

This pointed to another staircase, heading downwards into the gloom. Had I been consigned to the dungeon? Descending the steps, I came to a dank subterranean passage—seemingly straight out of the writings of Edgar Allan Poe—containing a number of locked doors², none of which, to my relief, bore my (or anybody else’s) name. At the end of the passage a further set of stairs led mercifully upwards. I ascended these, my apprehensions that my sojourn at Christ Church might be spent as a troglodyte ebbing with each step. I regained the ground floor to see yet another staircase, at whose foot was a board listing the names of its occupants, the last of which was my own. I trudged up this staircase to its top landing, from which a narrow final flight of stairs led to set 10. I opened the door to see an eyrie, tucked under the rafters, lit with an odd obliqueness by a number of small dormer windows set almost flush with the ceiling. So I was to be an eavesdweller after all! Entering the bedroom leading off the study, I spotted what appeared to be a noose dangling from a metal cylinder attached to the wall underneath the window. Had the Christ Church authorities, in their wisdom, provided a handy means for a desperate inmate to end it all? A closer inspection of the cylinder revealed that inscribed on it were the words “Patent Fire Escape”. It seemed that in order to avoid incineration the unfortunate occupant was to sling his shoulders (as opposed to his neck) in the noose, climb out the window, and then lower himself decorously to the ground by means of the rope wound in the cylinder on a friction brake. In theory, perhaps; but one would indeed have had to be desperate to entrust one’s fate to such a gizmo—I christened it the “DIY Hanging Equipment” and regarded myself as fortunate that I never had to put the thing to the test.

As a Senior Scholar my accommodation came rent-free, and I had been issued with a key to one of the college’s outer doors enabling me to come and go as I liked, a great improvement on the nocturnal incarceration I had suffered as an undergraduate. I was also entitled to dine in Hall at the High Table twice a week, a privilege of which I naturally took advantage, at least to begin with. Christ Church Hall is one of the glories of Oxford. Completed in 1529, it is, I learned, the largest ancient college hall in either Oxford or Cambridge, and seems almost to revel in its ostentation. Approached by a grand staircase passing under delicate fan-vaulting, on entering the Hall one’s eye is drawn immediately upwards to the extraordinary dark-beamed ceiling, whose potential oppressiveness is offset by the multitude of coloured devices with which it is tricked out. The hall’s wood-panelled lower

² I later learned from Roy Harrod that behind one of these doors was a chamber which Professor Lindemann, the physicist, had used to store radioactive material during the war. This information, adding a touch of van Vogt to Poe, had the effect of quickening my steps on what were to be daily trips through the passage. Since my day the interior of the building has been redesigned so as to render Killcanon’s “Rooms” accessible without a descent into the radioactive depths.

walls are crowded, overcrowded perhaps, with portraits of various luminaries associated with the place, including John Locke, W. H. Auden, Lewis Carroll, and Gladstone, one of numerous British Prime Ministers (to give them their due, with Capital Letters) educated there. The High Table sits on a dais at the end of the Hall under an imposing portrait of Henry VIII. I could not help wondering what the Hell *I* (an anomalous capital letter) was doing in the midst of such Magnificence!

On two evenings each week in term I donned my recently acquired B.A. gown and joined the congregation of Students (for that, curiously, is what the Fellows of Christ Church are called) gathered in the Senior Common Room preparing to dine. At the appropriate moment the company ascended to the hall by a narrow staircase, issuing through a door at one end of the high table. Each of us having located his place, indicated by a name card, we would stand while Grace (a lengthy affair in comparison with Exeter's terse *Benedictus Benedicat*) was read. A dinner of unvarying excellence would follow, its several courses accompanied by excellent wines. Afterwards a number of us would return to the Senior Common Room for the traditional indulgence in port, cigars, and conversation. It was at one of these gatherings that I met J. I. M. Stewart, then Tutor in English at the college, more widely known as the detective novelist Michael Innes, who proved to be an engaging raconteur. I also recall meeting the historian Hugh Trevor-Roper, who had formerly been at the place, as well as G. J. Whitrow, the physicist and philosopher of science, with whom I had a long discussion on relativity³. My neighbour at dinner one evening was the physicist Maurice Pirene. It emerged that his uncle had been an eminent historian—the Belgian medieval historian Henri Pirene. When I admitted my lack of familiarity with the name, he suggested that I might enjoy reading one of his uncle's books, recommending in particular his "Economic and Social History of Medieval Europe". Unfortunately, I did not meet Maurice a second time, but I did get hold of the book he recommended, and found it most engrossing. I also got to know Peter Parsons, later Regius Professor of Greek, who occupied rooms in Killcanon immediately below mine. His refined intellect and caustic wit impressed me. I recall greatly enjoying the several evenings I spent with him engaged in verbal fencing—an art at which he was a master—, quaffing in excess the whisky he dispensed so generously. The Student officially deputed to keep track of my welfare was Handel Davies, a Welshman who worked in applied mathematics. On the few occasions we met, he radiated geniality.

Soon after my arrival at Christ Church I received an invitation to an "at home" from the Dean, the Very Reverend Cuthbert Simpson. Now I had naturally envisaged the Dean of Christ Church as an etiolated

³ Some years later I wrote a paper criticizing some of his views on time. It's unlikely he noticed.

cleric of the type portrayed so memorably by Alec Guinness in *Kind Hearts and Coronets*, and accordingly I expected the Dean's *soirée* to be a genteel affair at which nothing stronger than tea would be served. So when I turned up at his lodgings I was surprised to find a party in full swing. My surprise was redoubled when a grizzled character resembling Spencer Tracy came up to me and growled, in an American accent, "Hi, I'm Cuthbert Simpson. How about a martini?" It turned out that the venerable Dean was actually Canadian by origin but had spent some years in New York as a Professor of Hebrew. His straight-from-the-shoulder approach was the very opposite of what I had expected.

Of the Christ Church dons it was Roy Harrod, the economist, then nearing retirement, whom I got to know best. I had already identified him as the gentleman, spare and, despite his white hair, still quite youthful in appearance, occupying the only set of rooms in Killcanon accessible without subterranean detour. One evening after dinner he took me aside, introduced himself, and said that he had a proposition to put to me, best explained, he went on, over a drink in his rooms. Thither we repaired, and, comfortably ensconced in armchairs, the whisky poured, he commenced to explain what he had in mind. The ensuing exchange went something like this.

"As a mathematical logician yourself you've doubtless heard of the French logician Jean Nicod," he must have begun.

"Yes," I presumably replied, "but I know very little of his work. Only that he formulated a single axiom version of the propositional calculus."

"Then let me tell you that in the 1920s he wrote two important philosophical works⁴. These were translated into English, in my view inadequately, in the 1930s. Some years ago I approached Bertrand Russell, who, as Nicod's mentor, had a very high opinion of his abilities, with the proposal that a new translation of Nicod's works be prepared. Russell not only endorsed the proposal, but has generously put up some money to pay the translators. Now I've found someone for one of these works, and he has nearly finished. But up to this point I've failed to find a suitable translator for the other one. The job requires a mathematical logician with a knowledge of philosophical French. You are, I understand, the former. Do you also possess the latter?"

"Well, I can read mathematical French, at least."

"In that case you might be the man I've been looking for. It pays £200, and you may also have the opportunity of meeting Lord Russell himself. Would you be interested in taking on the job?"

"You bet!"

Thus I undertook, with the impulsiveness of youth, to translate Nicod's *La Géométrie dans la Monde Sensible*. I would hardly have allowed the footling detail of my lack of knowledge of literary French to

⁴ *Le Probleme Logique de L'Induction* and *La Géométrie dans le Monde Sensible*

stand in the way of my accepting what I saw as a proposal both glamorous and lucrative. But on getting hold of a copy of the original French edition of the book, I was dismayed to find that I had bitten off considerably more than I could chew. Nicod's French was well beyond what I had learned from Bourbaki, to say nothing of *beurre fermier*, and indeed the thing was evidently more a work of literature than a mathematical text. Who better, it then occurred to me, to assist in the project than Michèle, with her native command of both French and English? So I wrote to her proposing that she provide a quick transliteration of the French text, which I would then polish up into what I hoped would be philosophically acceptable prose. She quickly agreed, and we set to work. (I also proposed that we split the proceeds fifty-fifty—I am ashamed to admit that I later reneged on the deal, rejigging the split to 5:3. Thanks to her forgiveness, our friendship survived my appalling fit of cupidity.)

The idea of re-translating Nicod's work was very dear to Roy's heart. In particular, he was most anxious that the translation of the *Geometry* be as accurate as possible. As the work progressed, he went over it with a fine-tooth comb. There were a number of passages where, in his view, my attempts at making the translation read smoothly had caused me to stray from Nicod's meaning, and which, he insisted, should be taken, and accordingly translated, *au pied de la lettre*. He insisted on replacing the offending passages with literal translations of his own devising, which, while undoubtedly exact, seemed to me awkward. Not having read any of Roy's own writings at the time, I thought that the stiffness of his substitutions might be characteristic of his own literary style. In this view I was quite mistaken, for, as I later discovered, Roy's habitual style of writing was graceful, if occasionally idiosyncratic. A characteristic passage of his, of which I am particularly fond, concludes the preface of his memoir of F. A. Lindemann, the physicist:

The only criterion for an author is that what he writes shall interest himself. This gives him no guarantee, of course, that he will thereby interest his readers. But of this he may be sure, that, if he cannot interest his readers by what interests him, he will not be able to interest them in any way whatever.

Roy was the senior member of the college, and he seemed to me rather lonely and isolated, most of his close colleagues having passed on. He loved to talk, and, after the latest instalment of the translation had been discussed, he would uncork the whisky and indulge his passion for conversation, or at least for the art of the monologue, a passion (which, like Russell's solipsists) I shared. That Roy was in fact a professional economist could not have been gleaned from his talk. Its range and sparkle conveyed the impression that one was conversing, simply, with a cultured man-about-town. In fact, his first degree was in

history, and he had received no formal training in economics whatsoever. He told me that his mother had come from a family of actors—the Forbes-Robertsons—and that civilized, animated discourse had occupied central stage in his upbringing. He painted a vivid picture of Oxford and Christ Church between the wars. It was from him I learned—to my surprise—that Einstein had been a visiting research Student at Christ Church in the early 1930s. Roy had come to know Einstein quite well, later setting down some of his impressions of the great man in his memoir of Professor Lindemann, mentioned above. He had also been a close confidant of John Maynard Keynes—his biography of Keynes was the first to be published, and is still, I believe, regarded as the definitive work on its subject. His high standing as an economist had been acknowledged, in the antique British manner, by the award of a knighthood, but not by the election to a Chair, a characteristically Oxonian snub which he must have found painful.

Roy had mentioned at the beginning of our enterprise that Nicod's translators were to be afforded the opportunity of meeting with Russell once the job was done. I was most disappointed when Roy told me that the promised meeting was not, after all, to take place. It seemed that his attempts at communicating with Russell had been frustrated by Ralph Schoenman, Russell's then secretary. In any case, Roy went on to say, with an almost audible sniff, Russell's activities in opposition to the war in Vietnam undoubtedly took up all his time. It was evident that Roy took a dim view of this. But only later did Roy's wholehearted support for American policy in Vietnam cause a rift to open up between us. To celebrate the despatch to the printers of the finished Nicod translation early in 1968, Roy invited me to spend the weekend at his country house near Holt in Norfolk. Of course, I felt honoured. Lady Harrod proved to be a most gracious hostess, and as far as I recall everything went swimmingly until, after dinner one evening, the conversation turned—as it so often did in those days—to the war in Vietnam. When Roy expressed unqualified support for President Johnson, I felt obliged to voice my opposition to the Vietnam war. At that point the exchange became heated, tempers flared, and, but for Lady Harrod's intervention, it would have been pistols and coffee at dawn. Although good relations had been officially restored by the time I took my leave the following day, I was sadly aware that Roy and I had come to a parting of the ways. This was to be the last time I saw him.

Roy died in 1978. But I ever recall his cultivated intellect, enthusiasm, and passion for civilized discourse. And above all the kindness he showed me, which far outweighs, in my recollection, our political differences.

In October 1965 Alan Slomson and I began the course of lectures on model theory fixed up by John Crossley. The first few lectures introducing the theory of Boolean algebras were my responsibility: I recall my nervousness before my first performance. The affair took

place in a cramped lecture room in the old Mathematical Institute at 10 Parks Road. It attracted an audience of perhaps 10 or so. One attendee was Wilfrid Hodges, a remarkable scholar, who, not satisfied with having obtained Firsts in Greats and Theology, had decided to take up the study of mathematical logic. Wilfrid is today an eminent model-theorist, and it still amuses me to claim (with at least a scintilla of veracity) that my hand guided his first steps in the subject.

Also present was Norma Silvia Horenstein—"Luly" of fond remembrance—an Argentinian philosopher visiting Oxford that year. We became great friends—her warmth and intelligence still radiate down the years⁵. She introduced me to several other remarkable personalities: Luisa Raijman, a chain-smoking, acerbic Argentinian doctor with a rapier-like wit, and Roy Enfield, a gentle, sad-faced philosopher. I recall how impressed I was with Roy's provocative analysis of science as the modern surrogate for magic.

I also met David Park, a brilliant logician turned computer scientist who, having been an undergraduate at Oxford in the 1950s, returned briefly to his *alma mater* before taking up an appointment at Warwick. He had an anarchic streak which greatly appealed to me. I have never forgotten the occasion when, as we were walking down the High, he remarked, with a sweeping gesture taking in the college façades: "in *my* day we wanted to blow all this up". I was sorry to learn that David died in 1990.

During the winter term of 1965 the outstanding mathematical logician Abraham Robinson was resident in Oxford as a research fellow at St. Catherine's College. I attended the series of lectures he delivered on nonstandard analysis, the revolutionary approach to analysis, based on infinitesimals, he had recently formulated. Some thirty years later I wrote a letter to his biographer Joseph Dauben in which I reported my impressions of Robinson's lectures.

As I recall, the lecture hall was [always] packed—the audience included Moshé Machover, Alan Slomson, Peter Aczel, John Wright, Frank Jellet, John Crossley, and Joel Friedman (his student who had accompanied him from UCLA). These lectures were very absorbing—it was evident that Robinson was presenting something of fundamental importance—and delivered with what I can only describe as an endearing lack of slickness. For example, he had a circuitous method of proving mathematical propositions at the blackboard which apparently proceeded as follows. To prove a proposition P, he would start by assuming not P. He would then prove P completely independently of the assumption not P, deduce that the latter must be false, and then finally infer the truth of P. This is not the familiar form of reductio argument: $\vdash \neg P \rightarrow P$

$\vdash P$

⁵ I was saddened to learn recently that Luly died in 2002.

but rather what I came to call the “Robinsonian” form:

$$\frac{\frac{\vdash P}{\vdash \neg\neg P}}{\vdash P}$$

At the end of the course Robinson held a party to which all the members of his audience were invited. I remember this as a very warm and enjoyable occasion.

In my letter to Dauben I also remarked:

The only other time Robinson and I met was (I think) in Amsterdam sometime in the early 1970s. Of this brief encounter I recollect only that his friendliness to me seemed undiminished, despite the fact that not long before I had been involved in organizing an antimilitary logic conference which had not met with the approval of all logicians.

In my opinion, Abraham Robinson was not only a mathematician of great originality, he was truly, in Wittgenstein’s sense, a human being.

I got to know Moshé Machover well during my first graduate year. After meeting at the Leicester conference, we saw each other at Abraham Robinson’s lectures on nonstandard analysis (see below), to which Moshé regularly commuted from Bristol. On several occasions he and his wife Ilana made me welcome at their Bristol flat, which was on the ground floor of a house in The Paragon, a curved Georgian terrace, evidently once fashionable, but by the 1960s sadly decayed. Ilana and I discovered a common interest in Russian literature: whenever I mentioned a Russian novel that I had read in English translation, she would insist that the Hebrew version was far superior. We were both very fond of Ilf and Petrov; it gave me considerable pleasure to translate into English an amusing short story of theirs, “The Soviet Robinson”, and present it to her.

Moshé’s strength of conviction and lucidity of thought and expression had a great impact on me, and I looked up to him as a mentor. I was impressed to learn that he had another career in addition to that of mathematician: that of left-wing political activist. In describing the turbulent history of the Middle East to me, Moshé opened my eyes to a historicopolitical world of which I had previously had no more than the vaguest conception. At once activist and perfectionist (that rarest of combinations) Moshé brought to his political analyses the same exemplary standards of rigour and clarity that distinguished his work in mathematical logic. I could not have had a better introduction to Marxist thought.

Moshé had joined the Israeli Communist Party as a teenager only to be expelled (absurdly, as a “Maoist”) for rejecting the Party’s pro-

Zionist line. In 1962 Moshé and a small group of like-minded anti-Zionists—including Akiva Orr and Shimon Tzabar, both of whom I was later to meet—thereupon established the Israel Socialist Organization, known as Matzpen (“Compass”), dedicated to the establishment of a socialist, secular Middle East, uniting Arabs and Jews. Naturally, this declared aim had led to the vilification of Matzpen from all sides, and a number of its members, including Moshé, were essentially forced into exile.

Through Moshé I met a number of mathematicians, one of whom was Azriel Levy, the set-theorist, who had been Moshé’s instructor at the Hebrew University. I must have been introduced to Levy in 1966. I had conceived the notion of working in set theory, and also of leaving Oxford, so I was delighted when Levy offered to take me on as a research student at the Hebrew University. (Moshé was due to return to Israel at the end of the year and I really wanted to work with him, but he thought that, given my interests, Levy would be the appropriate choice of supervisor.) I was still an American citizen at that time and accordingly I decided to apply for a U.S. National Science Foundation doctoral fellowship to finance my studies in Israel. This necessitated a trip to the American Embassy in London to sit the Graduate Record Examination, a ridiculous multiple-choice affair that inevitably evoked memories of my National Merit Award fiasco of a decade or so before. I had written to Moshé, who had by this time returned to Israel, to ask if he would provide me with a letter of support for the scholarship. I still recall the first line of his reply: *Are you mad? Don't you realize I'm persona non-grata with Uncle Sam?* He'd be pleased to do it, he went on, but it would probably be the kiss of death for my ambitions. He must have thought me naïve in the extreme! But actually I was aware that in requesting his support I was likely to be undermining my chances with the N.S.F. For that very reason I felt it would be cowardly not to use his name, particularly since, whatever happened, I could always fall back on Oxford. Always the realist, Moshé would in all probability have seen a decision on my part not to use his name simply as an act of rational calculation. Had I really *needed* the N.S.F. fellowship, I might—who knows?— have acted in accordance with the results of such calculation, repressing any feeling of bad faith at having done so. But in the event I was spared such tortuousities of self-analysis—I affirmed that I wanted Moshé to write the reference; he wrote it; I failed to get the fellowship. To this day I flatter myself that, despite Moshé’s unpopularity with Uncle Sam, I was rejected entirely on my own merits.

At the end of my first term at Christ Church I was invited by the Aquarones to spend the Christmas vacation with them, which on this occasion included a trip to Switzerland for wintersports. Of course I jumped at the chance, since vacations spent in college were dismal affairs at best. In my excitement at the prospect of escape I got very

drunk in Peter Parsons' rooms the night before my departure, with the result that when I staggered out of bed the next morning to catch the plane to Nederland I had a hangover of monumental proportions. I had formerly taken the ferry across the channel, but Mike Gray had persuaded me to make future crossings by air. With his boundless knowledge of aeronautical matters, he had recommended flying from Southend to Rotterdam by Channel Airways, an organization the modesty of whose fares, I was to find, were in mathematically exact correlation with the low altitudes achieved by their aircraft. I arrived at Southend airport in pouring rain to find a battered DC-3, apparently straight out of World War II, revving up throatily on the tarmac. The plane's passenger compartment consisted of a couple of rows of seats bolted to the rear portion of its bare fuselage, separated from the remainder by a tarpaulin which began to flap alarmingly after takeoff, feeding my growing concern that in entrusting my fate to Channel Airways I had made a serious mistake. The flight was rough, and at one point the plane suddenly plummeted, bringing it disturbingly close to the surface of the water—"just an air pocket, nothing to worry about" the stewardess (looking a bit queasy herself) shakily assured the passengers. It was this episode which caused me to refer to the company ever after as "Sub-Aqua Airlines"⁶. When the plane finally touched down in Rotterdam—an event for which I uttered heartfelt hosannas—I tottered onto the airstrip feeling (and probably looking) like a character out of "One of Our Aircraft is Missing". But at least the harrowing experience had obliterated my hangover.

It was, as always, a joyous experience to see the Aquarones. After a couple of hilarious days in The Hague, at the crack of dawn one morning we piled into the Aquarones' van and took off, our destination the Swiss Alpine village of Bettmeralp. I had had no experience whatsoever with wintersports, my knowledge of skiing⁷ being precisely equivalent to my knowledge of deep-sea diving, that is, zero. Stan kidded me that I'd pick up the rudiments of skiing in no time—both he, from experience, and I, from the lack thereof, knew how unlikely *that* was! After a full day's drive we arrived at Bettmeralp and installed ourselves in the comfortable lodge the Aquarones had booked for the week. The following morning I was buckled onto a pair of skis and let loose on the baby slopes, while the Aquarones, veteran skiers all, departed to tackle nontrivial inclines. Needless to say, no matter how hard I tried, I could not keep the confounded skis parallel, and so found myself sprawled in a heap within a few yards, the object of derision of the succession of infant virtuosos of the snowdrifts as they flashed effortlessly by. Finally I had my fill of humiliation. I threw in the skis

⁶ A double joke, since I only flew "Sub-Aqua" for the purpose of visiting the "Aqua"rones.

⁷ Curiously, however, I now recall that the Linfoots pronounced the word "skiing" as "she-ing".

and spent the time until the Aquarones returned catching up on my reading—assuredly not *The Magic Mountain*.

In Bettmeralp one continually came across the name “Stucky”—our abode, in particular, being part of an operation run by one “Auxilius Stucky” and a “Stucky Roman”. It seemed entirely possible that the native population of the entire village consisted of the descendants of a single *ur*-Stucky. I recall that one of “our” Stuckys became exercised at discovering a damp patch on one of the cabin’s beds. Failing to draw the obvious conclusion from the facts that (a) the bed was sitting right next to an open window, (b) it had been snowing heavily, and (c) the wind had been gusting, he insisted, stubbornly, that the bed had been wetted by its occupant—some kid, he must have thought. He blushed to learn that the bed in question was Mado’s!

Another inextinguishable episode from our visit to Bettmeralp took place one day at lunch. Encouraged by Mado to finish up the roast potatoes, I was, as always, only too willing to do so. But as I tucked into the last “potato”, I was amazed to find that I had bitten into something with the taste and texture of a bar of soap—talk about melting in your mouth! When I remarked on this, the immediate response from the company at table was “Come off it, John, you’ve got to be kidding!” They were not convinced until I actually started to blow bubbles. It transpired that a small bar of kitchen soap, of near identical colouring and dimensions to the potatoes, sliced by Mado with customary precision into segments of uniform size, had somehow slid off the kitchen counter into the potato pan!

Throughout the spring vacation of 1966 Michèle and I laboured at the Nicod translation in The Hague and Paris. With us now was Spencer Hagar, a quick-witted medical student whom Miche had recently met at St. Andrews. The usual hilarity was augmented by the Aquarones’ recent acquisition of a television set; Stan was, I recall, particularly amused by a children’s program featuring “Barend die Beer”, a bear who soon joined Smokey in the Aquarone canon.

At the time Michèle and Spencer were in the process of falling in love, and it began to dawn on me that I might be just a little *de trop*. An instance of this was the “musical beds” episode which took place during the week the three of us spent at the Rue Budé flat. This contained just two beds, a large double in the main room and a camp bed in the small adjoining room. Propriety, that absurd inhibitor, demanded that Michèle take the camp bed while Spencer and I occupy the double. What Spencer didn’t know—although he was, to his chagrin, to be rapidly enlightened—was that in agreeing to share a bed with me, one of the world’s most restless sleepers, he was committing himself to a night of purgatory. And that first night was nothing less. The following morning Spencer, hollow-eyed from exhaustion, vowed never again to share a bed with such a *meshuggener*. Since I, too, was scarcely rested, I was only too happy to agree to a permutation of the sleeping

arrangements. Thus propriety was kicked aside and for the remainder of our stay I occupied the camp bed.

But none of this prevented Spencer and me from getting along famously—I recall that we developed a routine in which he was “Finkelstein” and I was “Klopstein”, names we found irresistible. We all smoked like chimneys in those days and so we were delighted to find, concealed in one of the flat’s wall cupboards, a number of old vacuum-sealed tins of Players and Senior Service cigarettes. The slogan on the Senior Service tins—“A Product of the Master Mind”—tickled us sufficiently to weave it into the general nonsense. The routine had already been enriched through our continuing efforts at translating Nicod: where else could we have come across those indispensable phrases “perfect cicerone” and “sensible tram”? The French reprint of Nicod’s *Géométrie*, a copy of which I was able to obtain in Paris, had as a frontispiece a charming photograph of Nicod as a young man—tragically, he died of tuberculosis before his fortieth birthday. By propping up the book, opened to Nicod’s photograph, and flanking it with candles, we constructed a sort of shrine to which we all raised our glasses one evening. A verse inscribed by Spencer in the Aquarones’ visitors’ book immortalized this episode: I recall that it began:

*We toasted Nicod late one night
By Lower Slobbovian candlelight...*

That week the three of us spent in Paris seems in retrospect like a sequence from *Jules et Jim*, or at least something from the cutting floor thereof.

I journeyed up to St. Andrews by train a number of times to visit Michele, passing through such quaintly named places as Leuchars Junction and Auchtermurchtie. Michele had digs in a somewhat gloomy boarding house in Greenside place presided over by a resident troll whom I quickly dubbed “Mrs. Gruesome”. It was through Michele that I met Suresh Pandya, a garrulous Indian character with whom I became fast friends. Long resident in Scotland, he had once been a student of physics but had not completed his degree. We would talk and smoke into the wee hours: during one such session, I recall, I happened to mention Einstein’s *gedankenexperimenten* (“thought experiments”). Suresh, mishearing, interjected excitedly in his characteristic Indian accent, “What do you mean —gonga experiment?” My retelling of this anecdote (which I found vastly amusing) led to Suresh coming to be known to the members of Michele’s circle as “Gonga”⁸. Oddly enough,

⁸ My habit of laying nicknames on my friends (“Shrimp”, “Jumbo”, “Gonga”) led to my being hoist by my own petard. For some reason I had taken a fancy to the word “crud” and had taken to using it constantly. One of Michele’s St. Andrews friends nicknamed me “Professor Crud”, and Michele took up addressing her letters to me as “Dear Crud”—in retaliation, perhaps, at my having seized on her writing “hair-brained” for “hare-brained”

he also found the business amusing, and raised no objections. As an unmarried Indian in his thirties, Suresh was in perpetual search of a suitable mate, and thought he had found the woman of his dreams in one Anar, a young Indian student at St. Andrews. In our eyes she bossed Suresh around intolerably, but to him such servitude was nothing short of divine. Anar's combination of bossiness and stoutness of figure led to my nicknaming her the "Wine Barrel"—fortunately Suresh never found out. Suresh's efforts at wooing Anar came to nothing and he wound up marrying someone else. I was saddened to learn that Suresh died in the 90s.

One of my sudden departures to St. Andrews was the source of some anxiety to my close Oxford friends. My feelings of personal isolation at Christ Church had made me dependent on correspondence—which I saw as necessary messages confirming the existence of the external world. As a test of my increasingly paranoid notion that postal delivery might be prevented through some malign intervention, over and above the usual vagaries of the mail service, it became my habit to address a blank postcard to myself and put it in the mail to await its delivery—and my own deliverance from anxiety. I happened to post one of these void self-missives a day or two before departing for St. Andrews. I had not informed my friends in Oxford that I was heading north, so that when two my friends showed up at my Christ Church rooms to find my oak sported, they became worried. Their worry intensified when they came across the blank self-addressed postcard sitting in my mail rack at the foot of the staircase. Knowing my occasional moments of desperation, their first thought on seeing this curious communication (a self-indulgence I'd never told them about) was that it was a blank suicide note—perhaps I had made serious use of that DIY hanging equipment after all.

As a confirmed night owl, during my first year at Christ Church I rarely surfaced before 3 p.m. I told the scout on my staircase, Phil Taylor, to let me sleep in and not to bother with making my bed (amazingly, Oxford scouts still performed this duty even for semi-dons like myself). In Phil's eyes I was clearly a budding eccentric and he treated me with an amused tolerance. By the time I crawled out of bed the pubs had shut their doors for the afternoon, so that I was reduced to obtaining what nourishment I could at the Wimpy Bar on St. Giles. It was at this time I met Nick Zafiris and Demo Dirmikis, Greek undergraduates at Trinity and Balliol Colleges, respectively, who were to become my lifelong friends. Nick and Demo were a study in

to nickname her "harebrain" or simply "H.B." (In this connection I recall ribbing her endlessly about the telegram message she once sent me putting off an impending visit—*Don't come. Writing. Love Michele.* This reached me minus its full stops, leading inevitably to my replying *Not to worry. I won't come writing "Love, Michele".*) But I tired of the sobriquet "Crud" and implored Michele to cease using it. She agreed, but could not resist a bit of teasing by addressing letters to me with Dear Cr...iterion!, a nickname she had given me when we were children.

contrasts. Nick, pessimistic and cynical, presented his uniquely skewed view of the world and its inhabitants through the use of devastatingly accurate mimicry and a acerbic wit—reducing the hearer to helpless laughter. Demo was the embodiment of stability, with a Micawberish conviction that something would always turn up. It became my habit to present myself at Demo's college rooms at around 4 p.m., and prevail on him to take me to college tea. There I would proceed to make inroads into the substantial array of sandwiches which had been laid on, wolfing a number down before my methodical friend had even finished buttering his first piece of bread.

Around this time I began to be oppressed by the feeling that life is essentially pointless. On waking the daily miracle of returning consciousness would quickly give way to the dismal prospect of having to face yet another day of *ennui*, with its surfeit of hours. Aided and abetted by my reading of such novels of *Weltschmerz* and existential angst as Sartre's *Nausea*, Hesse's *Steppenwolf*⁹, and Huysmans' *Against the Grain*, I wallowed in a self-created swamp of futility. I would lie face down on the floor of my sitting for what seemed hours at a time—given my impatience, it was probably no more than minutes—hoping for enlightenment, or a providential knock on the door. Neither being forthcoming, I would rouse myself and seek companionship to exorcise, in feverish talk, the twin demons of loneliness and boredom which had come to plague me. I now think my depression was brought on largely by an unconscious fear of becoming an adult, of the stripping away of the illusion of prodigism I had clung to for so long. It was painful having to face up to the fact that my mathematical efforts were unlikely to set the world on fire. I camouflaged my fear of professional mediocrity by the cultivation of a flippant attitude to the whole business of doing mathematics, probably convincing nobody.

By the end of my first year I felt the urge to move and asked to be assigned another set of rooms. I migrated to the top of a staircase in the Meadow Buildings, a dispiriting Victorian edifice whose sole redeeming feature was its view of Christ Church meadow. While my new rooms were less tenebrous than their predecessors they were almost equally unheatable and, naturally, equipped with the regulation DIY hanging equipment. In the winter of 1966 my father spent a few days in Oxford en route for a new job in the Sudan. (This was the sole occasion on which he visited me in England.) He was, I recall, amused at what he saw as the primitive living conditions still prevailing in Britain, which, according to him, had hardly improved since the war. When I took him to my rooms in the Meadow Building he remarked that it was like entering a walk-in freezer—a memorable phrase that I quickly adopted myself. The sepulchral atmosphere at Christ Church had led me to

⁹ This despite the fact that both novels end on an essentially positive note.

refer to the place as the Mausoleum, and so I now headed my letters to friends with "From the Senior Eskimo, W.I.F., Mausoleum".

I met Francis Jellett, a student of David Edwards, in my first graduate year. Francis and I hit it off right from the start. Intelligence, articulacy, wit, mathematical and musical talent—wrapped in a quintessentially English reserve—all these qualities in him I found greatly appealing. His first name caused me some difficulty—he had not yet taken up calling himself "Frank"—for I had never been able to pronounce the long English "A" without sounding pretentious, and using a short "A" in "Francis" evoked in my mind the talking mule in the old Donald O'Connor movies. So I christened him "Jumbo", probably in part because of the alliteration with "Jellett", but also because of his imposing size.

Jumbo's imperturbability, his English *sang-froid*, his "it isn't as bad as all that" attitude brought out the imp in me. I must have tested his tolerance to the limit with my nonsense. When we first met he had ground floor rooms in the front quad of his college, Brasenose. His rooms were amazingly tidy, the pens and other objects on his desk arranged with near-military precision. These I could not resist jumbling up each time I went to see him.

Jumbo's thesis topic was functional analysis, the theory of Choquet simplexes (simplices?). Facetiously, I floated the idea that, in order to make a real mark in mathematics, he should introduce the concept of a "Jumplex". When he got round to writing his dissertation in his last year at Oxford, I suggested that in his acknowledgments he should thank "my supervisor David Edwards for suggesting the problems herein, my friend Brian Davies for solving them, and my department secretary for typing the whole thing up". (Brian Davies, the brilliant undergraduate I had had the misfortune of sitting next to in my finals, had also become a student of David Edwards.)

I envied Jumbo his considerable musical gifts, in particular, his talent for jazz improvisation. Within six months of taking up the vibraphone, for example, he developed sufficient technique to play the instrument in public. (Its unwieldiness led me to call it the "Peanut Roaster".) He formed a group with Peter Duncan and Brian Priestley—the Jumbo Joyriders, as I called it—which had regular gigs at the Newman Rooms on St. Aldates "...and now, folks," I would say in poor imitation of a 1940s radio announcer, "we bring you the Jumbo Joyriders dead at the Newman Rooms."

Jumbo had a car — a large (by British standards) red Vauxhall—which I dubbed the "Dreamboat". He would tool around in this vehicle at breakneck speeds—he called it "dicing with death".

It was through Jumbo that I came to know Peter Duncan, a trumpet-playing undergraduate at Lincoln College reading Engineering. We soon became close and enduring friends.

I also met Brian Priestley through Jumbo. Originally from Leeds, Brian had taken a degree in modern languages there, but his avocation was that of jazz pianist. Brian was a scholar-musician with perfect pitch and a truly encyclopedic knowledge of jazz. When we first met he was working in Maxwell's Bookshop near Magdalen Bridge. Later he moved to the French department at Blackwell's. As a frequenter of Blackwell's, I usually dropped in to see him and exchange a few witticisms. On one such occasion, a formidable middle-aged lady sailed in. "French Literature?" she demanded of us both, in a tone reminiscent of Edith Evans's portrayal of Aunt Agatha in *"The Importance of Being Earnest"*. I could not resist responding "No, madam, this is the pornography department!" Fortunately, either she misheard what I had said, or didn't believe what she had heard, or else my response was actually just in *l'esprit de l'escalier*.

Brian's speech, precise to the point of pedantry, punctuated with odd stresses delivered in a curious nasal tone, was continually parodied by his friends, myself included. I'll always recall the occasion on which Jumbo, Pete, Brian and I drove up to Warwick for a gig by the "Joyriders" at the university there. When we arrived, Jumbo attempted to park his car in some convenient spot near the university, quickly attracting the attentions of an official bent on driving us off. Brian's protestation, "But we're *guests!*", was dismissed by the man with a curt "I don't care if you're the Queen of Sheba, *you can't park here!*" On another occasion Brian and I visited Jumbo in his digs. Spotting a bottle of vegetable oil next to the gas ring, Brian remarked to Jumbo, "I didn't know you were a *user* of cooking *oil*." I could not resist jumping in with, "Sure, can't you see, he uses it to slick his hair down."

Brian's eating habits had a precision rivaling that of his speech inflections. When we dined together in a local "nails joint", I would observe him arrange, with great deliberateness, the rice on his plate into a conical structure, and indent the apex with a crater, into which he would then spoon the curry, so that it came to resemble lava in the mouth of a volcano. To my further amazement, he would proceed to consume this construct by cutting it up into radial slices as if it was a cake, ending with every last grain of rice consumed and his plate devoid of every last trace of curry. Among those who knew him, Brian's frugality had assumed a near-legendary status. I used to joke that an invitation to coffee *chez* Brian would mean to brace oneself for cupless, sugarless, milkless, coffeeless coffee.

In addition to being a talented jazz pianist, Brian was a walking jazz encyclopedia. With his near-photographic memory, he could instantly recall every detail of the obscurest jazz record, right down to the matrix number. The first thing I recall learning from him about jazz, though, was hardly obscure. It was on an afternoon sometime in the summer of 1966. I had invited Brian up to my rooms and almost as soon as he opened the door he spotted the copy of the *Times* I had happened to

buy that day. Grabbing it and turning to the Obituaries page, he pointed to an item headed Mr. "Bud" Powell and demanded to know if I was acquainted with the name. I admitted I was not. Shaking his head at such ignorance, he informed me that Bud Powell was the greatest modern jazz pianist bar none, an icon of bebop. And, as I soon discovered on hearing his recordings, Bud Powell was all of that. For me he became even more. While I liked the piano, and piano music, I had never been moved by a pianist in the same way as I had by Jascha Heifetz's incomparable violin playing. At Brian's suggestion, I got hold of Bud Powell's *Vintage Years*, in which are compiled a number of his blazing improvisations of the late forties and early fifties. I could hardly believe my ears. Here was a pianist going for broke, yet at the same time spinning the intrinsic geometry of line that had always appealed to me in Jascha Heifetz's playing. And, still more, producing these miracles scorelessly. Bud Powell became an instant hero of mine—he still is. I conceived the desire to hear every (significant) note this matchlessly gifted musician recorded, and, as in the case of Jascha Heifetz, I've virtually attained my goal. But I still sought a counterpart to Heifetz on the classical piano, a classical pianist whose every recorded note I would attempt to etch in my memory. Despite the blandishments provided by the electrifying playing of Vladimir Horowitz, I was only to find such an artist in Glenn Gould, whose records I first discovered a few years later. Heifetz's playing had long been for me the apotheosis of the continuous. Glenn Gould's playing became for me the discrete counterpart.

Jumbo also introduced me to Michael Wells—known to all as Spike—a clever, musically gifted undergraduate reading Greats at University College. Trained as a pianist, Spike had taken up jazz drumming and had rapidly attained professional status, becoming the drummer of choice of Tubby Hayes and other prominent British jazz musicians of the time. Spike affected a hip, ultra-cool attitude worthy of the great American jazz musicians he so revered. I was surprised to learn that he later joined the Anglican priesthood.

It was through Spike that I met Gareth Evans, a contemporary of his at Univ. A forceful personality, formidably intelligent, Gary was a rising philosophical star. I recall that when he asked me to explain the Gödel incompleteness theorem, it took him all of five minutes to grasp what was going on! Gary's subsequent career as a philosopher was to be brilliant but tragically brief: I was shocked to read of his death of cancer in 1980.

One day near the start of my second year I was lunching in a café on the High when I happened to overhear snatches of a conversation between two young men—one dark-bearded, the other carrot-haired—seated at a table nearby. My ears pricked up when I heard the words "Gödel" and "incompleteness": aha! I thought—a pair of logic students! I could not resist the urge to introduce myself as a fellow-logician. The

carrot-topped one was Chris Ash, the bearded one George Wilmers, both, by coincidence, new graduate students of John Crossley. Chris Ash and I failed to hit it off, but George soon became one of my closest and most enduring friends. George had a number of qualities I envied: in addition to his gifts as a mathematician, he was (and still is) an excellent pianist, linguist, and chess player. In George were (and are) combined acuteness of intellect, sensibility to beauty, and a curious dreaminess. He would gaze at you abstractedly with his dark eyes, his mind seemingly elsewhere, and then, as if out of the blue, produce an observation of startling pertinence. I recall a conversation with Dan Isaacson and George in which Wittgenstein's apothegm "Death is not an event in life: we do not live to experience death" somehow came up. A few moments went by, and then George, who had seemed not to be listening, observed "In other words, life is an *open set*." Neither Dan nor I have ever forgotten George's *aperçu*.

When George deigned to pay attention to what one was saying, however, the dreamer would be suddenly replaced by a formidable critic, a merciless gadfly questioning every proposition one had the temerity to put forward. I often had to scramble to justify some unreflective remark of mine he had gleefully punctured—justly, I ruefully admitted to myself. And, permanently humbled from my encounters with Peter Lee, I was hardly tempted to challenge George at the chessboard!

George's sensibility was manifested above all in his Mozart playing. I was moved by his rendition of the A minor Rondo, K. 511. He introduced me to the C minor Fantasy K. 475, and the A minor sonata, K. 310, works he played with passion.

By the time I met George my political orientation had swung leftwards, so I resonated with his strongly held left-wing views, his contempt for the established order. Trotsky was one of his political heroes: I recall him urging me to read Isaac Deutscher's monumental biography of the great man. Later George and I were to have a number of *gauchiste* adventures together.

I cannot recall exactly when George first invited me to meet his parents. George had told me something of his family background: his father an engineer of German-Jewish origin (the name "Wilmers" being, I believe, a contraction of "Wilmersdoerfer", itself possibly derived from the district in Berlin); his mother from the Greek community in Istanbul. (It was this latter fact, George said, that now made him leery of travelling to Turkey. He had learned that Turkish nationality is heritable through either parent; so, as a Turkish national, he would be liable for military service there.) George had warned me that his father was an old-fashioned stickler for detail, something of a pedant, in fact. I think that George introduced us in a spirit of experimentation: he must have been curious to see what would happen when two such apparently immiscible personalities were brought into contact.

George's parents lived in a spacious apartment in the Paddington district in London (oddly, their phone number PADDington 2866 remains with me to this day). I recall the L-shaped corridor, with its rows of bookshelves, revealed when George opened the entrance door with his latchkey. A book with yellow covers caught my eye: I quickly inspected it—*China, a Short Cultural History*, by C. P. Fitzgerald. I resolved to get hold of a copy of my own. We entered the drawing room, a spacious, pleasingly proportioned, refined room, parquet floors bright with Oriental rugs, Bechstein upright at one wall. George's parents—John and Rallou, then in their 50s—greeted us. I was instantly captivated by Rallou's elegance. John, like my father, was an engineer, an expert, I learned, in the construction of large industrial chimneys. The topic of conversation at tea soon turned from chimneys to politics and the lamentable state of the social order. John held a dim view of the contemporary scene, deploring the general decline in standards and expressing in his civilized, but insistent way his doubts concerning the present (then Labour) political leadership, with what he saw as their lack of experience. At that point I made the facetious suggestion that perhaps what was needed was the replacement of all these upstarts by a council of elders. I could not have been more surprised when, after a slight pause, he said, "Yes, exactly". He was, indeed, perfectly serious. George and his mother could hardly contain their mirth. But by the time tea was over and I took my leave I felt a bond with George's parents. John was old-fashioned, conservative, but cultured, sharp-witted, with a vein of impishness reminding me of his son. In my eyes Rallou was the embodiment of grace and beauty—how lucky, I thought, George was to have such a mother—I mourned my own mother anew. I liked these warm, cultured people, and the civilized ambience in which they lived.

John Crossley had become a Fellow of All Souls on his appointment as Lecturer in Mathematical Logic, and was pleased as Punch about it. He obligingly presented me with a key to his college room so that I might have access to his typewriter on which I was preparing my Diploma dissertation. This typewriter was unusual in that the standard keyboard could be detached and replaced by a custom-made mathematical keyboard containing many of the symbols essential to the practice of mathematical logic: \forall , \exists , \wedge , \vee , \cap , \cup , \rightarrow and the like. Typing a mathematical manuscript on this contraption was a tedious business. First you had to type the prose on a given page using the standard keyboard, leaving spaces for the symbols. Then the standard keyboard had to be extracted, the mathematical keyboard inserted and each symbol typed meticulously in its preassigned place. Photocopiers being as yet uninvented, if a reproducible version of a typescript was required, one had no alternative but to type directly on mimeograph forms, which were so flimsy that an incautious rap on a key—let alone my *martellato* approach to typing—could punch a hole clean through.

So in producing the 30 pages of my dissertation¹⁰ I probably used triple the number of mimeograph forms. Certainly I slaved on the damn thing for weeks. For the Diploma one was also required to undergo an oral examination. I recall that John Crossley became sufficiently concerned at my habitual late rising to rush over to my rooms on the day of my Diploma oral and drag me out of bed. Thanks to him, and the fact that I had chosen algebra and point-set topology in addition to logic as my special subjects, topics with which I was reasonably familiar, all went well at the examination.

A year later George underwent the same process of “diplommatization”¹¹ but wasn’t as lucky as I had been. He had chosen as one of his special subjects number theory, an area to which he was attracted but, it turned out, lacked the requisite knowledge—at least, in the eyes of his examiner, who failed him in the oral. This meant that he had to undergo a written examination in the subject at the end of the summer. George duly turned up only to find that no examination had been set, the affair having, in typically Oxonian fashion, completely escaped the examiner’s mind. Naturally, he awarded George a pass on the spot.

John Crossley was due to go on leave during the first half of the academic year 1966-67, and C.C. Chang, who, as I had hoped, had arranged to visit Oxford that year, was to act as my research supervisor in his absence. I looked forward eagerly to working with Chang. Everything went well, even jokily, to begin with: I recall that, with mock ceremoniousness, he would address me as “Your Most Senior Scholarship”, to which I would respond in kind with “Your Highly Esteemed Professorship”. But this pleasant jocularly came to an abrupt end when he gave me the official assignment of presenting some work to a seminar he had organized. The work in question was Jack Silver’s recent Berkeley dissertation on large cardinals and constructible sets. This is a technical *tour-de-force* written with extreme economy, and, to say the least, I had some difficulty in getting to grips with it. My presentation in the series of seminars clearly did not satisfy Chang, to the point at which he finally got up in the middle of one of my lectures and proclaimed to the whole assembly that I didn’t understand what I was doing, or words to that effect. Now that may well have been true, but I was stung by this public dressing-down. I cannot now recall what my immediate response was—I would like to be able to claim with veracity that, in the best Hollywood manner, I riposted with “Well, in that case, you’d better get yourself another boy,” storming off the podium in high and justified dudgeon—but whatever I said, the incident terminated my relationship with C.C. And in fact “another boy”

¹⁰ A short account of a long topic: *Languages with Expressions of Infinite Length*.

¹¹ Parts of George’s diploma dissertation, devoted to homogeneous and saturated structures, eventually found their way (with his permission) into Alan Slomson and my book, *Models and Ultraproducts*.

did step in—Wilfrid Hodges, scholar *extraordinaire*—who continued the lecture series, which I, not surprisingly, ceased to attend.

Sadly, my soured relations with C.C. continued at one remove when sometime afterwards I heard a rumour attributing to him the belief that in producing our book, “Models and Ultraproducts”, Alan Slomson and I had “plagiarized” his 1965 Leicester lectures on ultraproducts. (No decent literary autobiography—of which *genre* the present effort is hardly representative—should lack a whiff of plagiarism.) I don’t know whether he actually believed this. Certainly in our exposition we did draw on the published version of his lectures (which we had attended), but proper references and attributions were supplied. Perhaps we should have made explicit acknowledgement of the influence of his lectures in our introduction... A major reason for his pique, if piqued he was, must have been the fact that our effort appeared some time before his and Jerry Keisler’s book on model theory, whose publication had been greatly delayed by the collapse of their intended publishers van Nostrand. Eventually their book was published under the North-Holland imprint and quickly became the standard reference. Ironically, it is still in print today while ours sank into oblivion long ago.

Several footnotes to this affair. Some years later I was told by Wilfrid Hodges that Chang had expressed his surprise at my reaction to his reproof. Apparently the administering of such dressings-down to graduate students was no more than standard practice in the Tarski school from which Chang had originated. I feel fortunate that I largely avoided such education by humiliation¹². I met Chang on one further occasion at a conference in the early 70s: we exchanged pleasantries but there was little warmth. Not long afterwards I learned that Chang had abandoned research in logic (but not his professorship at UCLA) and joined an Oriental religious sect. *Sic transit Gloria mundi!*

During my last year in Oxford Georg Kreisel turned up for an extended visit, and John Crossley arranged for all of his current graduate students to have occasional “audiences” with the great man. It had been arranged for Kreisel to deliver a course of lectures for which Jane Bridge was deputized to take notes. My few meetings with Kreisel seemed to go reasonably well. When I expressed an interest in infinitary languages, he gave me a copy of a handwritten draft of his paper on the subject that later appeared in Barwise’s conference volume.¹³

While Kreisel did not seem greatly impressed with our efforts in general, he went out of his way to make an exception of Dan Isaacson,

¹² Years later Peter Freyd, in his contribution to Samuel Eilenberg’s obituary piece in the *AMS Notices*, observed “Sammy had an unprintable way of saying that mathematics required both intelligence and aggression.” Whether printable or not, it was the latter, in Chang’s case, that put me off.

¹³ *The Syntax and Semantics of Infinitary Languages*, J. Barwise, ed. Springer Lecture Notes in Mathematics **72**, 1968.

an American graduate student who had recently arrived from Harvard. To Dan's embarrassment, Kreisel let it be known that he was highly impressed with the work Dan had done (on Herbrand's theorem) in his senior year thesis at Harvard. This led me to joke that, were I to inform Kreisel that I had proved, say, the Riemann hypothesis, his reaction would be one of impatient dismissal as "utterly trivial", while if Dan were to announce his discovery of a new proof of $2 + 2 = 4$, the great man would exclaim, in his strong Austrian accent, "But zis is *most* interesting!" Dan had his revenge on me a few months later when he showed up at teatime in the Mathematical Institute gleefully waving a copy of one of my newspaper clippings (see **Millfield, 1958-61**) which his mother had sent him from Oakland, California (where Dan had grown up). How his mother had gotten hold of this I don't now remember, but I do recall my blushes when Dan read extracts from my interview to the assembled company.

My interest in Boolean algebras had led John Crossley to suggest that I study Halmos's papers on algebraic logic, but I did not find this area very appealing. Instead I turned to infinitary languages, a topic I had first encountered through Carol Karp's (whom I had met at the Leicester conference) recently published book *Languages with Expressions of Infinite Length*. I was less interested in the construction and analysis of formal systems for these languages (the principal focus of Carol Karp's book) than in their model-theoretic features, in particular compactness. After reading Hanf, Keisler and Tarski's papers on the connection between large cardinals and compactness of infinitary languages, I resolved to write my Diploma dissertation on this topic. At some point I acquired a copy of Mostowski's *Thirty Years of Foundational Studies* (which I jokingly came to refer to as *Thirty Years in the Salt Mines*), a masterly *tour d'horizon* of contemporary research in mathematical logic. It was there that I first learned of weak second-order logic—logic with second-order variables ranging over finite sets or sequences of individuals—and of the then open problem of furnishing it with a (necessarily infinitary) complete axiomatization. I had the idea of adapting Rasiowa and Sikorski's Boolean-algebraic proof of completeness of first order logic—which had long fascinated me—to an appropriately tailored system of infinitary axioms for weak second-order logic. I was elated when, in my second graduate year, my efforts bore fruit. But my elation was quickly punctured by the appearance in *Fundamenta Mathematicae* of Lopez-Escobar's completeness proof for a system of weak second-order logic. While Lopez-Escobar had indeed axiomatized a system similar to the one I had dealt with, I took consolation from the fact that his proof of completeness and mine were quite different: his employing Gentzen-type proof-theoretic methods, mine using the theory of Boolean algebras. I believed that at least I had an independently proved result worthy of the D.Phil. degree, and perhaps also of publication, despite the fact that I had been

anticipated. The first belief was to be confirmed, but, alas! not the latter.

Jumbo had introduced me to the novels of Raymond Chandler, to which I quickly became addicted. So I was delighted to discover that S.J. Perelman had written a Chandler parody¹⁴. I composed a variation on this parody, which I sent to Stan Aquarone in the hope that he might be amused¹⁵:

Oxford, 17 January 1967

Dear Sam:

THE STULTIFYING RESULT OF THREE DAYS' ADVANCED PERELMANIA WITH
CHANDLERESQUE COMPLICATIONS

I checked into the Arbogast building at about 10.32, narrowly avoiding a fried oyster propelled in my direction from behind the swivel doors of the World Wide Noodle Corporation (now amalgamated with Zwinger and Rumsey, Snooping Our Specialty, who pursue their shady activities just across the hall from me). The general idea of the caper was to catch up on a little of my foot dangling, which, believe me, is the safest way of impressing clients. I haven't spent my time weaving flannel kopecks during twelve years as a private op! But I had scarcely levered my way through the pebbled glass door which bears the legend:

SCHLEMIEL INVESTIGATIONS
Moshnik & Tiburon

into the crummy anteroom calculated to elicit derisive wisecracks from even a J. Edgar Hoover, and allowed the regulation six fingers of Old Tennis Shoes to burn its way down my craw, when the "Ka-chow!" of a roscoe reverberated through my think-tank, and a lead slug no bigger than one of Groucho's eyebrows split the fungus under my schnozzle. At the same time Skins Tiburon emerged from the bottom left-hand drawer of my desk, a smoldering ten-center firmly enmeshed in his dentition. "Shift those dogs, you schlemiel," he growled, "Or you'll be deader than an iced gumshoe." Now this statement in itself was interesting, coming from a gazabo whom everybody thought had been cremated in a fire sale last Walrus Emancipation Day, to say nothing of the fact that gumshoes have

¹⁴ Farewell, my Lovely Appetizer

¹⁵ Stan had introduced me to the ridiculous verses of Robert W. Service ("The Shooting of Dan McGrew", "The Cremation of Sam McGee", etc.). I produced the following variant of a typical Service stanza:

*He wanted to waltz
Along in the schmaltz
(Is there no end to this spiel?)
Play five-card stud in the frozen crud
And generally act the schlemiel.*

been known even to survive the rigors of a certain walk-in freezer I know. "Already so soon?" I replied airily, ignoring the minor blaze on my stiff upper lip that bade fair to diminish its tension....

In 1968 I compounded the offense by communicating the following piece of nonsense:

SIX HIX FIX MIX

OR

IT DON'T MEAN A THING IF IT MEANS ANYTHING

SCENE: A dingy courtroom in Gunkwick, Neb. In the gallery a crowd of honest, impartial, indifferent citizens. At the bench, Judge Bayliss Q. Arbogast, a vague expression on his even vaguer face, if that's possible. Just in front of the bench, a shyster lawyer who uses cooking oil to slick down his already vitreous hair. He has a smouldering tencenter firmly embedded in his cliff-like countenance. Under and inside the bench, the usual consignment of termites, whose presence is indicated by the steady sound of mastication. Let's grab a hunk of the action....

The Judge: *I fail to see...*

The Shyster (expansively for him): *You and me both, Judge. But just a second. Hold it right there. We have a key witness. Step right this way, Mr. Key.* (Mr. Key, a rotund character dressed in a shapeless grey outfit euphemistically called the "20 dollar special" by its makers, but rather more graphically termed the "crowd shroud" by the retailers, waddles his way slowly up the aisle and stops in front of the dock.)

The Recorder (mechanically): *Do you swear to tell the Truth, the whole Truth, and everything but the Truth, without resorting to fabrication of any description, ilk, species, type, category, ...*

The Shyster (roughly): *For Chrissake back off and cut that crap! He's a key witness isn't he?* (To Mr. Key): *Well, aren't you?* (Key waves his globular head in affirmation.) *OK Mr. Key, now just exactly when did you attend Law School on Mars anyway?*

Mr. Key: *Yeah.*

The Shyster (irately): *What the hell kind of answer is that?*

Mr. Key: *Basic English.* (Click) *Me only land yesterday. Me Hollywood alien, remember?* (Complacently dangles his left dorsal flap and adjusts his face into its usual expression of bogus begninity.)

The Shyster (reflectively): *Oh yeah, I forgot. Guess we'd better stick to the script. (Resolutely.) Get that interpreter in here! Tomorrow's out!* (There appears an Interpreter, his two heads adorned with matching pairs of horn-rimmed glasses.) *OK Key, feed your story to this joker and he'll make with the translation—if he knows what's good for him.*

Mr. Key: *Sqzprbodu zamsjxm whadooddlle...ttxy...α = ωω².* (Rolls his eyes.)

The Interpreter (in a monotone): *Vel, I happened already to be examining some old instruments...vel, not exactly old, maybe not exactly instruments either...*

The Shyster: *What the hell has that got to do with this case? This is a murder investigation, not a Salvation Army social!*

First Voice (aside): *Now he tells us. Who's the stiff, anyway?*

Second Voice (ditto): *Why, my dear, Brookmyer O. Fothergill, late Principal of the Gunkwick Institute of Applied Gadgetry. Where were you?*

The Judge (confused): *Do I detect a certain confusion in these proceedings?*

The Shyster (firmly): *You don't detect nothing, Judge. Just leave the detecting to me. Relax. Sooner or later somebody's gotta confess to something.* (Points a spatulate finger at an Innocent Bystander sitting in the third row minding his own business and looking as if he'd like to be out to lunch somewhere.) *How about you Bud? I mean get over here. But quick. Dig? Scram, Key.*

(The Innocent Bystander, an expression of sardonic amusement on his finely chiseled face, pockets his chisel—to say nothing of his face—and glides up to the dock, narrowly avoiding a collision with the crestfallen Mr. Key, who is trudging wearily back to the Extras' compound.)

The Recorder (ponderously): *Do you swear to tell the Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth, eschewing all fabrications, falsehoods, fallacies, mistakes, misapprehensions, inconsistencies, evasions, prevarications, dichotomies, dilemmas, forks, knives and spoons (what?!), paralogisms, specious arguments, obscurities, conundrums, riddles and rhymes, palindromes, schmalindromes, errors of judgment, perception or evaluation, euphemisms, dysphemisms, platitudes, splatitudes and ingratiitudes, circumlocutions, embellishments, embroideries, filigrees, complications, complexities, prolixities, hyperboles and paraboles, ellipsisms, witticisms, puns, jokes, gags (corny or otherwise), jests, jocosities, double entendres, plays on words, archaisms, anachronisms, ambiguities, ambivalences, equivocations, inequivocations, altercations, objurgations, imprecations, ejaculations, interjections, oaths, sloths, terms of invective, abuse, vituperation or opprobrium...? And incidentally how do you take your eggs?*

Innocent Bystander (casually): *Usually through the mouth.*

The Shyster: *Wise guy huh? OK, let that ride. Name?*

Innocent Bystander: *Vincent David or David Vincent. Whichever you prefer.*

The Shyster: *Hey, wait a cottonpickin' minute. That's my cottonpickin' name! You can't do this to me, I'll sue! I'll fight this all the way to city hall...wait a second, this is city hall...OK I'll fight it all the way back! Take care of that angle later. Now sweetheart, what the hell were you doing the night Fothergill got the chop? Five'll get you ten you...*

Innocent Bystander (coolly): *For your information I was catching up on my blood sandwiches and selling my best friend down the river as far as the ocean. (Chuckles.)*

The Shyster (unconvinced). *Great. Terrific. Groovy. You're about as funny as a cement mixer. And foidermore I make the gags around here. You dig?*

Innocent Bystander (contemptuously): *You do a dandy job, that's for sure. And there's only one cement mixer around here—you. So make with the mix, baby.*

(There is a grinding, slushing sound as the Shyster is slowly transformed into a ten ton cement mixer complete with consignment of Grade A cement.)

Innocent Bystander: *Well, Judge, I guess that just about wraps up this case.*

The Judge: *What case?*

FADE OUT

In June 1967 I made what was to be the last of my triennial pilgrimages to California. By this time air fares had fallen sufficiently for my father to be able to afford to stake me to a nonstop flight from London to San Francisco, so that I was spared (Allah be praised!) another transcontinental ordeal on the Hound. But other difficulties lay in wait. Within a few days of my return my father began to drop heavy hints to the effect that, rather than hanging around the house doing next to nothing, I should seek gainful employment for the summer. This did not seem unreasonable to me, but I hadn't a clue as to what sort of job I should seek. By way of suggestion my father proceeded to enumerate the many temporary occupations he had perforce taken up as a young man—canning fish, shining shoes, hawking newspapers, flogging encyclopedias, castigating hogs, and the like. A search of the classified section of the local newspaper turned up a suitable position as an encyclopedia salesman, and I duly found myself traipsing from door to door in a vain attempt to communicate the merits of the *Encyclopedia Americana*. On the rare occasions that a door actually

opened, the response of the potential customer ranged from annoyance—"If Ida knowed you was selling encyclopedias, Ida bolted the hatch!"—to outright hostility: "If ya don't stop bothering me, I'll phone the cops! Get the hell outta here!" Who would have thought that the mere mention of encyclopedias could provoke such ire? (Of course, it might have been my face.)

Having failed to make a single sale, after a few days I threw in the tome. Unemployment loomed. I had the good fortune to be rescued by Peter Perkins, Margery's son by her first marriage. He was just embarking on a new career as a commercial photographer in San Francisco, and had rented a studio there for that purpose. He proposed taking me on as his assistant over the summer, my duties to include the performance of odd jobs around the studio such as sweeping floors, painting shelves, and the like. I was also to learn how to load cameras and prepare them for photo shoots. Since working for Peter meant returning to my beloved San Francisco, I didn't take much persuading. The sole remaining problem was finding somewhere to live. Providentially, there was a spare room in the apartment Lynette—then working in S.F.—shared with a couple of other people. I moved to S.F. within the week.

Lynette's apartment was on Noe Street, just a few blocks from the fabled Haight-Ashbury district, the Mecca of the hippie movement. Like many of my generation, I was excited by the break the hippies had made with the past, their self-liberation from the conformism of the 50s when most young people aspired to nothing more than donning the grey flannel suits of their elders. Also appealing was the idea of the bohemian life-style, with its heady romantic mixture of drugs and free love, emblematic of the movement. Yes, truly

*Bliss was it in that dawn¹⁶ to be alive
But to be young was very heaven!*

That summer I learned to turn on and tune in, smoking grass and hash—unlike Clinton, actually inhaling—Wow!—and picking up the associated lingo: *joint, toke, roach, acid, trip, dig, groovy, gas, way out, spaced, stoned, acid, drag, too much, out of sight, right on*, etc. etc. But I stopped short of dropping out—that is, following my hero Aldous Huxley into the realm of psychedelic drugs. This was largely on the advice of Lynette, who had had a number of bad trips as the result of dropping acid—taking LSD—and who feared that it might cause brain damage. (Which, in my case, would have been undetectable.)

Lynette's flatmate Paula, a cool, attractive blonde in her late twenties or early thirties was one of the numerous San Franciscans

¹⁶ But in fact by the summer of 1967 the hippie movement had reached its zenith. In the fall of that year the soft drug market was taken over by the Mafia, marked by the discovery of the body of a murdered hippie drugs dealer.

who, while not *echt* hippies, had adopted certain aspects of the hippie lifestyle. She had, I learned, broken away from a conventional marriage, subsequently shacking up with a number of men—one of whom, she claimed, was Art Blakey, the drummer and founder of the Jazz Messengers. She and her current boyfriend, Arthur I think his name was, spent much of their time stoned on grass, acid, or the hallucinatory mushrooms from Mexico which, to my astonishment, were delivered by the U.S postal service to the very door of the apartment. It was all very different from Oxford.

Sandra (Sandy) Lauler was a schoolfriend of Lynette's I had met briefly three years before in Santa Cruz. A pretty seventeen-year-old girl, with long blond hair, I recalled liking her but little more. I must have been blind! But when we met again in San Francisco early in the summer of 1967 I fell for her utterly. Into the previous three years she had compressed what seemed to me then a lifetime of experience, having been married—thereby acquiring a new surname, Carmona—separated from her husband, and left with a year-old son. She had returned to her family home in Los Altos to live with her mother and stepfather (whom she disliked). While hardly reciprocating my infatuation with her, she liked me sufficiently to extend an invitation to stay with her family. That infatuation must have been obvious to everyone, in particular, Sandy's younger sister, who, on spotting my skeletal chest incautiously exposed to the sun one afternoon, scornfully nicknamed me "Bones". (Surely, though, preferable to the "Fats" I was later to become.) At the end of the summer Sandy and her family were to move to Beirut where her stepfather had secured a job, doing what I cannot recall. She planned to study at the American University of Beirut—coincidentally, the previous year Wasfi Hijab had offered me a job in the mathematics department there—I regretted at that point that I had turned it down. I vowed to correspond with Sandy once I had returned to Oxford, in the hope of persuading her to come to live with me in England. This ultimately came about, resulting in one of the most intense and emotionally harrowing periods of my life.

One evening I decided to tag along with Lynette and Sandy to a rock concert at the Fillmore (later known as "Fillmore West"). I did this not because of a burning interest in rock music, but in order to be near the object of my passion. It turned out to be a memorable evening. Entering the auditorium, which was filled to capacity with gyrating ravers, my senses were simultaneously assaulted by the sharp scent of marijuana, acid rock belted out at top volume, and a brilliant display of varicoloured lights. It was impossible not to be excited by all this, especially as the atmosphere was so permeated with grass smoke that one could get high merely by taking a deep breath. Along with everyone else, I grooved. The auditorium would intermittently be plunged into darkness and stroboscopic spotlights switched on, producing the strange effect of seeing one's fellow gyrators as if presented in a series

of still photographs—the discrete overwhelming the continuous. Although hardly a rock aficionado, I was impressed by the music—like wow, man, I dug it—which was provided by the likes of Cream and Jefferson Airplane, among the select rock bands of the day. But for me the evening peaked with the unexpected appearance of Gary Burton, the jazz vibraphonist, and his group. I had heard of him through Jumbo, who before my departure for the U.S., had commissioned me to buy “The Time Machine”, a disc of Burton’s unissued in Britain. Jumbo described Burton as a matchless virtuoso on the instrument, a description his performance that evening showed he fully merited. The brilliance of his technique, evidently unprecedented on the vibraphone, was simply astonishing. I watched and listened transfixed as, with astonishing dexterity, he manipulated his four mallets in intricate, rhythmically propulsive improvisations resting on some of the most intriguing harmonies I had ever heard. The bell-like sound of his playing continued to reverberate in my inner ear for days afterwards, and I resolved to get hold of as many of his recordings as I could. I was later to see him play in London on a number of occasions.

Although British by birth, I had acquired U.S. citizenship through my father, I carried an American passport, and regarded myself, in essence, as an American—indeed, I reveled in my American accent! The sole drawback was the fact that my American citizenship rendered me liable to the draft. This became a pressing problem with the expansion of the Vietnam war during the later 1960s. In accordance with U.S. regulations, at the age of 18 I had dutifully registered with the local draft board in Santa Cruz and secured the then easily obtained student deferment, category 2S. Towards the end of 1967 I received an alarming notification from the draft board to the effect that my student deferment had been revoked and that I had been recategorized 1A, “ready for military service”. This of course meant that I might find myself caught up in the Vietnam war. Now I knew that if Uncle Sam did call me up, and I refused to go, it was unlikely that the British would deport me. But then, as a fugitive from “justice”, I would never be able to set foot in the US again, at least not if I wished to avoid being clapped in irons. It seemed to me that my best bet was simply to jettison American nationality, thereby (so I presumed) automatically eliminating any obligation to serve in the US armed forces. I recalled that my mother, as a naturalized American citizen, had had to satisfy certain residence conditions in order to retain her American citizenship; and I was also aware that potential dual nationals were allowed to choose one nationality at the age of 23. Since my current passport was endorsed to expire on my 23rd birthday, I envisioned that on that day my American nationality would simply fall away in the manner of a chrysalis, so enabling me to elect to become a British national. Accordingly in March 1968 I wrote to the US Consul in London, enclosing my passport, and stating that I considered my American citizenship as having lapsed

from my 23rd birthday. After a few days I received the following reply, which put a wholly new complexion on the matter:

Dear Mr. Bell:

Reference is made to your letter of March 24th forwarding your passport and stating that you wished to renounce your American citizenship as of March 25, 1968, the date of your twenty-third birthday.

Passport number Z621825, issued to you on February 24, 1967, was limited to expire on your twenty-third birthday because you did not present evidence to establish exemption from the operation of Section 301(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act. However, it appears that you may be exempt from this section of law under two conditions—if your father was serving abroad at the date of your birth with the United States Armed Forces or if you were residing in the United States and were under the age of eighteen at the date of your mother's naturalization as an American citizen. You may therefore still retain citizenship and in order to clarify your present status, you should arrange to come to the Embassy... . If appropriate, you may at that time make a formal renunciation of United States citizenship before a consular officer as required by Section 349(a)(6) of the Immigration and Nationality Act. Your letter of March 24th may not be accepted for that purpose and is of no effect in changing your status.

*Very truly yours,
E. T. Vangas,
American Consul*

I have no doubt that the Consul believed he was conveying good news, for as Uncle Sam's representative he must surely have regarded the possession of American nationality as a precious asset. And, had it not been for the Vietnam war, I would not have been inclined to disagree with him—my father and grandfather had had, after all, every reason to be happy about being Americans. But at that time the possession of American citizenship was a distinct liability for someone of my age and gender, to say nothing of my political views: I had come to deplore the US military engagement in Vietnam, regarding it as a brutal effort to prop up the corrupt and unpopular regime in the south, and I had already begun to participate in demonstrations opposing the war. So shedding American nationality was a high priority. I therefore resolved to take up the Consul's offer and formally renounce my citizenship. I informed the Consul of this and a week or so later presented myself at the American embassy in Grosvenor Square, passing under the voracious-looking eagle looming over its entrance to perform the act of self-excommunication. I had envisaged the affair as a kind of inverted Masonic initiation ceremony, requiring the raising of one's trouser leg and the recitation in front of an assembly of elders of various formulas such as the Gettysburg Address in reverse. But when

I arrived at the Embassy I was surprised to find that the Vice-Consul, who had been deputed to hear my oath of renunciation, was a *soignée* woman reminiscent of Anne Bancroft in *The Graduate*. And the procedure itself amounted to no more than a straightforward declaration to the effect that I desired

to make a formal renunciation of my American nationality, as provided by Section 349(a)(6) of the Immigration and Nationality Act and pursuant thereto I hereby absolutely and entirely renounce my United States nationality together with all rights and privileges and all duties of allegiance and fidelity thereunto pertaining.

As I declaimed this text, right hand held high, I fancied I detected in the elegant Vice-Consul's eyes a glint of amusement at having grasped the likelihood that *both* of us saw the procedure as fundamentally absurd—certainly I did. Absurd it was, but its consequences were very real, and, as far as I was concerned, positive. For some months later my new draft classification arrived in the mail. This turned out to be 4C (I think) “Alien not *currently* available for military service.” The emphasized word proves yet again that once the military has you in its clutches, it is most reluctant to let you go. But I was happy enough to be unavailable for military service, even if that unavailability was no more than “current”—it was certainly preferable to the dreaded 1A, and even to Woody Allen's “4P” classification: “In the event of war you're a hostage”.

By the end of my second year at Christ Church I had had my fill of being “pent mid cloisters dim” and resolved to leave college for the real world, or at least for what passed as such in Oxford. So I applied to the college authorities for a housing allowance in lieu of my free rooms. This being granted, I began to search for some decent lodgings. One day I ran into Andrew Evans, an undergraduate at University College whom I had met through Spike Wells. In his own quest for accommodation Andy had found a room on the ground floor of a house on Walton Street, not far from the Oxford University Press. He told me that the basement flat of this house was currently unoccupied and that I might be able to snap it up. An attractive feature of the arrangement was that its troll, a Mrs. Pressman, was nonresident. On inspection the flat seemed a bit damp and, in truth, the £7 a week rent was really beyond my slender means, but I was sufficiently determined to have a place of my own to brush these considerations aside. I was also swayed by the presence of a small but serviceable kitchen, which I saw as my instrument of liberation from the poor restaurant fare in Oxford—the idea, in particular, of escaping the burnt offerings at the local Wimpy bar was not to be resisted.

I arranged to move in to the Walton Street flat at the start of the Michaelmas term. Initially the place was fine: cooking my own meals was fun, even if no-one but myself would have enjoyed actually having to eat them. I also liked being in a position to accommodate guests.

When Joe Harriott the tenor saxophonist came to town I put up his drummer and bassist overnight, regaling them with my records of Heifetz playing Bach solo sonatas, on hearing which they professed astonishment at the violinist's technique. Next morning the drummer, Noel Norris, gave me his London phone number, which, he was delighted to point out, began N-O-E-L, and invited me to look him up whenever I was in the Smoke. (But for some reason I never did.)

Andy Evans proved to be an agreeable fellow, somewhat feckless, perhaps, but full of enthusiasm. A talented musician, he had begun with the piano but turned to the bass, which had converted him to jazz. Unlike most of the jazz musicians of my acquaintance, who paid lip service to classical music but were fundamentally indifferent to it, Andy was a genuine devotee of the art, and had amassed a collection of classical records which he continually augmented through record sales—I still remember him bursting through my door one day waving the cut-price copy of Isaac Stern's recording of Bloch's *Baal Shem* he had just come across at a sale at the local W. H. Smith. (Of course I rushed out to snap up a copy myself.) Unfortunately, Andy's enthusiasms led him to neglect his official studies (I cannot now recall what he was reading, PPE probably) with the result that he failed some exams and was rusticated at the end of the term: I still recall his parents, understandably dejected, turning up at Walton Street to collect his belongings. But Andy, ever the optimist, put a brave face on the matter, saying that he'd be back to complete his degree—I later learned that he was as good as his word. He finally found his *métier* as a psychologist counselling artists and musicians.

Over the Christmas vacation I fell victim to a particularly virulent gastric flu and was laid up in bed for more than a week. My Greek friends Nick and Demo also happened to be becalmed in Oxford over that vacation and were able to provide me with the little sustenance I was able to hold down. When I recovered sufficiently to venture into the outside world I went with Nick for a meal at the local nails joint, the *Dildunia* on Walton Street. I decided to spare my stomach by steering clear of the usual Bhuna Schmaltz or Tack Gosht and instead order a mixed grill or something of the sort from the slender "English" section of the menu. Having long conceived a loathing for the wax peas that invariably accompanied such offerings, I asked the waiter if there were other vegetables to be had. This innocent request led to a ludicrous exchange, which Nick, after more than 30 years, is still able to reproduce to perfection, complete with accents. It went something like this.

Waiter: *Vegetables, sir? Of course, we have them. Peas, sir!*

Self: *No, no, I meant vegetables other than peas.*

Waiter: *Peas sir, yes sir, thank you, sir!*

Self (abandoning the struggle after numerous repetitions): *OK, the hell with it, give me the Bhuna Schmaltz.*

With the onset of winter the dampness in the flat had worsened appreciably and even before I fell ill I had resolved to decamp. Providentially, a room on the top floor of the house fell vacant. While small and kitchenless the room was cheap, and, above all, dry. I packed up my belongings and migrated upstairs. I struck up an acquaintance with my next-door neighbour, Petronella Pulsford, a glamorous undergraduate in her final year of reading English at Lady Margaret Hall¹⁷. An aspiring actress, “Petra” had appeared in various OUDS productions, including the Burton-Taylor presentation (later filmed) of Marlowe’s *Dr Faustus*. Her flamboyance, worldliness, and intelligence greatly appealed to me, and we became great friends. She had a constant stream of visitors, mostly male, some of whom I got to know. I recall Michael Black, the sculptor, who was later to restore the sadly decayed heads around the Sheldonian Theatre. Richard Heffer, also an actor¹⁸, impressed me with his wit and remarkable ability as a cartoonist.

In my last year at Oxford I got to know Jane Bridge, a new graduate student of John Crossley’s at Somerville College. She had been awarded the top First in her year, and was on the brink of a brilliant mathematical career. Jane and I became close friends. I had the great good fortune to enjoy the hospitality of Jane’s family at their home in London and, later, in Gloucestershire, on a number of occasions.

John Crossley had persuaded the North-Holland Publishing Company to publish the notes¹⁹ of the lectures on model theory that Alan Slomson and I had given during 1965-66. Alan, who had completed his D.Phil. in 1967 and taken up a lectureship in Leeds, shouldered the task of typing up the manuscript and submitting it to the publisher. Early in 1968, when the galley proofs of the book arrived, I shirked my proofreading duties, merely giving the proofs no more than a cursory inspection. The result was that the first edition of the book (1969) was a mass of misprints, a fact rubbed in with a heavy hand by the reviewer of the book for the *Journal of Symbolic Logic*. This consisted of 10 lines or so of neutral description of the book’s contents,

¹⁷ In this connection I might mention that Hubert Linfoot’s sister Margaret, long an Oxford don, had married the economist Robert Hall and so after he was knighted became Lady Margaret Hall. Further coincidence, however, was frustrated by the fact that she was a fellow of Somerville.

¹⁸ Richard later had a considerable TV and movie career. Seeing him in the final reels of Ken Russell’s *Women in Love* gave me a pleasant shock of recognition. Later he played a stiff-upper-lip RAF captive in the BBC TV series *Colditz*.

¹⁹ These notes had originally appeared in 1965 as an Oxford Mathematical Institute publication entitled “Introduction to Model Theory.”

followed by a lengthy list of errata (a number of which had been supplied by ourselves). Nevertheless, the book sold very well and went through 3 printings before finally being (in our view, unjustly) mothballed by Elsevier in 1983.

Sandy had meanwhile moved to Beirut. I wooed her by correspondence throughout my last year at Oxford, finally persuading her to come to Britain—with her now two-year-old son Chris—and shack up with me. Up to then my attempts at establishing amorous relations with women had met with rebuff, so that Sandy's positive response to my blandishments naturally led me to suspect that she saw me less as a potential lover than as an actual deliverer from her predicament as a divorced mother forced to take parental charity. But I didn't give a damn! My obsession banished all suspicion—indeed, like a character in a Russian novel, to achieve the object of my desire I was prepared to abandon rational calculation altogether. Still, the three of us had to live somewhere and so I asked Joyce Linfoot if she would allow us to use the house in Eachard Road in Cambridge which she and Hubert had bought as an investment some years before and which was currently unoccupied. Joyce generously agreed, even offering to provide us with some new furniture.

At the beginning of the summer of 1968 Sandy and her son arrived from Beirut and we proceeded to set up house at 50 Eachard Road. In true hippie style, Sandy had contrived to smuggle a substantial stash of grass through customs at Heathrow and as a result our honeymoon was spent in a haze of marijuana smoke. Our first days together were magical, idyllic. Bewitched by Sandy's sensuality, in those first few days I felt that all my inchoate fantasies had finally been brought to fruition. We feasted on strawberries and sex, and I, at least, cared not for what the morrow might bring.

But trouble loomed. Soon after we arrived Joyce informed me, with some embarrassment, that she and Hubert were uncomfortable with the idea of an unmarried couple with a child living together in their house and that, worse, the neighbours might be scandalized at the idea. So she suggested that I ask a respectable male friend to share the place with us. To whom else could I appeal but the ever-reliable Jumbo? Fortunately, he was free, and willing to join us: having been an undergraduate at Cambridge it perhaps amused him to return to his *alma mater* under such novel circumstances. He and Sandy hit it off instantly, and I thought our immediate problems were solved.

But I was wrong. For apparently even Jumbo's solid presence failed to confer sufficient respectability on our *ménage* to overcome the Linfoots' doubts, and it may perhaps also have reached their ears, via our neighbours' sensitive noses, that, in the police parlance of the day, "certain substances" were being consumed on the premises. So it was that Joyce informed me, with redoubled embarrassment, that we would have to move elsewhere. On learning of this reverse, Jumbo generously

proposed that we migrate to his flat in Sheffield, in which I had previously been his guest on a number of occasions. In his absence he had offered the place to one of his students as a temporary billet, but he assured us that in an emergency such as the present one the fellow would accept the necessity of moving out.

So we piled our belongings into the Dreamboat, and bade farewell to Cambridge. We arrived in Sheffield to find Jumbo's tenant still very much in residence. He had dismantled his car and strewn the parts all over the place, transforming Jumbo's flat into what appeared to be a automotive garage. He cheerfully informed us that he'd reassemble it in a jiffy and be on his way. The "jiffy" stretched into a couple of days, but he finally packed up and left. Meanwhile the four of us tried to settle in. Jumbo had formerly occupied his flat all by himself and must have found the cramped conditions now prevailing irksome, but, ever the gentleman, he never complained.

Relations with Sandy became strained after our move to Sheffield. It had become evident that she was now less than enchanted with me. I writhed with jealousy when she admitted that she had taken a lover while in Beirut. On a domestic note, I was annoyed that Chris, at nearly three, was still not toilet trained. Yet I remained infatuated.

One day Sandy announced that she was pregnant. Given the neglect of precautions in our initial careless rapture, this should have come as no great surprise, but the news hit me like a bomb. We agreed that there was nothing for it but an abortion, the arranging of which fell, naturally, to me. Devoid of experience in these matters, I was initially quite desperate. Then it occurred to me that Petra, as an experienced woman, might be able to help me. I got in touch with her and received a sympathetic response. She soon came up with the name of a suitable clinic, at Stanmore in North-West London. At £100 the fee for the operation was far beyond my means, and I had no alternative but to appeal to Joyce. Of course I didn't tell her for what purpose the money was really intended, merely saying that I needed a loan to "tide us over" temporary financial difficulties, or words to that effect. Kind lady that she was, and uncomfortable at having had to give us our marching orders from Cambridge, she offered me the money outright. But I felt that, whatever happened, I would not compound my shame at the whole sorry affair by simply accepting the money, at the same time cravenly concealing its true purpose. I vowed to repay it, and I did.

So much for my attempts at salvaging my battered self-esteem! I took Sandy down to the clinic in London; the operation was performed; and we returned to Sheffield to spend the last few weeks of our now sadly diminished affair together. And dismal weeks they were! In September I was due to start teaching at the LSE (see next chapter) and Sandy had, sensibly, but to my anguish, found lodging with some acquaintances of hers in Shepherd's Bush. In the last week of September the always supportive Jumbo drove us down to London. As

we neared our destination I became increasingly agitated, knowing that our arrival there would precipitate the final parting with my inamorata and cause all my castles in the air finally to crash to earth. So it was that when we stopped at a traffic light as we passed through Highgate in North London, I was seized by an overmastering impulse to flee the inevitable. I leapt from the car, leaving poor Jumbo to convey Sandy to her destination by himself. And still I could not resolve my contradictory feelings towards Sandy. I remained besotted, pathetically hopeful that the cinders of our relationship might somehow be rekindled into flame, yet at the same time grasping the impossibility of continuing our relationship even had she so wished—it being rather obvious now, even to me, that she didn't. For months afterwards, I mooned around Shepherd's Bush, the pitiful embodiment of a discarded lover trying to catch a glimpse of his lost love.

It was only after meeting my future wife Mimi that my infatuation with Sandy began to subside. Sandy returned to Beirut, and then, a year or so later, resurfaced with a new husband, a young fellow by the name of De Frates (I can't remember his first name) who, by a curious coincidence, was an undergraduate at my old Oxford college Exeter. My last meeting with her was at the house she and her husband had rented in Marston not far from Oxford. Finally free of the jealousy that had plagued me, I could see that her new husband was a personable fellow. I wished them well. But I never saw either of them again.

Reflecting after more than thirty years on my brief and turbulent relationship with Sandy, I now consider myself lucky that she made a clean break with me. After all, I was responsible for her pregnancy; she would have been well within her rights to have taken me to the cleaners! And if our time together wasn't all roses, neither was it entirely thorns: indeed in its initial stage it was nothing short of bliss, for me at least. To this day my pulse still quickens when I think of Sandy and the few intoxicating weeks we spent together. I wonder still what became of her. I doubt whether she thinks of me.