Botany and Zoology

In the year 1962, a long-overdue intellectual event took place at Yale University. After much discussion and some disputation, but not really much opposition, the separate Departments of Botany and Zoology fused to form a single Department of Biology. While some botanists joked that “Animals eat plants,” the main and most stubborn opposition came from Oswald Tippo, the cigar-smoking, dominant chair of the Botany Department, who had seen this happen before. “Every time Botany and Zoology fuse,” said he, “Botany ends up screwed to the wall.” Having a separate Botany Department actually made a lot of sense in many state universities, where the applied science of agronomy was a vital part of the institution. This was not so in a liberal arts college or university, where teaching of the shared fundamental properties of all living organisms stood head and foremost. With each passing year (indeed decades), the many fundamental similarities of plants and animals in their genetics, biochemistry, cell biology, ecology, and evolution had become obvious. It was unfair intellectually to our students and to ourselves as faculty to persist in retaining this artificial barrier between the two disciplines. In addition, it became clear that the duplication of educational effort this split entailed was stupid. So, the two departments fused. Tippo left, the students profited, and Trinkaus enjoyed the happy good fortune of more frequent and closer contacts with colleagues who shared many interests with him in certain basic areas of biology but who happened to use plants or microorganisms instead of animals as their research material.

Introductory Biology

As plans were being made to join the departments, the problem of the introductory course quickly came up. Obviously, a combined department
needed a combined course that reflected the revolutionary advances that had occurred in biology as a whole over the last several decades. Arthur Galston, a distinguished plant physiologist, and I volunteered to run the course. As with Zoo 23, it involved a new approach to the standard old way of presenting biology to young college students. The old-fashioned separate introductory courses in botany and zoology, with their time-worn themes of phylogeny, anatomy, physiology, genetics and development of plants or animals, needed to be joined and integrated with emphasis on great general biological principles. Galston and I were both skillful lecturers, so-called "large-class types," each with his own distinctive style to be sure, and we took on the task with enthusiasm. It was also kind of a mission for us. Inasmuch as we were among the first in the U.S. to try to bring the teaching of introductory biology up to date and at a higher intellectual and conceptual level, our course served as a model for reevaluation of the teaching of introductory biology in many colleges across the country.

Arthur was in charge of the first semester, where emphasis was mainly on the cell—biochemistry and cell biology, photosynthesis, genetics, and growth and differentiation. I was in charge of the second semester, where the emphasis was mainly on form and function of multicellular plants and animals—development, adaptive and behavioral physiology, biodiversity, and ecology and evolution. We would do most of the lecturing ourselves but bring in colleagues from our new department and some other departments to help out. Junior faculty and graduate students ran the laboratory.

After having agreed on the general structure of the course and our resolve to introduce biology as an enthralling intellectual discipline, Galston and I pursued our independent ways. I, for example, laced my lecturing with inviting topics such as Vesalius and the origin of observational science, the menstrual cycle, early human embryogenesis, homeostasis, the physiology of desert mammals, bird flight, how whales stay submerged so long, fish migrations, and coral reefs, leaving some of the standard material to the text. I would also bring in an occasional distinguished colleague from another department to present a special lecture on topics such as immunology or the latest finds in human evolution. The students loved it and so did the lecturers. It was a tough but fascinating and intriguing course and got high marks from the Yale College Dean’s Office, where there was much concern about the teaching of introductory science. The lectures were at 9 o’clock, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday mornings. Sometimes I was not in the best of shape lecturing Saturday morning but usually stayed alert and oriented during the lecture. Once I actually fell asleep during one of these early Saturday morning lectures, my own lecture. I remember feeling drowsy and leaned against the blackboard. The next thing I knew I was sliding slowly to the floor and woke up to the wide-eyed
consternation of the pupils in the front row. What a horror show! They told me
that they thought I had suffered a heart attack. This was an embarrassing
exception to an otherwise good track record as a teacher. Most of my
undergraduate lectures were lively and rigorous. For various reasons the lectures
were nationally known as being highly entertaining, especially for their
occasional raunchy asides.

Galston and I were a good team, but, curiously although he and I shared
much philosophy and worked well together professionally, we never became
particularly close personally, joking around and all that. I think I was a bit too
laid-back for him and he a bit too pompous and formal for me. Now that we are
both old men the differences are less important and we enjoy each other’s
company. Anyway, we ran that course successfully together for 5 years. The
lecturing was a fun and enriching experience for me and, I believe, for many
students, but 5 years was enough; there were other things to do.

Around this time, a book entitled *The Underground Guide to the
College of Your Choice*, appeared, saying about Yale College that “…groovy
undergraduate courses include Chinese Politics with Professor Bernstein,
Biology with J.P. Trinkaus (he grosses kids out), and Ancient Drama with
Professor Segal….” The final recommendation is about Eric Segal of the
Classics Department who wrote the best-selling *Love Story*. Being considered
groovy was a nice compliment, I guess. The gross part, I presume, refers to my
notorious “Junior Prom Lecture.” Each year, just for fun and as expected, I would
schedule my regular lecture on the human reproductive cycle and the beginning
of human development for the Saturday morning of the big spring dance
weekend. Most of the lecture was straightforward, graphic description of
reproductive function, enlivened, however with a bogus list of references,
including *Is Sex Necessary?* by James Thurber and a few jokes. The joke that
invariably brought the house down was the old gynecologist’s introduction of a
new patient, “At your cervix, Madame.” Of course, the patient would reply,
“Dilated to meet you, Doctor Speculum.” In this setting, even the perfectly
legitimate scientific word “gonad” would get a laugh. Yale College was only for
male undergraduates at the time but the show always attracted a large
coeducational audience, packing the largest lecture hall in the Department of
Biology. Now that I think back on all of this, it is pretty sophomoric, although
this was before the widespread use of birth control pills and the liberating sexual
revolution of the Sixties. You must remember that this was a fairly conservative,
all-male institution at the time. It was long before anyone thought about being
politically correct. A lot of what went on was juvenile but we had a lot of fun
while learning a lot of biology. I regret to say that my human reproduction lecture
seems to be the main item some alumni remember about me. At least I am not
entirely forgotten.
During this same period, Yale decided to produce a film on campus life called *To Be a Man* and brought in a professional director, Allen Lerner, to do the job. He ranged all over Yale College but for teaching concentrated on two of us, namely Paul Weiss in Philosophy (a former prize student of Alfred North Whitehead at Harvard) and me in Biology. He filmed me giving my introductory lecture on evolution (a good choice) and in some informal sessions with students. I had never lectured on camera before but the director apparently knew what he was doing and I simply cooperated with keen interest. One day I suddenly wondered why he was filming me so much and thought to ask. The quick answer was, “You are good camera.” Visions of Hollywood and perhaps changing my profession. But what is “good camera?” No big deal it turned out. He said, “You are relaxed and natural during each shooting. The camera doesn’t bother you.” Interesting, but a come down, as my egotistical fantasy about a movie career evaporated.

After cutting and splicing, all the participants and some friends were brought together for a viewing. I have two happy memories of the occasion. One is that it was a good film, an excellent glimpse of Yale undergraduate life of the day. The other was meeting the other faculty star—the philosopher, Paul Weiss—a brilliant, feisty and absolutely charming man, with a strong lingering lower-class New York accent, which was carefully preserved and not appreciated by some of his stuffy colleagues in the humanities. Nothing shy about him. He immediately complained to me that, “They shot too much footage of you and not enough of me!” This was the beginning of a warm, robust friendship. What a breath of fresh air! Having terminated his “Sports Period,” Paul was in his “Painting Period” at the time. After one of his parties, he generously presented Madeleine with one of his latest canvasses. It still hangs in our house. It is not a very good painting but every time we look at it we think of Paul and feel a little better. *To Be a Man* was interesting enough to be shown quickly across the country on Public Television, giving rise to some calls from apocryphal Hollywood moguls wondering if I would agree to come out for a screen test. Incidentally, Paul Weiss died recently at the age of 101. What a full, exciting life that wonderful man lived.

This was certainly my movie period, for soon after the crew of *To Be a Man* had left, a Swiss crew arrived to do a film on American student life for Europeans. I was shot much again, this time in part because I spoke French and had a French wife. It was also fun for me but the result was not as good as Lerner’s film. I am afraid that the lure of movies had gone to my head those days. Remember, I was really interested in acting in high school and have always been a bit of a ham. One evening when we had been invited by the Yale Drama School
to attend the official opening of *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, at the Schubert Theatre, a press type rose in front of me taking shots. I began posing a little but was immediately stopped in my tracks by my wife’s stage whisper: “You idiot. He’s not interested in you. Barbara Streisand is seated just behind us.”

*Branford College and the Sixties*

Being at this movie opening was just one instance of our having somehow joined the smart set at Yale. Our recognition had to do largely with the movies, my being the new Master of Branford College and, with this, our new friendships with people like John Hersey, the writer, and his wife, Barbara, and the new Director of the Drama School, Bob Brustein, and his wife, Norma. John and Barbara were sweet, decent people and we came to like them very much. It was a heady period for us. The signal event began one cold, gray, rainy, dreary Sunday afternoon in March 1966 with a telephone call. “There is a man with a very cultured voice,” said Madeleine. It was the President of the University, Kingman Brewster Jr., asking if we could join him and his wife, Mary-Louise, at the President’s House for a drink. So we put on our Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes and went over. After some small talk over drinks before a warming fire, he let me know that he would like to appoint me Master of Branford College, the very college where I had been a fellow so many years. I was thrilled and said I was inclined to accept, except for a certain reservation. So we left the women and went up to his study to talk it over. I felt ill at ease and a bit snobbish about my hesitancy but put it bluntly, saying, “Frankly, I don’t like some of the company I would be keeping amongst some of the other masters.” Some were the kind of academicians who had given up on serious research. He quickly dispelled my worries, saying that he agreed with me and asked me to name some names. He then let me know some of the distinguished gentlemen he had in mind as their replacements. Having no longer any reason for holding back, I accepted and we had another drink. Now, then, I asked what ideas or plans he had for the colleges. “None, especially,” he said. “It will be up to the masters.” His first appointment was John Hersey to be Master of Pierson College. I was his second for Branford and for Trumbull College, he intended to appoint Eugene Rostow, Dean of the Law School (who, however, soon became Undersecretary of State and was replaced by Ronald Dworkin, who turned out to be one of the most brilliant and amusing legal minds to be found anywhere). Appointment of R.W.B. Lewis of English; Robert Triffin of Economics; Horace Taft of Physics; Eltin Morrison of History; A. Bartlett Giamatti of Literature; and Vincent Scully of the History of Architecture, soon followed. This group of distinguished intellectuals was a stimulating conglomeration of diverse and independent minds. But some of the good old ones, like Eli Clark of the Law School, Duke Henning of History, and Thomas Bergin of Italian stayed on, to my pleasure. It became clear that
Brewster’s idea was to juice up Yale College, the true heart of old Yale, and part of his scheme was to stimulate new life in the Residential Colleges, giving each a distinctive style. Being a very smart man, he knew that this would depend to a very large degree on the masters.

Actually, my appointment was not a complete surprise. I already knew that the Committee of Branford Fellows (of which I was a member) had met without me and recommended me to the President. I also learned from my friend Talbot Waterman that the Trumbull College Committee had likewise recommended me for the mastership of Trumbull. Talbot reported that Brewster’s retort at the time was “Trink is very smart but has a rather sharp quick wit.” This was not necessarily a compliment from his point of view but I took it as one.

What was especially nice was the way Brewster asked me to do it. Not by letter. Not by a call from his office. An invitation for me and my wife to meet with him and his wife, alone in the living room of their splendid residence. Among his many qualities, Brewster had class. Although the wives of masters were not given titles officially (the way the spouses are nowadays), President Brewster knew how important wives could be in helping to build a certain ambiance. I’m certain therefore that my marriage to Madeleine was an important factor in the recommendations of the committees and the decision of President Brewster. Class appreciates class (Figure 10.1). Also, having her around probably reduced the riskiness of the appointment.

![Figure 10.1. Madeleine at the wedding of my son, Gregor.](image)
There is so much to say, and much has been said about the Residential Colleges at Yale and the corresponding Houses at Harvard. But, I will confine myself to a few summary remarks. They were both patterned after the Colleges of Oxford and Cambridge. Branford College, named after the village in which Yale was founded, provided living space and dining for about 400 undergraduate students plus quarters for the master, a dean and a few resident faculty fellows, and offices for several additional faculty fellows. Branford College is one of the gothic architectural masterpieces of James Gamble Rodgers at Yale, having a large stunning courtyard and three smaller ones, plus the imposing Harkness Tower and its carillon. The sumptuous Master’s House with its entry on High Street looks out on the major courtyard and, in spite of its function as a luxurious site for receptions of all kinds, was a very warm, livable place for us. My mother-in-law, being old French, was especially impressed with the plumbing—eight bathrooms! The colleges had been allowed to run down physically during previous regimes. To our good fortune, part of Brewster’s effort to spruce them up involved refurbishing the interiors of the Masters’s Houses. Madeleine was in her glory as she worked with the interior decorator of the University buying and borrowing furniture and going to Kebabian’s to select some splendid Persian rugs. We also borrowed some paintings from the Art Gallery. The pièce de résistance was having a bidet installed in the master bathroom, a civilized facility utterly absent elsewhere at Yale University. The pleasing result of all this was to give our house an elegant, comfortable and distinctly French touch, “Le Charme Discret de la Bourgeoise.” And, we had a full-time, live-in maid and cook! All this, I might say, was quite a leap upward for this lower-middle-class, mostly poor academician, not anymore so young. I fell into the life of a master immediately, as if born to it. I enjoyed this temporary position of wealth and comfort. It was as if I had been made an honorary member of the upper class. Communism be damned, this was a sweet lifestyle. There is a funny gossip about the bidet, recounted with delight by our maid. Once when we were away in Paris on academic leave for a semester, the American wife of the substitute master was so embarrassed and offended by it that she covered it over.

Among the many prerogatives of the master was determination of the use of the varied space of the college. Branford College was singular in possessing a treasured jewel of space that had unfortunately passed entirely out of its control—a lovely, small gothic chapel at the base of the Harkness Tower, complete with fan-vaulting and a large stained glass window. In my day, it was frequently used by the Church of Christ in Yale University and always referred to as the Branford Chapel. It was a popular venue for weddings; Madeleine and I were married there. After a little investigation I discovered that its original name was the Memorial Room, so named by Mrs. Harkness as a memorial to her son killed in the First World War. It had no designated function. One of my first acts as Master was to reclaim it, rechristen it the “Memorial Room,” and open it
for all kinds of secular activities like chamber music concerts and recitals, poetry readings, lectures for small audiences, as well as for weddings and even funerals. This meant a call to William Sloan Coffin, one of my locker room buddies at the Payne-Whitney Gymnasium, whom I knew mainly in the buff. Bill was Pastor at Battell Chapel, the Yale Church. He was an outspoken liberal and had some lively and entertaining public debates with William F. Buckley, Jr., his conservative counterpart. Both men were great speakers, clever, articulate, opinionated, outrageous at times, and always full of facts to intimidate the opposition. Buckley especially was a master of the veiled personal attack. He would begin a convoluted personal attack with, “Surely you couldn’t expect one to believe your position that...” or, “Only a fool or a misanthropic Jacobin would suggest that...” Their debates were exceptionally entertaining events, great theater really. Anyway, I informed Coffin, over his protests, that the room was no longer a monopoly of the Yale Protestant Christian Establishment.

My next move was to call the Yale Rabbi at Hillel to offer him the room for Friday services. He was very interested but questioned whether it would be proper. I understood his hesitation, the WASPiness of Yale and the relatively small number of practicing Jews on campus. To convince him I informed him that the room was no longer part of the Christian Establishment and that its size, seating about 40 people, would be quite convenient for his congregation. He soon called back joyfully to accept the offer. Thus the Memorial Room came to serve as a small makeshift synagogue every Friday evening. Being in an ecumenical mood, I next called the Catholic Chaplain offering him also the use of the room on occasion. He thanked me very much but demurred because, not surprisingly, they were very well taken care of it in the Saint Thomas Moore Chapel over on Park Street. The “Old Blues” were probably upset by all this inclusiveness but my interest was in overthrowing the ancien régime and establishing more of a meritocracy. Remember, I am an old left-winger, a real Jacobin minus the guillotine.

Where to begin in describing my ideas on changing Branford College? There were many significant duties of the mastership but the most important in my mind was the intellectual. Traditionally, and particularly under Brewster, most masters were full professors in the Faculty of the Arts and Sciences and, occasionally, very distinguished outsiders like Hersey. When asked about the role of a master by the Yale Daily News I was quoted as saying, “A master should set an example of what a scholarly life is all about. A master should promote within a college his idea of a university.” I promoted this idea in many ways. One simple way was easy and habitual. Since the master’s study overlooked the main courtyard, I would deliberately leave the curtains open so that students could see me at work throughout most evenings. Above all, each of my deans and I promoted the intellectual life of the College in many overt ways that will become apparent as I proceed.
The whole idea of the college system was to give students in a large university some of the intellectual and other intimacies of small colleges, such as Wesleyan or Swarthmore. This was accomplished by breaking up the student body into small, separate residential units, each with a master, a dean and a varied large group of faculty fellows, with the master and dean in residence. It worked. In fact, it was much better than Wesleyan, the only small college I knew well. Yale undergraduate students had easy access to faculty in various disciplines in a charming cadre and a relaxed social milieu. Many fellows in the residential colleges are authentically excited about their intellectual pursuits. In turn, the intense involvement of fellows can infect susceptible students, challenging the students in ways that they never imagined. Reciprocally, the youthful protégés can energize the fellows, perhaps even giving them new perspectives on their research. If the students were so inclined, they could make significant didactic contacts with scholars doing research on the cutting edge of their respective disciplines. Although not all students take full advantage of this tremendous opportunity, it represents an authentic portal to the intellectual life. Although cynics may think that this view is unrealistically idealistic, I can assure you that this sort of intellectual symbiosis (formally speaking, in biological terms, two separate organisms living in mutually dependent and mutually beneficial association) actually happens. Not always, but often enough to be exciting.

A central idea of having a master and his wife living in a college with the students was also to provide some measure of *in loco parentis*. We took this seriously in our own liberal way. Being very informal by nature, it was easy to create the impression of being available for help on all sorts of problems, personal and otherwise. On a number of occasions certain students took advantage of our availability for help with some deeply personal problems, such as difficulties with their parents or matters of love. On the other hand, I made it clear that we considered them to be adult and thus free to carry on their personal lives as they wished, including drinking and sexual activity, as long as they did not infringe on the rights and tranquility of others. After all, this was a university, not a prep school. Once a bunch of jocks broke the rule and in noisy, drunken enthusiasm broke down the heavy oaken door of one of the suites. For punishment, I “rusticated” them for a week—banished them from campus. So what did they do? They sent back for display photos of themselves beside a lake, lolling on the beach, fishing and swimming. Nowadays, this tolerance of intemperate student behavior is considered permissive, in large measure because alcohol abuse among college students has lead to many deaths from alcohol overdose, an unheard of problem when I was Master of Branford College. University policies now wisely prohibit underage drinking.

I made a point of having lunch almost every weekday in the college dining hall where I could have contacts with students and fellows and settle many
college problems. This way I disposed of much of the business of the college and freed myself to spend a lot of time up on the Hill in my laboratory. We also held an open house most Friday evenings in the Master's House with a keg of beer. These parties were invariably great fun. A special feature of the college system was the highly varied extracurricular activities, particularly sports—games pitting college-based teams against one another—swimming meets, football, basketball, baseball, squash, and hockey. This was a wonderful outlet for those student-athletes who shunned the dedication and time required for varsity sports. It was relaxing—sports without practice or training. We would attend a game or two a week, especially Madeleine who was considered the good luck mascot of the football team. I'm a pretty strong swimmer so I tried out for the Branford team, but was not good enough. Each fall at the annual sports rally around a keg, I would give my usual rousing, beery speech always ending it with. "It mattereth not how you play the game, but only whether you win or lose." Speaking of sports, something we enjoyed very much of a fall Saturday afternoon was Yale football in the Yale Bowl, with all the trimmings, especially the tailgating with friends in the so-called VIP parking lot, a privilege that came with the mastership. In the process of becoming a devoted fan, my wife came to understand a lot about American football, certainly more than most other French people.

There were also concerts, lectures, poetry readings by students, student theatre, talks by well-known guest speakers, name it. One of the fellows from the Drama School, Arnold Weinstein, a playwright, had a neat idea: have well-known professional actors from the Yale Theatre come over from across the street and read some of their favorite poems, standing, as Arnold liked to say, in the armpit of the piano. It was the job of the Master to stimulate such activities by creating an atmosphere that encouraged spontaneity.

It goes without saying that we reveled in those close student contacts. As my mother-in-law, in her eighties, said sagely, "Moi aussi je préfère les jeunes gens—de n'importe quel âge." ("I too prefer young people—whatever their age.") However, since there is a higher probability of finding youthful spirit among those who are young in years we took full advantage of their company. Many of our friendships with Branford students were intimate and we have remained close to some ever since. When I was very sick and close to death a few years ago, who came to visit me frequently in the hospital (aside from my wife, who came every day)?—a number of Branford College alumni, even from New York and Boston. And they also took care of my very worried wife.

When I become a Master, Yale College was still a place for men only. Hence, one of the additional great joys of our mastership came well into it—the admission of women to Yale College in 1969. The faculty in my day were always in favor of coeducation (in contrast to the administration and the alumni) but in the Sixties the students became involved, as in many other colleges and
universities, and as a result Yale College became coeducational. I had truly enjoyed all those years with only male students but when those young women arrived it was so warm and natural that I wondered how I’d gotten along without them. Madeleine, especially, enjoyed having young women friends. Anyway, their acceptance was instantaneous. Even stodgy alumni, who initially were opposed, accepted coeducation when it was pointed out to them that now their daughters as well as their sons might go to Yale.

Although men’s colleges all over the country were going coed in those days, each went at it in its own way. At Yale, most faculty members were for it, but the impetus that brought the situation to a head came from the male undergraduates. They took it on as a real political mass movement with a campus-wide poll (taken by Branford students), highly in favor and an ingenious gimmick called “Coed Week,” during which students from various women’s colleges in the area came to Yale for a week, stayed in the dormitories and colleges, attended classes and generally participated. It certainly stirred things up. The President reacted, but in a way that betrayed his male aristocratic background (Yale, Harvard). The first idea was to bring Vassar College to Yale, reminiscent of Radcliffe and Harvard. That didn’t work. Vassar refused Yale’s overtures. So he agreed to open Yale to women but confine them to one residence. The inane idea was to empty Trumbull College of its students and house the women there, separate from the men, (more Radcliffe). The Trumbull students would have none of it and in a wild, often profane, meeting in Trumbull they convinced Brewster that that wouldn’t work either. I personally was closely in touch with this particular confrontation because by then I had become known as an activist master who vociferously favored the admission of women. Just after a Yale College Faculty Meeting in Connecticut Hall one afternoon, a group of Trumbull students visited me in the Branford Master’s House under the obvious leadership of a student named Avi Soifer, a very bright, articulate and charming young man. They wanted to know of faculty opinion. I told them and advised them to make clear to the President their complete opposition to his plan. “He’s not going to be able to move you out of there if you won’t move.” I assume no responsibility for the ensuing profanity. The students made their point; but no one had ever before addressed the imposing, adept, upper-class, Kingman Brewster, Jr. in this way, publicly at least. He was shocked and humiliated.

The next day several of the masters were on the phone worried about how Kingman would react to this free-wheeling, often insulting encounter. A few days afterward, he invited us all to lunch at Mory’s, in one of the private rooms upstairs, to discuss the matter. He was very stubborn and angry, even at us. I don’t remember saying much myself because I already had such a bad reputation. He would listen to some other master more than to me. I recall that Hersey was quite splendid in letting Kingman know that women should be admitted and treated equitably and that he should find a way of managing it. It was a
contentious session that got nowhere. A few days later there was another meeting with the masters. It was a gloomy Sunday afternoon meeting in the Corporation Room in Woodbridge Hall. This time I did make a remark to the effect that it was ridiculous at this time in the twentieth century to treat women students as if they were different from men students. And, what was so special about Yale? This got a cutting retort from Brewster that this was a typical sort of loose, poorly thought out, permissive attitude. He was angry. At some point he made some snotty remark about us (he was really quite magnificent when he was angry and I liked that) and then somebody reminded him that he had appointed most of us and was getting what he asked for. In some ways the President revealed himself as a kind of conservative law-and-order type, in the way we all are for some things. His law and his order was basically traditional old Yale, the way it was, except for the need of some fine-tuning intellectually. Well, coeducation was really a big thing and he found the idea of mixing men and women in the same living quarters unacceptable. Finally, after our worry that he might resign from the Presidency, he instead became resigned to mixing men and women students in the colleges. He quickly promoted Elga Wasserman, a friend of mine who had a Ph.D. in Chemistry from Nobel Laureate Woodward, from Assistant Dean to Dean of the Graduate School.

Elga was not appointed an Assistant Dean of Yale College, which would have been appropriate, because, according to her, of opposition in the male Dean’s Office. Instead Kingman came up with the cumbersome title of “Special Assistant to the President on the Education of Women and Chairman of the Committee on Coeducation.” In her calm, sensitive, clearly intelligent way, she set about settling the women in the colleges and advising them and the administration in many ways, in particular of the desperate need for more women faculty. Elga, incidentally, was in her person a classic example of the repression of women. In spite of her doctorate in Chemistry she was at Yale only because her husband, Harry, also a chemist, had been appointed to the faculty. Indeed, I first got to know Elga because Harry and I were colleagues and friends. After her stint at getting the undergraduate women integrated, she finally gave up and went to law school, at Yale of course, and has had a successful career since as a lawyer and a writer on the obstacles women scientists face moving up in the professions.

Soon after the arrival of women students, I was introduced directly to the politics of feminism and the new women’s movement. I knew about it before, of course, and I was aware of how the feminist movement was taking on new life in the Sixties, but it was Branford women students who really introduced me to the subtle as well as the obvious vocational inequities of the situation. I had much to learn and am still learning. Curiously and significantly, of all the freedoms we talked about and worked on during my young days in the left-wing movement, I don’t remember the liberation of women as ever being given much attention; it was only rarely mentioned. The American Communist
Party, as I knew it, was pretty blind to the oppression of women, as was I. So I must admit, as I did to those young women of Branford, that along with all my considerable personal charm I was basically yet another male chauvinist pig. I was quickly convinced of the necessity for vocational equality and indeed believed in that many years before. But I never did anything about it as a tenured member of the faculty and hardly gave a thought to the many other facets of the male-female problem. Those young women students really raised the level of my consciousness and I owe them a great debt. My previous backwardness was certainly due in part because, as a typical male, I profited every day of my life from the lower caste of women.

Two of the many fine features of the part-time administrative job of master of a college at Yale is that it is not at all as demanding as being a chair of a department. There is no budget to deal with and no time-consuming and often wrenching appointments and promotions and firing (i.e., denying tenure) of faculty members. By contrast, the appointments of faculty and distinguished local citizens to the fellowship of Branford College was a relatively easy activity that I enjoyed very much. Among a number of others, I made my dear friend Bob Goldburgh an associate fellow of Branford. This killed two birds with one stone. For his many qualities he was a marvelous addition to the College for both students and fellows and Madeleine and I got to see him frequently at fellows meetings. Some of the other outstanding appointments were Gloria Schaffer, the Secretary of the State of Connecticut, Willie Ruff, the eminent jazz musician in the Music School, Albert Solnit, head of the Yale Child Study Center, Robert Wyman, a new assistant professor in Biology and Kenneth Mills a new assistant professor in Philosophy. Bob Brustein, of the Drama School, got himself transferred to Branford from his assigned college.

Soon after we were installed in the Master’s House I left one evening to attend a fellows meeting in the Fellows Common Room, men only, of course, as always—an enjoyable and cosy men’s club which I enjoyed. Madeleine understood this but, being French not English, never approved of it. It suddenly hit her that now that I was in a position of power I could invite the wives of the fellows to one meeting a month. Great idea! It had never occurred to me. Thus originated one of the most popular things I did in the opinion of most fellows—invite the wives. The women loved it, came in droves and dragged their husbands with them. The meetings quickly became so jammed in the Fellows Common Room that one couldn’t get to the bar. So we moved them to the Master’s House. And so it has been ever since. And, incidentally, because it activated so many fellows, it was also good for fellows-student relations.

This was the late Sixties and student political activity was in the air, particularly left-wing, an atmosphere in which I naturally felt at home and pushed issues that had long interested me. As a strong believer in the First Amendment, however, I vigorously encouraged all points of view and much
openness. In consequence, Branford quickly gained a campus-wide reputation as being hospitable to a diverse collection of people and ways of looking at issues. Because of my liberal positions, some people even jokingly referred to me as the “Red Master.” Little did they know that when I was young I really was a Red. One evening during this time of increasing ferment, a fellow from the Law School, Abraham Goldstein (soon to become Dean of the Law School), asked me if I would like to add a genuine right-winger to the Fellowship. “Is he distinguished?”

“Yes.”

“Does he drink?”

Abe assured me, “Of course.”

“So write down his name.”

Thus Robert Bork became a Fellow of Branford College (better than the Supreme Court). He and I knew enough about the other’s opposing political views to avoid discussing such matters. He was, however, a genial member of the fellowship.

The essence of a mastership is informality, but there is one formal occasion. At the end of each academic year, the master of each college awards degrees and prizes to the graduating seniors of that college in an intimate commencement ceremony in the college courtyard that takes place after the big Yale-wide Commencement on the Old Campus. So, finally, I had to rent a robe and the Johns Hopkins Ph.D. hood in order to attend my first Yale Commencement and afterward preside properly over our own ceremony. I would always conclude the occasion with a little speech of advice and farewell. Since they were young they tended to look to the future and as they got older look more and more to the past, my advice was not to forget the present. Live each day fully with only an eye to the future. As I was composing my little homily for my second Branford Commencement I suddenly had a useful thought. Since last year’s graduating class is gone and will never hear my speech again and the new class has never heard it, I can give the same speech year after year. And so I did, to the boredom of the attending fellows.

Although the mastership brought no increase in my professor’s salary, there were certain monetary benefits. The Master’s House was rent-free and Yale University paid the liquor bill. Then, when we added Madeleine’s salary from teaching French to school children and the two-ninths being added to my salary from my NIH grant each summer, we were financially comfortable for the first time. This meant having funds available for some of the luxuries of life like entertaining, frequent visits to New York, and great vacations. The first idea for an upper-scale style of entertaining came from an invitation to a black-tie dinner party in the Masters House in Pierson College. Our hosts and fellows guests were all gliterati and some literati—the Herseys, John and Barbara, the Brusteins, (Bob and Norma, drama critic and actress), Lilian Hellman (writer) and the
Coffins, Bill (preacher) and Eva, a very beautiful woman and daughter of pianist Arthur Rubinstein. All of us beautiful people looking beautiful. I was so happy at the unexpected world I had brought my classy wife into. So we soon reciprocated with a black-tie dinner party of our own, with Madeleine carefully supervising the cook for some refined French cuisine. We loved those marvelously snobbish formal dinners, with the ladies in their long dresses, but that sartorial fad did not last long. In any case, we continued to expect coat and tie at all our dinner parties. The current informal couture of blue jeans and T-shirt or underwear or whatever, regardless of the occasion, fortunately had not yet become la mode.

Generally speaking, the mastership did not interfere unduly with my research and teaching. I had much help for everyday matters—a dean, excellent secretaries, a superintendent of building and grounds and other kinds of help. Indeed, during those years my laboratory was exceptionally productive. I had some of my best graduate students, one of my best postdoctoral fellows and all in all we published a lot of papers in established journals. One activity of the mastership was somewhat time-consuming; however, it was certainly one of its most rewarding features—originating college seminars for academic credit and recruiting teachers for them. The purpose was to make available treatment of subjects not available in the standard course regimen of the Yale College curriculum. My ideas were to introduce courses in film-making, poetry, psychiatry and creativity, and the like.

Yes, this was the Sixties and there was political turmoil in the air on college campuses everywhere in Europe and the United States. There is no need for me to indulge in a lengthy disquisition on all of this. The story has been told and retold and analyzed many times. Since I was involved in some of it, however, in France and at Yale, comments on my own experiences may be of interest. For me it really began in the spring of 1968 in Paris ("Les Evenements de Soixante-Huit"). I was on leave working in the laboratory of my fish embryologist colleague, Charles Devillers, at the Faculté des Sciences in the old Halles aux Vins. There were many issues but some involved the traditional educational system in France. It was for this issue that I became involved in the complaints of the younger faculty. For once, coming from a country that didn’t even have socialized medicine, I was in a position to point out something superior about the United States. There we had young faculty, instructors and assistant professors in our great and small universities who taught courses on their own. They had their own research grants and had a full vote on most departmental matters, in contrast to France, where The Professor, one per department, had all to say and had full control of the purse. Paris in 1968 was a very exciting and absorbing place. Schools and universities were shut down and everyone was in the streets. I will never forget a huge demonstration of about a million people at the height of the fervor. It started at La Place de la Nation on the Right Bank and headed for Place
Denfert-Rochereau on the Left Bank. Marching 15 people abreast, when the head of the cortège had reached Denfert-Rochereau, the tail had not yet left Nation!

When I returned to Yale and America the same kind of ferment was building. There was some discontent with the traditional system of education but the big issues were the Vietnam War and racism. I remember meeting my three children in Washington for a big mass protest rally against the Vietnam War. They came down from the University of Wisconsin (where they were all in college), as people came from everywhere. It was nice to see them. My own political activity at Yale was to help in a small way to bring in the women, get rid of the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC), a military program of the Defense Department, and engaging in a movement to increase the number of black students and faculty at Yale.

Although the ROTC was a small unit at Yale, eliminating it became a cause célèbre. I wrote to the Yale Daily News at the time, “Much of the philosophy of the military runs counter to that of a university and, besides, low-level trade school courses have no place at Yale.” In retrospect, the small Yale ROTC may seem a small matter. But it wasn’t. It was a lightening rod. In the atmosphere of the time it was a big matter and, besides, as Abbie Hoffman so sagely put it, “Think globally but act locally.” I took center stage in the movement against ROTC quite unexpectedly and spontaneously. There was a small meeting of a few hundred students and faculty in the Ingalls Skating Rink on the matter. There were a number of little speeches that were sort of going around and around and the meeting wasn’t getting anywhere. Suddenly it occurred to me that I should try to break the impasse. So I went up on the platform, asked for the microphone and made a simple motion to deny the ROTC use of the Yale’s facilities and that the University make up any scholarship money that the ROTC students might lose because of the action. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. This certainly did gel the situation and the upshot was a big University-wide meeting of almost 3,000 people, organized by the President’s Office in the Ingalls Rink, to put the matter to a vote. In the meantime, the radical, humorless student organization, the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), had so vastly complicated my simple motion that it received only a tie vote. But that turned out OK. The result was the demise of the ROTC at Yale. This struggle had its importance. It was local, concrete and distinct, and raised people’s consciousness politically. It also made me notorious campus-wide. The President was pretty annoyed at me for a while but he got over it. I was pretty annoyed at the SDS and did not get over it. Having no sense of humor is an unforgivable sin.

I had no problem getting along with black people. I am not a racist, but I needed some better understanding of the depths of black rage. I discussed my deficiency with some black students and received some good preliminary advice. Read the Autobiography of Malcolm X and Soul on Ice by Eldridge Cleaver. Both
were eye-openers for this lily-white, naive academician and genuinely radicalized my opinion. My increasing closeness with black students came mostly from our day-by-day associations in Branford College. I also became friendly with a small number of black faculty. I rarely saw blacks up on science hill, except for one of my postdoctoral fellows, James Hogan, and one faculty member in Biology, Richard Goldsby, both of whom became friends.

Then, one day, who should show up but Charles Davis, the charming guy from Princeton I had met in Dave Jones's apartment in Harlem years before. Yale had induced him to come to New Haven to head the Black Studies Program. I saw a lot of Charlie, usually at lunch, for three reasons. Principally, we enjoyed each other's company, both being laid-back with a sharp sense of humor. Second, he wanted to learn about Yale so he questioned me endlessly, trying to become more sophisticated about its social structure. Third, I wanted to increase my understanding of black people. Not long after he joined the Yale College faculty, President Brewster appointed him Master of Calhoun College to succeed Dick Lewis. Calhoun was named in honor of John C. Calhoun (1782-1850, Yale, 1804), a South Carolinian who served as a Congressman, Senator, Vice-President (twice, under Adams and Jackson), and Secretary of State. Calhoun, being a gentleman of the old South, owned slaves. Charlie quickly made himself at home at Calhoun College. One of his first official acts was to have the huge portrait of Calhoun moved from the dining hall to his office, so that John C. Calhoun could look straight at Master Davis, a descendant of slaves, day in and day out. In addition to jointly marveling at the profound changes in America from the 1860s to the 1960s, Charlie and I had a good laugh over the symbolism of his placement of Calhoun's portrait.

The leftist and relaxed reputation of Branford College grew. This reputation was augmented, I believe, by my own open politics and that of several activist fellows, for example, my predecessor as master, George Schrader, and not only Branford students but increasingly like-minded students from other colleges frequented the dining hall—left-wing, black, and otherwise. Even faculty would frequently drop in, like Charles Reich from the Law School, who was then writing his *Greening of America*. This made Branford College a pretty crowded place at lunch and dinner. Because students could transfer from one college to another for meals, the Branford dining hall was for a period serving more meals than any other dining hall at Yale, except for the Commons. As long as it lasted, it was a "happening" that made for much camaraderie and was quite a show.

This extraordinary period at Yale, from about 1968-1971, brought social and political consciousness to many students (and some faculty) to a degree they had never experienced before. The big event then and since, that has drawn most attention was a murder trial of a member of the Black Panther Political Movement which was to take place in the New Haven County Court House on
the Green. This trial and general outrage against the war and racism drew many people to New Haven for a mass protest meeting on the Green the first of May 1970. This protest demonstration presented two dangers that many of us worried about—trashing by a minority of wild-eyed far-left students and over-reaction from a very anxious and fearful National Guard. Roads into and out of downtown New Haven were manned by soldiers who checked identities to be sure that individuals belonged in that area. Bizarre rumors of impending violent antics by far-left crazies and Black Panthers abounded. Thousands of soldiers in full battle gear cordoned off the streets surrounding New Haven Green, providing an unexpected and terrifying powder keg that could have led to real disaster. As I understand it, cooperation between some highly responsible student leaders, the Governor of Connecticut, President Brewster, and the local Chief of Police prevented any serious disaster. Yale was lucky, very lucky. A few days later, four students were shot and killed by Ohio National Guardsmen at Kent State University.

The eve of May Day, 1970, a small group of national left-wing organizers met in the Branford Master’s House and the question of the National Guard came up. We were worried that if they were too close to the demonstrators on the Green some “crazy” might throw a bottle at them and provoke an attack. It was decided to try to keep the Guard away from the Green out of sight. How? Someone suggested that maybe Brewster could manage it. So I called Kingman, he agreed to discuss it and five of us trooped over to the President Brewster’s house. It was about 10 o’clock in the evening. Brewster was alone with his friend and member of the Yale Corporation, Cyrus Vance. We were Tom Hayden, John and Ann Froines, David Dellinger and myself. Dave was a very intelligent, responsible left-wing leader and a friend of mine from a number of previous contacts. (He was also a Yale College Alumnus, one of the ones that turned out right politically—solidly left.) Bill Coffin soon showed up, not unexpectedly. A strange gathering of some people who otherwise would never have made contact. The proposal was that Kingman should call the Governor of Connecticut to get the Guard to stand back, close to but out of direct view of the demonstration on the Green. Brewster hesitated, stating that he was not sure Governor Dempsey would listen to him after Brewster’s famous statement that he doubted that a black revolutionary could get a fair trial in the United States. Cyrus Vance impressed me as a diplomatic, highly intelligent man. He was thoughtful and mostly quiet, but offered valuable advice, a fine example of the old chestnut, “Still waters run deep.” The upshot was that the National Guard did stand back, there was no dangerous provocation, and no regrettable confrontation. May Day for all its heat and fervor went off without serious damage to life, limb or property and was an occasion that none of us will ever forget.

Side-by-side with the genuine, political, social, and cultural outrage of this epoch was hippyism, a light side of what was going on in the minds of many
American young people, and many others (including me), not so young. Again, there is no need of a disquisition from me on this profound change in life-style, except to say that I liked some aspects very much—looser sexual mores, far-out clothing, men with jewelry, and an optimistic view of the glories of the simple aspects of everyday life. “Today is the first day of the rest of your life,” was plastered all over campus. I even liked marijuana, great stuff (but not around the College) and had much fun with laughing compatriots. And I inhaled! But for me this was a passing fancy, lasting only through the 1970s. Grass never replaced alcohol, the dominant and more socially acceptable drug of our culture.

Well, this was certainly an exhilarating epoch and it was also successful to a degree. The mass opposition to the war in Vietnam certainly helped stop it eventually. Yale broke away from the military, admitted women in increasing numbers, began luring women faculty and made progress against its longstanding discrimination against blacks, Jews, and other minorities. Perhaps the most important feature was the stimulation of questioning, especially by students, of many features of our society. Curiously, my old radical friend, Clem Markert, by then at Yale as Chairman of the Biology Department, was not much involved. He was very critical of the minority fringe hippy aspect, stating that one could not take such people’s political dedication seriously. Clem was basically an old leftist, in a way a kind of Stalinist, and he never got over it. He even got to look like an aging member of the Politburo.

After the heady intense political activity had quieted down after 1970, I devoted more of my time at Branford College to encouraging Branford intramural sports. We had a lot of good athletes in Branford, so all we needed to do was get them engaged. And the more involved they became the more they won and the more they won the more they won. The outstanding result was that Branford College won the Tynge Cup for the best sports record of the year of all the twelve colleges. We were very proud of that. Not only did we win the Cup, but we shattered the old stereotype that radical political activity and intellectual pursuits and sports don’t mix. We proved that they can and we did it.

Finally, after seven years as Master of Branford College, I was relieved of my job. The President was under much pressure from conservative alumni and faculty who disliked both my politics and my lifestyle. I understood the reasons and bore no grudge against President Brewster. Quite the contrary, I was most grateful to him for having appointed me a master in the first place and for having thus contributed to some very rich and happy years for me and Madeleine. At various times during my tenure as Master of Branford College, and after, even today, I have been complimented by various colleagues for having brought a “fresh wind to the climate of Yale.” (Of course, some people thought I was simply fresh. I haven’t heard from them.) Then my friends have often added that Kingman, as President, created an atmosphere in which such creativity and independence of spirit that I and others possessed could flourish. They hung my
portrait (an informal one) in the Fellows Common Room of my dear Branford College with those of previous Masters (Figure 10.2).

Figure 10.2. The fourth Master of Branford College.

It was a privilege serving under President Kingman Brewster, Jr. He was a very smart, cultured man, who had a cutting sense of humor, great dignity and charisma, and understood deeply and well the refined degree of intellectual leadership and boldness expected of the president of a great university. He was an intellectual leader in the best sense and dispensed his leadership with a brio unmatched in his day. He was widely considered to be the outstanding American university president of the epoch. Also, it didn’t detract that he had the class and attractiveness of a strikingly handsome man. It should be pointed out, however, that along with his outstanding personal qualities Kingman was in a way a product of his times. I wonder whether he would stand out so obviously
nowadays, when, sadly, it seems that universities, large and small, expect more management expertise and fund-raising capacities of their presidents than intellectual leadership.

A question often raised is why Yale did not blow up in the late Sixties as did Harvard, Berkeley and Columbia and some others. Certainly Brewster had something to do with it. He had a hard time understanding what was going on. For example, it took him quite a while to come to oppose the Vietnam War. But he had help from the masters of the residential colleges who were closer to the students than any other faculty group and he listened to us even when he thought we were wrong. Perhaps the most important factor that kept Yale intact was the residential college system itself. Students, faculty and administration had a much closer relationship than at any of the other universities that did in fact blow up.

**Vacations**

As our marriage got under way Madeleine insisted on several changes in my behavior. 1) I could devote myself to my work fully during the week, but weekends belonged to her, except when an experiment demanded a little attention. 2) We would take big, beautiful vacations (European style). 3) I could dress in any sloppy way, jeans and all, when at work, but when we went out together, I would dress “properly.” Wonderful rules and some of the reasons our marriage has been so successful.

As soon as she got her green card and we were free to travel, we visited many places, but mainly France; Paris and la Côte d’Azur. Each summer for 13 years beginning in 1964, after the *Fundulus* season was over in Woods Hole in mid-to late July, we would take off for Paris and the South of France (*le Midi de la Belle France*). There we settled comfortably in the *Salle de Garde* of a small chateau in a small, walled medieval village on the top of a hill called Le Castellet, a so-called “village perché.” Our quarters overlooked the Mediterranean between Marseille and Toulon. We had arrived at night. I’ll never forget my first day there. As soon as I arose in the morning, I threw open the shutters and there spread before me was all of France, it seemed, shimmering, bathed by the benign sun of Provence. Our home was called *Hurlevent* (Wuthering Heights). It was much photographed and the subject of postcards. Never mind how it all worked out. It was idyllic. There we thrived on French *gastronomie*. We bought our wine straight from the *tonneau* in the cave of M. Marius Peronne, a few steps below us in the village (*rosé de Provence*, naturally). We went swimming at various beaches (principally Bandol), dropped into one of our favorite *cafés* for a *pastis* (a yellowish licorice and anise-flavored liqueur that turns milky when diluted with water, widely consumed especially in the South of France) when food shopping. We often played *pétanque* in the evening.
**Pétanque** deserves some special attention. Although it is a specialty of Provence and played in every village, it is popular all over France. It is a little like Italian boccie but better. It is played with a somehow more aggressive style. The balls are of steel and when they collide, you hear the click of steel against steel. It can be played anywhere—preferably on bare ground. “Every average Frenchman has a set of *boules de pétanque* in the trunk of his car.” A perfect place for us was the Place du Village of Le Castellet right at our doorstep. The idea is for the *pointeur* of the team to toss a ball so that it lands close to a little wooden ball, the *cochonnet*, and rolls toward it. Then the *tireur* of the opposing team tries to knock your ball away with his ball. Neither Madeleine nor I became very good as *tireur*, but were good enough as a *pointeur* to make our games highly competitive. I became good enough to team up with two local teenage boys at an annual Fête du Village of Le Castellet once to beat a team of professionals from another village in a very tight game. *Quel coup!* What a razzing the pros took from our abundant audience! “Do you realize that you were just beaten by two kids and an American?” Our opponents slunk off without a word, while we and our friends went jubilantly to the Café de la Poste to celebrate our victory with a *pastis d’honneur*. One year when we stayed on in the autumn I used to play every evening with our next door neighbor, Eric. We were quite equal and had very good games but then I improved and started winning. Tough. Finally, his wife, Martine, insisted that we stop. His losing was ruining their evenings. Serious business this *pétanque*.

After many happy summers in Le Castellet, we moved to a farmhouse in the vineyards below a neighboring village, La Cadière d’Azur, also a *village perché*. Here, with pleasure, I took care of the chickens, one sheep, two ducks, some rabbits and a cat and a dog. These minor chores brought me back to my childhood. The dog and I would run together in the vineyard and play hide and seek between the rows of vines. Our proprietor, Jean-Michel Combe, was a physicist at the University of Toulon who had picked up jogging during one of his sojourns in the States and could often be seen running alone on the deserted country roads around La Cadière, the only jogger I had ever seen in Provence. It was a strange sight for the locals. One day when we were low on *vin rosé*, I lugged our bonbonne (10 liter flask) to La Noblesse, our favorite vineyard just around a bend in the road, and, as usual I would have a taste and shoot the breeze a little with the *vigneron*, Monsieur Jourdan. He asked, “*Monsieur Combe, il est un peu bizarre, non ?*”

I said, “*Non, pas spécialement. Pourquoi?*”

“*Vous savez,*” said he, “*Il court.*”

“*Moi aussi, je cours. J’ai couru après un lapin échappé ce matin.*”

“*Mais attention,*” said he, “*M. Combe, lui, il court pour rien! Il n’est pas un peu fada?*”
Translation: Mr. Jourdan said, “Mr. Combe, he is a little strange, no?” I said, “No, not especially. Why?” Mr. Jourdan said, “You know, he runs.” I said, “So do I. This morning, I ran after a rabbit who had escaped.” Mr. Jourdan said, “But notice, M. Combe, he runs for nothing! Isn’t he a little crazy?” M. Jourdan, a stolid hard-working farmer, could not comprehend someone running except for a good concrete reason, as away from a neighbor’s husband. He thought Combe was nuts. The people of Provence are full of Pagnol stories like this.

These were lovely days for Madeleine. She was back in her cher Midi. Her mother and son, Jean-Francois, and daughter, Anne-Laure, would stay long periods with us. Jean-Francois and I spent a lot of time on the Place du Village at pétanque. He was quite a good tireur. This is a good place to reveal my French name. Madeleine’s family preferred to call me something French and it turned out to be quite straightforward. Since my given names are John Philip I became Jean-Philippe. And so it has been ever since for her family and all members of our French extended family. I like it. Somehow Jean-Philippe seems more elegant than John Philip.

My days in the Midi were simple—write a little in the morning, the cat sprawling on the manuscript, the dog at my feet. Then we’d go to the beach for a swim and sun, have lunch at a charming little bistro right at and over the water, another swim, leave when the afternoon crowd arrived and write some more back at home. Our evenings and nights consisted of a pastis, pétanque, delicious long dinners, lots of rosé de Provence and long deep sleeps.

Finally, as we found it more and more difficult to park the car at the beach and find a spot on the sand to spread a towel, we decided that the hassle of the ever increasingly crowded, indeed jammed, Mediterranean coast of France in August wasn’t worth it. Why not stay on in Woods Hole in August and enjoy its tranquillity? So, after 1977, we stayed in Woods Hole for the whole summer.

Among the many reasons why Woods Hole is a very special place is its geography (see Figure 2.3). It sits on a small peninsula jutting out between Buzzards Bay and Vineyard Sound. It is crowded with many institutions and homes. The MBL, the Fisheries, the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, the US Coast Guard Station, the Steamboat Wharf, the Golf Course, lots of big, mostly old homes and estates of rich people, and all the little homes of the rest of us are all there. It is full. There is no room for the sprawl of condominiums and shopping centers that have plagued and tarnished much of the rest of Cape Cod (and much of the U.S.A.). Hence, Woods Hole today is basically the same captivating place for work and for living that it was when I first arrived over sixty years ago.

Since its founding, the Marine Biological Laboratory has been a marvelous place for both science and vacations. The MBL beach, Stony Beach, on Buzzards Bay, is a superb salt-water swimming hole and an easy, short walk
from the laboratory. When I was busy at the lab, Madeleine and I would often meet there for a swim, some sun and our lunch. For the stated reasons it was very popular—a pleasant place for a swim and for lazing away an hour with various friends. We loved it and also Nobska, a sparkling, white, sandy beach on Vineyard Sound lorded over by a stunning lighthouse.

When I was younger I sported a French bikini at these beaches, as I did in France, the opinions of the conventional laboratory crowd be damned. I love swimming nude and this was the closest to it. Also, because I am vain, I was always in good physical condition. One day Nancy Rosenbaum, the wife of Joel Rosenbaum, a departmental colleague from Yale, couldn’t wait to tell me that one of their very young daughters had just asked her, “Have you seen Dr. Trinkaus’s bathing suit?” “Yes.” “Well, it’s disgusting—You can almost see his thing!”

When the weather was right—sunny with little wind and no fog—our favorite way of going to the sea was in our little boat. I adore the fog, watching it roll in on a beach or on a dock, but in a small boat it is no fun and exceedingly dangerous. Our boat, an 11-foot Boston Whaler with an outboard motor, was conveniently moored in the Eel Pond, just two steps away in back of the lab. Madeleine would pack a special lunch, a bottle of Sancerre or Muscadet, a little scotch (for me) and always a few bottles of ice-cold Ballantine’s IPA for the boat. Thus equipped off we’d go down the islands. There was always Devil’s Foot Island, just across the harbor separating it from the Hole, for ten-minute trips and, if the tide was right, for clams and mussels. I collected clams with the aid of a face-mask and Madeleine collected the mussels. With more time we would strike out directly for the beautiful Elizabeth Islands that run southwest between Buzzards Bay and Vineyard Sound—Nonamesset and Uncatena, the closest, and Naushon, the biggest. On each, we had our favorite beaches where almost invariably we would be alone. We had a felicitous routine—beach the boat, spread the blanket, set up the umbrella, collect driftwood for a bar and a little table, have a drink, take a swim, open the wine (properly chilled), set the table and have lunch. After lunch, I would often go beach combing or spear fishing and Madeleine would read. Maybe a little siesta for us both. Another swim. Those trips were little fragments of paradise. Sometimes we’d go farther, to Tarpaulin Cove to the beach below the lighthouse, to Kettle Cove, or to the beach on Nashawena Island at Quick’s Hole. Once we went to Cuttyhunk to see the village but that was too far. In tight little Hadley’s Harbor, between Nonamesset, Naushon and Uncatena, we would gather clams in the mudflats and watch the birds. A special treat for weekend visitors was to take them to one of our secret beaches.

Phil Dunham would occasionally accompany us to one of these beaches during the week. He especially liked a beautiful little cove on the Buzzards Bay side of Naushon Island called Crescent Beach. He fittingly knicknamed it
“Bareass Beach.” We treated this tranquil, out-of-the-way strand as if it were our own private nudist colony.

And at night? It was for years the Cap’n Kidd with several other regulars, and occasional private parties, especially at the Bennetts’ or our place. It was at the Bennett’s that we met Joel and Benny Brown, who soon became close friends and remain so to this day. Around a lot of very intelligent people in Woods Hole, Joel is exceptionally so, another bright neurobiologist. He is also a tough-minded character, and, though full of himself, is a man of strong passion and deeply loyal to his friends, like Madeleine and me. He doesn’t go swimming or fishing like lots of people at the MBL; he cooks, superbly, deliciously, like Madeleine. One evening, after a fine dinner at one of our houses, he and I began ruminating about the former directors of the MBL and faced the obvious fact that although many of the working scientists at the lab are Jewish, no director had been. In our good mood after dinner, we decided to do something about this. We felt free to make the point since although Joel is Jewish, at least by ancestry if not by religious conviction, I am not. The result was interesting. Most people didn’t give a damn, but there was strong opposition from a few Jews, the old worry about being thought of as being pushy. After a bit of fun, we dropped our little campaign. Guess what? The next director was Jewish, by accident (as it should be).

We threw and attended numerous parties during these Woods Hole summers. Many of these parties were spur of the moment but soon we developed a tradition of having one big party each summer. They became famous—“The Trinks’ Party.” We invited all sorts of friends whose company we enjoyed for one reason or another but who did not necessarily dig each other. Joel couldn’t stand some of our guests. With lots of booze, ice from the lab, and Madeleine’s famous terrine, everybody soon had a good time, Brown included—in the house, out on the deck, and up on the roof. Many heavy hangovers the next morning. We also hosted occasional small dinner parties, French cuisine, of course, prepared by an excellent French cook.

In addition to the long summer rests at Woods Hole, we also took short vacations at the same time as the students, at Christmas time and at spring break. These were invariably in the Caribbean at first. Madeleine, an excellent skier, had lost her enthusiasm for skiing after having almost lost her life being swept down a mountain in an avalanche at Val d’Isère and I, a poor skier, who never learned as a child, both decided that we preferred the tropics. This led us to a wonderful discovery—a French-based organization operating resorts called Club Med. These resorts offered five essentials—the sun, the sea, French, SCUBA, and a crazy relaxed ambiance. I had learned diving back in the 1950s with Clem Markert at the Bermuda Biological Station, where we had a lot of fun diving together. I continued diving some in the beautiful Calanques of Marseille and Cassis, searching successfully for red coral and Greek and Roman amphora, but
only sporadically. At the Club Med I would dive every day for two solid weeks in spectacular waters. Our first trip to the Club was in Tahiti, more precisely Moorea, an incredibly beautiful island with its jagged peaks and turquoise lagoon. Ah, the South Pacific! We had a marvelous time, our best vacation up to then. The diving in the lagoon and in passes through the barrier coral reef was the best ever. I was just gaga about diving—the kinesthetic freedom of the diving itself, the biological splendor of the coral landscape, the amazing biodiversity of multicolored fish, and the camaraderie of the fellow divers. I was back to the natural history of my boyhood but now at the bottom of the ocean. Also, I became quite good at diving, adding progressively to its enjoyment. This meant always being assigned to the best and most experienced group of divers at the Club and thus having better and longer dives. Also, I must confess, I was a little macho about it. Why not? I was still young in body, one of the best divers and had fun fooling around with other divers on the boat and down among the fish.

SCUBA diving is really a terrific sport, given the right conditions, and it is not very dangerous, if you are at home in the water and follow the rules. Moreover, it is not very demanding physically. Some of the best divers I knew were women. I continued enjoying it until the age of 72, although at that point I was no longer strong enough to hoist the tank up onto my shoulders all by myself before jumping into the sea. But once in the water everything was easy. We alternated trips to the Club Med at Moorea and at Martinique. Australians brought a lot of fun to the former and French Canadians to the latter. Every once in a while some over-worked colleague at Yale would comment with a hint of hostility that “You’re so lucky to have such great vacations, Tahiti and all that.” “It’s not luck, my friend. It’s planning.”

**Academic Leave**

Since academic leaves were for us a mixture of work and vacation this is a good place to insert a word about them. Yale has a wonderful program of academic leave. Tenured faculty may take every sixth semester off, with full salary. I took them all. And, since my wife worked for me and could go with me, we always left town. What an extraordinary privilege! These leaves took us to many wonderful places: France of course—*Collège de France*, Devillers’s lab in the *Faculté des Sciences*, the *Station Biologique de Roscoff*, and places in the States: twice in Jonathan Singer’s lab at UCSD in La Jolla, thrice in Ray Keller’s lab in Berkeley, once at the Kewalo Marine Laboratory in Hawaii. All of these leaves were richly restoring both intellectually and personally. We usually traveled by air because it is faster or by car in the U.S.A., but twice we went by boat, for the fun of the boat and because of Madeleine’s fear of flying.

One of those voyages stands out. The trip over on the sumptuous Italian liner, *The Michelangelo*, was a delight. The trip back on the equally sumptuous
French liner, *The France*, was a disaster. We had a luxurious cabin, with big windows facing the bow of the boat. It was winter and we were in the midst of a heavy North Atlantic storm. This wreaked havoc in the bars and restaurants, sweeping glasses and food from the tables with each gigantic toss. Madeleine was getting dressed for dinner in the bathroom and I was lying on one of the beds, when I heard a large **BOOM**! A huge wave broke through the windows. Then another wave smashed into the windows and with the driving rain, water began filling the cabin. I rushed to the door. It opened inward against the rising water and I had to struggle to open it. Finally, I opened the door enough to allow Madeleine to slip out. Then, the door slammed shut again, the cabin rapidly filling with water. I was suddenly aware of the possibility of dying in this aquatic coffin. While I was thinking about death by drowning, the door opened, pushed by people Madeleine had found. Out poured the sea, rushing down the hall and the stairs. We were wet, relieved and saved. Then suddenly I realized that the films I’d been studying in Le Castellet and Paris and my manuscript were still in the cabin. Madeleine ran back to the cabin yelling to the boat workers, who had just arrived, to please rescue them for me. Then they took me to the infirmary to dress my battered hand and give me a tranquilizer. That accident was certainly a shocker but it could have been much worse. If Madeleine had been standing in front of the big wall mirror by one of the windows as she was dressing, instead of in the bathroom, she would have been hit by the full force of the wave and possibly killed. We were told that a person in similar place in a similar accident on *The Michelangelo* had been beheaded. We were well shaken up but very lucky. The ship’s captain gallantly visited our table in the restaurant and extended his regrets, saying it was the most vicious storm he had been through during all his years at sea. I washed the salt off my films in the bathtub of our new cabin and Madeleine lost her fear of flying.

**Houses**

Our new affluence permitted something more that has given us and our families and friends many years of pleasure. In the middle of the mastership we decided to expand our little shack in Woods Hole and convert it into something with some panache. Automatically we consulted an architect. But we did not like her ideas and decided to plan it ourselves. The result was a house with a tower high off the ground on stilts, big windows and decks, including a roof-deck with a view of Vineyard Sound and Martha’s Vineyard as far down as the Menensha Bight. It was a great house for us and our parties. It even got a write-up in the local newspaper, *The Falmouth Enterprise*, with a picture. The point is that we were able to plan it ourselves. As an embryologist, I have a feeling for space and can readily think in three dimensions. Madeleine has a very refined sense of color. Once the house is built and she can occupy the space, she furnishes it with
taste. My sartorial taste is so underdeveloped that I am often challenged to have matching socks. Furthermore, for years, I wore the same thin black knit tie. When it became stretched by overuse, I would simply let it grow. Madeleine finally convinced me to get rid of the tie in favor of something more stylish. Thus, I was the architect, with input from my wife, and she was the interior decorator, with input from her husband. Wisely, Madeleine listened attentively to my decorating “tips,” agreed that they were wonderful suggestions, and then completely ignored them without condescension. We were a team. We ended up with a useful, beautiful house that was perfect for us. In addition, we had the immense pride and joy of having created it ourselves.

Not long after that we left the Master’s House, we needed a home for the academic year. Back to the drawing board. Fresh from our successful Woods Hole venture, we bought an acre of woodland in Guilford, a lovely colonial town on the shore of the Long Island Sound, not far from New Haven, and planned another quite different house. To this home we soon added a study-guesthouse out in the woods, separate from the main house, and a wood shed. With all these buildings we had an estate, albeit a rather modest one.

In each case, of course, we needed an architect to convert our crude drawings into formal plans satisfactory for a builder and to make sure we were within the building code. These architects had mixed feelings about us, with remarks that they had known other amateurs like us who had tried to plan a house for themselves but were unsuccessful. Well, we were successful and are still happy with the results many years later. And so have been our cats. We always have had one or two, for all the reasons people love cats and, besides, some months after the crushing loss of one, Lailah, Madeleine decided that we must find another. As she said, “A home without a cat is less a home.” We loved them all, drove them across the country to La Jolla and Berkeley and took them with us to Paris, Le Castellet, and Roscoff. Each had his or her own character and personality but Mitzou stood out. He not only was a great traveler but actually took walks in the woods with us and lived a full 20 years. He even had a pet name, Mimi. He was around so long and was such a character that many of our friends remember him well and considered him “family.”