all angles, which intersect with pre-stressed concrete walls smothered with rolls of barbed wire, wrought-iron fences with spear-like railings, chicken-coup fences, red-stone walls, sandstone walls, limestone walls, custom-made marble walls and craftsman-made dry stone walls ... all

jumbling and crumbling into and over each other. I try to remember what it all looked like from above. It is more confusing from down here. Somehow I feel entangled in a labyrinth of unyielding brick, mortar, metal and wooden posts. Before I could see it, now I only feel it. It is claustrophobic and oppressive. The garden fence that once offered protection and challenge, has now metastasized into an infernal maze that promises only frustration, despair and incarceration. The womb has undergone a metamorphosis into an open-air tomb.

There is only one solution. I must break out by any means possible. There are no gates now, no doors, no openings for escape.

So you start smashing and tearing and uprooting. It's hard, it's painful. You get scratched and bruised and bloodied. But slowly you begin to clear a small space. You feel you can breathe a little easier. Bit by bit, the fences and walls and barbed wire are beaten and battered down. Once again the flat, concrete plain emerges. But now you are so caught up with the spirit of destruction that you are hardly aware of what is around you. Now you are existing purely on a visceral level and no thoughts intercede with this inner urge to destroy.

Destroy ... DESTROY ... de-structure ... unmake ... undo ... nullify ... abolish ... overturn ... do away with ... wipe out ... demolish ... crush ... grind ... pulverize ...

Eventually, you find yourself at the same wooden door that brought you into this place. Gratefully, you open the door and you are in the beautiful grotto again. But the beauty does not quell the desire to destroy. Like Samson, you feel you must bring down this unholy temple. You put your arms around the two largest stalactites and you pull inwards with all your might. You heave and strain, all to no avail. You summon all your will-power and focus it into one mighty heave. There is a cracking sound like a rifle shot and one of the pillars fractures, and then as you continue to exert pressure, suddenly your arms bang into your ribs as the pillars cave inwards. You look up to see cracks spreading out in the ceiling like horizontal forked lightning. And then in graceful slow-motion, great chunks of rock fall whirling and spinning. You glimpse a flash of light above and then just as quick, there is complete black-out.

You are back within your body. You look around in wonderment. The island is flat, as before. But it is no longer pale-gray concrete – rather a lush green meadow, speckled abundantly with red poppies, blue lavender and yellow mimosa. You have an overwhelming feeling of freshness and newness, Your senses are heightened to an extraordinary degree. You lie in the soft warm grass, close your eyes and smell the lavender. It is so peaceful. You lie there for a long time.

After a while, it becomes cooler and your body tells you to move. To your horror, you find that you cannot. The message is given but the limbs do not respond. It gets darker and colder. For a while you struggle with rising feelings of panic as you keep straining to move. You feel like an upturned turtle. Finally, you are exhausted. You give up the struggle. It is pitch dark now. You close your eyes and try to relax. Your mind slows down and after a while, you sleep.

When you awake, you are in bed in your room on The Cut. Now you can move. But while your surroundings are the same as before, the inside of your head has become a Tower Of Babel. The delicate fabric of your mind is being rent by sounds, jagged and amplified. Some of these sounds are from outside, like the sounds of traffic and people shouting; and some are from within, voices telling you what to do and what not to do. And it is all chaotic and unbearable. You can move your body but your mind feels like jelly – structureless.

It feels like you have no layers of protective padding, no form, no limits. You are completely exposed, completely vulnerable. The content of your being has broken free and is shrieking its way here and there. Your memory has blown its fuse, like a breaker, in order to deal with the chronically overloaded system. You have lost your filters. You cannot filter the incoming information. You cannot classify. Your judgment is shot. You can't tell good from bad, or even if there is such a thing as 'good' or 'bad'.

Space and Time become warped. There are people around you. They can see your weakness but they can't seem to help. You need them. You need their strength, their support, their security. Some say you are becoming a kind of vampire. Unable to subsist independently, you are forced to suck out the life force from others. The more they realize this, the more they want to keep away from you. And the more they withdraw,

the more desperate you become. Things go from bad to worse. As people tactfully pull away, you become super sensitive to the signs of rejection and abandonment. The result is that you feel they are letting you down, betraying you. That in turn makes you increasingly resentful. Pain spreads like water on a paper towel. Your inner being has become a dark place, full of fear, anger, resentment, jealousy, envy, anxiety, paranoia.

You are forced to turn within once again. But this time you do not seek general knowledge or exploration of unknown parts. Instead, you look for specific solutions to help you survive and lessen the pain. Slowly, you become more and more convinced of the wisdom and necessity of the exhortation to give ... to give of yourself to others, to give in some way, in any way. But before you do that, you realize you have to give to yourself. You have to take care of yourself. You have to love yourself. You have to make a home for yourself, without and within. You have to make it warm and cozy, with sufficient light and space. And you have to design and build the garden fence of your choosing.



## 39.

This is a phantasmagoric nightmare, as Miller would call it. And into this madhouse, into this nightmare, steps a person I barely know, someone at least as mad as me – my brother.

I met him at midday on November 22<sup>nd</sup>., my 24<sup>th</sup>. birthday. He was standing outside the left luggage office – short-cropped hair, goatee beard, green corduroy overcoat with dirty white sheepskin collar; piercing, intense, frightening eyes ... like my father's eyes, but more upsetting because they revealed so much pain, so much aloneness. Gaunt, haunted.

“Hello, brother.” The voice deep, trying to show control.

At 6 foot three, he loomed over me. He lit a Rothmans. I lit a Gauloises. Two brothers pretending to be normal, standing outside the left luggage office at Waterloo Station.

I thought to myself, ‘he probably thinks I’m fine, as usual; no point telling him what I’m going through; just listen to him, same as with my mother and father.’

And as we walked the short walk down Waterloo Bridge Road, and then left along The Cut, Robin talked and talked and talked. I heard a person in distress, seeking to impress. He jumped from topic to topic. One minute we were in Johannesburg and he was becoming emotionally broken as he talked about missing his daughter Shuna, and how his wife Avril had betrayed him. The next minute, we were travelling helter-skelter through the world of ideas and books; the Rosicrucians, the Kabala, black magic, white magic, Aleister Crowley, Ron Hubbard and Scientology. And my left brain, trained at Queens and L.S.E., began convulsing at the lack of any intellectual rigor to his ramblings. A deeper part of me wanted to reach out and touch him and say; ‘Robin, I know that we don’t know each other very well. I know that I can’t understand or appreciate all that you are and all that you’ve been through. But please, just know that I’m here, that I want to know you. I want to give to you, if I can. It’s true, you do embarrass me. Sometimes, I don’t want people to know that you are my brother. But, for God’s sake, know that I don’t reject you.’ But I didn’t say this. I just listened.

As we turned into the entrance of 35 The Cut, however, I said: “Robin, you’re welcome to stay as long as you need.”

\* \* \*

The Cut had turned into the Boulevard of Broken Dreams, with number 35 as The Last Resort. In addition to Robin and I, Françoise’s connection to The Square Pigeon Restaurant had led to an assortment of strange people turning up at different times of the day.

There was John Sangwin and his ideas for an underground magazine to be entitled ‘Bloody John’; someone called John Bloxham who was trying to organize a huge rock concert at Wembley Stadium; a tall slim gay man named Royston who had curly hair and an ever-present red scarf that made him look like Aristide Bruyante from Toulouse-Lautrec’s painting; and a young, earnest, good-looking guitar-player called Mark.

As for the permanent residents, everything seemed in flux. Val moved out, and Françoise took her room in October. Stuart Varney came back from his European motor-cycle trip and took over my dish-washing job at the Shillobeer restaurant. Mary Williams got increasingly upset at the increasingly anarchic atmosphere and made plans to get married and move out. Finally, at my suggestion, Mary Addison moved in to the large room which previously had been used as a common living room.

I was working at the Young Vic as an usher and cleaner. As the name suggests, the Young Vic was the offspring of the Old Vic, just down the road. The Young Vic had recently been built across the road from number 35 and had recently opened its doors for business. But just as the Old Vic was the grand old lady of English Theatre, its upstart son was meant to be alternative and groovy. In fact it was not quite ‘off-off Broadway’ in the

way that The Open Space had been. Rather than showcasing contemporary playwrights, the Young Vic's mandate was to show established 20<sup>th</sup>. Century playwrights like Beckett and Albee. It would also put on Shakespearian plays and other classics, but in a modern vein.

Working there greatly simplified my life due to the proximity. It also gave me a chance to see and study great modern plays in the same way that ushering at the Old Vic had allowed me to see plays by the likes of Ibsen, Strindberg and Chekhov.

The opening production of the Young Vic was Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. The simplicity and austerity of set design and two character dialogue influenced me and I began working on my first play entitled 'The Interview'.

At the beginning of December, Françoise went to France on one of her required visits. Although we parted on good terms, I had reached a point of complete confusion about who women were and how to be in relationship with them. I had encouraged Françoise to take her own room at The Cut so that we could de-emphasize emotional monogamy while keeping the door open for social and sexual relations. I had told her that I wanted her to relate to others and in particular to seek support from fellow artists like John Sangwin. But in the week before she left, she had gone out a couple of times with John, and one evening she had invited Mark over to talk and 'stay the night'. After I retired to my room for the night, I could hear them talking and laughing. Despite my idealistic intentions, I felt I was going crazy with paranoia and jealousy. I just didn't have a clue whether their relations were purely platonic or not. Meanwhile I was beating myself up for not living up to my own advocacy of an 'open relationship'.

Reading D.H. Lawrence, Miller and R.D. Laing had helped give me insights into relationships between men and women, but I was aware that I needed to see things from a woman's perspective. I decided to start reading Anais Nin's Journals. Perhaps she would help me understand a woman's mind and soul.

From the start, I was overwhelmed by Nin's writing – her directness, her awareness and sensitivity, the fineness of her sensibility, and the extraordinary depth of her observations.

Here is a sampling from the many pages of quotations that I copied into my diary:

Nin quoting her therapist, Otto Rank, on his advice to her with respect to her father:

*'Hurt him. You will deliver him of his sense of guilt for leaving you as a child. He will feel delivered because he will have been punished. Abandon him as he has abandoned you. Revenge is necessary (my emphasis) to re-establish equilibrium in the emotional life. It rules us deep down. It is the root of Greek tragedies.'* (*Journals: vol. 1: p.327*)

Deep in the recesses of my soul, I sought revenge for the dual betrayals by Lesley and Ellie, but until reading Nin, I had never felt those feelings recognized, let alone validated, let alone acted upon.

Nin on her predisposition for slow, patient, architectural construction in her writing and in her life, as opposed to Miller's emphasis on spontaneity and flow:

*'In the center of the Carnival, I began to think of a Cathedral. An immense Cathedral loomed in the heart of my light joys, the opposite of flow. I used to build cathedrals, cathedrals of sentiment, for love, for love of men, for love as prayer, love as communion, with a great sense of continuity and detail and enduringness. Built against the flux and mobility of life, and in defiance of it (my emphasis) ... pure flow and enjoyment of life leave me thirsty. I begin to think of Cathedrals. Why? I have the medieval faith needed for great continuity. I build human relationships with divine care. With sacrifices, lies, deceptions, I build up continuity, permanence (my emphasis).'* (*Journals: vol 1: p.327*)

Was this not a perfect paradigm for Fischer's quote on form and content? Was it not also a crystalline explanation for the difference in sensibility between Ellie and I that became manifest in the white horse incident in Wales? And as for the last line, it left me breathless somewhere between total insight and utter incomprehension.

On why she writes diaries:

*'I must continue the diary because it is a feminine activity, it is a personal and personified creation, the opposite of the masculine alchemy. I want to remain on the untransmuted, untransformed,, untransposed plane.*

*This alchemy called creation, or fiction, has become for me as dangerous as the machine ... it is too far from the truth of the moment ... too much awareness without accompanying experience is a skeleton without the flesh of life.' (Journals: vol. 2: p. 172)*

On women's orgasm:

*'The entire mystery of pleasure in a woman's body lies in the intensity of the pulsation just before orgasm. Sometimes it is slow, one-two-three, three palpitations which then project a fiery and icy liqueur through the body. If the palpitation is feeble, muted, the pleasure is like a gentler wave. The pocket seed of ecstasy bursts with more or less energy, when it is richest it touches every portion of the body, vibrating through every nerve cell. If the palpitation is intense, the rhythm and beat of it is slower and the pleasure more lasting. Electric flesh arrows, a second wave of pleasure falls over the first, a third which touches every nerve end, like an electric current traversing the body. A rainbow of color strikes the eyelids. A foam of music falls over the ears. It is the gong of orgasm.'* (Journals, vol. 2, p.263)

On neurosis (referring to an artist friend, Jean):

*'He dramatizes his neurosis, wallows in it. He spends all his energy describing his states of anxiety, the venomous flowers born of distortion. He complacently elaborates, adorns, develops, expands ... in a maze of talks and richness of material, he eludes to the simple roots of his malady, the simple conflict between instinct and the fear of life. He destroys the very love he courts. He arrests women's primitive response to him ... out of fear, and then laments he is not loved.'* (Journals, vol 2, p.295)

On depression:

*'Depression is characteristically associated with over-conscientiousness and so it is particularly liable to befall virtuous people (my emphasis). This is because they feel it is their moral duty to hang on to all good things, fixing them forever against the moving law of time.'* (Journals, vol. 2, p.316)

On anxiety:

*'Anxiety is a woman screaming without a voice out of a nightmare.'* (Journals, vol. 2, p. 275)

On maternal love:

*'The dream of every maternal love is: 'I have filled him with strength. Now he will be strong, and I shall rest upon his strength.'* (Journals, vol. 2, p. 226)

On women as Kali:

*'Women are much more dangerous as thwarted wills, unfulfilled artists, frustrated mothers, perverted power-seekers, who seek to dominate indirectly, via man. Women of yesterday and their negative wills! Their bending children, husbands, servants, gardeners, etc. Trying to fulfill themselves through others.'* (Journals, vol. 2, p. 291)

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My brother Robin stayed for about a week and then left to go and stay at my parents' house in Edinburgh. Shortly after his departure, there was another arrival in London in the person of Iain Anderson, the 'friend' from Expo '67 in Montreal, who had had an affair with my girlfriend Lesley while I was in Kenya. Although I still felt very raw about what had happened, I had not yet had the chance to talk to him. When he wrote to me from Sweden and asked if I could put him up for a night or two in London, I felt unable to refuse.

It was the beginning of December. Outside it was bleak and miserable. Iain Anderson and I sat in my room, smoking and drinking coffee.

"What exactly happened?" I said, bracing myself.



Iain didn't appear flustered in the slightest.

"You mean Lesley and I? Oh, I don't know. We met in Montreal. You were in Africa. You know how she is. She was networking with all your old Expo friends. You had given her my address and we had exchanged a couple of letters before the summer."

"I trusted her ... and you," I said, feeling my anger drowned by the pain.

"Listen, we just seemed to have a lot to talk about. Besides I got the impression that you two had split up ..."

"That's not true. We hadn't split up. She said she would write and she never did."

"Man, what can I say? These things happen, you know. She was really interested in my political involvement. She wanted to know all about it. We had a joint one day, and she came on to me."

I listened transfixed while his words pierced my heart.

"I don't think you have any idea. I was devastated. She didn't even tell me until a couple of months after I got back from Kenya."

"She dumped me too, you know."

I could feel a kind of numb amazement come over me. Was it that he wanted *me* to identify with him because *he* was dumped? I had no response.

"Anyway, look, it's no big deal. Let's not get hung up about it."

Why was it whenever I felt the strongest feelings of hurt or anger or outrage, that I seemed to end up succumbing to someone else's rationalizations? Why did I always finish up feeling invalidated? Why couldn't I tell him from my gut how hurt and angry I was? I could talk about it from a head level, but I was afraid of letting out the full force of my emotions. I was afraid of losing control. I had to keep my head. I had to be 'fair ... always be fair – the curse of a public school education. Repressive tolerance.

Slowly the conversation shifted. Iain wanted me to tell him about 'Bloody John', the alternative magazine that John Sanguine was trying to organize. I told him that it wasn't off the ground yet and that we were trying to figure out the financial side of it.

"Have you been following the 'Oz' trial? he said suddenly.

I told him I knew what he was referring to. The two largest circulation alternative culture magazines in London were called 'Friendz' and 'Oz'. On returning from France in the summer, I had heard that the editors of 'Oz' had been put on trial at the Old Bailey for producing an obscene publication.

"I've been following it carefully," Iain continued, because I'm going to be working at 'Friendz' while I'm in London.

"Tell me about it," I said, welcoming the opportunity to short-circuit my feelings about Lesley.

"Well, you know the two main characters, right? ... Richard Neville, the Australian editor and Judge Argyle, the hanging judge."

Something rang a bell inside me.

"What was the judge's name again?"

"Argyle. Michael Argyle, I think."

"Michael Argyle?" In shock, I made the connection. A few years earlier, my father had written to a family relative on my mother's side. His name was Michael Argyle. My father had written to him after I had returned from being with the Sedbergh C.C.F. contingent at Army camp in Germany. He wrote back to me personally, encouraging me to go into the Army and saying what a great life he'd had as an officer in the Queen's Own Hussars.

It was too much of a coincidence. Surely it couldn't be the same person. I decided not to share my thoughts with Iain Anderson.

"So what was the outcome of the trial?"

"You don't know!" Iain sounded incredulous. My ignorance of current events seemed more reprehensible in his eyes than his affair with my girlfriend.

“They were found guilty. Neville was sentenced to fifteen months in jail. John Lennon and Yoko Ono were at the demonstration following the sentencing. Lennon was quoted as saying that you couldn’t separate the issues of the ‘Oz’ trial from the internment of I.R.A. suspects in Northern Ireland. The Establishment really screwed up on this one. Neville and others have become martyrs of the underground.”

I watched Iain become the people’s orator. Here was a guy whose father was an Air Canada executive, who had just sailed on the QE2, who always seemed to have money for dope and travel, and who hadn’t, as far as I knew, ever worked at any job other than being a guide at the British Pavilion at Expo ’67. He would have had more credibility with me if he had worked at the bottling depot or the fur warehouse. I would have trusted him more as a person if he hadn’t screwed Lesley.

“In fact, I can show you an article, if I can find it, that I cut out of The Times back in August when this was all happening.”

Iain opened his suitcase and rummaged around.

“Here we are. This is it.” He handed me a crumpled newspaper clipping.

The article was written by the well-known columnist Bernard Levin, and the title was ‘New Martyrs For The World Of No’.

“Why don’t you read through it. I have got to go and piss.”

This is some of what I read:

*‘What the school kid’s issue is about is not sex, but pain – the agony of youth facing the incomprehension of their elders ... the imprisoning cage of ‘NO’.*

*Sometimes – increasingly now – the young people turn to the blind alley of drugs to ease the pain of their boiling blood. Sometimes they drop out, and spend their time, a new tribe of nomads, wandering the land looking for they know what.*

*The most revealing item in the magazine is the account of a kind of street play which a group attempted to perform at various schools: they were met with hostility, banned from various school premises, warned by the police. What they were never given was any explanation of what it was that the authorities objected to in the performance.*

*The young notice that their fathers are not enjoying themselves ... they notice that their fathers have lost the sense of the romance and mystery of the world ... they notice that their fathers have not created a just society ... the young can see the connection between commercial motivation and the ugliness of the environment ... the young look at their fathers’ world and see that much of what their fathers say is bogus.*

*The Oz trial was a disgrace. It served notice on the young that we will listen to them but not hear: look at them but not see: let them ask, but not answer.’*

*(The Times, 10/8/71)*

A few days later, I went to the library and looked up some back issues of The Times. I had to satisfy my curiosity about the identity of Michael Argyle. And there it was; in The Times ‘Diary’ of August 6<sup>th</sup>, there was a biographical profile of Judge Argyle in which it stated that he lived in Nottinghamshire with his wife Anne and their three daughters. Anne was my Auntie Molly’s daughter. I knew she had three young daughters and that she lived in Nottinghamshire. Case closed.

In my family’s shame about my fall from grace, what they didn’t understand was that I was ashamed of *them* and their associations; Major Brown who called blacks ‘trousered apes’, Judge Argyle – villain of the ‘Oz’ trial, Auntie Mollie who was married to one of the richest capitalists in the country. All I wanted to do was to dissociate myself from my roots – just like Peter O’Toole’s character in the movie The Ruling Class.

It helped to learn in December that I had been accepted as a sponsored landed immigrant. The door was open for an escape back to Canada, the ‘Land Of Opportunity’ – as the Canadian Government promotion put it.



## 40.

The Young Vic was just another battleground for cultural and class warfare. The Management had incorporated a coffee bar and juke-box into the theater complex. This inevitably attracted the local youth as a nifty hang-out spot, especially because, at first, they were encouraged to come. The theory of the hip new Director, Frank Dunlop (an ex-teacher), was that the coffee bar would prove to be the lure that would snag the local working-class youth into taking an interest in the plays themselves – a sort of Pygmalion for the masses.

Unfortunately, the road to hell being paved, as it is, with good intentions, the scheme backfired – badly. By the start of 1972, there were increasing incidents of vandalism and stolen property. The street kids who started hanging out at the Young Vic had more than a passing resemblance to the Droogs in Kubrick's movie 'A Clockwork Orange'. They were tough, manipulative, and by middle class standards, unscrupulous.

They could not have got into the Old Vic down the street, even if they'd wanted to. But the whole philosophy of the Young Vic was to attract youth to the theater. The Management found itself in a quandary. On the one hand, it didn't want to appear rejecting of the youth of the community into which it had parachuted. On the other hand, it didn't want its paying patrons to be frightened away by 'street thugs'.

At first, the Management of the Young Vic said that they would hold a general meeting at which the problem of the street kids would be addressed. Such a meeting never took place. Instead, as the incidents of theft and vandalism grew worse, the police were called in to remove the kids from the theater if they were causing trouble. Then, as this turned into a game of cops and robbers, or hide and seek, the kids were banned altogether from entering the theater, including the coffee bar. There was even talk about how the theater might have to be moved to a 'nicer' neighborhood.

I had become friendly with some of the kids and had tried to get to know them. As a result, they knew where I lived. One day, Mary Addison reported that her purse had been stolen from her room. Suspicion fell on the kids. A few of them had been invited into the house on occasion and we often left the front door unlocked. From that point on, we began to lock the door, and in some ways 35 The Cut became a reflection of what was happening at the Young Vic.

\* \* \*

The door was clear for going back to Canada but I couldn't make up my mind whether to go through it or reconcile myself, once and for all, to staying in the U.K.

In January of 1972, I got a reply from my sister Joy to the long letter I had sent her the previous November. In this letter, she told me about her affair with a Spanish man called Carlos and how this 'adultery' was the reason given in court for granting Jim a divorce from Joy.

Then she went on to say that Carlos was coming to London to see his longstanding girlfriend, Anna. She said she hoped that I would meet him and give him my support and understanding. She also asked me to sign and return a letter of introduction for Carlos to show the immigration officials when he arrived in London. As this seemed far less risky than the 'au pair' letter I had written for Françoise, I complied.

At the beginning of February, Carlos arrived. He called me and told me that he and Anna had just moved into a room on Holland Road. Shortly after, I went to visit them and immediately liked both of them. Carlos was only a year or two older than me and had a similar background in that he too was struggling to establish some kind of creative identity following completion of a university degree.

He was short - maybe 5 foot two, had soft brown eyes and a neatly trimmed mustache, and magnificent, glossy, shoulder-length black hair. He reminded me of Omar Sharif. He seemed to be gentle and loving towards Anna, who was a beautiful slim woman with little command of English. However, it didn't take long to see that

Carlos was someone who liked to be in charge.

At the time, I didn't mind this. In fact I liked it. It was what I needed – someone with strong, clear ideas, especially as it pertained to my dilemma over whether or not to return to Canada. By the second or third visit, Carlos was becoming increasingly persuasive. He told me how, following completion of a degree in Astrophysics at Madrid University, he had been influenced by artists such as Gaudi, and in particular, the Mexican muralists, Jose Orozco and Diego Rivera. He mentioned that he had done a couple of small murals in Montreal, and that he wanted to do large-scale ones on his return.

Then came the pitch:

“Ivan, I need a partner. I no can do big murals all by myself. Also, I need someone to help me with the business side because my English is not very good. If you come back to Canada, we could share a flat together and do murals together. I know there is good money to be made. We would go 50-50 and you could do your writing and music on the side.”

By the end of February, I was more or less convinced. Carlos was the missing link back to Canada. He was providing the meaning and support that I needed to begin the messy business of withdrawing from my life at The Cut, and in particular, my relationship with Françoise.

\* \* \*

Letter from Françoise (sent from France & received in February):

*'Ivan baby,*

*Since I came back to Grigny, I have been meaning to write you a beautiful letter.*

*First I wish you to be very very happy with yourself and with your work. I know, and please believe me Ivan, that you can write really well.*

*I know I have a strange attitude in front of your work (when writing, or playing piano or guitar). I can't really explain why. I think, first of all, it's because I don't dare or I don't know how to show my feelings with my heart. And if I want to show them with words, I lose my voice because I don't know how to use words and so they just become completely meaningless.*

*But I know that when I read what you write, I like it because of its clarity and its originality.*

*I wish as well that we can still live together and get to know each other better and be happy together. For my part, I know the only way I can give you some happiness is by being strong with myself and by giving you strength and help. I hope all your fuck-ups will soon decrease. I want to help you if you want of my help. I am your friend baby and I have a lot of love for you. I miss you.'*

I couldn't bear the thought of leaving Françoise and yet was unable or unwilling to ask her to come to Canada with me. I approached the subject but never asked her simply and directly 'yes' or 'no'. I felt that Françoise was a dear friend, one with whom I had shared some deep experiences. She was also my lover. But I wasn't ready to ask her to be my partner.

At the same time that I was strengthening my ties with Carlos, and the prospect of returning to Canada was becoming more of a reality, I was enmeshed in my life at The Cut and the Young Vic. The trust level in the house had reached an all time low. We never seemed to have sugar, butter or bread. People were suspecting others of taking their food.

I decided there were two things that could be done to improve the situation. The first was to change the layout of the small kitchen so that there could be a sitting area with table and benches. The only way this could be accomplished was by moving the stove to the other side of the kitchen. It wasn't hard persuading the other members of the house, and when they agreed to the project, I called the Gas Council to set up an

appointment for the re-installation.

The other thing that needed changing was our system for buying food. There needed to be someone to supervise the weekly contribution to the 'kitty' and to plan out the buying of basics. Everyone seemed happy that I was prepared to take over the responsibility. I decided that each week I would buy one basic in bulk. First sugar, then tea, then coffee, etc. Within 4-6 weeks, the change was noticeable. As we built up surpluses, I was able to expand buying to other commodities such as jam, bread and so on. Not surprisingly, the trust levels began to rise as well.

After the Gas Council moved the stove, I built a table and benches. Suddenly we had a communal area to sit and chat and have tea or coffee. The trust levels took another turn upwards along with the opportunity for greater communication and intimacy.

I really enjoyed doing these two things. It was like practical Sociology with simple application, no risk, and direct positive benefits. It was also a step in the direction of making out household more of a commune, or at least cooperative.

\* \* \*

Letter from Mum: Feb. 7<sup>th</sup>. 1972:

*Quoting Auntie Mollie:*

*'What is Ian thinking of?' (with respect to my choice of menial jobs after my 'expensive education').*

*Quote from Mrs. Mills in the Sunday Express (6/2/72)*

*'I think that everyone must do what is right for them. You can't ever try to tell people what to do – all a parent can do is smile away and pick up the pieces. It's no good giving advice.'*

*'Robin said the other day, 'but I must learn by experience'. That is all very fine, but at the moment we are paying for his inconsequence. He arrived home from South Africa literally on 'skid row'. His clothes were in rags and dirty, his shoes were worn through. He has his priorities wrong. He could have stayed home and been a help and comfort to me during this difficult time. Instead, he takes a flat. I told him that I would take steps through my will to see that none of what is left of the family fortune would go up in smoke.'*

My mother went on to re-tell the story of how her father was a failed businessman who lost everything his father and grandfather had built up through bridge-building and iron founding. He "retired to the coast of Lincolnshire, played golf, pub crawled and smoked."

Shortly after I received her letter, my mother called me to tell me that Robin had 'run away'.

Extracts from Diary: 14/3/72:

*'F. says she is fed up with my explanations / rationalizations / justifications / intellectualizations, etc. Last week she screamed at me, 'I can't take it any more.' Later she told me she did this to get me to shut up.*

*John Sanguine has lost respect for me due to my erratic behavior towards Françoise, and my lack of work on the magazine.*

*On Sunday, F. says, 'do you like me, Ian?' and then 'will you give me a little baby?' Then she says, 'we'll all get a cottage in the country.'*

*Yesterday, Robin turned up at the door. He told me that in Edinburgh he was exhausted mentally and physically, and unable to keep a job. He was on anti-depressants. He tried to start a youth club through the Church but ended up being more involved with a series of young girls who invited to his flat. When I mentioned Mum's concerns about him, he said 'it's a permissive society, isn't it?'*

*And life becomes a dreamscape once again. My mind begins to let go of 3 years in London and travels over to the vast expanses of Canada. It is only a matter of time now. More meetings with Carlos. More certainty about what must be.*

*A quick trip to Edinburgh. Not an official 'goodbye' but privately I know that is what it is. Anxiety and rebellion have become permanent residents in my gut. Go to see the 'Music Lovers' at the Cameo with Mum. As we watch a bearded Richard Chamberlain play the part of Tchaikovsky, I get the impression that I am looking at myself. The resemblance is uncanny.*

*Return from Edinburgh and discover that F. has slept with John. Rationally - nothing. Emotionally, the universe has moved. Memories, pain, fear, anger. Don't avoid them. Accept it. You knew it was going to happen. This has all been an experiment, just an experiment. It's not the end of the world.*

*Hey man, you did it to yourself! You encouraged her to relate to others ... just like in 'a commune'. But meanwhile, you held back yourself due to guilt and fear of losing her. You were terrified that she should ever feel that you were rejecting her. But that's what you're doing, isn't it? I didn't fuck anyone else because I just wasn't interested in anyone else. Or maybe it's just that I'm a one-woman guy! She asked you for a baby! She said she was willing to come to Canada with you. You're the one who has fucked her around with your ideals and your 'experiments'. So she fucked John. Maybe this'll release you from your guilt about going without her.'*

6/4/72

*'Meet Carlos. He is about to return to Montreal. He says that I shouldn't stay with Françoise if I am being held there out of guilt. I had a terrible tube journey back from his place. Psychologically, I'm being torn apart.*

*At The Cut, Françoise is in a good mood. I tell her that 'I have to go back to Canada to sort out my mind'. She says, 'just when things are getting good'. She says is wistfully but with acceptance. I feel released ... and grateful. Ironically, Royston and Mark came round and want to talk.*

*Françoise and I both said in the same breath that we wanted to be alone. They didn't understand and were upset. F. and I slept together, underneath the big eagle that she has been making for me.'*

24/4/72

*'I gave in my notice at the Young Vic and booked a flight to Montreal for the 15<sup>th</sup>. May on Air Canada.'*

28/4/72

*'F. very emotional. She says, 'life would become aimless' without me ... that she would 'model in the nude, even prostitute herself' to enable me to write.'*

29/4/72

*'I've decided I want to return without anything. I've sold my suit for £17. I've given things away. I'm packing all my books in my trunk and I'll ask Robin if he can arrange to have them sent to Edinburgh.*

*I'm going to Canada as an immigrant. I want to start from scratch.'*

4/5/72

*'Went to Ellie's house in Tuffnel Park to say goodbye. She wanted me to stay the night. I said that I wanted to get back to Françoise. She showed me her baby Luke (the one conceived with Roy the day I left L.S.E.). I leave with bitterness in my heart.'*

8/5/72

*'None other than Lesley Bowland walked into the Young Vic today! I recognized her immediately as she approached the box-office. It's just too weird!! Too much of a coincidence. More pain. More bitterness.'*

11/5/72

*'The others want me to speak to Robin about moving out before I leave for Canada.'*

12/5/72

*'Bought a huge plant for F. from Covent Garden.'*

14/5/72

*'My last night in London. Spent night with Françoise. Jerry picked me up at 7 a.m. the next morning. As I creep out, I know that my sweet Françoise is only pretending to be asleep. At Heathrow, at the Air Canada counter, they hand back the return portion of my London – Montreal ticket. I pause a moment, eyeing the waste paper container nearby. Then I put it inside my passport and head towards the departure lounge.'*



## Epilogue

White Rock, B.C., February, 2005

Thanks to Internet, I have an idea of where some of the characters in this book are now, and what they have done with the last 30-40 years of their lives.

My father died in Edinburgh in 1976.

My mother died in Edinburgh in 2000.

My sister Joy still teaches at Dawson College in Montreal and has bought a retirement cottage in Devon.

My brother lives in Edinburgh; his daughter Shuna is now in her thirties and is having a baby (IVF) with her partner.

**Colin Crabbie** is a farmer who owns 1000 acres in Perthshire. He is also a city councillor.

**Mark Hudson** is a dairy farmer in Wales. In 2004, he was elected president of the Country Land and Business Association (CLA), whose 40,000 members own and manage half the rural land in England and Wales and run more than 250 types of rural-based businesses.

**David Lungley** took his Ph.D. in Soil Science in Australia and then became a teacher at a boy's boarding school in Devon. He is about to retire.

**Geoffrey Grime** was President of the Jersey Society of Certified Chartered Accountants, 1996-97.

**Brigadier David Biggart** was awarded an O.B.E. and is soon to retire from the Army.

**Ralph Blacklock** is a Custom Design Jeweller who took over his father's business in the Newcastle upon Tyne area.

**Iain Bilsland** has been a life-long member of the Tynmouth Sailing Club.

**John Spencer** captained the English Rugby Team 14 times in the 1970's and presently serves on the three-man International Rugby Board judicial panel.

**Al Muir**, now known as Jim Muir, is a Middle East correspondent with BBC T.V. News, and has recently reported on the war in Iraq.

**Tom Wright** is Bishop of Durham and a celebrated author of many books on Jesus.

**Frank Wheeler** is a musician and Vice-President of the North Bay Area Arts Council.

**Pam Boyd** is a playwright who lives in Calgary. She is the Artistic Director of the Momo Dance Theatre, an initiative in partnering professional artists with artists with disability in mixed ability dance/theatre work.

**Ellie Epp** is a Vancouver-based artist best known for her three films *Trapline*, *Currents* and *Notes in Origin*. She is one of the founders of the Strathcona Community Garden, a four-acre site in a warehouse district in the downtown east end of Vancouver. She has her Ph.D. in neurophilosophy and teaches at SFU.

**Jeremy Lach** has worked as a Stage Manager and Production Designer at the Stratford Festival for over 20 years.

**Stuart Varney** was the anchorman of 'Moneyline' on CNN for many years. He recently had a falling out with Ted Turner, quit CNN, and now works with Fox News.

**Francoise Cresson** is a make-up designer and consultant who has worked in theatre, TV and in movies. She recently opened a bed and breakfast in Aldeburgh, Suffolk.

**Carlos Basanta** is an internationally known sculptor who lives in Vancouver.

And I am a teacher, writer and musician living in White Rock. Of the above people, I am in touch with David Lungley, Frank Wheeler, Francoise Cresson, and Jerry Lach.

I am also the author of my life and take responsibility for all successes and failures therein.