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John P. Lynch: Campus Citizen, Community Educator, Classics Professor

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John P. Lynch:

Campus Citizen, Community Educator, Classics Professor

Interviewed and Edited by Cameron Vanderscoff

Santa Cruz

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Interview History

John Patrick Lynch is a professor emeritus of literature and a formative figure in the classics program at UC Santa Cruz, as well as a former provost of Cowell College. Lynch expands on these roles in this account, providing their larger context in his work and philosophies as an educator, and discussing his hopes and priorities in his 37-year career at this institution. He makes sweeps through the personal as well as the professional, and in doing so, affirms a core vocational identity as a teacher above all else, a campus citizen above a researcher. In his work at UCSC, Lynch sought to instantiate a model of learning that is fundamentally shared between teacher and student, one that goes beyond the confines of the classroom to become an experience in community.

This telling begins in the mill town of Great Barrington, Massachusetts, where he was raised in a home that, as he puts it, “was run by my mother like a boarding house,” with an abundance of relatives across generations from the Polish and, to a lesser degree, the Irish side of his family. In this setting, complete with a boisterous dinner table presided over by the speeches of his grandfather, and bustling with three to four family members per room, Lynch describes himself as a “reserved,” “bookish” kid. He charts one beginning for his interest in classics through his involvement with the nearby Catholic Church, where his father was janitor and his mother a housekeeper and cook at the rectory. Between the access granted by his father’s job and his own nine years of service as an altar boy, he became interested in old books, manuscripts, and Latin. This interest flourished through high school, where he took Latin courses and developed an enjoyment for school that extended to taking on extra reading. This passion for learning and

education is one of the key topics in this oral history. In Lynch's youth it helped drive him—the first member of his family to attend college—from Great Barrington to a full scholarship at Harvard. In his career, it centered his professorial work not in research but in engagement with the questions, concerns, and welfare of his students.

Lynch overviews his time at Harvard, where he was partially inspired to attend by W.E.B. DuBois, a boyhood icon and fellow product of Great Barrington. He goes on to explain the evolution of his classical study through his undergraduate years, a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship at Yale, a Rotary Fellowship in Athens during the 1967 military coup d'état, and his return to Yale to finish his doctorate. Through these changes, he details the cultural shift of the sixties as it politicized both him and the classics field as a whole.

Lynch proves to be a thoughtful commentator on what has often been called the original UCSC experiment, starting from his decision to pick up and drive cross country, having never taught a class, to accept a position in classics at the young campus in 1969. He explains, "It had some of the same prestige in its newness that places like Harvard or Yale had in their ancientness or oldness." He illustrates this character through his own experience teaching courses like pantology ("the study of everything"), anecdotes on what he terms the cultural (rather than political) radicalism of early Santa Cruz, and through his own involvement in the collegiate model of student engagement.

Indeed, one of the core facets of the interviews is his reflection on his affiliation with Cowell College, which includes a tenure as provost in the eighties where he sought to engender a climate of "high expectations." For an indication of the

depth of Lynch's involvement with the Cowell and UCSC story, one needs look no farther than this: as provost, he was the original human model for the famous Plato-reading banana slug, now ubiquitous in campus materials, clothes, and branding.¹

Lynch also comments on his own educational and pedagogical ideas, which provide insight into what has made him so beloved as a teacher and college figure over the years. The soul of this philosophy is his professional focus on students. Lynch defines himself as a teacher of students first, a campus citizen second, and a researcher third—an unusual sequence, especially in an era when tenure, advancement, and professional esteem have increasingly been reliant on a prioritized, robust publishing career. Drawing on his classroom experiences, and the inspiration of Plato's Academy and Aristotle's Lyceum, he is an eloquent thinker on pedagogical approaches, "community education," and orienting teaching towards not "gatekeeping" or maintenance of rigor, but the relative "growth" of the student and the teacher. Lynch is also an advocate of the now-dismantled narrative evaluation pass/no pass system, in spite of the fact he feels it was "not in the faculty's interest" due to the extra workload required. It was, he feels, in the student's interest, arguing, "There's something about grades that

¹ In conversation during the final editing of this oral history, Lynch told Regional History director Irene Reti a colorful story about the early days of UCSC. Apparently coffee was not sold anywhere on campus in the early days and neither was candy. Carob bars were available at the Whole Earth Restaurant. Perceiving a need for coffee, but also for the interactive community that a coffeeshop can bring, Lynch founded the Cowell Coffeeshop around 1974 and was its first manager. Coffee was five cents if you brought your own cup. Many faculty members as well as students, and John's wife, Sheilah, worked in the coffeeshop as volunteers. A beautiful mirror from the Cowell Ranch was discovered in a barn and hung near the counter. Professor Al Johnson designed the interior of the coffeehouse. After a few years later when coffeeshop began selling food as well as coffee and managing a restaurant became too much of a job for volunteers and the first paid manager was hired—Irene Reti.

just cuts off growth, whereas a narrative evaluation can be a beginning of a developmental process.”

Thematically, Lynch tracks the development of the classics program, which has remained in keeping with his vision: small, intimate, close-knit, but part of the diverse umbrella of the larger literature department. Towards the end of our sessions, he also comments on the long move of UC Santa Cruz away from its original collegiate structure towards a traditional research university model. He consistently cites collaborators, including faculty and staff; he gives particular praise for the latter group as the “true heroes of the college system...even though the enterprise itself was being cut.” The sessions close with his meditation connecting his childhood in Great Barrington with his life in Santa Cruz, discussing home, family, and his current activities.

These sessions took place across the spring and summer of 2013, at the dining table in Lynch’s home in Santa Cruz. The house itself is a character in these sessions, present in the occasional creaking step, chimes in wind, dog paws over old hardwood floors, or the back door swishing open to cue the arrival of a family member or family friend and the end of our session for the day.

As is by now clear, Lynch has reputation as a patient, generous teacher. He has received much recognition for his work in this area, including a campus award and the nationwide award from the American Philological Association. This openness translated into our sessions, where he fielded even my most wide-reaching questions on classics with curiosity and flexibility. He was always encouraging of my queries, even though he does not see himself as a past-oriented person. And, in a small example of the broader welcoming he has given

to so many students over the years, he just about always invited me to stay for dinner.

One moment that is clear in my memory and crystallizes John's attitudes about learning was a shared experience of listening. We were sitting in his kitchen while classics professor Mary-Kay Gamel, who was visiting the Lynches, was preparing mango salsa for a pork entrée. John had his satellite radio, tuning across stations, cities, and continents, from Italian disco pop (to Mary-Kay's horror) to Russian classical, Memphis blues, Detroit Motown, and beyond. He worked over each station with total delight at the ability to bring sounds from all over the globe into his kitchen, and started a new thread of conversation with each movement of the dial. That moment, like these sessions, was a sharing of enthusiasm and of curiosity, and I am grateful for the chance to be a part of it.

This oral history project has finished an almost two-year journey with the help of people who'd I'd be remiss not to thank. First is John Lynch himself, of course, not least for his time, hospitality and diligent edits. But a big thank you is also due to his wife Sheilah Lynch—who has also graciously collaborated with John on editing—his son Brendan Lynch, and Mary-Kay, who were all part of the household when I was present and welcomed me to their table. Michael Cowan kindly helped guide my research through a series of conversations.²

Programmatically, this oral history is part of a series that was made possible through the unstinting support of Cowell alumna Patricia Kelly. In this vein,

² For Michael Cowan's oral history, see Irene Reti, Interviewer and Editor, *"It Became My Case Study": Professor Michael Cowan's Four Decades at UC Santa Cruz*, available online at <http://www.escholarship.org/uc/item/3j5438d7>.

current Cowell Provost Faye Crosby has been of ongoing support in this series. On the library end, my gratitude to Irene Reti, Director of the Regional History Project, who has gone above and beyond her usual role to both transcribe this volume and input its final editing. And thanks also to Elisabeth Remak-Honnet and the wonderful staff at Special Collections, who have, as always, steered my preparation and supported my work. Copies of this volume are on deposit in Special Collections and in the circulating stacks at the UCSC Library, as well as on the library's website. The Regional History Project is supported administratively by Elisabeth Remak-Honnet, Head of Special Collections and Archives, and University Librarian Elizabeth Cowell.

—Cameron Vanderscoff, Interviewer and Editor

New York, New York, Friday, February 13th, 2015

“It was Run by My Mother Like a Boarding House”:

Growing up in Great Barrington, Massachusetts

Vanderscoff: Today is Thursday, April 18, 2013. This is Cameron Vanderscoff here with John Patrick Lynch for the first part of his oral history. We are at his house on King Street in Santa Cruz on a beautiful spring day. We’re going to start at the beginning—when and where were you born?

Lynch: I was born and raised and educated in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, which is a small, largely working-class town, mill town, in the southwestern part of the state where there’re no cities, just small towns. Pittsfield, Massachusetts is the biggest town, not a very big one. Great Barrington was about 6000 people when I was growing up and maybe 7000 now, so a pretty stable place, a beautiful place in the Berkshire Hills. As I had mentioned to you before, it [Great Barrington] was recently chosen by *Smithsonian Magazine* as number one on their list of twenty best small towns in the United States.

Vanderscoff: Was it surprising to you that it was picked, based on your memories from growing up?

Lynch: Yes, I was just surprised because there are so many small towns and it’s not a ritzy town. Stockbridge is probably a more famous Berkshire town from Norman Rockwell, and Lenox, where millionaires live in the summer from New York and Boston. Great Barrington is the working-class counterpart to those two towns. But it’s fared better over time because it’s been much more diverse and much more open to the women’s movement, the crafts movement, teleconferencing employees, all sorts of things—alternative lifestyles, health

food, the back to the land movement, all those sorts of things. It has all of that there. I still go back there every year, at least a month a year. Our kids love going there. We all enjoy going there. I still have some family there.

Vanderscoff: And all those features that you just mentioned that have come to it in more recent years, were any of those characteristics—like you're talking about the women's movement, and the back to the earth [movement] and all these different things—were any of those at all characteristic to the town when you were growing up?

Lynch: Probably not. I mean, the main thing when I was growing up was it was a very ethnic town because most of the people who moved there moved there to work in the mills, Polish people and Irish people. I'm a product of an Irish-Polish mixture. And there was particularly one whole section of Great Barrington called Housatonic, which was all Polish growing up. Obviously it wasn't open to many outside influences because it was all Polish but there probably were not many outside influences to come in in those days. There was much more emphasis on stability and continuity, over change. But I think what really made Great Barrington thrive in the period of change (as the sixties were)—it has been open to change. Stockbridge and Lenox, less so. They've been very preservationist. Lenox, for example, outlawed everything in orange. Nothing orange could go—

Vanderscoff: (laughs) So was there then, a strong sense of ethnic neighborhoods and ethnic lines in the town when you grew up there?

Lynch: I think so. Certainly there were predominantly Catholic neighborhoods and predominantly Protestant neighborhoods. There weren't very many Jewish

people, maybe three or four families in the whole town. There was a black neighborhood. Great Barrington was on the Great Escape Route and they were pretty much geographically determined as far as housing goes, but they were in the schools. I had black schoolteachers. Some of them were Catholics; some of them were Protestants. Most of them were in the AME [African Methodist Episcopal Church]. Of course, the most famous African-American person from Great Barrington was W.E.B. Dubois, who was sort of a boyhood hero of mine and many other people because he was a major thinker, a major revolutionary thinker at a time when lots of people began being interested in revolutionary change, in the late sixties and early seventies.

I guess it was mostly working class. But we had lots of kids. We had baseball leagues by neighborhood. People kept standings and statistics. We had basketball teams by neighborhood, all organized by the kids. And football as well. We had three baseball teams, five basketball teams, and two football teams too. We played against each other and people kept standings and statistics for the games. There were that many kids. (laughs)

Vanderscoff: And in the midst of all of this, would you mind describing the home that you were raised in?

Lynch: It was a modest home. My parents bought it after the Second World War when my father came back from the service, my mother from the aircraft factory where she worked in Hartford, Connecticut. It was probably three or four bedrooms. But we had to have three or four people in each bedroom. We had lots of people over the years, ten to twelve, at any time. One bathroom, so you learned how to shower very quickly. And one of my friends from college

described it to other people as a Polish boardinghouse. It was run by my mother like a boardinghouse. The uncles, aunts, grandfather, great aunt all assembled at five o'clock for dinner. And we ate around the table. It was a loud and boisterous house, lots of people there, lots of card games going on. A fair amount of drinking. Alcohol was part of the culture, as I said, working-class culture. There was no privacy. Having that many people bond together has its difficulties. But people pooled their money. I think the only reason we were able to live in a house of our own was that we had all these people chipping in.

So I had a lot of adult supervision, so to speak. I had to spend a lot of time in the library because there was no place to study and read. There were too many people and it was too noisy. We had dogs and cats and it was a pretty rambunctious place. When I went to college and brought friends home, I was delighted in their reaction, because they'd never seen that kind of multigenerational family.

My grandfather was still there. He spoke English with a very heavy Polish accent. An outsider couldn't understand. They thought he was speaking Polish but that was actually his English. And I had a great aunt who came by to live. She had lived in Boston. She was Irish. My grandfather and my great aunt lived into their nineties. They died at our house in Great Barrington. The population fluctuated a bit. One uncle would move out and another would move in; or an aunt would move in and another would move out. But even for a working class town it was a bit unusual in that it was much more crowded than other people—we had more people living in the same house. It didn't cause a traffic problem because only one uncle and one aunt drove. My parents did not drive, didn't

have a car. It would have been problematic if everybody in the house had a car and there was no place to park them, even on back streets. But we were okay. No one much seemed to mind. Other families had four, five, six people living in a house. We had ten to twelve living in the same house. It wasn't that large of a house either, much smaller than this house. (laughs)

Vanderscoff: You mentioned your Irish and Polish roots. So was there a sense of distinctly Irish and distinctly Polish things in this house, or did they sort of blend together. How did that work?

Lynch: Well, I think by numbers the Polish won out by a long shot. My father never learned a word of Polish as far as I could tell. He was the only one who didn't speak any Polish, never tried to speak Polish. He was amazingly tolerant, in the sense that the only relative he had there was his Aunt Bessie. He was her favorite among the brothers and sisters in his family. So when she got ill later on in life she moved in. That was the only person on the Irish side of the family who lived there. All the rest of the people were Polish. My mother and grandfather spoke fluent Polish and my aunts and uncles spoke Polish too. I didn't. I had started out with my grandmother who spoke only Polish, during the war, but after the war my mother insisted that I not speak Polish, because she thought that I would get confused in school. So she actually put a stop to all my Polish baby talk. I continued until age three or four, and after four I stopped speaking Polish. I can understand a fair amount but I didn't speak very much. My mother didn't like the idea of my speaking Polish, even though she did speak Polish herself.

My parents didn't go to—they never went to high school. They had this elevated notion of what it would take to go to the high school. You had to be really fluent in English and good at reading and writing. So you concentrate on English. My Aunt Bessie, who was from Ireland, who moved in, was a Gaeltacht speaker initially. But then she said, "I will not speak a word of that. There's nothing in that for me." So she spoke only English. And we'd try and get her to speak some Gaelic and she would not do it. She said she would never go back to Ireland. She had negative feelings about it.

My grandfather, who spoke heavily accented English with a Polish accent, and my Aunt Bessie, who spoke English with an Irish brogue, would sit out on the porch and talk for hours. But they never listened to one another. One would just talk for about half an hour and then the other would chime in. But it wouldn't be related. (laughs) It was really interesting to hear them talking. But I guess they provided company for each other in their nineties and late eighties.

So it was a strange household. I would say we followed Polish holiday customs at Easter and Christmas. We did all those things that they did in Poland. My grandmother and grandfather taught my mother and her brothers and sisters to do it. And my father went along with all of that. He was not particularly ethnic-conscious. He was proud of being Irish and celebrated St. Patrick's Day, but he pretty much gave in to the Polish culture of the house.

Vanderscoff: What sort of work did your family do?

Lynch: My father was the janitor at the Catholic church and my mother was the housekeeper and cook at the rectory for the pastor. The Catholic church was

really close by. The rectory was right across the street. And various aunts and uncles—one of my uncles had polio, was crippled, but he was a cab driver. He was a well-known figure in town, everyone's favorite cab driver. My other uncles had different kinds of jobs at various times. My grandfather worked in the mill, in the paper mill, and did mostly cloth, actually, not so much paper, until the mills closed and went south. That's when the Berkshire economy went into an economic funk, when they no longer had all those mills. But by that time he was close to retirement and he retired. And one of his sons worked there, who lived with us for a while, he worked in one of the mills. He had to find other work. No one made spectacular money. People were just chipping in. And my mother basically ran the house and also the rectory across the way, which was what she wanted to do. She enjoyed doing that. Everyone had to eat at five o'clock. If you didn't get there on time, the food would be gone. (laughs)

Vanderscoff: And what sort of food was on the dinner table?

Lynch: Mostly meat and potatoes and vegetables. And special Polish things like kielbasa and kieska at holiday times, pierogi, golumpki. But we didn't have that regularly. Most of the time it was meat, potatoes, and vegetables, and the desert. And beer in a pitcher and milk in a pitcher. And people had boarding house reach—it was not a place with great table manners. In fact, I never learned how to eat at all. That was one of the experiences I had going to college—I got invited to people's houses who knew how to eat. I did not know. I still tend to shovel. I didn't know how to hold forks and knives and spoons; I didn't know how to work them very well. Because we just dug in. People ripped bread with their hands. (laughter) I should mention, my uncles were all over 200 pounds and

were well over six feet, all three of them who lived there at once. They took up a lot of space. I was tall. My father and mother were fairly short, as was my grandfather.

Maybe I should go put the dog in. [Lynch goes outside to bring in his dog, who has been barking; recorder turned off and back on].

Vanderscoff: So you've talked about all of these personalities, all of these larger than life personalities that you had in your house in such force. Where did *you* fit into all of this? Would you mind describing yourself as a child and where you fit into your family?

Lynch: I was considered to be reserved and a reader. I was very bookish. I loved reading. I was always trying to find a place to read where I could sit and be quiet. I learned how to read outdoors, in fact. I found places in nearby trees that I could lean up against when the weather was right. And Mason Library in town, which was a Carnegie Library that I loved and still love when I go there. I spent a lot of time there. I was also very thin and not a terribly strong kid, not handy at all. All the men could do things. They could use tools. I had no idea. My father was very handy. He could fix almost anything. But he would never teach me to do anything. He said he didn't want me to learn how work with my hands. He wanted me to not work with my hands. So to this day there's no tool that I can use except maybe a hammer, and I don't use that very subtly.

I had lots of relatives, because my mother had sisters and brothers who had children. So I had reams of cousins who would come and visit. I think they all considered me very reserved. When we got together it was very loud. There

was polka dancing and things like that. Lots of weddings, Polish weddings on weekends, and baptism parties at the Polish Falcons Hall. I would go but I wasn't really in the spirit of it. As soon as I could make excuses—by high school I'd say, "Well, I've got to work tonight," because I had a job—I ducked out of these things. It was a very social atmosphere, very ethnic-social. And it wasn't that I didn't like it. It was just that there was too much of it for me. I'd have no weekends at all if I did all the family things. I'd be going to a baptism, a wedding, a funeral, a wake, every weekend because of the number people I was related to. That was too much family.

Early Faith, Education, and Introduction to Classics

Vanderscoff: You mentioned a couple of minutes ago that both of your parents worked at the church. What sort of role did religion and that particular church play in your young life?

Lynch: Well, as I said, I was an altar boy for nine years. I got very interested in Latin and manuscripts and old books and things like that. I also had unique access to the basement of the church and the storage place of the church, since my father was the janitor. So I used to look at old things. I liked doing that. I enjoyed the liturgy as an altar boy, participating in rituals. That was fun for me. I liked being an altar boy, even if sometimes in my week I had to get up at five in the morning to serve in freezing cold weather. But I still did it. And the rewards were if you were faithful at it, you got to do weddings, and at weddings and things like that you got tips if you were an altar boy. Sometimes at funerals you got tips.

My parents were very religious, went to church just about every day, not just on Sunday. They didn't go to mass every day. They went to church every day. They'd stop in for prayer or reflection. It was nearby. I spent a lot of time there. I'd visit with my father, we'd help out. The family dog always followed him everywhere. He had a way with dogs. I could always find the dog there with him. Sometimes I helped with mowing lawns there, or dusting, or shoveling snow, that sort of thing.

Vanderscoff: So you talk about being an altar boy and having some exposure to Latin. Was that your first introduction to the classics and classical languages?

Lynch: Yes, I was pretty young when I started being an altar boy, about seven. All the masses were still in Latin. Most people did not know what the Latin said. I wanted to know. I spent a fair amount of time learning how the Latin worked. So that when I got to high school and took Latin as a freshman in high school, I had a fair amount of knowledge. It was disconnected. It wasn't systematic, but I had a fair knowledge of Latin. I had to change the pronunciation in school because we had to do classical pronunciation, and not church pronunciation. But that was not a big problem.

Vanderscoff: Would you mind explaining at this moment what the difference is between classical pronunciation and church pronunciation, where those diverge?

Lynch: It's a fairly complicated subject but I guess I'd say the classical pronunciation was really the restored pronunciation reconstructed when scholars of the Renaissance wanted a sense of how Latin was pronounced in antiquity. And Greek too. Erasmus and scholastics like him studied the evidence

for how consonants and vowels were pronounced, and they collected that evidence. And then they did what was called a restored pronunciation, as opposed to the living pronunciation—living, in the case of Latin, which is more Italianate. There's a lot of Latin which is pronounced as if were Italian. The restored pronunciation had hard G's. Elements like that.

So when you hear music, church music, that's the church pronunciation. If you could hear someone reading a poem, a scholar reading a poem from antiquity, from Virgil, that would be done in restored pronunciation. They're not that different.

Modern Greek and ancient Greek have a similar relationship. Modern Greek is a lot more like the Church pronunciation and the living tradition of pronunciation—Italianate in the case of Italy, and Greek in the case of Greece. It was restored from the Renaissance on. It seems like a rather trivial subject but it was a hot topic in Oxford and Cambridge, whether you picked the restored pronunciation, or the Latinate or the Greek pronunciation, what they call the living tradition. People were excommunicated on that basis. And for a long time the restored pronunciation, the Erasmian pronunciation, was forbidden. But now almost every department in the educated world, except probably Italy, teach the way you pronounce Latin and Greek using the restored pronunciation that Erasmus started. The ancient pronunciation they call the Erasmian pronunciation, as if it has no validity except for Erasmus. He started it and other philologists and linguists have continued it. I think they have a pretty good fix on just about every letter, how every consonant and vowel was pronounced in antiquity and you teach it that way. That's the way I learned and taught it.

Maybe some Catholic schools still teach the Italianate pronunciation of Latin. In Greece, modern Greeks learn ancient Greek as if it were modern Greek in pronunciation. They don't do any restoration. But that's too much information. I'll stop there.

Vanderscoff: Thank you. That's illuminating. Would you mind describing the role that school played for you when you were in Great Barrington?

Lynch: Well, I was peculiar among even my friends, in that I actually liked studying. I would help others with their homework and enjoyed doing things like that. And I liked reading. And if people said, "Oh, it's too boring," I would read it and tell them what it said and discuss it with them and try to get them interested in it. I was considered to be very bookish. My mother would say, "He's always got his nose in a book." But we didn't have a lot of books around the house—real books. We got one tabloid newspaper a day and that was the extent of literacy. But I bought as many paperbacks as I could afford because the paperback revolution made a big difference in terms of affordability and accessibility.

And then the library. I thought it was really a great library for that size town. I don't know where they got the funding, but it was good. They were helpful. It was a very comfortable place, a very attractive place to be. We had a school library as well. I would spend a lot of time there after school, which was also considered peculiar. Most people wanted to get out of school as soon as possible. I would often go to the library.

So I guess I had a positive notion of school. I didn't like all the teachers and all the teachers didn't like me, by a long shot. I had some very good ones, and some mediocre ones, and some pretty bad ones. It wasn't a great school. My Latin teacher was fabulous, for me anyway. I think other people would say he should have been kept away from all kids because he was way too strict, way too much of a disciplinarian. He used terror as a teaching technique, which I never did when I taught. But he was really passionate about learning and reading and it was fun discussing—I would read books just because I knew he had read them and we'd discuss them. He liked doing that. He was a big influence on my going to college and also studying Greek as well as Latin. I had him for ancient history. He also taught French. I had him for French at one point.

It was a small school. And you got to know everybody and everybody knew you. I thought it was a good learning environment. There wasn't a lot of imaginative teaching going on, or charismatic teaching. A few were pretty old-fashioned and rule-bound, sticklers. That was their idea of strong teaching, to be a stickler.

I had a slightly defiant side to me. A friend of mine, who also turned out to be a professor of classics, a lifelong professor of classics, also got his PhD at Yale after I did and is now retired in California—he and I shared a kind of anti-authoritarian streak and challenged teachers a lot and got into a fair amount of disciplinary trouble at times for our attitudes. He was very smart and we both ended up getting PhD's. We had four PhD's in our class, out of sixty-one kids graduating. That's a pretty high number. It was the class of '61. It was not the case in the class of '60, or the class of '62, or '59. If it was a great school, it should

have had a pattern of that. Well, it didn't have a pattern. We had a blip in 1961, when four people in the class went on to get PhD's, two of them in classics, and both of them influenced by the same Latin teacher.

I got my homework done really quickly, so I had a lot of time on my hands and I did a lot of work on things just on my own. I would read novels that were not assigned in school. People thought that was crazy, to read things that were not assigned. Why would you be doing that? (laughs) I had another close friend who also read things that were not assigned; the only difference was he didn't read anything that *was* assigned. So he didn't do very well in school. He was extremely bright but never handed in his homework. He was the next to the last of his class when he graduated, but he went on to get a PhD and he taught at Harvard in the School of Public Health and just retired.

Undergraduate Education at Harvard

Vanderscoff: And why did you decide to go to college?

Lynch: I don't remember ever deciding. It was always something I assumed I was going to do and I wanted to do. I began collecting college catalogs—they were one of my favorite sources of reading—when I was in eighth grade. I discovered that if you wrote away to a college and told them you were interested they would send you these wonderful college catalogs for free.

So by the time I was a senior in high school I had a larger collection of college catalogs than our school did. I wrote to all kinds of places and read them voraciously when I got them in the mail. It was such a delight. For some reason I liked getting mail and so I put myself on catalog lists all the time. I got catalogs

galore all my life. I still do. When I arrived here to Santa Cruz in 1970, the steno pool women said they couldn't wait to see who this was because they had already three whole boxes full of catalogs waiting for me. (laughs)

Vanderscoff: (laughs)

Lynch: But I especially liked college catalogs. I tried to get a sense of the college and get more information about the college by looking at the catalog and looking up things that interested me.

I did learn at one point that W.E.B. Dubois mentions that he collected college catalogs too. I thought that was great. He has a chapter called "Boyhood in Great Barrington." And then the next chapter is about going to Harvard. He also decided that Harvard was the place to go. Unfortunately he didn't get in the first time he applied and he went to Fisk College in Nashville, Tennessee instead, an all-Black college that used to be quite a good place in those days for learning. And then he applied to Harvard after he got his degree at Fisk. And they accepted him as a junior. So he got two B.A.'s, one from Fisk and one from Harvard, and then went on to be the first African American to get a PhD from Harvard. That's one of his distinctions. And he writes about that in the autobiography. I was an admirer because he was a famous person who lived in Great Barrington and had all of these wonderful, interesting thoughts about equality and justice and injustice. He wanted to be a philosopher. He pretty much was a philosopher and had a major influence. He was probably the most influential person, not only born in Great Barrington, but in Massachusetts. I would say he's right up there with Kennedy and people like that in his influence. He edited so many great things—an African American encyclopedia—and wrote

such good things. He was very brilliant and a good writer. So I read him, particularly the things about Great Barrington, which is a town he loved. He found it open and tolerant even in his day, which was the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. [inaudible]

Vanderscoff: Do you remember what you hoped that college would do for you, what you wanted out of college?

Lynch: Yes, I do remember. In fact I've talked about this with my friends recently. We all noted, three of us got together, and none of us ever thought about marriage or having children or family. We all wanted to go to college and we all wanted to go on to teach or do research. For some reason, the three of us all felt the same way. We all ended up doing exactly that. We all went to college and got our PhD's. One of my friends who went to Harvard had a bumpier road. He didn't study for a long time and didn't get into a very good college and had to prove himself elsewhere and then transfer to the University of Minnesota, before he went for his doctorate at Harvard.

But we all ended up doing that. We wanted to study, read, write, think, teach. Our families would all have thought about life in family terms—they wanted you to get a job and have a family of your own and raise it. We didn't think that way at all. We thought much more in terms of a career path and leaving the town, even though we all liked the town. But we didn't see anything that we wanted to do there. We thought of it in terms of teaching and learning. College played a pivotal role in that. And I'm not sure—we all puzzled about why we thought that was what we wanted, if other people thought that way, or if they thought of themselves as being like their fathers and grandfathers, having

a family, buying a house in town, getting a job, moving as far as you could move, participating in Little League and the PTA in the same town.

That was not part of our thinking. I think probably it was because something changed in the late fifties, early sixties. And the idea of society having many more paths and being much more open, less tradition-bound, was part of it. It was an era of change. We all thought about change rather than continuity. If you were two years younger, you might have thought much more about life as adding on to the continuity that we liked and benefitted from, extending another generation and looking to a third generation beyond that.

But we were looking for a life that had change in it. I do think it was partly the music of the era and the things that were going on in society—the civil rights movement, the feminist movement, stirrings— Think of the things that happened while I was in college. Birth control had a much more changing effect on society than anyone ever wants to say. And the discovery of drugs, psychedelic drugs, psychotropic drugs, all being experimented with while I was in college. People like Timothy Leary were on the faculty while I was at Harvard.

Vanderscoff: He came from Harvard, right.

Lynch: Baba Ram Dass was there too. And they were running experiments, drug experiments. So there was a sense that there were possibilities out there to be explored. Many now think of drug use, for example, as something that was abhorrent and anti-establishment entirely. But a lot of people at the time who were interested in religion were involved because they thought that drugs were going to open up access to the mind and to religious experience. The drugs were

not illegal. One of my roommates from college actually participated in the LSD experiments. It wasn't illegal. It wasn't done in a very ethical way. I don't think it had the ethical backing that modern experimentation with drugs has to have. You have to have consent forms and they didn't have any of that stuff.

Vanderscoff: What was your personal take on all of this, all this culture of experimentation and possibilities, as you said.

Lynch: I think it freed my thinking. I didn't start going wild in it. But I probably needed to be liberated a bit. I was brought up in such a traditional way. I think it was more a kind of osmosis for me. It wasn't that I was searching for this and hunting for it and wanting to find it, and when I found it I felt saved and renewed. It was that I entertained more possibilities and thought about changes and thought about ideas that were different from what I had experienced previously or saw in possible models in the past. And I forged my own way. I think that my friends thought that too. None of us were druggies at all.

But all those things were going on. The anti-war movement—I think we were all involved in anti-war activity, certainly by the mid-sixties, going to rallies. Graduate school was a lot of peace dinners. It was a really strange time, an important time. Some people it ruined. They just never recovered from it. I think it had a remarkable effect on me. It was good for me. I liked the music of the time. I liked the feeling. But a lot of horrible things happened too, assassinations. The Kennedy assassination I remember vividly. It [happened] when I was a sophomore in college.

Vanderscoff: What sort of music were you listening to at the time?

Lynch: Well, I still listen to Motown. I love Motown. You must go see *The Sapphires*. The best movie of the year. You know about the Sapphires?

Vanderscoff: I don't.

Lynch: I bought their album in 1968. They were four Australian aboriginal girls who sang Country Western, Patsy Cline type stuff, and also Motown. They were just fabulous. They put out a record of their own. The movie is about their going to Vietnam to entertain the troops. Because they were cheap. They were fourteen or fifteen year old girls, as opposed to trying to get Smokey Robinson or Diana Ross to entertain the troops there. They were too big, too expensive to go there. And it was also probably too dangerous to go. It's a very uplifting movie, if you get a chance to see it. They were called the Sapphires.

Vanderscoff: Thank you.

Lynch: I still listen to a lot of rhythm and blues, a lot of Motown. I like folk music. I have a lot of Dylan; I have a lot of Joan Baez and Joni Mitchell. I like that. I have some original Sapphires on my Ipod. I like jazz. I like classical music. My friend, the one who just retired from teaching at Harvard, was a musician, and he was really, really talented—he is still playing. In his seventies he is still playing in a rock band. (laughs)

Vanderscoff: And before we get too far into discussing your college years, what led you to Harvard in particular. How did you wind up there for your undergraduate years?

Lynch: I think W.E.B. Dubois had some influence on that. He also collected college catalogs. He said that was the place he wanted to go. He thought that it

was the oldest place and it was the best place and it had the reputation he wanted. Also the location he wanted because he lived on the other side of the state of Massachusetts.

And certainly they had a very impressive catalog. Incredible offerings in ancient studies—ancient history and archaeology, ancient philosophy, lots of Greek and Latin courses to choose from. They just seemed to have so much more than other places, even other Ivy League places. I didn't apply to any other Ivy League schools. I knew that W.E.B. Dubois had been rejected and he was a lot better student than I was, I'm sure. He didn't have a funding problem because the town people were going to pay, did pay for his schooling. He was a prominent kid in the town and a bunch of town businesspeople who he worked for and did various things for put the money together to send him to school. He didn't get in. But he didn't give up either, which was nice. He went for four years and applied again. The second time he got in.

He writes about it. He says it wasn't all he expected it to be, in the sense that there weren't all great teachers there. The teachers were more famous but they weren't better. But he also identified mentors that he had—William James, George Santayana, great philosophers who took an interest in him. And he was the first African American to get a PhD from Harvard. I don't think any [African American] had even been accepted previously into the PhD program. That was considered to be a real jump at that time.

I had never been there—even though I lived on the other side of the state, only 120 miles away, I had never been to Harvard. I had never set foot on the campus until the day I arrived. I drove by it. I had a sense of where it was. I saw

the signs because I had an aunt in Somerville, which is right near Cambridge. So in visiting my father's sister and her children and other cousins on the Irish side, I would see signs for Harvard. But it never occurred to me to go there and visit. I didn't take any college tours.

Going to college then was really a very different experience than it has become. I don't really remember SAT's. I know that I had to take them. I remember vaguely that I did very well on them and people commented on that. I didn't get 800s, I don't think. Probably I got in the 700s. I didn't take any prep classes or anything like that. I know my friend who taught classics at the University of Montana for his whole career got higher scores than I did. But I don't remember what they were. The essay—I can't remember what I wrote on my essay. I did have an interview, I remember, with a Harvard person. The interview seemed to go well. He seemed to think that I had a chance. He said, "Don't bank on it but you have a chance."

I did it quite secretly. Not even my principal knew but he found out. I had three other teachers write me letters of recommendation. He didn't want me to go to Harvard. He didn't think I could get in anyway. He was very angry when I did get in and he told my father that I should not go there, that I should take a year off, because I was not Ivy League material and I was a big fish in a little pond but Harvard was just in a different league. He went to Holy Cross; he thought I should go to Holy Cross and that a Catholic education would be a lot better, with the Jesuits, than going to Harvard.

My father listened but wasn't swayed. He said, "Do whatever you want to do." He just reported what the principal told him. The principal was not a fan of

mine. As I said, we did some cutting up of various sorts, the three of us. It was strange that he didn't take any pride that I did get in, never congratulated me, never wrote it up in the paper or anything like that. I kept it secret and it was kept secret even after I got in, that I was going to Harvard. He even told me that when I go there I should make sure to get a two-way bus ticket because, he said, I would be back by Christmas. Which was not true.

Vanderscoff: (sharp intake of breath) Wow. So you mentioned that your father was supportive. More broadly, what sort of an attitude did your family have about the idea of you leaving your hometown, leaving your family to go to school on the other side of the state?

Lynch: Well, I think that they were hoping I would go somewhere a little closer, like the University of Massachusetts, or even Holy Cross is quite a bit closer. Williams College, they kept saying, that's a good college, only thirty miles away. Amherst College. There were a lot of colleges nearby. But they said, "Why don't you look at that one?" They didn't know anything about colleges, the differences between them. I could see from looking at the catalogs how much more offerings there were at Harvard. I was impressed with the choices you could have there, as opposed to a place like Amherst or Williams. No matter how good they are, the offerings are quite restricted. I had more esoteric interests than most kids coming out of high school. So I was impressed by Harvard's, all the stuff they had from antiquity.

I think Harvard was the closest place I applied to. I applied to the University of Michigan, which had a very good Honors program. I had never been out of New England, except for New York State, when I applied, never set

foot in any other part of the country. But Michigan appealed to me. They didn't want me to go there, for sure. That was way too far away.

So when I got into Harvard they were pleased. It was still a little far for them. But my father said, "Well, we have family that lives nearby there and we can visit you on occasion. You can always come home. Just get on the Massachusetts Turnpike. It's 120 miles, not bad." So I think they were reconciled to my going there. It wasn't too far.

I think what they were still hoping was that I would go to college and come back to town and live nearby or even in the house, take over the house, and get a job in the town. I think they were quite disappointed that I didn't express any interest in doing that. My two closest friends from Great Barrington also said that their families expected or were hoping that they would come back to live in the town. I would say that of the 61 people in my class, thirty-some of them stayed in town. That's a pretty high percentage. It was even higher two years before that. As I said, something changed around 1959, 1960, 1961. Those years were years of change brought on by Elvis and other people like him.

I would have liked to have lived in that town but there wasn't anything there that I wanted to do. I didn't really want to teach in elementary school or high school. I wanted to teach in a college if I could. High school would have been good. But my interests were such that—I was already hearing that Latin was not very popular. And my Latin teacher there was retiring and they were not going to replace him. So it was not as if I could just find a job teaching Latin there, or teaching ancient history. There wasn't a big demand for that. I guess the

choices were things like working in a bank, or selling insurance, that sort of thing. It wasn't much of an economy that I could plug into.

Vanderscoff: Looking back, can you isolate what it was about classics that so caught your interest?

Lynch: It appealed to my imagination, the idea that there were all these people who lived so far before us and lived a rather high style of life and wrote fascinating things—thoughts and plays and poems. I loved stories and it just seemed to be an endless source of narratives, stories of all sorts, mythology stories and historically based stories. And I also liked the Christian dimension too, to think that the stuff we were reading in church in the New Testament actually had a basis in fact in antiquity, that there were such people. Not everything that we read is factually accurate or 100 percent accurate, but there is some basis for it. As a kid, I was thinking that as a kid. I liked to read. I also liked exotic languages. I loved the fact that Greek was in a different alphabet. That really appealed to me. I would have taken Greek in high school if it was available.

Vanderscoff: Is there something particular about the Greek alphabet that captured your interest? Because, of course, you could have studied Russian or something else.

Lynch: I would have done that if it was available too, or Chinese. I think the fact that Greek was spoken in an area that I already explored doing Latin. The ancient Mediterranean, the whole area, interested me. And I got interested in what was going on north and what was going on east and west of the

Mediterranean as well. And in North Africa, to some degree. Africa hadn't been opened up very much in terms of scholarly thinking in the late fifties and early sixties. A little bit. Augustine was from Carthage in North Africa. Some of the other saints were from North African and some of the Aeneid took place in North Africa.

I liked maps. I used to like looking at historical maps. Whenever I got one I would put it up and spend a lot of time just looking at it. Having never been anywhere, I traveled through maps. I liked things that were remote in time and in space. For some reason, something that was remote in time and space, rather than something that was close. It appealed to me if it was remote—became way, way away in time or geographically. The further it was, the more interesting it became for me, if I looked on the map. Something in Boston would be mildly interesting. But something in Helsinki would be a lot more interesting to me. I think I was especially interested in difference, things that were different. The concept of difference has always interested me, rather than sameness.

Vanderscoff: You mentioned that when W.E.B. Dubois went to Harvard, to some degree he found great mentors, in other ways it didn't quite live up to his expectations. How did the reality that you found at Harvard match up to your hopes going in?

Lynch: I think I was delighted. I really enjoyed being there. I would go there again for four years, like right now I'd start as a freshman. (laughs) The one thing I didn't like about it, that I wasn't prepared for, was the running of sections by graduate students. There was a lot of emphasis on graduate students teaching these sections. And I guess, I don't know, maybe I do have a kind of arrogance

that I'm not so aware of. I think graduate student assistants often found me and other undergraduates to be arrogant. They seemed to be trying to put me down because either they didn't go to Harvard themselves originally or they had an axe to grind. So I didn't like that, in some instances anyway, the tension between graduate student TAs, who often were the ones who graded your papers and your exams and always ran the discussion sections— That wasn't a problem in classics because the classics courses were small. They didn't have graduate student TAs, they had faculty. I liked that. We had senior faculty, distinguished people who wrote books and published a lot of stuff teaching you as a freshman or a sophomore in classics. It was only the large general education courses where you got graduate student TAs. I didn't like the TAs. I liked the classes. The large lecture classes were fine because they got great lecturers to lecture. They opened up a lot of stuff for me. I often dreaded sections that were taught by graduate students. But that was a minor problem.

I wasn't too good, it turned out, in science. I thought I was much better in science than I turned out to be. I had to struggle in the science classes and spend more time on them than I had hoped to. And sometimes that cut into my real interest, which was studying ancient stuff and languages. Those classes were hard. But I liked the fact that they just poured on the work. Every teacher seemed to think that the only class you were taking was that class. And you were taking four or five classes. And they would say, "Next class I would like you to write a fifteen-page paper." (laughs) I didn't have time to do a fifteen-page paper. But you had to do it.

Well, luckily I didn't require a lot of sleep. I could get by on five hours of sleep. And I was willing to outwork anybody. That was the one source of confidence I had. I couldn't believe that anybody would be willing to put in as much time as I would be willing to put in. In fact, I didn't find many people who were willing to put in as much time. I did things that were hard because I enjoy reading and I enjoy studying. I liked it. I didn't always like all the test taking. But I didn't mind test taking. I did fine on tests. It was just that was not my favorite part of studying, actual testing. I used to ask my students if anyone organized their life this way, were there any students, who past 1970, would get up in the morning and start studying and studied the whole day and went to meals—going to meals meant going away from studying and then coming back to studying; going to class meant going to class *from* studying and then going back to studying. Basically, studying was your mode of being, not your errands.

I suspect that most students now do their errands, what's on their calendar, first and then they put studying in the blank spaces. I didn't do that and a lot of other students then didn't do that either. You actually got up and sometimes before you even brushed your teeth you would write a page or so on the essay you were writing, or read a few pages, or learn some paradigms. And then you go in the shower and learn some more. I hardly ever went out on Saturday night because Saturday night was a very difficult night to go out. Boston didn't have enough movie screens, so if you went to a 7 o'clock movie it usually got to be 11:00 before you got your tickets. It was very frustrating to try to go places on Saturday evenings. There were always lines and so many college students. I mean, Boston is basically a college town. That's all. Nobody really lives in it

except for the students. People who say they're from Boston are actually from Newton or the suburbs. They're not from Boston. Saturday night was just a killer. You could hardly get reservations to go to a restaurant or anything like that.

So I always went out on Friday night. Every Friday night I did something with somebody, usually. And then on Saturday night I'd stay in my room and I would prepare for myself all kinds of things I really liked, like coffee and something to eat that I really liked. I'd treat myself really well and save my favorite things to do for Saturday night. It worked extremely well. I got all kinds of stuff done.

I worked during vacations. I didn't really consider it work. It was actually fun. And summers. I would go home summers and read Greek and Latin. The other students in the classics major were almost all from private schools so they had more Greek and more Latin than I did. I had four years of Latin but no Greek. They had six years of Latin and sometimes five or six years of Greek before they started. So I was at a disadvantage. But I caught up very soon because they didn't read Greek and Latin during their vacations or during the summers. I did. And I enjoyed it. I would look forward to reading stuff on my own.

Vanderscoff: You said at the beginning of this session that Great Barrington was very much a town of a few select ethnic groups. And culturally—

Lynch: Mostly Catholic, by the way.

Vanderscoff: Okay. And so given that you came from this certain background with these certain set factors, was the Greater Boston area, Cambridge and all of that, an unusual or a new context for you?

Lynch: There was a lot of ethnic division in Boston, too. Not so much in Cambridge, which is where Harvard is. Cambridge had a black neighborhood, pretty much isolated. The Irish and other Catholic groups and Protestant groups mixed in according to what they could afford, where they could afford to live.

I did have relatives in Boston. My father's brothers were there; my father's sisters were there. I had some contact with them, not a lot actually, because I tried to keep on the straight and narrow and study. I didn't want to spend my time visiting family. And also, my cousins were among those who teased me about even applying to Harvard. They said, "You have no chance, you have no idea what it's like to try to get in there and what it's like to try to stay in there." I got a lot of teasing from my Boston-area cousins about applying to Harvard and even after I got in they teased me about how I could stay.

I don't know if this had an influence. I don't know if I consciously tried to prove them wrong. Revenge did not seem to be what I had on my mind. But I was confident, as I said, that I could out-study anybody, just in terms of the number of hours I would be willing to put in. And the concentration—I had really good concentration. I could sit for four or five hours. In fact, that was one of my problems. I'd sit way too long, not realizing how long I'd sit, and needing to stretch around a little bit more, get more exercise.

Boston, I didn't really experience the ethnicity of it. I went to Revere Beach, which was heavily Italian and I noted the difference between Revere Beach and, say, South Boston. I went to Southey and Dorchester, which were largely Irish. I didn't feel comfortable in the Irish neighborhoods, incidentally, even though I had an Irish name, because it was not the kind of Irishness that I knew. I had a very individualistic taste of it because my father was the only Irish person in the house—he wasn't terribly Irish-conscious. He was a proud Irish person but not somebody flaunting his Irishness. He wasn't carrying on traditions from his family or anything like that. In fact, the Irish families seemed to me to be much less clannish than the Polish. They seemed to be rivals; often they didn't like each other as much.

Whereas my experience of Polishness was that everyone pitched in and you always looked to your family first. If you had a winter coat that you outgrew, you sent it to some Polish person who was related to you because they were related to you. Even if they lived in Florida and they didn't need a winter coat, you still sent it to them. The Irish side of the family did not think that way at all. So in college I experienced mostly my father's side of the family, which was much more scattered. They tended not to like each other too much. There was much more of a feeling of rivalry and I felt that my cousins were kind of rivals. That was the relationship they were cultivating. I guess that was a major difference.

But I liked the city in the sense that I did go to basketball games; I went to baseball games. I even went to one Bruins hockey game. (laughs) I never really liked it. But Boston was hockey crazy, so I had to go and see what it was all

about. It was on TV. Once in a while I watched it. But I never took to hockey. Basketball and baseball I followed really carefully. Football was nonexistent when I was growing up. In Massachusetts you rooted for the Giants or the Baltimore Colts, which was who I supported. The Patriots came later. There was a little phase of Patriots football but it didn't last more than two years, I think.

I didn't go to football games. I did go to racing, which was a very ethnic experience. Dog racing—

Vanderscoff: (laughs)

Lynch: I would not say that my college years were an ethnic experience, even though there was ethnicity all around. And Catholicism was really underrepresented at Harvard, always less than 10 percent of the students at Harvard in any class were Catholic. And I know that because I was vice president of the Catholic Club, and they used to send us the declared count. I was always hoping for more, but it was usually under 100 out of 1200 students; 99 to 110, something like that, would have declared Catholicism as their background. Harvard had a very large Jewish contingent, something like 30 to 40 percent when I was there. Still is in the forties.

Reflections on Vocational Directions and Education at Yale

Vanderscoff: And how did your time at Harvard focus or change your interests?

Lynch: I think it really did confirm my interests in the sense that I felt I found something early on that I really liked and I stayed with it, was interested in staying with it.

By my senior year I had read so much ancient stuff that I started longing for something a little different. So I started getting more interested in Christian texts, not for religious purposes, just for the same reasons that I studied classical texts, for opening up more perspectives on life and on the world and on time, broadening horizons. I did start reading things like the New Testament in Greek and in Latin translation, St. Jerome, St. Augustine. These are not on the Classics reading list. So when I applied to graduate school, I actually declared this as one of my major interests: Christian texts. I started off that way and then I ended up turning back and spent much more time on ancient Greek and Latin, and even on linguistics and archaeology.

That was not what I anticipated. It just happened that I got very interested in Indo-European linguistics because I took one class that I really liked and then I took three more from the same professor. I got a fellowship to go to Athens, so I got interested in Greek in archaeological terms from a more concrete perspective. It was quite a shock, actually, because all those years the Ancient World was only in my imagination. When I did go there, it was at first quite disappointing. My imagination was quite different than the reality of what I saw.

Vanderscoff: So you mentioned this fellowship. Was that directly after your undergraduate years?

Lynch: No, I went one year to Yale, when I was studying some religious texts, as well as classics. And then in November of that year I got a letter from the Rotary Club. I had applied for a Rotary Club fellowship, which I had forgotten I ever did. I guess there was a two-year lag in between application and award. [UCSC Professor] Michael Cowan got one also. It was a great fellowship. It was the most

lucrative fellowship I knew of. It paid for everything. And it was for a full year. Many fellowships are for nine months but this was a full twelve-month fellowship.

I had a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship for my first year at Yale. That's why I took a year at Yale. It was a very generous fellowship but you can't stay at your same institution for graduate school. They required that you take a Woodrow Wilson elsewhere from the undergraduate institution where you matriculated. That's why I went to Yale.

I wasn't sure I would stay at Yale. I gave it a try. I didn't have to make a decision because I got the Rotary Fellowship to study in Athens. I got a certificate in archaeology at the American School of Classical Studies. I really enjoyed that year. But it was a tough time because that was the year of the revolution of the colonels. I don't know if you've ever seen the movie *Z*. But to be caught in the middle of a revolution is not easy going.

The other thing was that I was subject to the draft. It was 1966 and 1967, and in order to get a student deferment you had to have preferably three people, but at least one person, certify that you're making significant progress towards a degree. I took a gamble by going to Greece to start with, because the question was, at a different institution was I making significant progress towards a degree? They had a certificate program. I got a certificate in archaeology but did a certificate mean a degree or not? My draft board initially said no, it wasn't; but eventually they changed their mind after some protest from me and one of my Classics teachers. I think my high school Latin teacher even got involved in that dispute.

I wanted to stay a second year in Athens. There were plenty of fellowships available because no one could take them because of the draft problem. Females, I guess, could take some, though there weren't as many females interested. But I didn't dare risk it, so I came back and went to Yale because that would say I'm making progress toward the same degree that I started with. If I went to a completely different institution they'd say, "You're not making any progress towards a degree. You're going from one—this is the third institution you've been to in three years." So luckily for me, Yale had an archaeology, ancient history requirement at the PhD level. My mentor, Tom Cole at Yale, said that Yale accepted (which they were free to do) my year in Athens as satisfaction of that requirement. That meant the year was a significant step towards my degree. That worked. It was a brilliant idea on his part, for which I am eternally thankful.

Vanderscoff: When and why did you decide to go to graduate school and pursue your doctorate in the first place?

Lynch: Well, it was like a train on the tracks. Once I was on the tracks I never thought of doing anything other than that. After students did classics for four years they did the next thing, which was graduate school. I never thought of any other possibilities. I remember once they had a career counseling thing for seniors and I went to it and they said, "You ought to try out various opportunities." I went to an interview to work in the high-paying advertising sector and after that I said, "That's not for me. I've got to stay in the university. I'm not interested in that kind of stuff." It was really eye opening to see what was going on in the advertising sector. I probably could have done that sort of thing, basically fooling people with imaginative advertising campaigns. This is what

the people specialized in. It was a firm located in Pittsburgh and they were very successful at that time. But I was not interested and I didn't even go through the whole interview process.

I worked in college at the Massachusetts General Hospital. I worked for a Swiss physician there who headed a laboratory called Carbohydrate Research. He thought I should become a doctor and he said he could get me into Harvard Medical School. He made me think about it for maybe a day and I thought, no, a doctor's not for me either, a medical doctor. Those were probably the only two times I thought of anything else than just staying on the track I was on. And in both cases they were things that I was sure would not be for me. I would have liked to have done medical research but I don't think I would have wanted to be a clinician and have patients.

Vanderscoff: So given that you've been so persistent and almost undistracted in this pursuit of a doctorate—

Lynch: Well, I got a doctorate in four years, which is pretty quick.

Vanderscoff: —what sort of hopes did you have for your doctorate? What did that mean to you? Why was that something that you pursued so thoroughly?

Lynch: Well, again—it seemed so casual. When I went back to Yale, my eventual thesis advisor and mentor, Tom Cole, was director of graduate studies. And the person who was head of the department, Eric Havelock, had been at Harvard when I was an undergraduate and knew me from there. He actually recruited me to come to Yale. He accepted me way before he should have, gave me an offer way before he should have. There's this thing called the gentleman's agreement,

which he violated because he was trying to build a department and the students Yale was attracting weren't good enough for graduate school, he thought. He may have been right, I don't know.

He recruited me. When I got back to Yale, the head of the American society for classics had made an argument to the defense department that classics should count as a language study in the national interest. So they sent Yale three NDEA [National Defense Education Act] fellowships, one of which was for classics, for studying Greek and Latin. Eric Havelock and Tom Cole decided to award it to me. They didn't have any open competition. They just offered me a four-year, completely expense-paid fellowship, guaranteed. There wasn't even a minimum grade—you couldn't flunk, obviously, but usually it said you had to have a B average. Nothing like that. Just as long as you didn't flunk.

Incidentally, I don't think I ever paid any money at all to go to school. It's amazing to think that I got a full scholarship to Harvard. There was a work requirement. If you didn't work, you had to take out a loan. I worked the ten hours a week. And when I was done and there was seven hundred dollars left in my account that I hadn't used, they gave it to me in cash. (laughter) So I actually came out ahead.

Vanderscoff: (laughs) A cash payout.

Lynch: And then the Woodrow Wilson was very well paid, for my first year of graduate school. You couldn't teach on a Woodrow Wilson. So I didn't teach. The Rotary fellowship to Athens was really well paid. I was the best-funded graduate student at the American school, and as I said, for twelve months, not nine. And

then NDEA was four years more. I didn't even use all four years, it turned out. I don't know what I did that was in the national interest, but I was ready to serve.

Vanderscoff: (laughs) Did that come with any special obligations, given that you were supposed to be doing this, as you just said, in the national interest, learning languages and so on?

Lynch: No, there was nothing at all. The idea was that the Department of Defense said that they had to promote the study of foreign languages because of defense needs, getting people who knew and could teach foreign languages. But somehow or other, classicists said well, you need to have people who study Greek and Latin as part of this mix. Perhaps to break codes.

Vanderscoff: During the Cold War. (laughs)

Lynch: Yes. And that argument was somehow accepted. And the other nice thing—I guess the second nice thing about it was that you were not allowed to teach on that either, because you were fully funded. That's why I never taught a single class or graded a single paper until I came out here to start teaching. Never once. I arrived here with no teaching experience whatever. None. And yet I know that all my evaluations from my teachers said that I was a really promising teacher. I don't know what the promise was based on, I guess just interaction with me, or maybe it was just a form letter. (laughs)

Vanderscoff: (laughs) Well, at this point we've gone about ninety minutes. We're just coming up against it. Next time I'd like to start out talking a little bit more about the political context of the late sixties and your education and to ask you a few more concrete questions about your fellowship in Athens, in particular. But

before I close off the record, is there anything else that you'd like to say about these topics that we've been discussing? Your family, or childhood, or Harvard, Yale? Any stories, or—

Lynch: I'll probably think of things after, maybe at the beginning of next time, if you give me a chance.

Vanderscoff: Which is fine.

Lynch: I hadn't thought about a lot of these things you just prompted me about for a long time.

"In This Country, You Need a Degree":

Reflections on Family Expectations and Reactions

Vanderscoff: Today is Thursday April 25, 2013. This is Cameron Vanderscoff here with John Patrick Lynch for the second part of his oral history project. I'd like to have a bit of a coda for our last section today, starting out with a story that you've told me off the audio record about your grandfather and the idea of a college degree. So if you wouldn't mind starting out today with sharing that story—

Lynch: My grandfather—I told you we had a boarding house atmosphere with twelve people around the table—and my grandfather was sort of the tyrant at the table and would often make speeches in very broken English. One of his favorite speeches was about a degree. He would say, "In this country you need a degree." And, of course, his daughters and sons, none of whom even went to high school, are all sitting there—my mother and my uncles, all with no high school degree—and feeling shamed, I think, that they didn't have a degree. And this went on for

a long time over the years. One time I was home from college in my sophomore year and my grandfather said to me, "Why you no get a job?" I said, "Well, don't forget I'm getting a degree. You said you need a degree." And we began talking more about a degree, in a little bit of Polish and a little bit of English, and it became clear that he had no idea what a degree was. He was saying all these years that you need a degree; he thought it was some piece of paper that he failed to get when he got off the boat, and that's one of the reasons why he was not able to move up in society. A degree had nothing to do with education. And no one in the family ever realized that until many years after I stopped living in the house and he was still living with us.

So in a way my ambitions for college, my mother pushing me to do my grandfather's bidding, may have been based on a translanguistic misunderstanding, just an outright mistake in translation. When I did get a degree, not only a high school degree, but a college degree, he didn't seem to be impressed by that at all. His idea was I should be out there working, making money.

Vanderscoff: And how did your family more generally come to feel about the degrees that you received?

Lynch: Well, I think they were very happy and pleased. As I said, they would have preferred that I be a little closer. One hundred and twenty miles was a long ways for them to be away. Sixty would have been better. They were happy that I applied to Yale for graduate school. That was only ninety miles away, actually closer than Harvard, to where we lived. We were on the Connecticut border. So I

think they liked the fact that I enjoyed what I was doing, doing what I wanted to do, and I wasn't terribly far away.

From New England to Athens:

Studying in Greece in a Time of Revolution

Lynch: That all shattered after my first year of graduate school, when I got a completely unexpected fellowship—I forgot I applied for it two years earlier—from the Rotary Foundation, to go to Greece. That was a real shocker for them, the idea that I would be in Greece for a year or more. It was a shocker for me too, because of course, I had never myself been out of New England, except for New York State. I had never been in Europe.

I took a boat across. That terrified them too, but I think an airplane might have been even more scary, because none of my family had been on an airplane. I hadn't either. I did not fly in an airplane until I was twenty-one. When I flew for the first time, I went from Athens to Istanbul. That was my very first trip on an airplane, and it was a scary one.

I came from a fairly enclosed, provincial background. I think by the time I graduated from college in 1965—I'd been in graduate school for a couple of years—I didn't meet many people who had never been on an airplane before. It was not a new thing at that time. Ten, fifteen years earlier you'd find people like that. I was one of the rare people who'd never been on an airplane. Of course, I'd never been on an ocean liner before either, and that was an experience in its own right.

Vanderscoff: How did you find that, given that you hadn't even been out of state much before?

Lynch: It's a long trip across the ocean. (laughs) It took us eleven days or something like that to get to Athens. It gets pretty monotonous out there. But one of the reasons why I wanted to do it that way was that it was a Greek boat I took, called the *Olympia*—and there mostly were Greeks on the boat and they spoke Greek. I had a fellowship from the Rotary Club, which required me to speak at Rotary Clubs in Modern Greek, which I didn't really know. I mean, I knew ancient Greek, but not modern. So I spent my time on the trip over studying Greek grammar and practicing Greek at the breakfast, lunch, and dinner table, and late nights. But by the time I got to Athens—it was eleven days—I was feeling fairly comfortable in just practical, ordinary Greek of ordering food and asking people how they are and what the weather was like. I couldn't carry on a philosophical discussion or anything like that, but I think I was fairly good at just the everyday language of eating and interacting with people and talking on a news level.

I did have to struggle to give a speech in Greek. My first speech at the Athens Rotary Club was tough. I had it written out and it was fine, I think. It was intelligible at least. But what I couldn't prepare for was that almost everybody in the audience, as a sign of politeness, asked a question. So I had to answer a barrage of questions and some of the questions I had real trouble understanding. Luckily I had my Rotary advisor there, who was bilingual, and he helped me by telling me what the question was. I was able to frame some response, not very sophisticated ones, but—

As I went to the various Rotary clubs I got better at it. I used basically the same speech at all of them. It was about archaeology and the American School, where I was studying classical studies, and how archaeology was advanced by the interaction between Greeks and Americans at the American School. I got better at answering and anticipating questions. Anyway, it was a different aspect of the fellowship, not academic. I learned a lot about Greece by being part of a different area of society, businessmen—that's what the Rotary is, all businessmen. I did things that other students would not normally experience because I was sponsored by the Rotary Club, and that opened my eyes to some interesting new perspectives.

Vanderscoff: I'd like to go into greater depth about the archaeology, especially given that you'd spent so much time studying Greco-Roman classics from a distance. Would you mind sharing some of your experiences and impressions at actually concretely interacting with objects from that world and being physically at those sites?

Lynch: Well, it was quite a shock to arrive there because I had built up in my imagination a whole personal construction of what an ancient civilization was like. It didn't really live up to my imagination. The modern city of Athens was not what I expected at all. It had been severely bombed in the Second World War, so it was a collision of rather uninteresting structures that had been thrown up after the war, with tall apartment buildings, and archaeological remains scattered here and there in between.

It took a while for me to get used to the idea that this is the country that is the custodian of antiquity. But I got to enjoy modern Greek society, and speaking

Greek, that life. I would have liked to have stayed a second year, except for the draft difficulties at the time. A second year would have been great, but would have put me in jeopardy. I probably would not have been able to get another student visa.

I did really like living in the city and going around in the city. It turned out I don't have the patience to do archaeology as it was being practiced. I took an archaeology course. I was expecting to get a shovel and start finding stuff. Instead, we just got toothbrushes and spoons and things, and we were spending a lot of time on very little. It just didn't suit my temperament. But I learned something by doing that. I learned that this is not for me. I'm not a thing-oriented person either. And I think you're intrigued by archaeology if you're mostly interested in material culture. I'm much more interested in literary culture and the word. It was good to learn that. I spent most of the rest of my time—after doing excavation work at Corinth with a student group—I spent a most of time in the library doing traditional literary-type research, historical research, until the revolution occurred in the spring.

There was a revolution in the spring of 1967. Greece was taken over by a military government. It changed life entirely. The Rotary Club, for one thing, was canceled. (laughs) No group of more than three people could congregate. And they had nothing but military music and jammed BBC broadcasts. Jeeps going through the city shooting up in the air and making sure you didn't cross the street or congregate in the street. Rumors flying all over the place about deaths and revolutionary events of various sorts.

We were stuck for the last months of our year on one side of the street, where luckily the dormitory where we lived was located along with the dining hall. But the other side of the street was where the library was. You had to make sure that you crossed to the library only during daylight hours. If you strayed into the dark you were risking being shot on sight. That's what they said. Rumor was there were people who were shot on sight. I don't know whether any Americans were—not that I know of, but it was a very scary time.

Vanderscoff: And did that revolutionary state persist throughout the rest of your time in Greece?

Lynch: Yeah. It wasn't overthrown until a couple of years later. It was a fascist regime. I had no idea what it would be like to live that way. It was inconceivable to me that I was living under a dictatorship. You wake up in the morning and you find yourself being ruled not by the government that was there before but by a group of colonels in the military. They were real hardliners. That made Greece a lot less fun to be in because you had to stay in at night. Greek life revolves around eating late at night into the early morning, and often outdoors. Food is a very important part of the culture and conversation is really important. That was all cut off. It really felt stifled from that time on.

I actually felt good about leaving Greece just because I didn't really want to stay around in revolutionary times. I think almost anyone who wanted to could have gotten a second year there because there were fellowships available and almost no takers. Very few people wanted to stay a second year, or could stay a second year because of the politics.

But it was a valuable experience, not just for filling out my classical background, but also for learning about modern Greece and dictatorships and militarism and conflicts between liberals and conservatives. It's a very political country. You see people arguing about politics all the time, and sometimes really quite belligerently so. Old wounds are still festering from what happened after the Second World War, and different groups went in different directions, even during the Second World War.

Reflections on the Sixties, the Study of Classics, and Mentorship

Vanderscoff: And while we're on this idea of politics affecting education, how did the political climate of the mid and late sixties impact your education back in the States?

Lynch: It was a shock to come back to the United States because I felt as though I missed something significant. The aftermath of the Beatles and the San Francisco flower children, all that stuff. Those were things that were banned in Greece under the colonels. The Greek name for hippies was yeah-yeah-yeahs, which was from the Beatles song "She loves you, yeah yeah yeah." You were not allowed to have long hair or beards unless you were a priest. Standards of dress were set up.

There was definitely student action in Greece but it was very difficult to get far because of the tight-fisted control of the militaristic fascist government. So we were not aware of a lot of things that were going on in the world. While we were there it seemed almost as if we were in a time capsule. All kinds of things were happening and we were unable to follow them. We were cut off so severely from

news that it was quite eye opening to come back, but also fun. I liked the late sixties, actually.

Vanderscoff: And would you mind describing why you liked the late sixties, what it was about this climate that particularly sparked you in some way.

Lynch: Well, there was such energy in the air, and openness to change and desire for change, to get things right. I liked the music of the time. And there was a lot of social action, party action, potlucks—all those sorts of things. It was a community of like-minded people who really wanted to see something done, and see society change. Society did change a lot in the late sixties. I just saw those two movies about 1968—*The Sapphires* and *Searching for Sugar Man*. Great movies. They provide a very different angle on music in the late sixties. You know who the Sapphires were?

Vanderscoff: I believe you mentioned them briefly last time. But no, I am not familiar with them beyond that.

Lynch: In a break or afterwards I'll tell you about those two movies. Both of them had to do with Motown. I liked Motown music a good deal, especially with Smokey Robinson singing.

Vanderscoff: If there is something in those movies that has sparked something for you in thinking about these times we've discussed, I'd love to hear it.

Lynch: Well, the Sapphires were a group of Australian aborigine teenagers, very young teenagers, who could sing, imitate country and western music, Brenda Lee, Patsy Cline type of music, but also could do Motown. They were recruited to go Vietnam to entertain the troops. And they sang Motown and they were a

big hit. The movie is about their tour in Vietnam in 1968 and what happened to them afterwards. It would be a spoiler to tell you what happened.

I bought their album in 1968. We played it at many parties and I wore it out. It's a great album but there hasn't been much since. I didn't know what happened to them until I saw the movie. Then *Sugarman* is about this guy, Rodriguez, who is just an amazing person. Also in the late sixties, in Detroit, who was an extremely big hit, had a huge following in South Africa but not in the United States. So what happened to this guy, Rodriguez, who was such a big hit and influenced the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa and then just dropped out of sight? There were lots of rumors about what happened to him, including that he committed suicide on stage in various graphic ways. But in the movie you find out what happened to him. I don't want to spoil that either. Great music, too. You can get both of these on Spotify. I mean the music. You can't get the films. You know Spotify?

Vanderscoff: Oh yeah.

Lynch: Rodriguez has two albums, hardly known at all in the United States. I think the promoter of the album said he sold six albums in the United States and several million in South Africa.

Vanderscoff: (laughs) Given that you were studying the classics, something that happened two thousand years in the past and so on, what sort of connection, if any, was there with this political agitation and this stirring that you were talking about happening in 1968, 1969, 1970, and this material from antiquity that you were so focused on studying?

Lynch: Well, I think that it made the ancient texts also come alive because you realized it was an extremely political situation in antiquity, too. When you study classics in that kind of nineteenth-century way, they seem frozen in time. They're there to be admired and they seem set in stone. But if you start studying the texts as dynamic creations in a society that was in turmoil—and there was a lot of turmoil in ancient Athens, and responses to turmoil—I think texts come alive in a completely different way.

It's like the shock that people have when they've found out that the statues and architecture were painted. Because everybody had such an idea of antiquity being marble, white marble. But there's no doubt that the buildings and the statues were painted. And the paint residues suggest quite gaudy color schemes. So when you realize that these texts are not just timeless but that they were created in time and reflect times that are often parallel to our own, then the classics become much more relevant and interesting.

Classics underwent a huge renaissance in the late sixties, early seventies. You would think that they might drop out of sight during that time but quite the opposite happened. A lot more people were taking Greek and Latin than before, especially Greek. Greek was much more popular. And I think the study of classics became the subject of debate and argumentation and discussion about values and politics. Formerly classics had been identified with seeking truth and beauty and timeless values.

Vanderscoff: And in this time of change in the classics, would you mind talking about any important mentors that you had and how you were influenced to think differently or in new patterns?

Lynch: My undergraduate mentors would be, I guess, Zeph Stewart and Sterling Dow. Both of them were, I would say, old-fashioned classicists, very good classicists. I appreciated the fact that they took an interest in me and were very helpful. I wouldn't say that they opened up new ways of thinking about classics. One person who did was Christian Wolff, who was an assistant professor, and left Harvard. He was denied tenure and went on to Dartmouth. He definitely opened up texts in new ways for us. He was a person of great literary insight and he was politically shrewd, too.

In graduate school, Tom Cole was my thesis advisor and a very good director. He had much more radical ideas. He didn't publish the radical ideas. He published more conventional stuff. But his own thinking was quite anti-establishment and I think that influenced me.

Who else influenced me? When I was in Athens, Sterling Dow, who was my undergraduate teacher, was the professor at the American School that year. So it was nice to have that connection, someone who mentored me before and continued to take an interest in me. I think I mentioned Eugene Vanderpool at the American School too. He was a permanent faculty member, someone everyone admired. It was just amazing to have a chance to study with him and be part of the program that he developed.

The thing that united all these people in my mind, even though some were quite old-fashioned in some ways and some were more progressive, was that they all had a real passion for the study of ancient languages and antiquity. Things really sparkled for them. They liked what they were doing and they communicated that very well. They weren't just drudge classicists. They were

really, as you would say, “into it.” I was very lucky to have those sorts of mentors, and people who were willing to help me out, speak for me, write letters for me, make me aware of opportunities. They were looking out for me. And I really felt it. They would write to me even after I stopped being a student in graduate school. I got letters from Vanderpool and Sterling Dow. It was very encouraging.

Tom Cole, who was my thesis advisor, had spent a year at Stanford in the early sixties. He was very interested in experimental education, so he came by [UC] Santa Cruz to see what was going on here. This was before the campus opened, in the early sixties. And he was not terribly impressed. He sort of warned me about coming out to Santa Cruz, in fact. He thought that rather than being experimental and doing something new in education that they seemed to be reinventing the wheel trying to replicate Oxford and Cambridge for Americans.

He gave me good advice—not to listen to anybody who tells you that writing and publishing are not going to be important in the future. He said, “They may keep you there and be content with you not writing, and teaching a lot, but if you wanted to get out of Santa Cruz, if you wanted to move away, you have to have a research program going. Don’t abandon your research.” That really was good advice. I think I would have probably not continued my research program for a while as I got adjusted. But I remembered what he told me, “If you wanted to move.” I guess everyone assumed that they would move sometime. I certainly never thought I would stay thirty-seven years on the same job. So I didn’t stop writing and doing research. I continued doing that. At a slower pace,

because it was a very demanding campus to start out in; you were building the place, it wasn't all established for you when you arrived. And there were lots and lots of meetings, and lots of discussion, and issues being aired and debated, and dead ends explored again, and wheels being reinvented. It was a very time-consuming place but that was one of the things I liked about it. The faculty was really engaged.

Vanderscoff: Before we move forward to discuss you coming to Santa Cruz, there's one more story that you told me off the audio record, which goes back to your undergraduate years, which speaks to some of the anti-establishment or anti-rules tone a little bit. You were talking about a burlap coat that you would wear. And before we move on, as a way of talking about the sixties, would you mind sharing that story on the audio?

Lynch: Well, when I was an undergraduate, you still had to wear a coat and tie to the dining hall in order to be served. So a number of people—and I identified with this—decided to test this by wearing something outrageous that satisfied the coat and tie requirement. A lot of students wore outrageous ties but no shirt or no collared shirt. The rules did not say anything about wearing a shirt. They just said a coat and tie. And so we often just had a tie hanging up in the cloak room and you pulled it off, or you just grabbed anybody's tie and you put it around your throat. And it was not elegant. Students would also try to find some inelegant coat that would satisfy the coat requirement. I had one that I liked a lot. I don't know where I got it, some secondhand store somewhere, I think. It was a burlap coat made of burlap bags, I think the kind of bags that coffee comes in. And it was stitched together. That's what I left in the cloak room and when I had

to run into have breakfast, lunch, or dinner I grabbed this and put it on. So I was satisfying the rules minimally but protesting against the rules at the same time. Harvard did give in. I think a couple of years after I was there they abandoned that rule of coat and tie in the dining room. When they did that, students began dressing better.

Vanderscoff: (laughs) So out of all of these factors that we've been discussing—in your education in the sixties, your mentors, and this tone of challenging the rules in some way—

Lynch: Right, people like Bob Dylan and Joan Baez were singing right across the street on the Charles River bank. It was a really unusual time to be going to college. In Cambridge a lot of stuff was happening, a lot of folk music particularly.

Vanderscoff: And how were you personally involved with the folk scene?

Lynch: I would go to rallies and listen to music, go to Club 47 on Mount Auburn Street, which is no longer there, particularly rallies on the Charles River bank on Sunday afternoons. There was a real spirit. People wanted things to change—militarism, racism were particular targets. Sexism and homophobia were right behind.

Vanderscoff: And coming out of this context, what sort of hopes or aspirations or priorities did you have for your career, emerging from graduate school?

Lynch: Well, I wanted to contribute something to making classics and the study of ancient literature and literature in general, humanities in general maybe—more egalitarian, less associated with elitism, not just for a select few, but open to

a larger segment of the population who are interested, without the sense that you had to somehow sell out to become a classicist or you had to be born into it. I think that inclusiveness was a fundamental ideal in my mind. I wanted to think of classics also as having a more communitarian base than an individualistic base, where you are not competing to win prizes and to establish your personal identity, but you're contributing to an effort that was cooperative and interactive, one that puts you in contact with other people who are like-minded and who are interested in the same sort of things. I wanted to foster community spirit in a cooperative approach to studying, rather than one you would associate with competition. I think [I was] anticompetitive and anti-elitist but also there was a positive side to it. It was just not anti. The positive thing was being part of a group and socializing and interacting as a result of common interest. That was my educational ideal. I was always looking to promote structures that brought people together rather than to appeal to someone who wanted to do it alone. I don't know if that makes any sense to you?

Vanderscoff: It does.

Lynch: Classics was an isolated department at many universities, often associated with elitism and exclusiveness, a private school background rather than public school, and I would say very individualistic and competitive in its approach, rather than thinking about education as a communal enterprise. I have communitarian values and that was one of the things that attracted me to a place like Santa Cruz.

Coming to UCSC:

Early Cowell College and the Classics Program

Vanderscoff: And would you mind charting the route that led you from the completion of your graduate studies out west to Santa Cruz?

Lynch: I came out to the American Philological Association meeting in San Francisco in 1969. I had never been west of New York State before. I went to the meeting in San Francisco and drove down with a friend to Santa Cruz. And I met some faculty—I think about a dozen showed up just to meet me. I was surprised, because I had been unannounced. I had written to Santa Cruz and said if there was anything available in my area I'd be interested. So they had a preliminary application from me. I hadn't even started my dissertation so it looked like a long way away. This was in December of 1969.

But the Board of Studies in Literature wrote to me and said that they had a possible position in classics. They didn't have a classics department, but they had a classics position in literature. They needed someone who could cover the ancient world. So I applied and I flew out. That was only the second time I flew west of New York State, both times to Santa Cruz. They offered me the job, even though at that time I had only one chapter of my dissertation done. This was in March. My thesis advisor warned me, "If you go there and try to finish your dissertation it might be really difficult because a new campus like that is swimming with ideas and adventures, and things to do. So you probably would not be able to finish it in good time. It might take you a few years to do it."

But I just accelerated and finished up by July and sent my thesis out to readers and much to my surprise it was accepted with very minimal changes needed. So I was on my way to relocating to Santa Cruz.

I bought a new car. I had a Studebaker before, which I very rarely drove. I was not an experienced driver. I had never driven anyplace like across country before, never been out of west of New York State in a car before, and somehow—I still can't believe it—I arrived unscathed in Santa Cruz. It took me about a week. I stopped at a few places along the way. I was unmarried. I had no possessions, a few books. I had never taught a single class before. I had never drawn up a syllabus, never graded an exam, because all the fellowships I had did not allow teaching. My inexperience never came up in my interviews. So in July 1970 I arrived at Cowell College, just twenty-five years old. I had never really lived that far away, except for the one year in Athens. But this was different in the sense that I was actually putting down stakes in California and was going to be there for a while. I really knew nothing much about it. I felt unprepared but still confident that I could make up for my deficits.

Luckily I had housing, because I was a preceptor in Morison House my first three years at Cowell. And meals were provided. I had an office. I had an office about two hundred feet from where I lived. I'd never had an office before. It was as exciting as when I went to college. I'd never had a bedroom before of my own. When I went to college, I had a suite to live in and three of us lived in it, with our own bathroom, as opposed to the situation I'd lived in before, with ten or twelve people using one bathroom. Now, all of a sudden, I had my own office. So I took advantage of the opportunity and kept researching and writing on the

subject of my thesis, revising it into a book. I had some ideas on how to make it more of a book than a thesis. I often would be there the whole night and go home at one or two o'clock in the morning. I enjoyed doing that, having that kind of convenience and space for myself and time to do the research.

In my first year I was teaching a lot because there were students around who were taking Greek or Latin and they had to be taught. So I think the first year I taught three regular classes the first quarter—three regular classes along with two independent studies. I had five preparations to do, having done none before. But it worked out fine. I liked teaching. I was really impressed with the students. They were fun. They were inquisitive. I wasn't that much older than a lot of them, so it was much more like the small community of classics fans that was being built, the kind I wanted to be a part of. We spent time together outside of class as well. We often met on Friday afternoons for Classics Happy Hour, which continues to this day as an informal gathering of anyone interested in classics.

I have a hard time believing that I did that, hopped into a car and drove across country. (laughs) With almost no preparation at all. I was winging it, really, the whole time. With no planning. In retrospect, I realize that I was not really ready. What my thesis advisor had advised me to do—because I had one more year on my NDEA Fellowship—was to just cool it and stay in graduate school another year. Because it was all paid for. I could have just stayed in New Haven and finished my thesis, without having to rush it the way I did, and reapply for jobs the next year. But who knows if a job in Santa Cruz would have been available in a year. The only places I applied were Santa Cruz and

Hampshire College, which hadn't even opened up yet. And St. Johns in Annapolis, Maryland, which was an old place but was a great books school, with no classics department. That was in fact what I was looking for, a place that would do classics but had no classics department. I did not want to be part of a classics department. And at Santa Cruz I am happy to say we still don't have one. I think that was the right decision, not to have a department but to have classics be part of a larger dialogue.

I had read some things by Dean McHenry about the problems of departments and I agreed with him. We have a program but we don't need a department. Departments have less flexibility and tend to be in a rivalry—so they end up serving themselves rather than the students. I wanted to have a program that really served the students, reached out to them and drew them in. And I think we have managed to do that. We have had a lot of good classics majors. Lots of them now teach at prestigious universities around the country. And they did fine without a classics department at their undergraduate institution.

Luckily, when I arrived there were colleagues in literature, which was my department, who really were interested in classics. Lots of times classics was so insular that people who taught classics would say in effect, "We have keys to the antiquities, to languages, and you don't have them. So we won't speak or listen to you." And the faculty who were in English literature, and who were genuinely interested in classics were offended by this and would say, "You guys are just wordsmiths and commentators, not literary interpreters, and we're not going to listen to you." We didn't have that kind of division between literature faculty

who had an interest in classics, versus classicists who had a mild interest in English literature. Literature faculty were divided by their disciplines, or by the traditions and boundaries of their specialties. At Santa Cruz, faculty like Harry Berger had a deep interest in classics and it was great for me to be able to have a senior faculty member in literature who was not a classicist by training, but who did a lot of serious work in classics,³ like Harry Berger. Berger became my mentor and my strong supporter in building classics at UCSC.

And then, another key figure for me was Norman O. Brown. I don't know if you knew Norman O. Brown. He was not in literature but he was a very fine classicist. He had a PhD in classics, from Oxford, and was a wonderful classics resource for me. I was warned before I came here that I might have trouble getting along with Norman O. Brown because he was so unconventional. I seemed so conventional in my background, by contrast. He wrote books like *Life Against Death*, and *Love's Body* on grand subjects like that, while I wrote things on Aristotle, for a much more narrow audience, employing a much more conventional approach to scholarship.

But Norman was very open to me, as it turned out, and I persuaded him to start teaching one course a year in Greek or Latin. He could do that brilliantly—and he had all kinds of stuff memorized, and he had very interesting ideas that were novel and thought-provoking. He loved Greek and Latin, too. Sometimes he would invite me on walks with his dog, and we would talk about classics and

³ See Cameron Vanderscoff, Interviewer; Cameron Vanderscoff and Irene Reti, Editors, *The Critical World of Harry Berger, Jr.: An Oral History* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2015). Available in full text and audio at <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/berger>

other things. We got along very well. He was a great asset for me in getting the classics program going because he actually became part of the classics program. Most importantly, he asked that his enrollments, which were enormous, be counted as classics enrollments. That really helped us grow because, whatever anyone said, there was a relationship between enrollments and new positions on the faculty. Student enrollments weren't the only thing you needed to get a new position, but they really did help in lots of ways. Norman did that for us. His mythology classes were huge and so our classics enrollments were huge. And classics grew, largely because he was such a popular teacher.

Because Greek and Latin—especially third and fourth-year Greek and Latin—are going to be small classes. Not that many students go on to the third or fourth year. So we're not going to get new appointments unless we had five hundred or seven hundred for one class with Norman O. Brown. I really miss him. I think later on people forgot the fact that he was such a good classicist and knew Greek and Latin very well, and loved it. He was nice to me. When I got married, he threw a surprise wedding party at his house. I don't know if he ever did that for anyone else, but it was very touching.

We should have done more—we tried to memorialize him, but he resisted it. We tried to have some things named after him and when we started doing that he wrote me a letter fervently asking me to stop because it made him think about his own death too much. I wish we had paid more tribute to him because he was an important person on the campus and was really important for the life and thriving of classics on the campus. Classics was very important to him as well.

I was technically the only appointment in classics, yet I had senior colleagues who were very committed to the study of the ancient world and also supported our bids for new appointments. Gary Miles came the next year and then Mary Kay Gamel came, then Laura Slatkin. We had some very good people here all together.

Vanderscoff: And were you the first appointment in classics?

Lynch: There was somebody who was appointed before me but he didn't get a regular appointment. He didn't finish his thesis, the thing that is a disadvantage about coming to a new campus. And so he dropped out and went to law school. That was his job that I ended up getting. I didn't know that at the time. He didn't have a program going. He was just a classicist who was here and he taught a few people. I'd met him before I came out here and he didn't think there was much hope for a classics program on the Santa Cruz campus. He said the students were too modern in their outlook.

Vanderscoff: And compared to that opinion, what sort of a reality did you find with the students out here when you came at the very beginning?

Lynch: Well, a lot of them were very interested in classics and couldn't get enough. I don't know if you know Victor Hansen. He's politically on the right; he's a conservative commentator with a website, and identified with anti-liberalism. But he's also a really good scholar, a leading scholar. He's in ancient military history and ancient agricultural history. He once told me he took twelve or thirteen classes from me, mostly independent studies, I suspect.

There was just a whole host of really fine students here—in the seventies—and all the way through. I found amazing students who were very interested in classics. I feel lucky about that. Classics courses—especially when you get to the advanced classics courses—are a real dream to teach. You almost feel as though you shouldn't be being paid for teaching these classes, they're so much fun to do. I always taught an overload in order to make up for the fact that we were teaching these smaller classes at the end. We didn't want to collapse those courses because we wanted the students to have it on their record that they advanced that far.

I think probably the most striking thing about teaching at [UC] Santa Cruz was the high quality of the students we had right from the beginning. Lots of PhD's—not that that's the only measure of the success of a program. But quite a few students went on for PhD's.

Vanderscoff: And more broadly, would you mind sharing some early recollections of UCSC and Santa Cruz as a personal context relative to the East Coast institutions that you left behind, like Yale and Harvard.

Lynch: Well, it was an amazingly open atmosphere. (Recorder turned on and off) There was a sense of possibility, that anything could happen. It wasn't that anything goes. There was just much more—you could dream more here. Things could happen. Things could change. Things could get better. Things could go more in the direction that you were interested in taking them.

Our classics major, for example, rather than being something that was set in stone, was more individual. It was an individual major. There were certain

guidelines about how much Greek and Latin you needed to know, but what you covered was agreed upon by you and three faculty members in classics. So it wasn't a set program. The program reflected a student's individual interest. And I liked that. You couldn't set up something like that, in those days anyway, at Harvard or Yale because they had a set program. It changed a little every once in a while. But pretty much it was based on the same program it was one hundred years ago. I mean they changed the reading list a bit here and there.

I think the idea was that students took risks in their curriculum here. They'd take Greek even though they were in science. We had a really first-rate biology student who took Greek for two years, for no other reason than she was just interested in it. We had people who took Greek or Latin and combined it with an interest in music or art or philosophy or linguistics. Classics wasn't isolated. This is what we encouraged and this is what the students were interested in doing, making Greek and Latin part of other majors, as well as having a classics program or major. And I really enjoyed that.

So Mary Kay Gamel began working in theater arts—the combination of classics with performance. She is still doing a lot of theater thirty-seven years later. It would be rare for a classics program to be associated with putting on modern productions of ancient texts. Mary Kay is a pioneer in doing just that.

It took me a while—in terms of your question about how open the campus was then—to remember there were no checkpoints then. There were very few police around, very few lights or signs. It really was like a summer camp in atmosphere. Very dark at night. You were living in the forest. It was so different from where I came from—two very urban environments. My last year at Yale the

Bobby Seale trial was going on right across the green from the classics building, so you smelled a lot of tear gas (laughs) and to come out here and find that it was much more a paradise-type place, as un-urban as you can imagine. That took some getting used to. Everything was closed in downtown Santa Cruz by ten o'clock. It's grown more urban since I came, but in 1970 there wasn't a lot of night life here.

But there was a charm, the charm of being in a wooded area with mountains and ocean views and water. It just had lots of natural features that I was not used to as part of a campus and a university education. And I really liked that. I had a dog and lots of other people had dogs. Dogs ran free on campus. They don't anymore but they did then. I'm sure I could not have had a dog at Harvard. I wouldn't have even thought about it, and certainly not one that ran free and came to class when he felt like it.

When I was first here I think there was maybe one policeman at most on duty at any time, certainly there was only one at night. The campus was wide open to anyone. There was a guy I can remember right near Morison House at the Cowell fountain—he called himself Jesus Christ and he wore a cloak and he would come and walk on water at the Cowell fountain. People would gather around and he would walk on water. Unfortunately, he never stayed above. But there was always hope.

There were a whole bunch of characters like that around Santa Cruz, in the town and around campus. It was a colorful place and very different. There was also a lot of, I guess, passion for the place—students who were really proud to be there and happy to be there. It was distinctive to them. It had some of the same

prestige in its newness that places like Harvard and Yale had in their ancientness or oldness. It was still highly selective, hard to get into, small, lots of individual attention, lots of very, very bright, sometimes slightly eccentric or wavering students. But it was fun. When I went out to help recruit people to apply for a teaching job here, I could say with great confidence that they would enjoy it here. And they did. We picked the right kind of people. Gary Miles and Mary Kay. They stayed on from the time they came here until retirement. They didn't go anywhere else. That's unusual.

Vanderscoff: And would you mind speaking to your work as a preceptor in Morrison House for those three years that you were there?

Lynch: Yes. I was the adult presence, as it were. There was very little training going on. Two resident assistants, who were seniors, helped. And it was a difficult time. There were always problems with drug taking. There were a couple of really horrendous accidents that resulted from bad trips on the campus. These were things that I had no experience of myself. And it was a noisy place. Luckily I'm a very sound sleeper, but there were people who had trouble with the noise, music playing all the time, people staying out late.

There weren't a lot of rules. We were just working towards rules and guidelines and things like that at the time. And there was very little training. So mostly what I tried to do was just befriend the students, be on their side if they needed me. And sometimes they would come down and consult with me about various sorts of things. I had breakfasts on Sunday mornings. I guess that's the way the job was conceived, to be an adult presence. But I wasn't really that much older than a lot of them.

I wasn't a police person. I did try to warn people if they were stepping over obvious boundaries but I was not there to take names, bring charges, or anything like that.

Vanderscoff: You were mentioning that when you were at Yale Bobby Seale's trial was going on just nearby. In other words, an instance of political tension. What sort of instances were there of political tension more in that mode, more in a confrontational mode in Santa Cruz, in your time here?

Lynch: There was less than I thought there would be. You can associate Santa Cruz with being quite radical, but it seemed more culturally than politically radical. Students and the people in town who went to rallies tended to rally around having freedoms to do things. They were less involved with revolutionary action. Now, some of the students went up to Berkeley and participated in things up in Berkeley which were much more heavy-duty political statements. There were rallies at Santa Cruz all the time but I don't remember them being ugly or explosive, or particularly heavy-duty. But certainly that was going on in Berkeley in the late sixties, early seventies.

"They Decided to Tear Up Our Reading List":

Early Educational Experiments at UCSC

Vanderscoff: Did you have a sense of a distinct *UCSC experiment*, however you want to interpret that term, in your initial years here?

Lynch: Yeah, I think everyone was trying out something, trying to find boundaries that needed to be questioned or broken down. It seemed to me that people were looking—there was a lot of searching and seeking going on. And I

think there are some genuine good products of that. Some of the students that were produced ended up having amazing careers in terms of what they contributed to literature or to studying literature or the humanities.

Harry Berger and I taught a course in Cowell, an upper-division course, in which the students actually took over the class. These were amazing students and what they said was that what inhibited discussion was that Harry and I had picked the reading list and these are all things that we knew a lot about, since we had studied them. They didn't realize that some of the things we hadn't studied that much ourselves, but they thought, well, you're experts on this and this makes it impossible for us to have a real discussion because you're an expert and we're not. So they decided to tear up our reading list and impose a reading list of their own, which were all things that we hadn't read and they hadn't read before either, so we were all on equal footing.

Vanderscoff: How did you respond to that?

Lynch: We let them do it. It was hard. We had to read things like Josephus instead of Plato. I had maybe read a paragraph of Josephus before. And they were constantly experimenting with things, like we'd come to the class and there'd be no tables or chairs in there, just rugs and pillows. They were trying all kinds of different formal arrangements and informal arrangements. And then for the reading list they all came in and we had a discussion which was not led by us. They didn't want us to lead the discussions. We participated in it but on an equal footing with them because we all had just read the same stuff together for the first time. And they decided where to go with it. The students worked amazingly hard. Several of them wrote papers on the readings and put them on

reserve, so that we had to go and read student papers that were assigned to us.
(laughs)

Vanderscoff: (laughs)

Lynch: So there were things like this going on; this is just as a single example. And there were things like student-directed seminars, where students would conceive of a course on their own and find a faculty sponsor. I sponsored many of them. And a student actually ran the whole class. I didn't even go a lot of times. You didn't have to go, just had to follow them and make sure things were going well. Well, a lot of these classes were very imaginative, really unusual things that would never have gotten in the regular curriculum. They were limited to twelve students. But I've had students come back and say, "The best class I ever took was that student-directed seminar in pantology, or something like that." We had one called pantology, which is the study of everything. And it was an interesting class because it ended up being the study of anything rather than everything.

Vanderscoff: When you reflect back on this time of rearrangements, of challenges to your syllabus, or even physical rearrangements of the classroom in bringing in cushions and pillows and things like that—

Lynch: Refreshments sometimes. You never knew what they were going to set up. Because the students took responsibility for the class. That's what they wanted to do.

Vanderscoff: —what sort of impact or repercussions do you think that that had for the educational process, both for them and for you as a teacher?

Lynch: I found it challenging and interesting. I liked being challenged by students. We didn't like everything. I mean, I didn't like being in the lotus position (laughs) for a half hour. I can still remember that. Or sitting on a pillow or those sorts of things. But I think I learned. I opened up my own thinking as a result of it. A lot of those students have become extremely successful in academics and elsewhere.

I, for example, participated in a course called *Creating Kresge College*. This was how the campus was growing—by colleges. You would add on a new college and then hire faculty and students in that college. Kresge was the new college online so the people who were in charge of the college, the provost and the new preceptor, created a class called *Creating Kresge College*. And you took it for five units of credit, in that informal setting across the way.

I took the class. I wasn't the teacher but I went every week. And I made no secret of why I was there, because I wanted to have a new appointment in classics. And since the campus was growing by college, you had to find somebody who would not only be in a department but also was acceptable to the college. And so, who was going to be acceptable to Kresge College? Well, who knew, because it hadn't been created yet. So you had to be in there on the creation level to understand.

Kresge College was initially set up to be the environmental studies college. That was the original idea. But the people who were in charge decided that you couldn't really understand the environment unless you understood yourself first. And so, they began using humanistic psychology approaches, the T group in particular, as a mode of teaching and learning. You almost didn't have to read

any books. You just had to look inside yourself and be able to say how this made you feel or didn't strike any cord with you.

But they had people present ideas. I came in and talked about Plato's Academy as an ancient educational institution, what we could learn from it as a model for our class. And they claimed to have learned something. I don't know if they did.

But one thing that did happen—this may seem a little far out—was that Norman O. Brown was invited to come in. He was very good on mythology, and how to teach mythology. He gave a talk about Actaeon, who was torn apart by dogs. And at the end of the talk, after a little discussion, we were led out into the woods. It was getting towards darkness, and people started barking, for what reason I don't know. (laughs) And this was interpreted to be as a sign that this is where Kresge College should be. So this was how Kresge College was sited, it was where this group of people from the course *Creating Kresge College* walked out in the woods and started barking.

Vanderscoff: (laughs)

Lynch: I don't think I should go on too much more. I could tell you even more outrageous stories, but that's one that I was particularly fond of because I was there. People have forgotten these kinds of things. Anyway, we ended up getting an appointment [in classics] in Kresge College because I had a sense of what they were looking for. Unfortunately, the people who came didn't like being in Kresge College and left. Gary Miles left one year after. Mary Kay came to Kresge College but she left a few years after for Crown College.

Vanderscoff: Well if there are other stories about—

Lynch: Kresge was a hard college to fit, trying to find a physicist who'd also like to do T-group study, pretty hard to do. But we were able to find some classicists who were at least open to the idea. I think that's how we got the appointments, was through Kresge College. It was a loophole.

It was just such a mix of thinking. The tarot was used in the Kresge College course. They used that as a way of making decisions. And they used *Sesame Street*—and Kresge Street is modeled on *Sesame Street*, where everyone meets around the washer and dryer in the middle of the college. That was their idea, that winding main street. They said it was like *Sesame Street*, where you walked down the street and you bumped into people. So in that huge expanse of campus you were made to walk down a fairly narrow street so you had to encounter people walking each way. That was part of the thinking there. These were all things that came out in the course creating Kresge College. This does not happen at Harvard and Yale, I can tell you.

Vanderscoff: (laughs) That's right. Compared to that context at Kresge, would you describe Cowell College at the same time, where you were affiliated?

Lynch: Well, Cowell was identified as the most traditional of the colleges. It focused on Western civilization. There were some comparative interests but mostly it was Western civilization from early antiquity through the present, and the core course was going to be centered on that. So by contrast with the newer colleges, it seemed set and stable. But, as I mentioned, even within a set and stable thing framework, there were people doing all kinds of challenging things

in the curriculum, even in Cowell. But Cowell definitely had much more traditional humanistic interests.

Kresge had almost an anti-humanistic feeling. It was humanistic psychology but it was not focusing on human beings in their most glorious sense, or the largest sense. It was much more interested in defining weaknesses and defects in oneself and overcoming them, it seemed to me anyway. A lot of the T group things were confessional, that is, you basically owned up to things that you supposedly had been suppressing all your life. It did not appeal to me.

I think the students were much more culturally radical, especially the ones who were attracted to Kresge College. I found Kresge a difficult college in its conception. It really struggled to get going. It turned so many people off, it seemed to me.

But there were differences between all the colleges and some of them were accidental and some of them were purposeful. Some of them came by design and some not. There was a real mix of things happening. And I liked that. Each college was not a replication of the previous one. There was a sense that plans were open and up for grabs still.

Reflections on the Narrative Evaluation System and Ideology in Classics

Vanderscoff: So in this context of growth and the new, did you find the Narrative Evaluation System and the Pass-No Pass system to be useful tools as an educator?

Lynch: Yes, I liked them. Except for when I taught larger classes. I never found a good way of evaluating students in larger classes because the menu idea of just

filling in “very good” in a narrative didn’t seem to be any different from giving a grade. But I liked in the smaller classes that you could actually individualize what was good about a student’s work and what was lacking. You put both in there. And you didn’t have to do a grade. I don’t like grading people so I liked that aspect.

I do think it failed. The system failed because it just doesn’t work for large classes and there’s no way we could live without large classes. There may have been some other way, some brilliant idea to handle large classes so the smaller classes could continue to have narratives.

What I didn’t like about narratives—it was not in my interest to like narratives, it was not in any faculty’s interest, because you never had any vacations. At Christmas time you had to spend all your time during the Christmas break writing narrative evaluations, whereas it took very little time to do grades or the number system. I can remember all the times between the winter and spring quarters there was very little time off. Sometimes we only had a weekend and you had to have your narrative evaluations in. And there was just no way that you could keep up. I was constantly behind on that. I think all faculty members who taught any—once you got into larger classes in the thirties, or forties, or fifties, not to mention the ones in the hundreds or two hundreds, it was very difficult to do them in the time you had to do the evaluations, even using a menu.

Vanderscoff: So, given the time factor, why do you dislike conventional grading?

Lynch: Well, it seems to me that it's false quantification. What is a B essay? What makes an essay a B or a 70 or a 60? What is important about someone's writing is the qualities that it exhibits, the good qualities or the less than good qualities and to be able to identify them and to help people to work toward improving or developing what they already started. There's something about grades that just cuts off growth, whereas a narrative evaluation can be a beginning of a developmental process, or part of a developmental process, in education.

Students actually learn from narrative evaluations. You don't learn much from a B, whereas you could learn from a good evaluation, you could learn something important. A good transcript of narrative evaluations from a lot of different faculty—a real student emerges from them. But it takes a long time to read those and many places with very good graduate programs did not have time to read them. If you took the time to read them, they were much more informative than a grade point average or a transcript of letters.

Vanderscoff: So when it comes to drawing lines, for you what made the difference between a pass and a no record or a no pass?

Lynch: I think everyone who completed all the work, for the most part, passed. Not a very distinguished pass, but if you completed the work then you passed. And then you evaluated it and said this is outstanding quality or this was a rather weak response to the assignments and say why.

That's the thing. When you give a grade, you don't ever have to say why. When you give a narrative evaluation, supposedly you're saying why you think the person's work is of such a quality. You give a reasoned statement.

But I do think it's impractical. Maybe a small private college could do it but at a larger state university it's just not going to happen. As the campus grew and the size of classes grew, what you ended up doing was having a lot of transcripts that said, "No narrative evaluation has been received for this class." That doesn't look good on anyone's transcript. That doesn't help anyone get a job or opportunity.

Vanderscoff: Well, we're just about approaching ninety minutes so at this point I'd like to ask you if there is anything else that you'd like to say about the topics that we've been discussing in today's session.

Lynch: No, I don't think so. You're leading me through this stuff. Until you bring it up, I have no memory of all these things that happened. Next time we'll talk about me being provost—the eighties and nineties and the twenty-first century.

Vanderscoff: Yes. And a lot of the dynamics within the literature [department] I'm curious about. Publication. So we'll get to all of that next time.

Lynch: I have mixed feelings about the literature department. I liked the fact that we had so many faculty in the department who were very interested in the classics and supported classics. But there were also some rather ugly tensions. I think that's probably true of most departments. We were considered to be one of the worst, though, in terms of hostility.

And I don't have any great insight into how these hostilities developed either. Lots of them had to do with personal relations outside of any jobs. Some of them were ideological differences because literature became much more ideological in its approach in the seventies and eighties. And the idea of looking

at something in a disinterested way fell by the wayside, as a naïve concept. Or to give close readings, the quality of which is closeness rather than what you're saying about the politics of the text. The politics of the text became primary in many peoples' study and that caused, I think, the kind of ideological tensions that you see in the Senate and the House of Representatives and groups like that, with people supporting a particular line of thought when they write about or talk about literature.

I was not really prepared for that to happen. Classics training does not give a sense that there are centrally important ideological differences. They are there but research doesn't feature them, at least. It masks them—the kind of classics training I had anyway. When you put ideology in the forefront, I think that made the sometimes personal tensions between people much more exaggerated. It became hard to get anyone to lead such an ideologically split group because it was so quarrelsome. It's obviously not much fun to be the chair of a group that's not getting along and not working together.

Vanderscoff: As a closing question for this section: how do ideological questions manifest themselves within classics, either the program here or the field more broadly?

Lynch: Well, I think in the way that you draw up the syllabus, the way you write what become acceptable essays in the field. The politics of deconstruction of a text are completely different from reading a text to see what you can learn from it. Deconstruction compels you to read *through* the text, see what's underpinning it—who is profiting from it, who is being advantaged by the text or by something in the text, or by the author who is writing the text. You identify the different

forces at work, the power forces: who is winning and who's losing? Who is marginalized and who is centralized by the text? In the world of the text who gets to speak and who gets to decide and why?

You get into very sensitive areas when you start doing this. The way I was trained was that you didn't look at what Sophocles was trying to generate in you as a reader, but you looked at what you could learn from Sophocles, whatever he had to offer. You tried to discover insights you could gain from reading the text. And in political terms, that's now considered a naïve or ridiculous way of reading. But it's still I think the way that most people read. They're not there as a reader to find out what Sophocles was trying to do to you, what he was trying to put over on you, or the like. You're trying to discover through the language of the text what you can learn about the new world that the text opens up for you. Reading is transformative.

Vanderscoff: Okay, well thank you for your time today and I look forward to picking up the thread next session.

College-Board Dynamics at Early UCSC

Vanderscoff: Today is Thursday, May 2, 2013. This is Cameron Vanderscoff here with John Patrick Lynch for the third part of his oral history project. I'd like to pick up the thread by asking, in the seventies, prior to [collegiate and administrative] reorganization how did you balance your time or prioritize your

time between your obligations to your college and your obligations to your board?⁴

Lynch: I was a service-oriented faculty member. I thought that there was important business that needed to be done in committees and by individuals to administer the programs both on campus and in the colleges. In my view, everyone should take a fair share. I tried to take a fair share in both the college and in the department. I guess it was a board of studies then. I probably spent more time in the college because I volunteered from early on, to do much more time-consuming jobs in Cowell. Like the senior preceptor job I did quite early on. By my third year on campus, I was the senior preceptor of the college.

And I did committee work in the literature board of studies but it was mostly being on committees rather than leading them. Eventually though, I was an undergraduate program committee chair. I was a graduate program committee program chair. I was a personnel committee chair twice. Those are the fairly onerous jobs in literature. I was only acting chair of literature one time. I never became chair of the literature department or board of studies.

In the end, I probably did more for the college, in the sense that I was usually asked to do some sort of leadership position in the college, all the way up to the time I was provost. I went from resident preceptor to senior preceptor to provost. Those are all pretty demanding jobs. I thought of them mostly as service, things that needed to be done. And I was willing to do my part.

⁴ Departments were referred to as "boards of study" at UCSC until 1997. The two terms are largely used interchangeably in these sessions.

I would say my attempt was to balance my service at fifty-fifty for the college and the department. It was not an easy thing to do. But again, I found it challenging and fun to do these jobs, largely because I got tenure so quickly that I didn't worry about exposing myself or risking my career. I understand other junior faculty members could not do that because it was too risky when they were on the clock for a promotion to tenure. They had to spend more time on their research and then their teaching development. The service in the college was counted in personnel but you were not going to get promoted just on the basis of service. I think everyone could see out. They didn't need tea leaves to figure that out.

Vanderscoff: And so, given the strong presence of the college in the seventies, how would you characterize the UCSC climate in regards to support or emphasis on research and publication?

Lynch: There were mixed messages. I know Page Smith famously said that he favored a system whereby you would get demoted if you published because it meant that you took time away from your primary task of serving the needs of students. A teacher should be devoted to the care and feeding of students both in the classroom and outside the classroom.⁵ I think he was partly joking. While he said things like that he was, of course, himself writing like crazy. He would have been demoted regularly because of all the publications he was involved in. He liked to write. Why penalize anyone for that?

⁵ For an oral history of Page Smith's perspective on early Cowell and UCSC, see Elizabeth Calciano, Interviewer, and Randall Jarrell, Editor, *Page Smith: Founding Cowell College and UCSC, 1964-1973*. Available in full text and audio at <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/smith>

I do think some wrong messages were being sent to junior faculty. It was suggested that significant service counted for tenure and not worry so much about publication. Just one quality article would do it, or something like that. I don't know—my own thesis advisor, I think I told you before, warned me, "Don't get involved in a lot of things that keep you from writing and publishing because that's your only mobility in the profession—your publications."

In other words, it was the traditional voice of the UC system as a whole that was calling the shots. "Oh, you're a senior preceptor or you're head of the undergraduate program. That's nice but that's not a quality performance on the job—everyone does that sort of thing. We want people who are publishing and opening up to students what's going on in the field in terms of research, who are mentoring students, getting jobs for students, getting opportunities for students in graduate programs. Those aspects of performance are all dependent on your reputation in the field. And your reputation in the field usually comes from your writing. So when employers are looking for teachers/scholars above the beginning level, they are looking for strong researchers who have established themselves in some way, who have published something significant, and who have promise to publish more." That is the traditional way of evaluating a tenure case, and in the end that is what prevailed at UCSC.

Now, I think research is probably overemphasized in faculty performance evaluations. I agree with Page Smith that publication shouldn't be everything. There are people who get promoted and get in high positions who don't teach well or don't teach at all, who don't do service or do service badly. I was always looking to have some sort of balance between those three areas, which is what I

think the ideal should be, to have a balance. But the reality is that the balance is pretty much stacked in favor of research and publication, no matter what your field is. And, of course, science is definitely stacked in that direction. I don't think any junior faculty members in science would be told when they come in that they need not do research; they can just teach well and do fine service and they will get promoted. That's not going to happen. You *could* teach badly and not do very good service and still get promoted if your research is outstanding. But the opposite doesn't happen very often, if at all. Strong teaching and some service will not compensate for a thin research record.

Vanderscoff: And how did you personally function or choose to prioritize your time in that sort of a stacked situation, as you just characterized it?

Lynch: Well, I was actually eager to do better in writing. I did the thesis, which was a book-length manuscript, but it was really a thesis, not a book. I wrote it very fast. There were lots of things I wanted to research, but I didn't explore them for the thesis. There were avenues I didn't want to open up because I needed to have the blinders on to go right straight through to the end of the project. That is a way to finish something, to start ignoring things. If you start allowing issues to open up, you never get done. When you're doing a thesis, you've got to stay on track.

I did that but I didn't feel satisfied. When I was doing research, there were questions that kept popping up that I was interested in pursuing but, as I said, I didn't dare pursue them because it would get me off the track and get me into something else. So when I got here I had written notes to myself in my thesis, both in the footnotes and in side notes that I kept for myself, to identify avenues I

wanted to pursue. My hope was to change what was basically a history of Aristotle's school as a piece of land and a building project—very material, and with very little intellectual history, just some—and to make it more of a study of Aristotle's school in the larger sense. Not just as an institution in the material sense, but also an institution as a philosophical project and educational institution. So that's what I did.

I was eager to do that. I guess lots of times you feel burnt out after you finish your thesis, but I didn't feel that way. As I mentioned, I had an office which was about two hundred feet away from where I lived. I could spend every night in my office. I'd never had such a setup before. I was up there every day and night working on my book, and I didn't do that and neglect my teaching. I taught a lot and I had a lot of interaction with students. But I also had a lot of time. I was onsite; I was not married; I had no other commitments. I was new in the area and didn't have a lot of obligations. And it was just lucky circumstance for me that I was able to go up there and do what I wanted to do.

One night Page Smith stopped in and asked me what I was doing and I told him I was working on this project. And he said, "You shouldn't be doing that. You should be interacting with students and working on your teaching." I said to him, "I'm teaching five classes. They're not big classes but I am ever present on campus and showing my commitment to teaching." My first quarter I had to teach five different classes. The biggest one was nineteen and the smallest one was three or four, but each of them took preparations. So I thought I was doing what a teacher does. The students seemed to like what I was doing in class. I enjoyed it. We were having fun. But I don't think Page was convinced

that I was spending my time appropriately. I'm pretty sure he suspected that I was a Trojan horse on the side of the traditional research university.

And as far as service goes, I was a resident preceptor. I was taking that job seriously, trying to be an adult presence for students. I spent a lot of time with students in my dorm. It wasn't as if I was neglecting them. And I also involved some of the classics majors, and other students who were oriented to the classics. I brought them in on what I was doing in my research, explaining to them what it takes to be a grad student and a junior faculty member. I think they found it instructive to see someone who had just finished a thesis and talked about how to get a large project like that going, and then to see what I was doing now, how to revise a thesis for publication, and what I was going to do with it next.

So even my research I thought was benefitting students—not all students because not all of them would be interested in my particular project. Students came up and asked me how it was going. There was a student who read a chapter of it, he said, just out of curiosity. It was not the kind of life you can do forever, I don't think. I guess some donnish faculty in Oxford and Cambridge used to live that sort of life. That was the kind of life I was living at the beginning. And I really liked it. It was different and very stimulating.

Luckily—and I was completely naïve about this—I just sent the completed manuscript off to the University of California Press and they liked it and accepted it with almost no changes, I mean, very, very small changes. And then I took on other things—like I decided to do the index myself. I didn't hire an indexer. I found the process instructive, actually.

Reflections on Reaggregation and Reorganization

Vanderscoff: So you've been discussing this certain professional ethos that characterized UCSC in your time there in the seventies. In the late seventies, under Chancellor Sinsheimer, there was a substantial reorganization, of course, of that structure, where power was devolved to the boards, hiring and firing powers was moved from the colleges, among other changes. How did that event impact how you personally distributed your time at UCSC?

Lynch: Well, I guess I followed along with the purpose of the reforms. Obviously the administration wanted to have people spend more time on their departmental duties and their departmental responsibilities of doing research and teaching in the major.

We had had a conception of classics on campus which was very collegiately based. Our goal was to have somebody promoting the ancient world in every single college. So every college would have a friendly classicist available to them. We had a missionary vision of what classics would be. We were going to bring classics to all parts of our world.

That took a toll on some of the faculty. It was perfectly nice for me because I was in Cowell, and Cowell was largely humanities. And I had a lot of people to interact with on the faculty. Norman O. Brown and Harry Berger particularly, as I mentioned before, were very great supporters of classics. But my classics colleagues were in colleges where their missionary obligations were much greater and their rewards much smaller. They didn't have that many faculty in

their colleges to interact with, and they didn't see much interest in the ancient world at the college level.

So, although I liked the vision and profited from it, I think it was probably a good idea to bring classics faculty together at Cowell. We became much more of a group and a presence in the college. We saw each other a lot more and on a day-in and day-out basis.

When we got everyone together, we were able to do some good things. For example, we established a classics library at Cowell and developed a classics corridor, where faculty offices were together. We became more centralized and visible, having been radically decentralized in the earlier vision of the campus, and I would say it was good for all of us, including me.

I don't know for sure. There are arguments for both visions. I think what we were doing initially was more in the spirit of what I interpreted UCSC to be all about, which was a purposefully decentralized institution. What happened? I liked—and still like—the conception of the campus as a collegiate university, which means that we would be in a good neighborhood in a great city. Many people were in good neighborhoods in their colleges, if they chose the colleges that they wanted to be in and this fit in well and they liked them. But what was not growing was the great city. There was not much in the way of centralized things happening at the campuswide level. So you felt as though you were in a good neighborhood but the city wasn't so good.

Though I don't think this was the conscious intent of the reorganization—the idea of featuring UCSC as more of a university, as well as a collegiate place,

started to grow. I think that was probably good for the students and faculty both. Reorganization was not done in the most sensitive way, however. Faculty were yanked from places that they had built themselves, that they had put a lot of themselves into. When you build a structure, you don't like to hear, "Okay, we're going to take you over to a structure that someone else built and plunk you down there because you belong there." That underestimates values like loyalty and the amounts of your own soul and personal being that you put into a place. I know I would have been really upset to be yanked from Cowell if they had decided that classics should go in Kresge or Porter. I have nothing against those colleges, but having invested so much in Cowell, as a resident preceptor, a senior preceptor, doing all those things with students in Cowell, and then being told, "Okay, you go on over there to Porter because that's where we have decided that classics should be." I had nothing to do with the building of Porter, or who was there, what programs. So that was harsh, I think. It would have been slower, but I think goals could have been set and a more evolutionary process could have been put in place.

Vanderscoff: So what then do you think were the consequences for the original UCSC experiment and the particular quality of education at UCSC, as a result of the institution of reorganization?

Lynch: Well, I think that students were given an introduction to the university which was much more centralized. You started out with your major and your field of study, and the colleges were thought to be secondary places where you lived, or picked up your mail, had friends, or you liked the coffee shop there. But

it didn't have the same sense of a strong ongoing community that was planning for itself.

This is from the student point of view—the student government was Cowell-based. There was a lot of interest in being part of the Cowell community; students would meet and plan and do things together, solve problems together. That was a really good education, I think, for the students. After reorganization, there was less of an emphasis on interaction and fewer students participated at the college level. More students went towards participation in centralized government if they were politically oriented.

As I said, I think that the centralized government needed some new blood, or at least a transfusion because it had not developed sufficiently. It was atrophying. It was a tough call. Those are not easy issues to decide. But I think that underneath the surface contours, support and funding for things in the colleges were eroding and moving away rather drastically to the center, including fundraising. If you followed the money you could see that the colleges were being weakened in favor of doing things much more at the central level. I think that made a difference for students, particularly in the humanities and social sciences, who really wanted to be part of a community and a more face-to-face enterprise, and didn't want to go to a university that was doing everything *for* them, putting on the whole show. They wanted to be participating in a community, as they would in a small liberal arts college.

The Role of the Staff in College and Department Life

Lynch: The colleges—I'd say Cowell anyway, kept going. [Cowell staffer] Angie Christmann is just an incredible person. If a history of Cowell College is written, she'd deserve a chapter all of her own, and probably the longest chapter. She really was Cowell College for several generations of students. She carried the torch and carried the ball. She managed to keep up enthusiasm and worked with students effectively, kept them involved in planning, even though they didn't have the kind of financial support that was available previously. Always, every year, it was cut-cut-cut. Sometimes it felt like, would you prefer for your left hand or your right hand to be cut off? Difficult and painful choices had to be made. But she kept the thing going and gave Cowell students a strong sense of identity. It was just amazing what she did. There aren't many staff people anywhere so dedicated. Any lack of faculty involvement at Cowell, Angie made up for with her enterprise.

Vanderscoff: Would you mind reflecting more broadly on the role that staff have played in the maintenance of both Cowell as a college and literature as a board/department?

Lynch: Well, we had some great staff at Cowell. Lynne Wolcott was a fine academic advisor. I hate to start mentioning everybody by name because I will forget someone. My own personal assistant when I was provost, Wally Romig, was amazing. She just loved to work. In fact one thing she said when I asked her to be my assistant was that she did not want to have any afternoons where she had nothing to do. If she had nothing to do, she just wanted to go home and not be paid. She liked to stay after work—if there was a project, a grant application

to be done, there was a deadline, she would stay as long as it took. She was a very efficient worker and a great support. A lot of the success I had as provost, I would attribute to her generosity. I could always depend on her being available and willing to do whatever was needed to be done. I do think the hidden heroes of the college system were the staff that kept the faith, kept the programs going, even though the budget was being cut. Sometimes their salaries were being cut, their hours were being cut. But the staff kept it going and enjoyed working with students.

In literature, we were blessed with some very good administrative assistants that I think made up for some rather poor leadership on the part of faculty. There wasn't a lot of reward for being a department chair. Even after the centralization, we really didn't have departments that had real budgets. There was no significant power given over to the chair. They called them the chairs of the departments but it was very much like being the chair of a board of studies. When you have that sort of situation—a small stipend—some faculty aren't willing to put much time in. They are willing to do the housekeeping that needs to be done but they didn't provide a lot of vision or leadership, or put in that extra time needed to make things grow.

I don't think that, at least in literature, the reorganization shifted the power toward our board of studies. It took power away from colleges but it didn't give much in return to the boards. And what kept the boards going administratively, doing all the personnel work and the course approval work and the evaluation of student work, and the scheduling of exams—what kept all that going was a really dedicated staff who liked working for students. Not every staff member

was great but people like Claire Braz-Valentine, she was a real trooper and a great fan of the literature program and a big favorite among students and faculty. She was a playwright herself. The role of staff probably in any university is underestimated, but at a place like UCSC, which had so many irons in the fire and things going at cross-purposes, staff had to be flexible and very willing and very committed to students. Otherwise they might well get frustrated at the place.

Interdisciplinary Experiments at UCSC

Some of them did get frustrated because there was a lot of creation going on and a lot of the creation ended up being junked. I compared my situation with someone who went and did classics at a place that had an established classics department. They just went and fit in a role that was already there, that was defined before they came. Whereas for me and other people who came to UCSC there was no role. You made up the role and sometimes you made up things that were not going to work and were not sustainable. So you had to trash that and come up with something else. But you didn't come in and just fit in, take over the Virgil class or the composition class, the one that's already there. You're constantly thinking about how can you make classics relate to other things going on in literature and history, philosophy. You'd try to coordinate and build something different.

The ideal was to find something interdisciplinary. *Interdisciplinary* was a hot word. Most of us were trying to be interdisciplinary. And some experiments didn't work out. On the whole, I would say that the interdisciplinary approach didn't yield as much gold as I hoped it would. Some silver and some bronze

experiments. (laughs) You don't hear the word *interdisciplinary* much any more. But that was certainly an ideal when I arrived—how could you take what you do and extend it to other areas and work with other faculty members, preferably across divisions—humanities and science, for example. Very little of the humanities and sciences interactions paid off, I would say. Some. I think some relationships between humanities and social science have been a little bit closer but nothing revolutionary. Now if you're thinking of your teaching and your research at the university, you're probably thinking of your discipline rather than interdisciplinary work. You have remnants of a once illustrious interdisciplinary PhD program in History of Consciousness. But that's eroding.⁶ I haven't followed exactly where it's going, but it doesn't seem to be going up.

Vanderscoff: And so you say that there was a certain dearth of gold in these interdisciplinary endeavors—

Lynch: Not for lack of trying. We certainly tried a lot of things but it was just a practical reality that trying to do what's expected of you as a philosopher, or as an English literature professor, or as classicist, and then do something significant in an interdisciplinary way was tough for all but a few special people.

Vanderscoff: So if not for a lack of effort, what do you think it was that made it difficult for these projects to yield their desired result? Was it a structural issue? Was it a disciplinary expectation issue? What do you think?

⁶ For oral history perspectives on the history of consciousness program, see Irene Reti, Interviewer and Editor, *Edges and Ecotones: Donna Haraway's Worlds at UCSC*; Cameron Vanderscoff, Interviewer and Editor, *Hayden White: Frontiers of Consciousness at UCSC*, and James Clifford: *Tradition and Transformation at UCSC*. Available on the Regional History Project's website at <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/ucsc>

Lynch: Well, the demands of the disciplines became more and more difficult, trying to keep up with your field. There was a proliferation of scholarship and programs and thinking that you had to keep up with. Trying to develop something significant and interdisciplinary was pretty tough. Journals were founded to try to forge the way and I don't think people read them very much. There was so much being written, so much that was not exactly interdisciplinary, but novel within the discipline, as well as traditional research, that I think it was difficult for many to keep their heads above water.

Humanities scholars do not have a very easy time grasping big time science. And I would say the same thing vice versa—a lab scientist, however brilliant in his field, has trouble trying to understand what is going on in the humanities at a higher level. At the introductory level a lot of interesting interdisciplinary things did happen for students, for freshmen and sophomores. But interdisciplinary breakthroughs in research: that's what has "yielded very little gold." The idea of interdisciplinary studies as a basis for general education, I think remains a very good one.

Vanderscoff: So if the usage of that term, or the salience of that term *interdisciplinary* or *interdisciplinarity* has diminished, what do you think has become of that original interest or determination to try it out that you said was such a prevalent factor back in the seventies?

Lynch: What has taken its place?

Vanderscoff: Yeah, if that word is gone, what do you think has happened in regards to the drive that led to that word or the interdisciplinary spirit behind that?

Lynch: I think the talking among scientists and social scientists and humanities faculty who are interested in the general education of students, creating introductory courses for students, has yielded some useful results in the classroom. I think that's good, for students to see things across disciplines, or all the human sciences—humanities and social science and science together before they start taking them apart and becoming more specialized. Pre-specialized interdisciplinarity is good. But highly specialized hasn't worked very well, in my experience. I wouldn't give up on it. I just wouldn't have great expectations for it. A more modest vision instead of some sort of grand interdisciplinary synthesis, finding some way of pushing the boundaries a bit in one's own discipline—that's a more modest goal. And I think that's do-able and valuable.

Cowell Provostship:

Student Protest, Student Life, and Being the "Model of the Slug"

Vanderscoff: Well, coming back to reorganization and the changes that that brought about in the campus in terms of the colleges and the board, you served as provost of Cowell from 1983 to 1989, in the wake of this reorganization when the role of the colleges and the role of the provost changed substantially. Why did you want to be provost?

Lynch: Well, I'm not sure I would say I actually wanted it. I had done the steps, done the jobs beforehand as a resident preceptor, senior preceptor. I enjoyed

working with students. If I had my choice about the provost, I would say that I would like it to be a career position rather than a rotating one. I think that would have been better. I would vote for John and Ann Dizikes to be the permanent provosts.⁷ (laughs) I think they really did it extremely well.

I was balking at the word “wanted.” I did apply, so I guess there was sort of a wish in that. I was happy to get it and I was happy to have done it. I myself would do it over again, the six years that I did, but I wouldn’t do years seven, eight, and nine. I think I did all I could do. From my own experience, I would not have wanted it as a career position. But I would have liked to have seen someone like the Dizikes’s lead the college all the way through. Because I think they have the right spirit, the right vision, and the right following.

People warned us that the Dizikes’s would be a really tough act to follow. And it is true they were a really tough act to follow in one sense. But in another sense, they were the ideal act to follow because they left the college in such good order. Things were working well. Staff had high morale, even through all the bumps that went with reorganization. There *were* protests about funds cut. But I think because of John’s ability to lead, it was an easier place for someone to take over than other colleges might have been. And also, John and Ann were so generous. They supported us through any kind of a problem and made clear that we were free to call on them and they would help as much as they could. They didn’t take my going off into other directions as criticism, as happened between

⁷ For John Dizikes’ perspective on Cowell and UCSC, see Cameron Vanderscoff, Interviewer and Editor, *John Dizikes: Reflections on a Life of Learning and Teaching at UCSC, 1965-2000*. Available in full text and audio at <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/dizikes>

some other provosts. When a new provost decided to do something else in his or her provostship, the previous provost took that as a criticism of what they were doing. John and Ann didn't feel that way at all. They knew that there were lots of things that had to go on the back burner. You do some things and then the next person does other things. It's not a criticism. It's an extension or a rotation of what needs to be done, corrections. They always took things in a very good spirit. We were really lucky to have the Dizikes's as our predecessors.

But I think that what encouraged me to want to continue being a part of Cowell and doing the provostship even though things were looking a bit grim was the contact with students. I really liked working with students. I think Cowell and the campus have had some really incredible students over the years. I don't think people realize how much talent has passed through this campus. I liked the idea of having a college humor magazine, for example. We talked about that before, *The Fish Rap*. I heard that students were interested and I tried to support it.

I liked the initiative. As I said, I called our concept a great city and in a good "neighborhood." Some of the students in Cowell who were leaders, wanted to be leaders of the campus as a whole and they were elected. I think they did a very good job. The whole "banana slug" episode was an external symbol of what was going on in the struggle between central administration and the campus leadership among students. Pete Blackshaw and Kevin Gillis were two of the leaders—I told you about the secret, about the symbol of the banana slug?

Vanderscoff: Yes, and I invite you tell that story about the slug if you wouldn't mind, for the record.

Lynch: I didn't tell that on the record?

Vanderscoff: No, that was off the record yesterday, after we ended the session.

Lynch: Well, I don't know how much legend and how much truth is in it, but Pete Blackshaw, who was probably the leader in the "banana slug" campaign and who is the one who has the copyright on it all and I guess has made money all these years on the producers out of Oxford West—he was a great leader and a great guy, I think. He says in a *City on a Hill Press* letter, and I have a copy of that, and I have a copy of a letter he sent to me saying that the sitting that I did for Marc Ratner was the basis of the slug emblem, the guy reading Plato with the glasses, the look, was supposed to be me. Whether Pete was teasing me, whether he was making a joke or that's true, I don't know. I've never gotten any royalties for being the model of the slug.

Vanderscoff: (laughs)

Lynch: I've never gone public and claimed this, but Pete did definitely say this in a letter for *City on a Hill Press*, which I have somewhere. I also have the letter that he sent to me, which is parallel, saying that I was the model of the slug. Sometimes I see the resemblance. It goes beyond the glasses and the Plato.

Vanderscoff: (laughs) Oh, what other similarities do you detect?

Lynch: The sluggishness. I was known for a slow and deliberate way of going about things. Pete did have Marc sketch out a slug when I was sitting around in Cowell one night. I don't know if that was the basis of the emblem or not. Marc did lots of drawings of a slug and I'm not sure how they ended up picking which was going to be the official one. This is not the muscular Barney Banana Slug, the

one that the university came out with. It's not that slug. It's the one on the original Oxford West shirt, the one that has the slug in glasses reading Plato.

Vanderscoff: So, as it seems that's the model for that rendering of the slug, (laughs) how do you feel about the banana slug as a representative of this institution, given that when you came here there was no mascot and then there was this whole push for sea lions under Sinsheimer for a while there in the eighties.

Lynch: I thought it was great. It was impressive that the students played such a role in it and there was more at stake. It seems trivial—it's like the Latin diploma riots at Harvard which happened I think just before I arrived—it seems trivial in retrospect maybe, but there were issues behind Harvard going from Latin to English in the diploma. And there were issues going from sea lions to slugs—I don't know if sea lions were ever picked by anybody but I know it was painted in the middle of the basketball court at one point, a big sea lion. I'm not sure what the process was that established that—whether there was any vote of students or just—

Vanderscoff: I think there was. We'll look it up.⁸

Lynch: My memory is that the sea lion was on the ballot and lost. Chancellor Sinsheimer chose the sea lion because he thought it was more appropriate and

⁸ According to the oral history of William Domhoff (Sarah Rabkin, interviewer and Irene Reti, editor, *G. William Domhoff: The Adventures and Regrets of a Professor of Dreams and Power*), [available at <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/domhoff>] Chancellor Sinsheimer unilaterally decided on the sea lion as more dignified in spite of overwhelming student support in favor of the slug—a vote which he elicited. After a protracted situation in which Sinsheimer insisted on the sea lion and the majority of students on the slug, the chancellor capitulated.

that triggered the response. It was a useful issue for galvanizing student leadership on a campuswide basis. There was good involvement of students and there was a lot of creativity around it.

Angie [Christmann] has put together a wonderful record of the whole banana slug controversy in the Cowell archives, and last year the alumni involved came together at the Alumni Weekend. There was a nice panel on that whole story, a retrospective on it. Obviously, it was a very meaningful part of the education of the students who were most involved.

I like things like that. I like to encourage student initiatives, even rebellious ones, as long as they're not violent. Real disagreements can have great educational effect on the campus and for the people who are participating. Education, in my mind, doesn't just go on in the classroom. And it doesn't just go on online. There's a real community basis for it and a face-to-face basis for it, a creative basis. I think all those things that were employed during that period of time led to quite interesting results. People learned about government, and how it worked, and how it doesn't work, and why it often doesn't work, and the conflicts and coordination between centers of power—central administration—and the decentralized corridors. I think it was a great teaching moment and students learned a lot from it. I think the campus benefitted from it too in terms of its image. Chancellor Sinsheimer did not think that was an appropriate image of the campus but he gave in, saw its irony. He was, in the end, a fairly good sport about it. He wasn't a good sport about it at every step, but in the end I think he appreciated it.

Vanderscoff: And in issues of protest, whether over the slug issue or something else, what do you think the role of the teacher is, as someone who is so closely associated with the students but of course also with ties to the administration?

Lynch: Well, I always try to support student protests and rallies. When the campus was blocked off [for a student strike], I regularly held my classes outside the boundaries of the campus. I honored the strikes and protests and encouraged students to get involved with one side or the other or both. There are often not just two sides, often there are three or four sides. I encouraged students to get involved with the issues and take part. Helping students grow as participating citizens in a community I took to be part of my job as a teacher, not just teaching the syllabus but teaching the syllabus within a context of campus politics, of campus culture, campus activities. I wanted students to see learning as part of a larger project.

I taught several classes over the years—I don't know how many different ones—in a tent, or on the grounds outside the campus, or even at home because we were honoring student protests or encouraging it. I was willing to shift times of classes to accommodate students' desire to be involved, even if I didn't agree with their position.

Now, the one thing I always stressed was I did not like the idea at all of using any kind of violence. I do not think that is ever appropriate. If you want to protest and block the road and get arrested, that's fine. But you're going to get arrested. That's what the protest is about. You don't have it both ways. You don't block the road and not get arrested. You're volunteering yourself for arrest. That's part of the protest. So you try to talk about those issues. I think the

classroom is an appropriate place to work that out. No matter what the syllabus is, there's always time to see what you're learning in the syllabus, or what you're following in your class, as part of a larger context. A degree doesn't just mean that you've accumulated a certain number of classes. It's *Fiat Lux* after all. *Lux* does not mean "credit."

Vanderscoff: I'd like to talk more specifically about your provostship. You and Mary Kay Gamel, as your vice provost, wrote about "creating a climate of high expectations." What did you mean by that and how did you go about engendering it?

Lynch: Well, it's not just our document. Mary Kay came in at the end of it but I think I started it, working with the Cowell government. It actually came out of discussions with students—it wasn't just dropped down from on high. We ended up re-wording it and codifying it. It doesn't have any legislative force. It's a statement, a vision statement. That was what we wanted, something that would get people thinking about what it is to be a member of a college or a community and what your responsibilities are as well as your rights and freedoms.

I have a political bent toward communitarianism, which emphasizes rights coming from responsibilities. They're balanced. I'm not a big champion of rights just for rights sake, or freedom just for freedom's sake, or individuality, cultivating it. I'm on the communitarian side, which is to say you're not just yourself. You're part of a community and you have obligations to other people, and you're dependent on other people. You are anaclitic. You're a member of an integrated community and you have to take responsibility for that. Life is not just living out your breaths and your wishes and desires, but it's also interacting with

people and serving the needs of other people who are dependent on you. It's recognizing your interdependence. I think that's what the document tries to do, to recognize that you're not just asserting yourself. You're looking at what is needed and being part of that and trying to satisfy that.

I think that's the underlying principle of the whole document and it's spelled out in various parts. Your responsibilities are manifold. You have an obligation to your own body, for example, and health. Some people objected to that, did not think that that should be part of it. We talked it out and we left it in. It was more radically put in the original draft conception.

Incidentally, faculty also were sent drafts of this and faculty contributed input, including some very useful input by Norman O. Brown. I didn't break down by footnotes who was responsible for what. That was not the kind of statement it was. But he made some very interesting corrections and thoughts and we tried them out on the Cowell student government, the Cowell Assembly, and students responded very well to them. I was surprised that Norman was much more of a communitarian than I had thought.

Vanderscoff: So you've been discussing these principles in theory, talking about personal health and rights resulting from responsibilities. How did they work in action in the college, the application of these principles during your provostship?

Lynch: Well, I tried to use that as a guide for talking with students who were having problems or were facing disciplinary action. Rather than going through a legal solution—that is make charges and give people the right to respond—I would try to start with something more informal, talking to them and seeing if

there was a way in which a disciplinary problem could be turned into a teaching moment where they agreed that what they had done had overstepped in some way that they had not realized at the time. And letters of apology or face-to-face mediation sessions were the first way to deal with those sorts of things. And I think most of the problems were worked out that way.

It turns out that there are students who insisted that they were being disciplined inappropriately for one reason or another, lies were being told or evidence was not there, and we did have to go into disciplinary actions. But I think we cut down on the number of formal disciplinary charges and penalties assessed because we were able to use this statement, whatever appropriate part for an action: do you agree with this and how do you see this fitting in?

And I think most students—I don't think they found this to be irrational—decided that it made sense. There were students who said that it was a little too idealistic and doesn't correspond as it should to the age group of seventeen to twenty-one year olds. It was more for the next period of one's life. We had discussions about things like that. There were still students who thought then, and I'm sure still believe that college is a time to really sow oats, wild oats if necessary, to try things and experiment with things. That was really what college was all about. I don't agree myself. And I believe, because of the way this document evolved, a lot of the students no longer think that either.

So we tried this, what we called a softer approach, less legalistic, less formal, and less alienating. Because once you make charges, there's a division of the community, whereas if you can bring somebody in on expectations and changing your expectations and changing your perspectives on things, you

exercise an educational process rather than a legal process to accomplish the same thing in a better way, I think, because it leaves the person feeling whole in the educational community at the end of the matter.

Now, I don't know. I've never tested to find out if I had fewer formal disciplinary actions as result of this or not. I never saw any statistics about that. We did have every year some disciplinary actions and some were pretty heavy-duty and difficult ones. But for the most part I think we were able to handle smaller disagreements with a statement of expectations and using that, and using letters of apology—I mean real letters of apology, thoughtful letters of apology, or face-to-face apologies that are face-to-face discussions of where I'm coming from and where you're coming from. Exchanges of perspectives ended up resolving a lot of the conflicts, I think.

Vanderscoff: And what sort of—

Lynch: And, remember, as I said before, this is the end of the Age of Aquarius and the beginning of litigation. So litigation—everyone was looking at that. Students actually on occasion hired lawyers. At a hearing or even a pre-hearing, a student would be accompanied by a lawyer. Not often, but three or four times in my time. That was new to me.

Vanderscoff: And what sorts of transgressions or violations of this community code are you talking about dealing with, in terms of these students?

Lynch: Well, fights between students at activities, dances or parties. Sometimes it was difficult because they were at different colleges and our system was very college-based, so you had people at different colleges as perpetrators and people

who were making claims. It was difficult to use this when there was different collegiate membership involved, difficulties with the climate of high expectations.

And threats, racist, sexist statements, sexual harassment, which was very much part of the day—sexual harassment training and legislation were going on. This was the early eighties. Some pretty tough and sensitive emotional issues having to do with identity were surfacing. Antisemitic graffiti, offensive things that were said publicly and sometimes said at college-sponsored events. There was a charge against someone who maimed another student. And there were problems like plagiarism or suspected plagiarism, or more academically related issues.

The job was once defined as drugs, sex, and rock and roll. Those are the major areas—alcohol and substance abuse issues. A fair number of cases involved sexual harassment, sexual force, rape charges. And rock and roll would be noise. A lot of those charges could be handled that way—if people could start seeing the way they were perceived by others a little bit better, that helped. Some people wanted to be perceived in a negative way and they were doing it deliberately, playing loud music, making loud protests late at night, not observing hours.

Vanderscoff: And when you think of all of these different factors and presences that impacted so many students' lives, what did you hope the college could provide students, personally, academically, however?

Lynch: I realized, having been a resident preceptor and also the senior preceptor that the resident preceptors needed more training and more exposure. And resident assistants, too. My job, when I became a resident preceptor, was to be an adult presence. That was all I was supposed to be, an adult presence. I appreciate that definition but it's wide in scope. What it means to be an adult presence can cover a lot of the things we're talking about. But there are also a lot of things that you need to know that not every adult my age or older would know much about. How to handle students who are severely depressed; what to do in various emergency situations.

One of the things I did was I established a course for our resident preceptors to come to once a week. For resident assistants, they could get credit for it, five units if they took it for three quarters. They had to do a project at the end as well. They didn't need to get the credit but they had to take the class. We brought in people from all the different student services: the campus health professionals from psychology and psychiatry came and gave presentations about depression and other issues of student life. They talked about how to identify potentially suicidal cases and how to handle them.

The main point was not for the residential staff to take on the burden of handling these cases themselves. It was actually to get them to realize that they were a conduit, how to be a conduit in a safe way, so that they were not working against the students but they were working to help them. They were not spies—as resident assistants and preceptors they were not policing student life, but they were there to identify problems that students often had in the residential circumstances of a college campus. They learned how to listen and how to refer

students outward for help. So we spent a lot of time on identifying depression, on identifying suicidal tendencies, alcohol problems, and substance abuse problems, conflicts between roommates, and conflicts between couples. We discussed perspectives on sexual harassment. We brought in professionals from the community, from the downtown community, as well as from the campus, to help us sort out these issues.

And I think this had some real payoff. There were cases where I think students who exhibited things like eating disorder behavior, which is really a very difficult thing to deal with, to realize that, "I'm an RA, I can't handle that myself. I see it as a potential problem." And then we worked on how to get that student, who would usually be in denial about the problem, to get help—because denial was part of a lot of these problems—get the kind of help which would enable them to identify and take a positive, creative, and productive way of solving these problems. Eating disorders were, I have to say, a lot more common than I realized. I don't know if they started increasing in the eighties or my awareness increased.

Anyway, I learned a lot in the class and I think the RA's did, and did some really good work. The resident preceptors, I think, appreciated it. A lot of the value was to be more aware, be more mindful of what's going on, and identify potential problems, and then if you see a potential problem, conferring, knowing who you could confer with. You don't have to do it in a way that gives the person's name away. You can just say, "I see a student of this nature, with these qualities, showing this sort of behavior pattern," not necessarily naming the student—not naming the student in fact, just asking for help on how to get the

student to an appropriate referral. I think that was the right approach—working together as a team—not taking things on by yourself.

I think a lot of great work came out of the course. I did it for three years. I would say that that training made Cowell's residential program one of the best on campus, enriching what you would learn from being a resident assistant in the Cowell program, as well as what you would learn from being a student who had interaction with a more knowledgeable residential assistant or residential preceptor. The residential staff was really very tight as a result of the course on Residential Life. I have heard that they have drastically dropped the number of residential preceptors, and I think that is probably a false saving because a good residential preceptor can be very, very useful in making things work in a college.

Promoting a Community Education at Cowell

Vanderscoff: And what sort of a function did you hope that college events and college programming and things that would bring the college community together would have in the students' lives?

Lynch: Well, it gives them a different kind of experience; it puts their classroom experience into a larger context. I think that's important. I think in general teaching is not, or a teacher is not, just a person who is running a class. The staff has a teaching role and the faculty outside of the class has a teaching role. And you're on the same side as the students, helping them to learn.

If you read some of the things I wrote about teaching and you might recognize this theme, that a professor or a teacher is not someone who is a gatekeeper for a student—you identify when a student is done and has

accomplished what needs to be accomplished and so you open the gate. That's not your function at all. Your function is to help the students identify the gate and get them through it. You're on the same side. You're not keeping that gate. You're working in the same direction for the same goal. I think that's what teaching is. You recognize that a teacher has the same interest as a student. You look puzzled.

Vanderscoff: No, keep going.

Lynch: (laughs) I mentioned that that was one of the reasons why I had trouble doing grades. Because basically when I'm grading a student, I'm grading myself at the same time, my success in getting the student from where he or she was to where he or she needs to be. If you say 'D,' that means you didn't make much progress, and I didn't make much progress.

Vanderscoff: So it has something to do with education perhaps being a joint venture, a partnership, rather than information being delivered to students.

Lynch: Yes. You're helping to turn the student in the right direction and get them going in the right direction. Right direction is defined by the goal of the major or the class, or whatever you are doing. But you're not the one who is dangling the key and saying, "If you want to go through you've got to deal with me." You're on the other side. If the gate is closed, you've got to find a way of getting it open with the student. Your strategic interest is the same as the students', which is for education to take place.

I know that is a hard concept for a lot of people because I think teaching situations are often quite different. If you have Scantron tests at the end you

might say, how can you move students towards being better Scantron test takers? Luckily, I never had to do a Scantron test. If I had to do that, I might modify a little bit. But I still think the basic principle is that the teacher has the responsibility of getting the student through— Now, obviously if there are students who just balk or won't move, or run in the other direction, you can't spend all your time running after them and neglect the other students who are at least trying to get through. But I do think that it is the responsibility of the teacher to try to identify what problems the students are having, and then help them with those particular problems and get them through too—they may not be the first through, but get them through.

If you take or teach a class and everybody fails the class, does that make any sense? I've heard faculty at other institutions say that there are such classes where everybody failed. How could that be? The class failed? The teacher failed. It makes no sense in my understanding of education to say that there could be a class and a hundred people took it and a hundred people failed it. That makes no sense at all to me. Either the class wasn't designed properly, the students who were in the class were not taught properly, the problems they were having were not identified sufficiently. I could give a class like that. I could ask things that are unfair, things that were not covered in the class. Is that a high-standard class, a class which has a hundred students who failed? Is that high standards or are the questions or the expectations not correct?

Vanderscoff: So when you talk about this educational partnership that occurs in a classroom context, what sort of a role does involvement in the larger college

community at Cowell through events play in that process of education, a shared process, a mutual process, a reciprocal process of education?

Lynch: I think that there are some faculty who have said, “Well, the colleges have become just fun and games.” But I think that’s also revealing a very narrow view of education. It really is their responsibility also to work with students outside the classroom and that includes things that may not seem “academic” or might seem frivolous. But it’s giving students an opportunity to exercise leadership, creative spirit, all those sorts of things that an academic class might not be able to bring out and develop. Some students, I think, are able to learn more from things that were not in the classroom than from things that did go on in the classroom for the whole four or five years they spent there. They actually profited educationally from their experience on their own. I think there are students like that and I think faculty have an obligation to take that seriously and to say, “Can I help you meet a goal?” or to make themselves available to be part of that extracurricular vision if a student has it.

To just call it fun and games going on with the students—I think dances, social occasions are vital because you’re not just stopping real life when you go to college. Other kinds of things are going on in your life and you can’t just cut them off. You try to make them valuable, make them more you, to put yourself into them.

I certainly spent a lot of time on extracurricular things, Culture Breaks and the College Nights.⁹ I went to many, many College Nights. I may have a record among faculty, the most College Nights attended. And I think they're important. Extracurricular experiences provide a vital context for furthering education. Because if these sorts of things were not going on, I think a lot of students would find the classroom, what's going on in formal education, just dull and ordinary. It's only exciting when it's part of a whole set of things that are contributing to your growth and stimulating your imagination, helping you grow some gray matter—magically all of a sudden—that's the kind of discovery process going on.

You actually feel the blood pulsing in your veins. Just taking a class online or taking an individual class without any face-to-face interaction with other students or with faculty members involved, it's not the same. You need to feel that, I think, that kind of rush that happens—maybe that sounds too much like drug language—the rush that happens when things are clicking, to mix the metaphor. Your classes are going all right. Your extracurricular activities are there. Things are going on in your personal life. That's when you're really learning, growing, and discovering what interests and matters to you.

I think there are faculty, particularly the ones who are over-disciplinary in their approach to education, who don't see the value of social experiences and activities outside the classroom, the educational value, and how that educational

⁹ College Nights are a longstanding institution in which the college gathers for a special dinner around a theme or event. Culture Breaks were similar events in the early years of the college around an intensive series of events around a particular culture or context, and receive more detail on p. 112.

value actually contributes to a better student in the classroom too. I would urge such faculty to explore how they can fit into extracurricular education, like getting involved and showing up at student events and offering themselves as faculty helpers or advisors. Saying yes to student projects. I said yes to a lot of student projects in my time. (laughs) Some of them I got mocked for, but then they taught me a lot of what I never learned in graduate school.

Vanderscoff: Would you mind recounting a few of the requests you received for independent studies?

Lynch: Well, there used to be student-directed seminars.

Vanderscoff: Yes.

Lynch: They don't have many anymore. I thought they were great. I think I was faculty sponsor for maybe ten or twelve of them over the years. Often they brought out the best in the students who planned them and executed them and those students who took them as well. I think probably the most notorious one I got was from two of my students, classics students—and very colorful classics students, very imaginative ones—who devised a course called *Pantology*. They had the *Information Please* almanac and a lot of the big reference works on the reading list. And Ovid's *Metamorphoses* was on there and Hesiod's *Works and Days* and other encyclopedic works. And what they tried to get at was, how do you study everything at once? How do you learn about wholes—not just parts? (recording paused)

The pantology class was mocked as not just the study of everything but as the study of anything, because it inquired into the study of holistic visions of

things. One week, for example, was eggs, the idea of an egg. And people just went and researched everything they could find out about eggs and then they came in and talked about eggs. Which came first, the chicken or the egg? They had incredible discussions in this class. It would be a great class to have now that we have the Internet. This was before the Internet. And in the discussions they had utopian visions of things. The Drive In was thought to be a great utopian vision, the idea that you could have a Drive In everywhere, and not have to get out of your car. So they spent a week just thinking about different kinds of things that were adapted to a Drive In situation, what happened there, what the future of the Drive In concept might be.

I went to the classes. I thought they were really some of the best discussions I've heard. I've had alumni come back—only twelve students allowed in this class—two of them told me independently at Alumni Weekend that it was the best class they ever took. It was run by two seniors who were friends, who ended up marrying each other and having a child who went to UCSC. (laughs) A great vision of things—I think it was very good for both of them as teachers. They both went on to Berkeley, to different PhD programs, and got their degrees.

We had a Greek Culture Break, which was famous in the early days, and included a reading in Greek of the whole *Odyssey*. We took turns doing it. Norman O. Brown read for two or three hours; I read for two or three hours. There are pictures of us with our laurel wreaths on. And I think this probably gave a sense of how the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were actually disseminated; various performers would read or sing the epic, but the audience would just check in and

out—sit down for a while and listen, then leave, check back in again. I doubt that many people listened to the whole twenty-four books of the *Iliad* or *Odyssey* in one sitting, and probably the reciter changed over time. I don't think anyone could do all twenty-four hours in a row, although there are scholars of oral tradition who think that that was possible, with breaks.

I do think that the planning and execution and participation in Culture Breaks—active learning experiences like that were very valuable and important. I remember them very fondly and I would say that these kinds of experiences taught me more than just about anything I did preparing for formal classes. I would say I grew and learned more in the extracurricular realm at UCSC than I did from my curricular role—and I took my curricular role very seriously.

Vanderscoff: I was reading an article that you wrote about a character in *Satyricon* and you mentioned “that most oppressive force towards homogeneity.” And in a document that you released as provost of Cowell you also argued that “individual creativity and self knowledge are best promoted in a diverse, rather than a homogeneous community.”

Lynch: That's been a long thought process of mine. I think I started that kind of thinking as an undergraduate. Being part of the diversification, I considered myself as a low-end student when I arrived at Harvard and I thought, I have something to offer this place. They need me here as much as I need them. I still believe that. I don't think I ended up being a low-end student, however. I think I moved up fairly rapidly in the eyes and estimation of faculty there. But in my view it was not doing the institution a disservice to have people like me—from

working class, small town, ethnic households—be part of the population of students that Harvard educated.

So I guess it started there, thinking of myself as being a diversifier and having something to offer a community that shouldn't and couldn't be all rich kids. Then moving on to making it more general, to realize that people of all kinds of different niches in society have things to offer that are important. It enriches an institution to have diversification. Someone might say, "Well, you're letting in all these marginal kids so that's making education less good for the best. You have to water it down for the newcomers." That's not true, as I see it. You have to improve your pitch. You have to work harder at educating newcomers—because you have to draw out what each of them has to offer in terms of perspectives and insight. Teachers need to learn how to approach various kinds of problems and texts in new ways, and how to communicate to a larger constituency. That is what I was thinking as an undergraduate.

Vanderscoff: And of course the idea of diversity in education, now, with entrance to institutions being very much controlled by factors like test scores, like SAT's and things like that, there is sort of a quantification or a stratification of the type of people who are allowed into different kinds of places, based on that.

Lynch: Yes, I have a really strange relationship to the SAT because I think I actually profited from the SAT in the sense that what the SAT originally was supposed to do was to identify people who are the hinterlands who might be really quite good but you'd never know it because they didn't apply or the institution didn't know about them. The SAT was meant to pluck out students who might not have had a chance except for the fact that they obviously are good

at taking these tests. And I was one of those people who was good at taking these tests. I actually had high SAT scores and probably would not have been noticed by Harvard on my application without those numbers. That's my guess. Because something got me in. I did have high SAT scores. I imagine I wrote a fairly good essay. I don't know. I don't remember what I wrote. Actually the SAT was supposed to be an egalitarian thing, rather than something that identified the elite. Now it's known as much more of an elitist thing because, as you said, people with the highest SAT scores are the ones who spend the most time and the most money preparing themselves for these, and who come from households where the sorts of things that are asked on the SAT's are valued and can get developed; whereas poor people who live in more marginal areas of the society don't get these opportunities and therefore tend to score less well on SAT tests and the like.

But I like the idea of having some sort of a mechanism that would allow identification of students who are better prospects than you would guess, given where they come from. That really was the original intent of the SAT. I think it worked for me. And it stopped working for people like me within the decade of the seventies. By the eighties, it seemed to be that the SATs were supporting the elite and favored the advantaged and the privileged, the very opposite of what they were supposed to do.

The Three Worlds of Maria Elena Gutierrez:

A Student at Cowell and the Study of Literature Across Cultures

Vanderscoff: I'd like to talk about a particular example of how the college can be very involved with the student in more than just an academic way. Would you mind relating the story of Maria Gutierrez and your involvement with it?

Lynch: She was a really exceptional case and a film was made of her life *Mi Vida: The Three Worlds of Maria Elena Gutierrez*—you've seen it?

Vanderscoff: Yes.

Lynch: Well, Maria was a freshman at Cowell. I talked to her a couple of times, found her very engaging, but did not realize her story. I feel bad that it took me more than one quarter to find out that hers was an extraordinary life. She was on a scholarship for farmworkers' children, which I assumed was for four years. I later found out from her that it was for only one year, and after one year she would be just adrift.

Maria was doing very well in her classes and made quite a splash socially and in other ways at Cowell, a very outgoing personality and very smart, eager to learn. Some businesspeople downtown heard of her plight, which was that she had no funding for a second year, having been given a farmworkers' scholarship. They found out more about her, including that she'd come to Porterville, the Central Valley, to join her parents, who were farmworkers there and within two years—she came speaking no English—just two years later, she was first in her class. She was quite an amazing learner, a quick learner, and very good at

languages. Her English was superb for someone who had really only been speaking English for three or four years.

So the businessmen were intrigued by this story—George Ow, who lives around the corner from me, and some other people—and they put up money to sponsor her, to pay her tuition for each of the next three years. And then, at the same time the [*Santa Cruz*] *Sentinel* put out a call for anyone who would be interested in putting her up so she could save money on living expenses.

She got several offers, including us. We said, “Maria, if you want to stay with us we have an extra room.” We had two kids but we had an extra room in the provost’s house. She took us up on the offer, largely I think because she would be living very close in, she’d feel safest there, and also she didn’t have to commute and could spend the maximum amount of time studying. She studied fiercely and often. She was a person who probably lived on four or five hours of sleep a night, and studied all the time, drinking tea, strong tea, to stay awake. And also, she was really enjoying it.

Maria continued to do extremely well in her classes. She took Latin and turned in an extraordinary performance. She was particularly interested in Italian and was doing extremely well in Italian, which ended up being her major. At some point George Ow got the idea of making a film about her, an inspirational film, because George values education a great deal and thought that this would be instructive, seeing someone who has really appreciated the meaning of education in her life and is taking action and advantage as a result of this opportunity. That’s what the film was about.

He funded the film directed by Geoffrey Dunn. The film was done in and around Cowell College for a couple of quarters. There's a scene in our house, maybe a couple of scenes. He probably overdoes the contrast between the three worlds. When Maria is going back to her Mexican grandmother they play folk Mexican music really loud in the background, and when she's at the labor camp they play Mexican music of the sort you hear on the radio in the United States, slightly out of tune. And then when you come to our house, we see Maria listening to classical music and she's pulling down Dante from the shelf. It served its purpose but it's a little bit exaggerated. She didn't just separate those worlds. They were all mixed in in her life.

The film then premiered at Cowell College and there was a big opening downtown as well. The theater was full. The film was quite a hit, I think, and it's been replayed recently on KQED. It won some awards. It's used in many junior high school classes around the country. If you get on Google, you see it's recommended or even part of the curriculum for some junior high schools, and to some degree high school students.

The film was used in the core course on campus here a few times, a few times at Merrill and Oakes. But the reaction to it at Merrill and Oakes was usually more negative than positive. I had to go, along with Harryette Mullen, who was one of my resident assistants, a literature graduate student and poet, to talk about the reaction of students who felt that this was a betrayal of her culture and identity. For some it was the story of someone who was a Mexican and Mexican farm laborers' daughter who was then turned into a European-oriented

academic, and showed that she was not proud of her identity. She was shedding it; she was trashing it, even.

It was pretty emotional stuff. The thrust of the criticism was that they felt that she should not be turning her back on her Mexican past and studying Dante and other Italian and European authors. That bothered me, that line of thought, because it indicated that if you're Mexican American your only path would be to do Chicano literature. And that seemed to me very restrictive, not fair for her or other students; they would have no choices. I have an Irish and Polish background. I study Greek and Latin. Am I turning my back on my Irish and Polish ancestry by saying I need something that's better than Polish and Irish: I need Greek and Latin, better philosophers, better art, more interesting languages? That's not true. I don't trash my heritage. I never thought of studying Irish or Polish literature. I would be interested. I never thought of it as a major, I suspect, because it's not offered very often. Very few places have Polish studies at the undergraduate level, or Irish studies. Maybe five places have Irish studies in the whole country.

But why would I even have to think about those things if I'm more interested for other reasons in Greek and Latin, or the Mediterranean? Why is it all right for me to do that but not all right for Maria to have that choice? No one has found any difficulties with me not studying Irish or Polish studies, just because I'm Irish and Polish. But some did find a difficulty in Maria studying Italian. She ended up going to Stanford graduate school in Italian, with complete fellowship support, because she earned it and deserved it. She got a PhD and she became a professor of Italian literature at SUNY Buffalo and is at State University

of New York at Buffalo half the year and at the University of Milan the other half of the year, and I think, as far as I know, pleased with what's she's doing in her life.

I mean, she may not be back influencing Mexican-American students who need role models. She lives in New York and Milan and I think speaks Italian so fluently that you would think she's Italian now. She has expressed some regret, wishing she had some more Mexican American students to talk to and influence their thinking or help guide them. But she's doing her thing. She did the film. And I think the film still has that kind of influence. It's often listed as "an inspirational film" when it's cataloged in high school libraries. I don't know, what did you think of it? But you're not being interviewed. (laughs)

Vanderscoff: (laughs) I enjoyed it. It was an interesting insight into her story. It seems to me that's something that was going on in California then and you're talking about a situation still happening in California now, in terms of the fact that she was coming from a migrant family. What I would ask you is, what do you think the value is in studying something from a culture other than your own, the one you were brought up in, as opposed to studying literature that comes from your own heritage?

Lynch: Well, I think you are asking different questions when studying literature that's not from your heritage. Heritage invites you to ask questions about identity—identity politics and identity issues in what you read. I think that's okay but it shouldn't be the only approach. If Italian literature were studied only by Italian scholars, it would be a terrible field to be in. It would be a field dominated entirely by people who had one axe to grind, for the most part. I think

that what really would make Italian much more interesting is to have people from other literary traditions, other ethnicities, other ethnic backgrounds, study it—having Germans study Italian; having French people study Italian. That enriches the field. That makes a much heartier mix of discussion. I've heard that Hungarian, for example, is studied almost exclusively by Hungarian scholars because of the language difficulty, and the kinds of questions that get asked and answered are limited. You exhaust the field very quickly.

So it does wonders for the field—I think almost all Italian scholars would say it's really good to have non-Italians—like Maria—studying the literature, history, philosophy of Italy because they bring in different perspectives. Not necessarily the right perspective always, but a different one. It educates, in the best sense, as it opens up new horizons. And if you're studying from a specifically ethnic point of view—and that's all you hear, people who have the same point of view—it doesn't open up very much. It closes things off and limits the debate and discussion that keeps a discipline evolving. It also does things for the person. I think that's what you were more interested in, from your question. You ask different questions than strictly identity questions, or questions that stem from identity. You can ask more poignant questions, more difficult questions, thornier questions. You're not invested in the same way. You are invested since you studied it, put a lot of time into it. But it's not part of you in the same way. It's not an expression of your own heritage and culture. It's harder to criticize your own than it is to criticize an other. That can have a good effect. It can have a negative effect too, but it can have a positive effect, to bring in a new perspective that has to be dealt with.

Vanderscoff: So, if it is limited, then, what is the function of identity politics in studying literature?

Lynch: My point—I think I didn't make it well enough—is that all approaches are limited and because they're limited you need a mix. The mix will get you over some of the limitations of the blinders that you bring into the study. Does that make sense? What was it you just asked me?

Vanderscoff: If it is limited, what is the function of identity politics in studying literature, art?

Lynch: It does bring out the perspective of someone who is invested by culture and birth in the literature, the history, the philosophy, the art—whatever you're studying. So you get the perspective of, I guess you could call a native.

[Mary-Kay Gamel, who is staying with John and his wife Sheila while she teaches at UCSC, enters and greets us]

Vanderscoff: At this point, perhaps we can bring this to a close and we can finish this topic next time.

Lynch: Okay.

Vanderscoff: Great.

Closing Reflections on College Culture and Helping Individual Students

Vanderscoff: Today is Thursday, May 23, 2013. This is Cameron Vanderscoff here with John Patrick Lynch for the fourth part of his oral history project. We're going to pick up continuing with your provostship in the eighties. Last time we stopped in the middle of a discussion of Maria Gutierrez and her involvement

with your provostship. As a way of coming to a conclusion on that segment I'd like to ask you what you say in response to the criticisms that you've received in presentations and core courses and other places that Maria was somehow removed from her culture, or was being whitewashed into another culture.

Lynch: Well, I think she had a very high opinion of herself. She did *not* have low self-esteem. She wasn't trying to change her past. I know her parents. Her parents wanted her to do whatever she wanted to do. She had no barriers, no restrictions. They were delighted in her choice of subjects and the fact that she engaged in them so well, and were amazed at her language abilities because they had trouble themselves acquiring English. They spoke mostly Spanish and they had been in the United States quite a long time, and wouldn't consider themselves bilingual. But they delighted in the fact that she was tri and quatra lingual so early in her life. I think she was fulfilling her parents' ambitions. I don't think she should be defined in her ambitions by having come from a labor camp, or by having lived in very rural Mexico without any indoor plumbing or electricity. This was all part of her dream and she was fulfilling it. And I don't think that she should be restricted about how she should dream by any kind of things in her past. That's my feeling anyway.

Vanderscoff: And what sort of a role, at its best, do you hope that a university institution can play in that process, like Cowell College did with her during your time as provost?

Lynch: One of the real satisfactions of teaching and doing the job of provost is to find opportunities like this to help someone who really wants to further him or herself, and to help them get to the level that they want to get to. I think that the

college, because it's closer to the student than a large university setting, can identify those students and work closely with them.

We invited her into our house. She lived with us for three years at the provost's house, or actually two, because she went on Education Abroad for one of those years. She went to Italy. That was a big part of it. I don't think that came up in the film, that she went to Italy with the Education Abroad Program. So I guess I have always thought part of the job as trying to find—this might be clichéd—gems in the rough, identifying the gems in the rough and help them to shine the way they should shine, in the context they want to be—out of the rough and into the smoother areas of life. And I think we were able to help Maria do that, to achieve her own goals. I don't think we imposed goals on her. We were helping her identify and fulfill what she wanted to do with her life.

There were other students who were also transformed—I was able to see that I played some role in turning them from where they were to where they wanted to be. That was very satisfying. I take particular pride in that. That's one of the reasons I wanted to go into teaching. I guess maybe I identify myself as sort of a proto-gem in the rough, coming from where I did. Some people identified me as somebody who really wanted to go further in the academic realm and I was able to do that. I appreciate what my main mentors have done for me and I wanted to be able to pass that on to students that I encountered in my tenure as provost and as a professor.

The Bacchae:

Arts and the College Environment

Vanderscoff: I'd like to talk about an intersection of the arts and your provostship that you were speaking with me off the record about a couple of weeks ago, in particular the relevance of theater when you were provost. You were telling me something about a production of *The Bacchae*. And I was wondering if you would mind relating that story and talking more broadly about arts and your provostship?

Lynch: Yes, I think probably the highlight of my first year as provost was working with Jordan Corngold, who was a classics major interested in theater but who had no practical theater experience. He came up with the idea of doing a production on campus, an outdoor production of *The Bacchae*. I was the faculty supervisor of that. Jordan went on to do a great job with that production and also to go on in theater. I think he went to Yale drama school after graduating in classics. I'm not sure exactly what happened to him. He came to my retirement party, I think, or he at least wrote in for my retirement.

The idea of doing productions through the college, rather than through the theater arts department—although we weren't in competition with theater arts, we borrowed equipment from them and lights and sound equipment from them—but to do it in a more community theater spirit, the college being a small neighborhood or part of the city that is doing community-level theater—that appealed to me.

Jordan went way beyond that in the sense that this production was much more ambitious than most community theater projects. He cast it and spent a lot of time directing it. The site was picked below the old swimming pool, which is no longer with us, but was above a natural indentation in the hill going down to the field house and the track down there. Students built a stage and put up lights and then suddenly realized that these were all vulnerable to theft. So they ended up having to camp out during the production. While they were rehearsing and doing the production they were actually living in the theater space. So for many of those students it was their whole life for at least a quarter, sometimes two quarters—and in Jordan's case three quarters spent on the production. They really bonded, got all the benefits of being part of a cast. I think they really enjoyed it and their success was enormous.

One of the things that kept me up at night was that production, because *The Bacchae* is about liberation, specifically through alcohol and drug experience. Dionysus uses intoxication both to liberate and to destroy those who oppose him. It's a bloody play, especially at the end and it has quite a bit of violence in it. It's a difficult play to put on, particularly for college students. The lead figure is Dionysus, a god, and it's hard to think of someone between the age of seventeen and twenty-one playing a god, but we found someone. He did a fantastic job, not only spoke the part but he danced the part, which was an innovation. The play, because it was a wide-open play with no admission charge, and most of the productions were at night, attracted an element of people off campus who were very interested in the drug experience. We had to have a police presence in the

back to make sure that people were not overdoing their reaction to the play by taking drugs themselves.

This was the eighties and the idea was to bring back the spirit of the sixties in theater. *The Bacchae* was a big play in the sixties, with *Dionysus in 1969* playing Off Broadway and Yale drama school productions which were so controversial and which ended in arrests every time. I didn't want to see that happen again in the eighties.

But we managed to keep it under control, while doing some fairly innovative and, I would say, slightly dangerous things. For example, they decided they needed a live goat to be part of the introduction to the play. So they got a live male goat which they tied to a tree and fed and treated very well. But when the production was over they didn't know what to do with it. They liked the goat so much they didn't want to just turn it in to the SPCA. So they let it loose in the woods. And the animal control officer had to spend two days rounding up a goat.

When the play was over, there was a lot of—I would call it post-traumatic stress syndrome among the cast. They had put so much of themselves in it that they felt, I think, almost wounded going back to their regular lives as students. It was a heavy-duty play and the kind of experience I don't usually get. I am not usually a faculty sponsor of a play. And it's not the kind of experience I would like to have on a regular basis. It's not for me. I worry too much about what could go wrong. It's a very difficult kind of teaching and I certainly admire theater arts people who do that on a regular basis. I myself couldn't but I got a feeling for the people, all the students who involved themselves so thoroughly in

the spirit of the production, and in getting better and better and better as cast members. Most of them were not experienced at all. They improved dramatically through rehearsals through the leadership of Jordan Cornhill who I think really has a gift for getting the best out of people, getting people to improve without making them feel bad. I was very happy to see the success of that play but I was also very happy when it closed and I no longer had to stay awake through the night wondering what was going to happen the next day.

Vanderscoff: What sort of role do you think artistic productions play in the maintenance of a college community, given that so many of the students aren't theater majors themselves and have other interests?

Lynch: It gives them the opportunity to participate in a much more localized way. Most of the students at Cowell who were in that play were not theater students. Most of them probably would not go out for a casting on a play in theater arts, and if they did go they probably wouldn't get picked because theater arts students are the ones who would get first priority, naturally.

This gives an opportunity to participate in the arts without having to be a major and go through all of the rigors and the tryouts that are associated with being a part of a college production at its best, at its most professional. I think it invokes the spirit of early theater because theater did arise from community involvement initially. There weren't drama schools before there were dramas. There were communities before there were dramas and those communities usually took a role in producing entertainment and rituals and holiday spirit for communities. And I think the college productions give students a chance to feel part of a community and the artistic basis of community, without feeling that they need to

go on to the next drama, or become theater arts majors, or become professional theater people.

The Function and Evolution of the Core Course and Writing Education

Vanderscoff: A consistent feature of UCSC's college system is, of course, the core course. Would you mind speaking towards the core course during your time as provost: how you found it, or what changes, if any, you made with that system.

Lynch: Well, when I took over it was down to one quarter of *Western Civilization*. It originally was a three-quarter sequence but instead it had turned into a single quarter required and then a second quarter was devoted to computer literacy because that became more and more of an important part of what students needed to know and engage with before they took other courses. This was the early eighties. Computers were not what they are now but it was obvious that students were going to need to start feeling comfortable in an electronic environment as well as a print environment. So those were the two components of the core course and I kept that: just two quarters, not three quarters.

What I tried to do was change the reading list in the direction of having greater diversity in the readings, shorter readings but readings which represented some suppressed voices, stories by women or by minorities included in the reading list.

I think the core course worked reasonably well, particularly as a way of introducing students to reading and writing about literature. In some ways you could say it was a composition class, a composition class which I think gave more attention to students' writing than most courses could give because they

were smaller classes and students worked together sometimes, and they worked in groups, and they worked more closely with the faculty in the college.

Writing was something that seemed to be lacking in many of the students in the early eighties. I don't know what happened but it was identified as a national problem, that students had not been given enough opportunity to write or enough training to write. So when they came to college, they were not writing at a college level. The core course, I think, was able to identify students who were having writing problems and was able to work with those students and help them overcome whatever background deficiencies they had. And there were quite a few who needed help.

We met as a group and the faculty identified problems that they were encountering in almost every section. Students had not been given any chance to write analytical prose. For some reason, high schools thought that writing a short story, or just a memoir, or something cute was enough to give students writing practice. There seemed to be much more emphasis in the high schools on encouraging self expression rather than the discipline of putting together an argument and making a case for it and supporting it with evidence and drawing logical conclusions. So we were working very hard on that because if you just passed students up to the next level, if you had students in the upper division who can't write or don't write sufficiently well, how would they fare in those courses? It was a problem that needed to be identified right away and addressed right away. I think our core course did that.

And in addition, I think it did do something to raise questions about diversity and culture. What I tried to do was suggest through the readings and

through the discussion that the ancient world, classics, was not what it was because it was the beginning of Europe, the beginning of white domination culturally, but it was multiculturalism that made classics interesting and made Greek and Roman cultures so vital. Culture flourished because of the intersection of three continents: the bottom of Europe, the top of Africa; and Asia and Asia Minor. And the interplay between those cultures was what enriched architecture, art, literature, philosophy and so forth. So I looked at classics, still do, as a multicultural inquiry rather than a cultural war winner, which is the way it has been taught and still is taught in some places. That is to say, Greek architecture would be unthinkable without what was done in Egypt and the Near East beforehand. They wouldn't just start building buildings on that scale with that sophistication and engineering without having the knowledge of what to do and how to do that spread from other cultures nearby. They enriched each other across the Mediterranean, not starting with the Mediterranean and going up.

Vanderscoff: A moment ago you talked about how you had this sense that many students were being trained to write in a way that was placing self-expression over discipline. Would you mind commenting on what sort of a balance you think is the ideal balance between self-expression and discipline in terms of writing and being a college student?

Lynch: I think it should be fifty-fifty, but it's often said that a Catholic education values the discipline of writing over self expression and discourages or undermines any student's creativity in writing. That is, don't be creative; just write it correctly. I think that's a bit of an overstatement but it may be true of many schools, private schools particularly, and maybe more specifically Catholic

schools. Certainly, from a teaching and writing point of view, I would prefer students come in with the discipline mastered and try to get them to start being more self expressive and creative in their approach. That's a teacher's dream, I think. The opposite is a lot more difficult.

Vanderscoff: (laughs)

Lynch: You find students who say, "I have lots of ideas and lots of things to say about myself but I don't know how to say them and I don't know how to write them. I can't spell; I can't punctuate." Those are harder students to work with.

So I would say an ideal would be if you could have a student who came in—and we have had students of this profile—half of where they should be in self expression and creativity and thinking, and half where they should be in their knowledge of how to write, the grammar, the discipline of making an argument and supporting it and drawing a logical conclusion. I like to see students having both. And I think that is what the ideal would be but the ideal is often not there.

I can understand why a high school teacher, if they have thirty-five or forty students, would not assign a lot of writing assignments. Teaching writing is extremely labor intensive. It's a lot easier, for example, to write opinion pieces, to say what you feel. Those are easier assignments for students and teachers alike. I sympathize with teachers, with the kind of load they have. [I understand why] they feel unable to respond to every student's writing. In my view, I think a class with writing intensive requirements should not be more than twenty. Fifteen

would be better, from my point of view. With that class size, you can give proper responses to students' writing.

Now in terms of what kind of response to give to students, that also requires the same kind of balance. There are teachers who do nothing but correct students' grammar, punctuation, and don't really comment on the content. And then there are other people who comment on the content and just ignore the grammar and the punctuation. Again, I think you need to have a balanced approach as far as grammar goes. Don't try to teach everything at once. Identify certain kinds of problems and patterns and work on those rather than just go through and concentrate entirely on grammar. At the same time, you need to bring up ideas about how to express your thoughts in a way that's more creative, that's more spontaneous, that's more individualistic, colorful, and forceful. Balance is required in how you approach your response to student papers. You can't just say yes-no, good-bad, and correct grammar. And you shouldn't just ignore grammar, as if it didn't count at all. Because it does count.

Vanderscoff: When you reflect on your own education, what were you taught to prioritize or value by your teachers in Great Barrington, or later at Harvard?

Lynch: I went to high school with the benefit of some teachers who were experienced in teaching writing and who were demanding. But I think, for me, most of what I learned was from studying the authors that I read. I learned to write mostly by reading. I remember practicing imitating various writer's styles, and using the elements that I liked to be part of my own writing. In high school I did quite a bit of extended writing, not just journal entries. I always liked to write whole paragraphs rather than just jot down notes, whenever possible.

Although I was worried about whether I could write at the college level (because I had no idea what that was like), I found myself being very comfortable in what was called the Harvard Gen Ed class, which was a notorious class that made you write in every class and write something as homework to hand in. It was very intensive and had a kind of principle of making you feel bad about your writing. From what I hear, they still do that to some extent. For the first assignment in Gen Ed A, you handed in what you thought was a good example of your writing and you'd get a D on it. D was the highest grade that they gave. The instructors were required to be completely critical and even cruel in their responses.

They had a different problem at Harvard than most places had. Harvard had a bunch of students who thought they were really hot writers and were so good that they were going to just wing it. What the instructors were trying to do was to bring you down a peg or two, to say you're not as good as you think. You may be great for high school, but you've got to improve and to get to the next level. And they did that by making you feel terrible about your writing. It's not my favorite approach to learning. But it worked for me and many others. We also read about how to write. Harvard assigned books about writing, how to do it, how to improve. I don't think teachers do that anymore. But there are a lot of things to be learned in self-help books, as I found out.

Vanderscoff: Coming back to the core course and its involvement with this mission of teaching writing, how do you think the core course had changed towards the end of your provostship, compared to what it was when you first arrived here in the early seventies?

Lynch: Well, the students who came in the seventies had more training in writing, for the most part, and were much better at it. An instructor didn't have to spend as much time on grammar. The students knew basic grammar but they didn't always value the rules of formal writing. They often tried to go around the rules, but they did know them. That's different from students who have no idea about how to write a complete sentence. They knew what a complete sentence was. They just didn't want to write one. They wanted to write in fragments, or in some kind of new style.

There's no doubt that students in the early seventies were much more advanced as writers than the students were when I took over as provost ten or twelve years later. I'm not sure what the reason for that is. Of course, the campus was the most selective campus in the system in 1970. It may be that the process of selection identified the students who wrote the best, or wrote well anyway, and they were the ones who got in. And as I said, it's a lot easier to teach students who know the basics of writing. Students were fairly confident writers, for the most part. There were some who had difficulties but it was a lot less work and a lot more fun to teach the students in the seventies because there were so many gifted ones. A confession: I enjoyed working with the students who had weaker backgrounds. I identified with them, and I was able to spend more time with them. But at first I had mostly students who didn't need extra time.

So when I was teaching in the core course in the eighties, both before I became provost and while I was provost, it was a lot more work because almost every student had writing problems, and sometimes you didn't even know where to start. There were more students whose first language was not English,

and I could sympathize with them. I liked working with them more. I admired them for their hard work and the determination it took for them to get to college.

The main way to learn to write is to write and write and write and write. And that's exactly what many new students felt not able to do, both because they were likely struggling in other classes and because they did not know how to address writing problems.

Someone like Maria, who came to college after only two years speaking English in the United States, worked very hard at her writing. She wrote clearly, but in very simple sentences, almost one sentence to a paragraph. She developed quickly. She listened to suggestions; she read things; she revised things. She spent hours and hours of time on the writing. She identified that as one of the areas she was going to have the most problem with, since she didn't write in Spanish either. She had almost no background in grammar. She needed work on writing in both languages. She was an unusual student. You can't expect every student to be as driven as she was. You can see that in the film, what a driven person she is, much more focused and goal-oriented than I would ever be or could be. (laughs) Both teachers and students have much to learn from her and it was good to have her as part of the community because she provided one example of how to go about overcoming adversities and disadvantages.

It was hard to recruit faculty to teach in the core course, mainly, I believe, because of the writing problems. Many faculty felt, I haven't had the background myself to teach writing at this level. I don't even know where to start. We spent a lot of time as a staff on teaching writing and I think that was good for everyone. We met as core course leaders and discussed our experiences. We had a really

good writing program on campus. Carol Freeman was the head of it and she was a Cowell fellow. And other writing faculty were wonderful resources. They often taught the sections with students who needed the most help.

Writing was just emerging as a real discipline in the late seventies, early eighties. There was a cadre nationwide of faculty members who specialized in the teaching of writing because the need had been identified and there was an opportunity for Humanities PhD's, often unemployed, to fill that need. I think that was one of the good things that did happen in the late seventies, early eighties, was the professionalization of the teaching of writing at the college level.

The Evolution and Growth of the Classics Program

Vanderscoff: I'd like to turn our focus to the classics, the classics program. You've spoken about this a little bit in some of our earlier sessions, but just to put us back into this context, would you mind speaking about the classics program in the seventies and eighties and its position as a program within the larger literature board?

Lynch: Actually, originally classics was a college major. But what I wanted to do, as I think I said before, was to have a classics program in which classics was not isolated as a department but was diffused to the whole campus, so that every college would have its own friendly classicist—someone who specialized in the ancient world. The study of the ancient world is part of many disciplines and interacted with many disciplines, rather than a study unto itself that was reserved only for people who knew Greek and Latin—those who didn't know

Greek and Latin need not apply. We had a more missionary vision of what classics could do in a collegiate context and what it should do as a discipline nationwide, worldwide in the contemporary university. Classics too often was seen as a discipline of a privileged and isolated group, rather than an integrated part of humanities in general, promoting synthesis, not division.

As I said, in one way our original vision on campus didn't work, and reorganization brought the classics faculty together, mostly in Cowell College. Probably that benefitted the careers of most of the classics faculty because we were together and we were able to do certain things more effectively because we were together on a regular basis. We were all friends when we were in separate colleges and we met over the classics program. We did things together socially but we didn't have regular interactions. Reaggregation, for all its faults, probably did strengthen the classics.

The classics program itself was a self-designed program. That is, rather than have a major with a certain inalterable requirements, we had guidelines for drawing up an individual major. It became an individual major in classics and each student who went through didn't do the same preparation. Each major did his or her curriculum in the design approved by three members of the faculty. Students chose the authors, the topics, the artifacts to specialize in. We emphasized excellence in translating from Greek and Latin, so we looked at what classes a student took, and then we gave them passages that corresponded to passages they should be able to read given what they had read, rather than the usual approach: these are passages that everyone should be able to read regardless of what you've taken before.

Every major was really tailored to what students had done before in terms of translation. For the topics, they had freedom to choose just about any area. We encouraged them to be creative in their choice of topics, but not to be overly ambitious. Three topics—one had to do with Greek and one should deal with some aspect of Roman antiquity. Otherwise they were free to choose and define their topics with the help of the faculty members on their committee. The third topic could even be outside of classics, could be something in linguistics or philosophy or modern comparative literature, or modern history. Each student designed his own major, in effect, but always within the context of knowing Greek and Latin at a certain undergraduate level.

Vanderscoff: And would you mind speaking to the spectrum of different tracks students would go on, different projects they would embark on, given that substantial leeway?

Lynch: Well, I think Jordan Corngold could be a good example. One of his topics was *The Bacchae* and rather than doing essays about *The Bacchae* he did a production of *The Bacchae* as part of his major. You could do productions. The major had that kind of flexibility. We had people who did recitals, reading Greek and Latin out loud, topics like that. We were quite expansive in our vision of what you could study for your topics, as long as the design was approved by faculty members. The fact we had only seven or eight people graduating per year in classics—sometimes it was a bit more than that, sometimes a little bit less—but seven or eight, that was a good number because we were able to give them the kind of attention that made the individual major meaningful.

We got many quite creative responses to those three topics. I doubt that anybody ever took three topics similar to those chosen by another major. Everyone, especially at the beginning, tried to be very distinctive. We gave examples of what people had done in the past in our advising sheet. But that didn't limit anyone's thinking. That, in fact, probably inspired them to try to be more creative in what they regarded as a topic. We put more of a burden on the student to come up with what they were going to be examined on, but I think it also involved them in a way that was meaningful in terms of their commitment to the subject and their interest in going on from undergraduate to graduate school. We sent a lot of students on to graduate school, maybe more than we should have. Quite a few students from the seventies are now full professors and chairmen of various classics departments around the country. We didn't have a PhD program but we did have a very solid undergraduate program and some exceptional students. It's strange for me that some of them are now already retired.

Vanderscoff: And would you mind speaking to the role that your collaborators in the classics program played?

Lynch: I think Gary [Miles], Mary Kay [Gamel], and I were the first three. Then Laura Slatkin came in. I wanted to have at least four classicists and Laura was a wonderful addition to our group. We tried as a group to be teaching-oriented and to pay close attention to students and to student needs. We talked about students regularly. We spent a lot of time with students outside of class. We had classics hour which I think still continues, on Friday afternoons. We knew our students and they knew us. We'd meet somewhere, at various places,

downtown, sometimes on campus and have social time. You didn't have to talk about classics. You didn't even have to be in classics. A lot of students were not in classics per se, but just took Latin or Greek or knew somebody who took Latin and they came along. Some years we'd have twenty or thirty people every Friday. We encouraged students to be part of a larger community and not to think of studying classics as over when a class ended. We wanted them to continue their interest outside the classroom.

Gary Miles and I decided to share an office. A campus office is a lot of space for one person. We used the other office as a classics library, and we provided a place where classics students could go to study together. The "library" became a center for students to use and hang out together. We received a gift of classics books and ended up getting two other substantial donations to the library. The library now has a rich collection of books, as well as tables and chairs and computers. It's heavily used by students.

The library has also developed into much more now. Charles Hedrik has made it into a much bigger space. It's no longer the size of a single office. He was able to do some trading and move it and make it available to more students.

"You're a part of a group," is one of my mantras. I always encouraged students to study together. I think students like doing Greek and Latin together. In some ways, students, when they meet together and do things in a group work harder than they do when they meet as a class or work solo. Because in class they can let the teacher take over and just fill in the spaces, whereas when they meet together they have to be prepared and do what they are supposed to do. They

are dependent on each other, and you don't want to waste the time of your friends and group members.

Classics lends itself to collaborative study because you have to have someone looking up words in the dictionary and reading commentary. There's just a lot of elaborate source material that's needed for reading classics texts. You can't just go out in the woods, put your feet up, and read something in Latin. They are hard languages. There is a lot of learning you need to bring to the text. Most classics students have four or five things open at any one time when they are reading a text. To have four or five different people in charge of different things helps a lot. In addition, before you are reading texts, just going over the material with others and sounding it out loud, helps learning for many students. They hear it and remember it better from having just heard it from having worked together.

I think the program has been very successful. I hope it continues. Classics is an important and fragile enterprise everywhere.

Vanderscoff: I recently was doing an oral history, as you know, with Harry Berger, who was one of the people who set up the lit department at UC Santa Cruz. He was one of the inaugural faculty.

Lynch: He was *the* founder, number one as far as literature goes.

Vanderscoff: And I asked him what sort of principles or focuses he had in setting up the lit department and he said he particularly, as did several of his collaborators in those early years, held a strong interest in New Criticism and the practice of close reading. So what I would like to ask you, as a formative person

in classics, what sort of relevance did this larger governing principle that was a part of the lit board at UCSC, this attachment to close reading that Harry talked about trying to instill, what sort of relevance did that have for you as a classicist and for the program more broadly?

Lynch: A lot of people think that close reading grew out of the classics—you have to read closely every single word, as a word. There is no speed-reading in classics. Reuben Brower—*Fields of Light*—he was a classicist and a lot of principles of close reading were enunciated in that book, well before [Cleanth] Brooks.

Close reading—it means a whole lot of different things. It's a loaded phrase. It could just mean that you read closely with attention. But it also means finding patterns in the texts, seizing on repetitions, focusing on particular words and etymologies and language features. All those elements of reading closely are very compatible with classics and they are also very compatible with the way I was taught to read texts by faculty at Harvard in the sixties.

New Criticism was not new in the early sixties in English departments, but it was quite new in classics. Classics always has a lag time. The late fifties, early sixties was the beginning of the influence of New Criticism with capital letters. We had new criticism before, close reading, but New Criticism with capital letters was more of a fifties phenomenon and did not influence classics very much. But by the late fifties, early sixties, there were scholars in classics who identified themselves as close readers and Steele Commager who wrote a book on Horace identified himself as a new critic. Bernard Knox emphasized the new close reading in his *Oedipus* book. Those were very influential books. I would

say that they represent the way I was taught to read classics, not just close reading in the sense of reading carefully, but close reading in the sense of reading with a particular sense of how the language of a poem or a passage or a whole text related internally and dynamically.

You didn't bring in biographical, or historical information to read into the text. You read the text as if it were "found." As Brower and others have said, "You found this text in the field, you don't know who wrote it, you don't know when it was written—read it, tell me what it means." A text should have a meaning apart from its author's life and its historical context.

Now, it grew from that stark vision of reading—something that you just found in the field and you didn't know when it was written, or by whom it was written—to finding a more limited role for biographical and historical context in interpretation. By the time I came here in 1970, I would say that there was kind of a New Historicism growing, which valued context more than before. But let me stop there. I'm oversimplifying, I fear, and getting ahead of myself.

I think the classicists all shared a vision that we wanted classics to be part of literature in general and that we accepted the notion, which was a bit simplistic, that all literatures were one—that literature was literature and what you did when you read literature is you read it closely. You saw things and learned to observe more carefully what was in the text and how the elements within the text related to each other. And often you found some sort of a pattern that united the text thematically. Context came in, but as secondary to close reading.

Vanderscoff: I'm curious about this relationship between classics and the rest of literature. During the seventies, the eighties, the nineties, literature more broadly, of course, was influenced by a number of changes, such as the rise of the notion of women's studies and cultural studies, and these larger challenges and transformations of the canon. How did all of those shifts in literature as a whole and these debates that emerged impact classics and the way classics was taught at UCSC?

Lynch: As I said before, classics tends to lag behind other fields. When there are developments in other fields, the approach of the classicists usually is to wait and see. Will it be lasting and what of it will be skimmed off as useless? I think we try to be a little bit more responsive, not to jump on every bandwagon of change, but to identify elements of change within the study of literature and to see how they relate to classics.

We were pretty open to feminism early, I think, in our concerns. We were interested in structuralism also. None of us were structuralists; we wanted to push the boundaries.

Excluded minorities and voices that have been suppressed or ignored—we tried to incorporate those perspectives and to teach about them. Teaching about them is not the same as teaching *from* them. That is, we didn't teach as cultural critics; we taught about cultural criticism that was going on and identified the leading influences. We did not judge, "These scholars have nothing to say. They're not mainline classicists." They were included in the debate. Our teaching sought to be progressive.

For example, there's a school of teaching Plato by Leo Strauss and his fellows called Straussians. I taught about the Straussian approaches to Plato interpretation but I didn't consider myself a Straussian. Now, the strange thing was two or three students became Straussians as a result of my exposing them to this. They wanted to apply to the University of Chicago and study with Straussians. That can happen even if you're not identified as a member of the group. Teaching about it can inspire students to go in that direction. That's fine with me. I think it's better, in fact, than to try to convert students to Straussianism because you're a Straussian yourself and you hold hard and fast to the Straussian line of how to interpret Plato.

I wouldn't say that we were necessarily cutting edge here in classics in terms of developing ways of doing things which were in advance of others. But I think we paid closer attention to what was going on in other fields and made students aware of trends. I think a lot of classics departments just shut themselves off from all of these influences and said, "Oh, that will go away. You don't need to know anything about that."

It hasn't gone away in many instances and this has caused rebellions among students, who say that classics is too far behind the times. There are departments that are maybe considered to be much more contemporary and much more up on the latest, but the most prestigious departments—Harvard, Yale, and Princeton—still would be identified as conservative in terms of their approaches. They have faculty members who are interested to some degree in new approaches, but they don't usually exhibit them in their scholarship. Their own work is still fairly conventional.

Vanderscoff: And so, when you consider your own teaching and the way that you read classical texts, keeping in mind these political trends that we're talking about, what sort of alterations have there been in your style, when you compare how you started in the early seventies versus later in your teaching career?

Lynch: I have tried always to be open to things. I have to admit that I was less open to certain trends in literary studies, because they seemed to be too narrow. I may have gotten more crotchety in my old age and become less sympathetic to new approaches, particularly when they seemed to be not just political and ideological, but polemical. They came at you in an attack—more aggressively polemical than past trends. Maybe I didn't react as well to those as I should have, but still, I would want our students to be aware of published works, interpretations, scholars who are doing work that we identify as a new development, not the kind of research I read when I was in college and beyond. Classics students need to keep up with new approaches they have to offer the study of classics. To see classics as a growing, evolving discipline and moving faster than before, rather than classics as an island of sanity in storms that are going by and that are transitory and not of any great interest.

Vanderscoff: And when you think of the classics program here, what do you think distinguishes it and how is it similar to these other programs you've been talking about. I mean, you've mentioned Harvard, Yale, and Princeton. But also more broadly, other programs in the University of California, for instance, and elsewhere.

Lynch: I do like to think that we're more open and that the "closed" button isn't pressed as much here as it is in other departments. And that's a strength of the

students we produce. We have stayed with the thing that is most important in classics and that is that students have to be good at the languages and to enjoy reading Greek and Latin. You can't go very far in classics if you can't read the languages well.

The students who have gone on from our program to be most successful have been the ones who especially like reading Latin and Greek. It's fun. It really is fun. (laughs) I still enjoy it at this time of life. But if it's really a drudge for you, if it's very difficult and it always feels like you're not making much progress, then maybe you need to move on and consider, for example, a comparative literature approach that would not emphasize facility in languages so much.

I think making intensive language study prominent and at the same time being open to various interpretive trends and approaches—I think those are the things that would distinguish our program from others elsewhere. We have not watered down the language requirements. Many programs do that.

Students may take classics for more personal reasons. A few think of classics as something like the rock of Gibraltar rather than an area of study that is moving and growing. We don't think of rocks. Our metaphors tend to be more biological than geological, about growth and expansion and evolution—which means that even in classics things come and go, live and die. As classicists, we're not just preserving something that's fixed for all eternity. Although we honor other ways of understanding the field, I think we all see classics as a dynamic, in flux, reflecting change as well as continuity.

Vanderscoff: As a result of this openness to new approaches being one of your two key principles as you just laid them out, have there been perspectives or student projects or new movements within the classics program that have challenged you, or that you have personally found difficult to understand or relate to.

Lynch: We encourage students to see our classics faculty as not different in a negative sense but different as a positive feature. We offer a greater range of opportunities because people have different backgrounds and perspectives. Although we all may share fundamental understandings, we value differences as vital and exciting, not threatening. It's good also to have a class where students have different ways of looking at things. It energizes the discussion. That's the whole reason why when we hire faculty, we look at their interests and approaches, to try to expand what we have to offer. We strive to be inclusive rather than exclusive.

Vanderscoff: Wonderful. Well, at this point we've gone about a good seventy-three minutes and my instinct is to cut it off here before we go on to the next topic, which is talking about the literature board in the early nineties, which is really specific and might be prove to be more than the next twenty minutes or something like that.

Lynch: It probably would be.

Vanderscoff: Okay, then for this moment I will switch this off. Is there anything else that you would like to say about the topics that we've been discussing today, your provostship and the classics program here at UCSC?

Lynch: Well, they've been both great sources of satisfaction for me, both the college and the classics program, because I've had such a delightful group of students in both realms from 1970 to 2009.

I think being provost of the college for six years and being in the classics program all of those years gave me exposure to a wide range of students. I feel very grateful for the students we've had and continue to have at UCSC. I'm surprised that students, with the economic climate such as it is, are still taking classics and doing well in it and going on in classics. Classics is such a fragile enterprise that it could be damaged severely by an economic downturn such as we have now. It's a small field. It's never going to be huge because it has that filter of two very difficult languages. And yet we are still producing very good students. For my last year of teaching I had a couple of the best students I ever had in my thirty-seven years. You hear some retiring faculty buying into a narrative of decline—that is, it all started off so wonderful and then went downhill, and finally now that I'm retiring it's hit the low end. I don't feel that way at all. There have been ups and downs in our program at UCSC, but ups and downs in interesting ways, with different challenges in different eras. And through it all we continue to get fine students at UCSC, including ones who love classics.

The same is true of my experience of being provost. When I go to alumni events I look forward to them because I meet students who come up and thank me for what I did, and especially what Cowell College did for them. It's a great job. It has reinforced in me that we are doing something right. UCSC, Cowell College, the classics program have all made significant contributions to

the world. We have more than our fair share of great stories reflecting the power of education.

Internal Conflict and Receivership in the Literature Department

Vanderscoff: Today is Thursday, May 30, 2013. This is Cameron Vanderscoff here with John Patrick Lynch for the fifth part of his oral history project. I'd like to talk about literature more broadly in terms of the structure of the board. I've been looking at external reviews of the then-board in the late eighties and early nineties, which present a picture of internal conflict. What do you think were the pros and cons of the board's broad structure, so that it wasn't simply English literature or French literature, but they were all gathered under the same umbrella?

Lynch: That was one of the most attractive features of Santa Cruz for me, the idea that faculty in classics would sit at the table with those who taught other literatures—foreign and English and American. And the same was true on the history side: you would be sitting with faculty who were doing history of all periods and in all geographical areas, not just ancient historians associating with classicists, who all were grounded in classical literature and languages.

I valued that new configuration and I valued associations with people like Harry Berger and Tom Vogler, whose research took them into classics and who spent a lot of time reading ancient texts. They weren't dabbling; they were deeply involved, connecting classics with their own specialties. In Harry's case, it was the Renaissance and texts far beyond the Renaissance era. Harry has an amazingly broad sweep and scope in his writing and his thinking.

So when the department started to have some major administrative problems I was concerned. It always had conflicts and those were not always healthy, but most of the time there were useful divisions or disagreements about literature and how to teach it, how to go about structuring the curriculum and what kinds of approaches to literature made the most sense for undergraduates, graduate students, and for research in the contemporary university.

But then there were some deeper divisions and they grew, I guess, gradually. I didn't notice them. I don't think I have great insight into what happened, either. I wish I did. I did volunteer to try to help things by being chair. No one wanted to be chair at that time because it got fairly ugly, and there were personal dimensions to it. There were ideological dimensions and there were dimensions that I'm sure I didn't appreciate or know how to tackle.

I liked the idea of saving the board and keeping the board of studies together. There were threats of splintering off and groups of faculty establishing their own separate programs. That wasn't really very practical in that this was a time of great cutback in the university in terms of support. We already had to do at least a 5 percent cut every year for several years. And I think every year, every department, every division, every aspect of the university was asked to say what would you do if you had to cut 5 percent or ten percent or 15 percent? You had to come up with contingency plans. Space was at a premium because of the cutbacks.

So the idea of breaking off and forming your own unit made no sense economically, especially in that climate. Because to have your own unit you needed space; you needed staff; you needed program support. You needed all

kinds of things that would not be likely in that climate and probably not in any climate since I've been here. Maybe in the seventies things were a little bit rosier.

There's such a thing as a critical mass and I think we had established that in literature. And to undermine that by breaking off in your own separate department just made no sense to me. Plus, you'd then have the intellectual division on top of that.

I don't know if you read the *Lingua Franca* piece. It was from a national news organization, the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, but it's more personalized and newsy. They did an article about three departments that were in receivership in the nineties—Columbia's anthropology department, Yale's philosophy, and our literature department.¹⁰ There was a reporter who came and interviewed people. Because we had gotten to the point where we were pretty much paralyzed. We had no leadership. The dean had brought in a fairly expensive outside consultant to try to remedy the situation. And she worked and worked and worked and then she threw up her hands saying that she couldn't do anything because there were parties in the debate—or I don't know if you want to call it that—who had a vested interest in the non-resolution of the problem. When you have that situation surface, it's almost impossible to solve problems.

Eventually we got outside leadership appointed, someone from outside the board, from linguistics came in. I had something to do with that. I was acting dean at the time. Our outside chair identified someone in the department who

¹⁰ The article is "As Bad as It Gets: Three Dark Tales from the Annals of Academic Receivership," in Vol. 98, No. 2. It is currently available online at: <http://linguafranca.mirror.theinfo.org/9803/asbad.html>

was acceptable to everyone as a chair and he developed her to take over. And that worked out. I think time was helpful too. Things gradually settled down, and I think people came back together, not without some lasting scars.

It was a tough time. I guess it was partly the age. You can see if other departments around the country were experiencing similar kinds of divisiveness. I really don't know. I hate to finger personal things but there were personal dimensions to it. I don't know enough about it to feel comfortable developing that line of thinking because I wasn't party to it. I just heard second and third hand what was going on in certain kinds of personal divisions.

Anyway we did stay together and I think we did clean up the major. We had too many pathways developed. We had the world lit pathway, most notoriously, in which faculty identified other faculty who could and could not be part of that pathway, and that caused a lot of ill feeling, to have a pathway which was exclusive in its faculty, as opposed to faculty who volunteered or whose courses fit the bill. There were people who were teaching courses that really were world lit in almost every sense of the word but who were not recognized by the world lit group as world lit. That was a bitter pill for some people to swallow, that their courses were not "world lit" enough, whatever that might mean.

I think that that article covers a lot of things. I don't think anyone would agree entirely with its analysis. It seems that it is mostly the old guard versus the new guard—or, what happens to Old Turks. Having been Young Turks, how do they experience it when another group rises up against them? I think that's the perspective of the article. I think it was more complicated than the reporter

thought that it was, but I guess most things seem more complicated from the inside than from the outside.

Vanderscoff: So you mentioned that the internal debate had some ideological dimensions, and of course we're talking about a time in the seventies and eighties and into the nineties when literature was going through significant changes, as well as academia more broadly, through the introduction of women's studies. And in the nineties, of course, there was the rise of identity politics and certain things in that vein. When you reflect on the balance between personal conflict and ideological conflict—like individual allegiance to these larger movements—how do you weigh those two different factors in terms of figuring out where that trouble began for the board?

Lynch: I think we developed a kind of feminist component and perspective fairly early on. I think we did well enough that we had some strong voices among female faculty. I don't think that was a source of tension. Feminism was a source of learning for most faculty.

Racial conflicts in literature—we had people who were very sensitive to those issues. We didn't have a large component of minority faculty, but we had some and we had some people who were very interested in race as a category in literature. And class. The litany is always race, gender, and class but there's very little class analysis most of the time.

I think we were okay where other people found storms of conflict, as far as incorporating racial perspectives or ethnic perspectives, feminist perspectives,

gay and lesbian perspectives. It wasn't completely smooth, but we had a healthy discussion and mix.

It was the "theory," when people looked more towards theory, than to text. That's where the conflict came in in our department. Theory felt to some of us like a controlling device, a kind of an airplane view which saw across boundaries and didn't recognize areas on the ground where there was real differentiation, where you valued things like studying the literature of a people. Theory seemed to be pretty monolingual to those of us who taught texts in foreign or classical languages.

That doesn't sound very explosive—theory versus [text]—but that's where I think the world literature conflict developed.

But when we had the reform, and new, acceptable leadership, we sorted out the pathways of the major. Because it had gotten to the point where basically there were so many pathways that an undergraduate could take almost any set of seven or eight courses and call it a major, whether it had any coherence or made any sense of all. But I think we reduced the pathways sensibly, so that they provided structure for students and a sense of where you could go with a given interest, which pathway to take. That's worked out pretty well. That made it possible to advise a lit student. In the early nineties it was almost impossible to advise a student. You'd just say, "Do whatever you want because I can't figure out what is required in your pathway or what pathway you're going to be in." So advising was left pretty much to the staff. Staff still do the main advising, but faculty now do contribute to advising and meet with the students. That was a big help.

Personal tensions have been put on hold or on the back burner. There are still some fairly severe and almost predictable disagreements about hiring new faculty, even new temporary faculty, but probably no worse than it used to be. That's always a point of division, when you are hiring a new person. There are disagreements about who is the one that would best fit the program.

Vanderscoff: So in that climate, why did you personally make that push to head the board?

Lynch: I didn't make a push. There was a committee who tried to search for faculty who were willing, and I said I was willing. The reason I was willing was that I did not want to break up the board. I never wanted to have a classics department, as I've said many times, and I liked having the broader representation of literature at the same table. To have classics included in literature made our program unique. We talked about some of those unique factors last time—we always wanted to be non-exclusive, that is inclusive. And so to be able to include you're going to be part of the bigger picture. That won't come in the isolation that classics often suffers from. Classics usually does not even participate in debates like the debate over theory versus textual analysis. But we did here. It wasn't always agreeable and it wasn't always welcome, but I think it was good for us to be part of that debate.

Vanderscoff: And when you reflect on receivership, how do you think that impacted the board in terms of assuaging these existing conflicts and these ideological differences?

Lynch: I think that the receivership, coupled with the threat of losing resources. That threat was real in the sense that everybody had to save money; every dean had to save money; every vice chancellor had to save money. So to say, "Well, you're an obvious target for saving money because you don't have your act together," was pretty persuasive. In fatter times economically we probably would have had a harder time solving the problem. The threat of cutback—or it wasn't even cutback, it was the threat of not getting any new resources, did persuade people to think a little bit differently, or a little bit more cooperatively.

Receivership was not something to be proud of. Students heard that we had outside leadership, we had internal problems. That can't help the reputation of the department for students who are interested in literature and pursuing higher degrees. So it was good to get past that. The article says that these sorts of things can pop up again and they may. But right now, as I understand it—I haven't been up there very much since I retired—but things seem to be perking along pretty well.

Vanderscoff: And so more specifically, when you reflect on the literature board at the time of your retirement, what distinguishes it from the literature board of that more contentious period in the early nineties, and also earlier that literature board that you found when you came here in the seventies?

Lynch: I think the center of faculty interest is much more centered in modern issues, in modern literature, in more contemporary things. When I arrived, it was delightful to have so many senior faculty interested in antiquity, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance too. It's changed now.

Certainly there are a lot more courses on theory, theoretically oriented courses, and probably much less emphasis on studying foreign or classical languages. We had a second literature requirement for many years, so you couldn't major in literature knowing only English. You had to know some other language, to the point where you could study literary texts in that language. But we gave that up in part of that struggle over how literature should be taught. I think people who are interested in theory want students to get to a higher level of thinking more quickly than you could if you started with a beginning language, classical or modern. That's quite a challenge—by the time you start thinking in any sophisticated way about literary texts you have to have four or five quarters of language study behind you. Theory pops up more easily, I would say. You get the hang of it in a quarter or two.

I think there is more interest in and emphasis on the non-canonical in literature. Somebody once said, "We have Madonna and Bob Dylan covered but we don't have Shakespeare and Joyce right now in our curriculum." You might argue that's a good thing. I myself wouldn't.

Vanderscoff: And, of course, I've been calling it "the lit board," but by the time of your retirement it was, in fact, called a department. Do you think that that shift in language made any difference for how the board went about its business, or do you think that was simply a change of a label. Does that matter?

Lynch: I think it was just a change in label. I don't think calling it a *board of study* as opposed to a *department* ever made any real difference. I haven't experienced a great difference. We don't have real departments even now. A real department would have its own real budget. We have just a little sprinkling of spending

money. There's not a lot of power in the chair and the chair doesn't have a lot of discretion.

Dean McHenry got his wish, in a way, even though the language changed to *department*. Departments have never developed in the traditional sense that he said were a danger to the university. I still think that he was onto something there. Calling it a department doesn't make any difference, but if we really had departments, that would make a difference—and for the worse.

Vanderscoff: And before we move on to discuss your campus citizenship, is there anything further that you would like to say about the lit board or the lit department and how it changed over the years.

Lynch: It was a mystery to me that we got so divided. Because I do think the hearts of most of the faculty support the basic idea of being inclusive, the big tent idea, and also not wanting to make education an elitist enterprise for the fortunate few.

I seem to have lost the battle that education should become more social and cooperative, less competitive and individualistic. We're going through a much more competitive and individualistic phase in literary studies and in the university in general. I hope the more communitarian concept of education will not be lost forever. Trends in education swing back and forth. I still would welcome education having a greater social dimension, having a more cooperative than competitive definition.

Vanderscoff: Well, thank you. And we'll talk more, probably next session, about some of your thoughts on teaching and writing.

Campus Citizenship:

Academic Senate and Educational Abroad Program

Vanderscoff: So turning to campus citizenship, during your time at UCSC you've been very consistently involved with campus government, which is not something that we've talked about at any length. You were involved with the Academic Senate for the vast majority of your time here and chaired multiple committees, and in some cases acted as a statewide representative. What significance has this sort of campus civic work held for you?

Lynch: I believe strongly in the Academic Senate. I think it's a great institution. It's something that is almost unique to UC. Other universities have senates, but they don't have the structure and the power that the Academic Senate in the University of California has. It is useful to find allies at other UC campuses, to find out what's going on elsewhere, and to work against the idea of strictly autocratic governance. The Office of the President at UC is not usually perceived as an enemy, but as a source of leadership that is accountable, transparent, and cooperative with the faculty.

There is a limited sense in which faculty do have governing power. I mean, they don't have control over the university budget, obviously. The administration does. But the Senate can throw its weight around about how that money is spent, and certainly can call attention to waste and programs that are not working well. The evaluative aspect of the Academic Senate is useful and it also promotes a sense of involvement in the community. *Involvement* has always been one of my watch words: *engagement*, and *involvement*. I like being involved.

It makes service much more meaningful to me if I feel that I'm doing it out of interest, that I am making a difference, and that the university is partly mine.

I was chair of just about every major committee at UCSC except the senate itself. I was offered that on at least two occasions, but I decided I could not make that kind of a commitment at the time. The classics program requires teaching quite a few courses, and I did not want to short the classics major, which was always my first priority.

I was chair of the Committee on Academic Personnel, which is a major committee, as well as the Committee on Planning and Budget (twice). I was chair of the library and the teaching and charges committees, the sexual harassment education committee. You saw all those things I listed. I wish I had as many publications as I did committee assignments.

Vanderscoff: So for you as a teacher, then, what's the relationship between educating students in the classroom and serving on committees in the senate?

Lynch: As I have said previously, I think that education is much more than an individual learning experience. It's being part of a community. So by being involved in the senate, I'm more informed about how the community works, and I think I show students by my own commitment that what I do is something I consider meaningful and I consider other people doing it significant and meaningful. Teaching is *not* just individual performance. Civic mindedness is a secondary goal of my teaching, I think, and to teach it you have to be it. You can't just say, you should participate in things, and not participate. But I don't think anyone would say that I didn't participate enough. (laughs) I have heard people

say, "Why didn't you write more instead of doing that?" I don't think that was the tradeoff, between writing and doing that kind of work. I was trying to do both and support being a teacher, in a full sense.

The Education Abroad Program, for example, is a very valuable program I got to through Senate service. I was chosen to be a director. As a result, I could advise students from a more informed perspective than most faculty could. I think that was a great program. I know it's suffered from budgetary cuts now. Were you on the Education Abroad Program?

Vanderscoff: I never was, actually, no.

Lynch: It was a costly program, but it was a year that changed lives in a way that other years at the university do not always change lives. You could spend three years on the campus and not have your life significantly changed. But if you go one year on Education Abroad it's almost always significantly life changing. And that's good. I mean, not all education has to be life changing, but it's wonderful to have that kind of profound experience as a student.

Vanderscoff: So speaking more specifically about your involvement with the Education Abroad Program, you worked as the associate director, I understand, at the London office in the late seventies. How does that fit into your other modes of campus involvement?

Lynch: I think the Education Abroad Program job in London is the best job anyone could ever have. It was two wonderful years. I don't think I could do it forever as a career because it doesn't use my skills and interest in classics as much as it might. I had a lot of good contact with classicists in Britain. Classics

there is a premier study, still, or it was, anyway, in the British university. There are a lot of resources, a lot of events, a lot of people involved in the classics community in London. That was very good for my scholarly development.

What I enjoyed most as a teacher was having close involvement with students, 130, 150 students, for a whole year of study in a foreign university. Well, British universities are maybe not too foreign, but they're foreign enough. You get to know the students well, visit them three times a year and enroll them in courses, give them advice, and work on problems that they have. It's a multidimensional job. You have to like students and like working on student problems to do the job with any degree of joy and effectiveness. And I do. I made good friends with students those two years. Some of them have kept in touch with me all of these years since we were there, largely because it was an intimate experience for them, but also because I was interested in what they were doing and I was able to help many students, able to provide some direction culturally and academically.

I don't know if you are interested in the structure of the job. Basically what the director and the associate director do is enroll students in foreign university in courses that look like and parallel the University of California courses. So there's a kind of cross-registration. That requires you to work creatively because the British university doesn't have a curriculum system that's like ours at all. The associate director has to translate the students' comparable University of California-like courses. So I had to learn about the majors at the various University of California campuses and then work with the individual faculty or departments to cross-register and advise students through the whole year. When

the students got done with the year. they would receive proper credit on their University of California records. Otherwise it might be a throwaway year, where you got an excellent education but you didn't get any credit towards graduation. The idea is to try to translate into UC credit, the credit that you received from the experience of a British university. It's tricky and requires some creativity, working closely with the students and what they're doing.

Leaving Rigor for the Coroner:

Philosophies on Teaching and Education

Vanderscoff: So when you reflect on these different capacities that you've served in, and different committees that you've worked on, what are some that stand out as particularly important, or meaningful, or worthwhile for you, in retrospect?

Lynch: It's not a major committee, I guess, but the Committee on Teaching was important because I was interested in keeping alive the dialogue about teaching at UCSC. I always felt that there were things I could learn from other faculty and things I could learn from other students. Teaching is not something that gets done automatically without any reflection. It's not something done the same year after year, or the same regardless of the teaching situation. We are a research university. Research is obviously valued more than teaching in the University of California system. Not by me, though. Is there any hope for me and other faculty like me?

I think the biggest honor I had as a faculty member was to win a national teaching award, the American Philological Teaching Award. I'm prouder of that

than any other achievement. I'm prouder of it, I'm sure, than I would be if I won an award for the best book of the year from the American Philological Association. If you gave most faculty a choice—you could either get the teaching award or you can win for the best book—I would take the teaching award, but I guess that probably 90 percent would say I'd rather have the best book of the year.

For me, teaching was what I most wanted to do, even though temperamentally and talent-wise, I'm probably more at home as a researcher than as a teacher. I never felt that I had great gifts as a teacher in terms of voice modulation, stage presence, etc. I thought I was lacking in those presentational gifts. I've tried to work on them but they didn't come easily for me. Library research was easier for me. I love libraries. I'd like to spend every day in a library. Digital libraries, too. Online research is of great interest to me. But teaching still was the number one priority for me. It is something I consider vitally important for my own fulfillment. I don't think a research university should do research to the exclusion of thoughtful consideration of what teaching is all about. Research-oriented faculty have a lot to learn and a lot to teach from a research perspective. We all need to do both as well as we can, whatever our priorities.

Vanderscoff: Are there any particular debates or conversations that you remember happening in the Committee on Teaching?

Lynch: I think I gave you a couple of articles. Have we talked about those already?

Vanderscoff: No, we haven't.

Lynch: I did try to float some ideas about teaching as more of a guiding process, with teachers working on the same side as the student, rather than teaching being adversarial to the student, or checking on the student, or rating the student.

That did cause some furor, I have to say. One year when I won the teaching award on campus, and even the year that I won the national teaching award, I got some negative responses from colleagues. They felt that I was undermining the idea of standards and quality in education, that I didn't emphasize excellence enough. They saw the job of a teacher as modeling high standards, high quality. I didn't use those words. They also used the word *rigor*, which I play with in my essay. I did learn from some of the discussion I had with faculty. I went out for a beer or coffee with some of them. Others wrote me saying they were stimulated by my views.

I did get a couple of responses anonymously—they were a little bit more strongly worded—about sullyng the reputation of the University of California by implying that research was not the most important thing. I didn't say that. But I did say that it was worth raising questions about teaching and the relationship between teaching and research. Research is not the only thing, even at research universities. We all need to give some real thought to pedagogy.

The faculty in the writing program I found to have some of the best ideas about teaching because they had spent a lot more time thinking about the teaching process. They typically don't publish as much but they do spend a lot of

time thinking about teaching; when they do publish, they often focus on a teacher's perspective. It's very useful, I think, to have working in every university, research or not, faculty members who help us think about teaching.

I've heard faculty say—not necessarily just faculty here but elsewhere—that there is no such thing as teaching, there's only learning. You learn and someone else learns from your learning. There's no communication dimension to teaching. There's no interpersonal dimension. I disagree.

As a teacher, I learned how to be open to almost anything that happened in class—the blurting out, the hostile question, the joke—I ran a fairly easy-feeling classroom, an easy classroom to be in. There was no intimidation. People who have come to my classes have said that they found them non-threatening, easy to relate to, and easy to plug into. I got students to discuss, even quite shy students, to discuss, without making them feel that they're on the spot.

I think I was one of the first faculty in humanities to run a discussion online, by email. Very early on I realized that certain students, particularly in larger classes, were very shy. So as an experiment I required everybody to contribute to an online discussion, over email, at least two observations or questions. It was amazing that some students who never spoke up were quite expansive in the online environment.

I think there's a lot of potential in online teaching. It's not incompatible with face-to-face teaching; in fact I think it could supplement the traditional classroom in very interesting ways. I ran a fair number of these discussions. They don't make the job of teaching easier, I can tell you that, because online teaching

is really time consuming, if you respond to everyone's comments—I was getting reactions and questions from students after midnight on the day before the class. You're basically on call 24:7 if you do online teaching. You can't let it back up, at least the way I was doing it. This was fairly primitive online teaching, of course. There are more sophisticated ways of doing it now. I just had a kind of open forum. Nothing was blocked. There was no moderator.

Vanderscoff: And now, of course, there's a lot of discussion going on about online classes, online university, and so on. So as a teacher who's placed such a primacy on smaller class sizes, what are your thoughts of the value of this increasing confluence of the Internet and teaching, and education?

Lynch: Well, I do worry about education getting reduced to learning things from the online environment. That's not education. It's a component of education. But where I think there's a real possibility—and this may be too optimistic—to rid yourself of the large lecture. Instead of having students come to the campus and basically be passive listening to a large lecture, have that available online or on disk to be done whenever they want to.

When they come to the campus and get together, they could be in smaller groups and they could discuss both the reading and the lecture. I think now there's too much of a disconnect. It doesn't really make a lot of sense to me for students to come and listen to a lecture on the campus if there's a way they can do that on their own—on demand.

Vanderscoff: Something that you were speaking about a little earlier was a critical response that you received from some colleagues about an article that

you'd written. I'd like to speak about that more particularly. You've written in that article that you were mentioning, which was published in a UCSC faculty newsletter—and I believe we're speaking about the same one—that "rigor should be a primary concern of coroners and morticians and not teachers." In your opinion, if not rigor, what should be the primary concern of a teacher?

Lynch: Growth. I see students, wherever they start, committing themselves to a goal of getting better, improving. I don't care where people start, as long as they develop. And if they develop from A to B, where someone else goes from B to Z, I'm just as pleased if the effort is there, the effort and commitment. I'm looking for effort, commitment, involvement, rather than the end product, which is where you land. Again, I'm intrigued with the idea of education as a growth experience rather than a measuring or a rating experience.

Vanderscoff: Well, if it is not the primary concern then, what you think the relevance of rigor is in education?

Lynch: I think it's a flawed notion, a false goal. I'd rather be called flexible than rigorous. Flexible means to me that you're alive. I'm committed to living and growing, developing metaphors, rather than ones that imply end result or product. Rigor, to me, values the end of things, rather than the beginning. I'd like to see someone opening up, growing and developing, rather than settling. The human body gets more rigorous as you get older, and that's not a welcome thing, entirely. I think education is counter-rigor. Get out of that stiffness and open up and develop and grow. Keep growing.

Vanderscoff: You've often allowed students the chance to retake their finals and made yourself available by phone the night prior to a test. On this you've written that "a course isn't a contest to see who comes out on top and who does not make it on a given day." If a course isn't a contest, if isn't about rigor, about these different notions that you've been discussing, at its best what do you think the purpose of a course is?

Lynch: It's an attempt to promote social and interactive learning. You're not just learning on your own. There are people who learn well on their own. But I think you also want to be able bring students together who are interested in the same thing, or taking the same subject, or are thinking about it together. Not necessarily on the same level. In fact, sometimes it's really useful to have different levels. I have found it very useful to have a diverse group of students together in a class.

One of the things I loved about teaching at UCSC was the number of older students. We attracted reentry students. They often brought to the discussion of a literary text a completely different life experience from a seventeen- to twenty-one year old. That was very useful for the seventeen- to twenty-one year old, the so-called traditional student. They learn from people who are getting an education as a second chance, often older perspectives with different life experience. And in turn I think some of the older students have learned a lot from reengaging with younger minds, who are in many instances more open and creative in their approach.

I think the interaction of males and females in a class, older and younger students, students who entered as freshmen, students who transferred, students

who came from different economic circumstances, different ethnic circumstances. I love it when I see a diversity of ethnicities in a class because I know that it's going to end up being good, even if sometimes there are some tensions on the surface.

Vanderscoff: And why do you think is? What is it about that unfamiliarity or distance allows you as a thinker, as a speaker, as a teacher, that is somehow distinct from actually identifying with that category in some way?

Lynch: I think we talked about this previously. It's having both the inside and outside perspective on an issue. I think both are important. To have, say, only women comment on women's literature would be limiting, rather than liberating, or only men can comment on literature by men or about masculinity. I think you need the perspectives of others. I'm big on mixes. I'm against puristic notions. Puristic notions, I think, are not nearly as healthy as mixed, motley ones.

Vanderscoff: Well, at this point it's four o'clock, so now would be a good moment to bring this to a close. And we can pick up the thread next time. I have a good docket of questions yet about education and teaching.

Lynch: Okay, if you're willing to put yourself through this, I'm willing.

Vanderscoff: It's my pleasure.

Jack Kevorkian for Chair of Literature

And Acting Deanship of the Humanities

Vanderscoff: Today is Thursday, July 11, 2013. This is Cameron Vanderscoff here with John Patrick Lynch for the sixth part of his oral history project. We are in his residence in Santa Cruz. There's an anecdote that you told me off the record in

discussing some of the troubles that the literature board was going through in the early nineties. And I was wondering if you'd start us off today, parenthetically in our larger conversation, by sharing that?

Lynch: Yes, I am embarrassed to admit that I am the author of this story. And also, it's the only thing some remember from that time of trouble. We had at that point a big problem, and that was that we could not find, after many, many months of antagonistic deliberation, anybody who was willing to be chair in that atmosphere. So in a meeting someone suggested that we must look for an outside chair. And then someone else replied logically, "Well, who would ever take it?" And at that point I did, I'll admit, spit out the phrase, "I've heard that Jack Kevorkian is available." As I said, that has lived on in the oral tradition.

Vanderscoff: (laughs)

Lynch: And if that's the only thing they remember that's great because there are lot worse things that happened.

Determining Personal Priorities

Vanderscoff: (laughs) So when you weigh the different ways that you've been involved—your department, your college involvement, campus citizenship, and personal publication—do you have a sense of priorities? How did you balance these different pursuits in your career?

Lynch: Well, I guess I obviously put publication at the bottom of my priorities. I love doing research. I do like being in libraries and archives. But I think I always felt a call to be helpful to other people—to students first. Teaching always was first for me, and then to be helpful in running the place, from the administrative

point of view or from a senate point of view. And I liked that balance of senate and executive, or administrative branches, having say in policy—not final say, but some input. So I guess I would put citizenship above research and publication.

I should say publication was a lower priority. Research was still a high priority. I still did a lot of research to try to keep up with my field. But I didn't think the world needed much more in the way of publication from me. I was working on projects. I intended to work on them into and through my retirement. But I didn't feel that there was pressure on me to publish furiously, or a demand for publication of the sort that I would do. So I continued to try to keep up with my research, but publication was left unfinished.

So higher than publication would be citizenship. I spent the most time on teaching. In fact, if I had to choose between the three or four, between research and publication, as I just did, if I had to choose between them, I would definitely put my teaching responsibilities ahead of all other things.

I enjoyed my work with the Academic Senate. I had many leadership positions in the senate. I liked the Education Abroad Program particularly, as I did CAP and CPB and the Committee on the Library, and Academic Freedom, and Privilege and Tenure.

Plato's Academy, Aristotle's Lyceum, and the Contemporary University

Vanderscoff: Well, I'd like to go with the thread of what you've described as your priority—teaching—but also keeping in mind your research, which is focused in part on Plato and Aristotle. You've written a book on Aristotle's

school. When it comes to teaching, are there particular virtues, either drawn from Plato or Aristotle or elsewhere, that you can isolate that make a teacher good at what they do?

Lynch: I think the most important thing is caring about students and their welfare and wanting to take them from where they are in their education to where they'd like to be. And in some cases where you don't seem to get a response from students, you need to work to stimulate their interest, to find out what it is that you can get them to start caring about. Learning is a passionate activity and if you can excite the passions of students, I think you have more than half the battle won. Teaching is not something that's 90 percent done by the faculty member and 10 percent in the reception. It's really inviting students to do the work of teaching themselves. You just can't push things into that student's mind. Learning is an active experience.

Plato's dialogues illustrate how education works and emphasizes the need for engagement in the learning process if it is going to be meaningful and transformative. Education is a living thing. As a teacher, Socrates was a "midwife" of ideas, not a storage jar of information. A midwife assists in the birthing process, enabling life to come about and continue on its own. It is a major breakthrough if you can communicate that concept of education. It usually takes a long time for students to understand that, and get beyond what they were probably led to think in high school.

It's good to stimulate students' thinking about education as freshmen. That's why I think the core course is such an important vehicle, and why I think more senior and regular faculty ought to be teaching in these programs. The

introductory classes, in my view, are the most important ones—and also the hardest to teach. It bothers me when I see so many introductory classes getting very, very large and being taught by adjunct faculty or graduate students exclusively. I'm not saying that adjunct faculty or graduate students can't be good teachers. They are often, in fact, very effective teachers. But a college core course ought not to be farmed out completely. It's valuable for senior faculty, to communicate to students that the core course is important. As Socrates models for us, education is not a commodity, but a way of life. New students need to be exposed to a wealth of ideas.

Many times deans and administrators who are looking at things from a budgetary point of view think it's best to put the senior faculty, the most expensive faculty, up at the top and to teach the lower division more cheaply. There is no way that we could put faculty resources into introductory courses to match what many private institutions do. That would never be fair on the state university budget. But I do think that we should not engage in false economies by not supporting introductory courses that facilitate the transition from high school to university.

You have to work on the educational environment of a campus. You want students to feel that they're getting the best we can offer at all levels of education. If we do not use our regular faculty to teach Latin and Greek, for example, students get the message that beginning languages are less important, which is not the case in classics. Beginning Greek and Latin entail a lot of office hours, extra classes, and special attention. I think it's vital that senior faculty teach beginning Greek and Latin as part of our offerings. But we seem to have lost that

battle, unfortunately. I taught introductory Greek and Latin quite often, they're not easier to teach, believe me. It's much more work to teach beginning Greek and Latin than it is to teach advanced courses. Advanced classics courses are a joy because you have students who have made it through the beginning and are highly motivated. But beginning Greek and beginning Latin, those are tough because there are usually morale problems. Students don't realize how difficult and time-consuming it is to learn Greek and Latin. We go fast. If you don't go fast, then you lose students because they don't feel they are making enough progress. You have to start them reading real Greek and real Latin after two quarters to keep up interest. And that's a trick, because the authors are often quite difficult stylists.

For Plato, education has to be pursued at the right scale. One-to-one was ideal, but how much larger could a group get and still be a viable group, and able to interact with each other and have real dialogues? When does face-to-face become no-face to no-face? I think the maximum size group for Plato at the Academy was twenty-five students at a time.

Now Aristotle did not agree. According to many testimonies he gave large lectures, big crowd-pleasing lectures, and communicated effectively what he had to say. But he was communicating a different body of material to a different kind of audience. He was communicating scientific information. That can be done at a larger scale. But only certain kinds of material can be conveyed that way. You can't start a group of 1000 students discussing the meaning of life, or what is love, or justice. These are not questions that can be well pursued in a huge group. But those are the kinds of questions that Plato thought were the most meaningful

ones for education. Large lectures and communicating information was not, in his mind, education. You can acquire information by yourself. Education, for Plato, was much more dialogically based. It came at the end of a process that was argumentative and involved being open to debate, and changing your position. Education is a process, a continuing process that has no end. If you stopped at one point and said, "Well, now I understand what justice is, I got it," then you're no longer a philosopher, you're no longer learning. You've become an intellectually middle-aged person who is relying on a fixed formula, because a question is never answered in that way. The question was kept alive. You give tentative answers and then you ask a question of the answer. You don't accept the answer as a final form. As Martin Heidegger put it, "an answer is valid only so long as the question pertaining to it remains alive." If you have an answer, and you can't say why you have that answer, then all you have is an empty formula. You have to consider the answer being questioned at the same time, and it's susceptible to being questioned, so that you keep trying to answer why you think something is the case. Education is a complex process of growth and development. That is modeled by Socrates in the dialogues of Plato.

Vanderscoff: And so when you consider those two models of learning, from Plato and Aristotle, how do you assess the current moment in higher education, in this institution, the direction of things now, what counts as knowledge, what's quantified or qualified as knowledge?

Lynch: That's a tough one because technological education has taken over so much of what education used to be. If we were to guess, I would suspect that technology would not be of great interest in the Academy or in Aristotle's

Lyceum. Not that they wouldn't be interested in it, but it would not be what they would want to be doing as teachers in the tradition of Socrates. Aristotle was much more of a scholarly collector and archivist. But I don't know what he would do with technology. The Greeks were not technological people. Technology wasn't highly developed or prestigious. It was considered to be almost like slave activity. It was not considered a worthy pursuit for a mind seeking philosophical understanding. Ancient Greece was a slave culture and technology would have been pursued as an ancillary activity. But I am only guessing here. Sometimes it is fun to guess.

Vanderscoff: So if you have this Platonic vision of education as something that can happen anyplace, a group of people sitting down in a field with no sort of apparatuses or technology, and then more in line with Aristotle talking about all of these facilities and as you were talking about, this more recent advent of technology becoming huge, what do you think happens to the education itself, to the act of learning, the transmission of understanding and of inquiry, when it is filtered through, or somehow contingent upon these huge university facilities that we now have—and more and more through technology, like the Internet?

Lynch: I should have prefaced my guesswork by saying that Socrates was against all institutions. He worked against institutionalizing education entirely. The only avenue for an education would be from person to person. What happened after the death of Socrates was that many of his students, including Plato, decided education was a very fragile enterprise if it's relying on a single person or a group of people to hand it down from generation to generation. Plato and other philosophers in the Platonic tradition did found schools. The schools

may not have had great facilities but they had leadership and they had a group identity.

Socrates as a teacher didn't want anybody to be a Socratic. You should be your own person. You shouldn't be a follower of someone else. But education is a fragile thing, particularly in cultures where warfare is so common. War was a way of life in ancient Greece, so very few generations of Greeks lived without major war disruption in their culture. Hence they need to institutionalize education so that it gets passed on from generation to a generation in a more permanent way, a more substantial way, a way that enriches the next generation.

Greeks didn't have to worry about jobs. They had slaves and they had inherited wealth in land. The slave economy was so different, it's hard to compare what kinds of institutions you would get, how they would value the educational institutions we have now. Because budget is a big part of it.

Buildings and physical structure, apparatus, equipment, are really central to a modern university. I think Plato would consider that to be a real mistake in priorities because you would be committing yourself to a particular place and you couldn't move around if a war came and knocked out your facilities. The Academy or the Stoa could still go on in another place because neither was so dependent on buildings and land. But I won't speculate further.

Vanderscoff: So if the nature of education has gone through some sort of transformation, what do you think the guiding principles or core values of education are now relative to then? And I suppose as a way finding the heart of all of this—what are your own?

Lynch: I think I said before that caring is the most important part of education, including caring about the next generation of people who will transmit concerns and ideas and thoughts and ways of doing things. Institutions are transmitters of that caring across generations.

Education opens up new horizons for people, as it did for me. You realize that there are bigger frames of reference out there, bigger worlds out there, bigger issues to think about. When you teach, you try to get students to see past the fashionable, past the formulations. In the meantime, you're exploring this process of understanding. When you're reading in these texts, you don't try to just see through them but you try to see in them—that is, what do they have to offer you that expands your horizons and allows you to develop larger frames of reference and search for values like tolerance and appreciation for the human virtues. That is to ask: what's good and just and proper in life? You end up with more questions than answers. A humbling prospect, but a very human one.

I do think there's a kind of arrogance in some modern approaches to literature. Some imply that the interpreter knows more and sees more in a text than the person who wrote it or composed it. I think you need to feel that you have a lot to learn from these great authors and texts—even some texts that are sometimes not considered so great, small texts, texts that are overlooked for whatever reason. I'm not in favor of having an established, fixed canon. A canon needs to be open to revision at all times.

So I don't know if that's enough for your question. Your question has got a lot of possibilities for going in multi-volume directions.

Vanderscoff: (laughs)

Lynch: These are big questions. I don't want to steer away from them either, but I want to say I do much more modest things in my courses. I'm very interested in—and this is part of my problem, I think—I'm interested in *everything*. When I start working on a text, and get to the first word, I'm interested in what it means, why it's the first word, and what other people have said about this word. I have what you might call a scholiastic intelligence. Scholia are the notes that you put on the bottom of a page that help explain a text. Insofar as you call anything ideologically neutral, I would say scholia are fairly neutral, in the sense that if it's geographical, they try to tell you where the place is. If it's a proper name, they tell you who it is, who else had the name. Basically all the information and ideas that one might need to understand that word or sentence is of interest to me. When I read, I read with reference books. I go to the Internet all the time to try to understand everything. I have to read very slowly. I start with the language of the text, in search of meaning in the basic sense of the lexical meanings of the words. It takes me a long time to get to meaning in the larger sense of what does this mean in my life.

I would say I'm a passionate reader, full of curiosity. I try to convey that spirit to students even though my interpretations may be somewhat unsophisticated. I am trying to uncover or discover meaning in a text. I am not trying to cover a text by closing it off.

From Mr. Chips to the Grant-Getter:

Changes at UCSC and in the Values of the Professorate

Vanderscoff: Well, I think a perhaps helpful way of grounding all of this, or contextualizing, it would be to turn to UCSC. UCSC started with this very particular vision, which has been called the UCSC experiment, and a structure which has changed over the years. So, keeping in mind everything that we've just been discussing, on balance what sort of institution do you think has been made here at UCSC?

Lynch: The concept of experimental education is gone. What used to be called experimental education was one of the attractive things for me in coming here in 1970. The idea was that you could actually have a class that was experimental, that just tried things. You might fail but you would still learn from the failure. Trial and error was an acceptable way of teaching. It was exciting and provided the promise of new insights and new approaches.

I don't know. I suspect now, in retrospect, that that vision of education is doomed if an economy starts going down. Maybe it's only possible to experiment like that when the economy is good. That is when students accept the idea, feel that I'm not investing in going to college, I'm just trying stuff out. Once you get to the point that students are thinking about the cost of what they're doing in college, then experimental education doesn't seem very attractive. It ends up on the short side of a cost/benefit analysis in a tight economy.

I've heard parents—I sometimes talk with parents and high school students who are thinking about applying to UCSC— I mean, you see a big

difference in attitude now. I also was the chair of the interviewing committee for Harvard in the Santa Cruz area for many years. I interviewed students who were applying to Harvard from our area. You could see that in the uncertain climate students became much less adventurous in what courses they wanted to take. I've even heard parents of Harvard applicants say, "Well, if you are taking four courses and one of those courses is something I don't think is going to help you get a job—you know, it's an art class or something like that—I don't want to pay \$40,000 in tuition." They are finding that the art class is costing them \$10,000 over the year. It seems like this is a frivolous class if they think of it in strictly economic terms. I see more parents doing that now. I try to discourage them from thinking that way, but obviously an experimental class is harder to justify to such parents. "I'm not going to let my son or daughter take an experimental class when we're taking out large loans to pay for their education." Like it or not, education is in the marketplace.

We are facing a completely different mindset about the role of education. In the late sixties and early seventies there was much more prosperity. Students and parents had the luxury of thinking more broadly. Society was much more freewheeling and more receptive to ideas rather than careers.

I was always very attracted to the idea of experimental education, as was my PhD thesis advisor at Yale. He visited here in the early sixties and didn't think they were being very experimental at the time. But there was some interesting experimentation happening. We talked about the class that I taught with Harry Berger, Jr., where the students came into class and said, "We don't like this reading list because you've read it all before and we haven't, so we can't

have a real discussion.” So we allowed them to remake the syllabus with works none of us had read before, and we went along with it. Believe me, it was not an easy way out for us because that meant we did have to read a lot more than we had planned. The students wrote papers every week and put them on reserve and we had to go and read them and discuss them. It was a good class of great students, very adventurous and lively. But that sort of thing is not going to happen again soon. Think about the student-directed seminar that I supervised with two students doing the teaching, called *Pantology*, which was for them the “study of everything.” It was a holistic view of education, way ahead of its time.

Vanderscoff: So if your earlier years at UCSC were characterized by this certain flexibility or a tone that could be experimental, what sort of characteristics, beyond these financial dimensions that you talked about, the cuts—what characterized UCSC in the last several years of your teaching career, or more recently?

Lynch: Well, the big thing that happened in the next decade was the emergence of high-priced science. A lot of higher education in research universities is funded through huge grants funded by the government and private companies. I went into a profession which had a model of a Mr. Chips type person as a leading member, somebody who basically sacrificed his or her own life for his or her students and enjoyed doing that. Mr. Chips didn’t get paid very much but he had a lot of satisfaction. That’s the profession I entered into; that was the model. But all of a sudden, by the late seventies, the faculty member who could bring in the big bucks was the model of what a professor should be. Universities hired junior faculty members who brought funding with them, particularly large

grants in hot subjects. Very rarely are humanities, particularly not ancient humanities—considered to be “hot subjects,” and rarely are they the recipients of large grants.

The reason why administrations love grants is simple. If their budgets are reduced, they are able to rake off overhead from grants. They can take 20 percent of any faculty member’s grant and use that to run the institution. It gives them play. It’s no fun being an administrator if you haven’t got enough money to spend, if all you have to do is preside over cutbacks.

That development changed the nature of higher education and not in a way that was particularly helpful to UC Santa Cruz in its original vision. It had already canceled its plans for an engineering school, which now has been revived and put into place.

In 1970, we did not have anything like a desktop computer. If someone had told me when I started in 1970 that I would be spending eight hours each day in front of a TV screen, I would say, “That does not sound like a very attractive job to me.” But I try to embrace important new things. I did not want to be a Luddite. I didn’t want to be the last to learn anything. I didn’t necessarily jump on first either. There are things that you jump on, spend a long time learning, and find that they soon change and are gone. It was a tough environment for a classicist. We tried to keep classics involved with computerization. We spent a lot of time on that with students. We fostered some pretty good work, including a very fine thesis from a senior student on computerization and classics.

More and more, you have to fight for fragile enterprises like the study of antiquity. Classics is no longer considered essential in a general education curriculum. More often we hear, "Let's not waste our time on languages and poetry and art. Let's go where the money is and where exciting, new, cutting-edge stuff is." *Cutting edge* was a term that came in at that time. Many of us realized that we were going to be on the blunt edge of this movement.

As for computerization—I think humanities did invest heavily in that. We didn't see a conflict with computerization. Classics had taken one very good step in the right direction. At UC Irvine they had the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, which was all of Greek literature in digital form. It was the largest humanities database in the world. It was just below the size of the Pentagon's database at the time. We were all learning how to use it, how to run searches on it, how to ask questions of Greek literature that we'd never thought of asking before because we never dreamed we would ever be able to consider so many texts together. We used to run word searches. It would take eight hours. You'd run a search at midnight, and wake up the next morning and find out all the places where this word occurred in all of Greek literature. Then you could go and look at those contexts, something you could never have done before. Lots of new research followed from that. The project is still there, a very significant resource for our field.

A Personal Retrospective on a Career in Santa Cruz

Vanderscoff: We've been talking a lot about electronics culture and changes in the institution and in classics. And as a way of wrapping up this session, I'd like to ask you for more general reflections about your career in Santa Cruz, what

that's meant to you. What do you think that's offered to you or not offered you, relatively?

Lynch: Well, I hope I've communicated that I've really enjoyed my job and consider myself very lucky to have had it for my whole thirty-seven years. But one of the paradoxes, as I look back on my career, as you force me to look back on my career, (chuckles) is that I would have to say my most memorable years in those thirty-seven were the four years that I was away from Santa Cruz.

There was a year that I was at the Center for Hellenic Studies in Washington, D.C. in 1976. In 1981-83, I was the director of the Education Abroad Program for the United Kingdom and Ireland. I was in London. And then in 1989-90, I was a member of the Center for Advanced Studies in Princeton. What I think made those years particularly valuable and memorable for me was the feeling that I was away from Santa Cruz as a positive change. I was away looking to broaden myself in ways that were more useful for my life as a faculty member at Santa Cruz, and to become deprovincialized a bit.

I had the advantage of being able to go back to a place I most wanted to be. There was not a dark cloud over me in the years I was away, saying, I have to go back to some horrible place. The fact that I was going to go back to a place I really wanted to be, meant that I was able to make those years away much more enjoyable and valuable for what I wanted to pursue in my own intellectual life and teaching career. It may seem strange to have your four most memorable years be the very years you're not living in Santa Cruz, but I think it says something positive about my experience in Santa Cruz, not something negative.

Vanderscoff: Well, wonderful. Is there anything else that you'd like to say about Santa Cruz in regard to having spent your entire career in one place, as opposed to switching throughout different institutions, as is often common with careers in higher education?

Lynch: Yes, that is certainly the way I envisioned my career when I came here. I didn't expect to stay. I expected to spend some years here and then move on somewhere else, and also thought that not only would I be more itinerant, but I would also be more cosmopolitan. I would spend more time in Europe and Asia Minor and North Africa, traveling in the summers and on sabbaticals.

That just didn't happen. I went back to Greece a little bit and spent some time in various places in Europe, but most of my time was spent in Santa Cruz in those thirty-seven years. It was a real advantage. What kept me here, for the most part, was a dedication and commitment to my family—kids' baseball games and recitals, and the like. I wanted to be part of that and not the "go-go world" all the time. I reconciled myself quite happily to being here even on quarters off and in summers, and not traveling a lot. There was great satisfaction in staying around and living a more continuous life and one that revolved around family experience. I never anticipated a family being so important to me. I always thought that my job and my career would be the most important thing. But it ended up being otherwise, and I am happy about that.

Vanderscoff: Thank you for those reflections. For now we'll close off this record and we'll pick up next time with some more closing reflections and talking in a little bit more detail about some of your interests and your life now.

“Opportunities to Contribute:”

Retirement, Health, Study and the Soup Kitchen

Vanderscoff: Today is Friday August 15, 2013. This is Cameron Vanderscoff here with John Patrick Lynch to do the closing session for his oral history project. Today I'd like to start out late in your teaching career, by asking when and why did you retire?

Lynch: I'm not sure I know that myself. It was a complicated decision. And the answer to it I think involves a dilemma as a teacher that I had my last ten years. And I don't think I solved it satisfactorily and I haven't solved it yet. That is, around 1997 I came down with Parkinson's disease. I started showing neurological deficits. And it took awhile, but eventually it pointed to Parkinson's.

I never knew what to do about it, whether I should retire instantly (that would have been very early) or see how it went. I went from year to year, keeping it private, a secret from students and from everybody except close family members—not all family members knew—and a couple of friends. My sister advised me to just tell everyone; she's in education and the vice president of a college, and she urged me to make that part of my teaching and my education, for people to find out more about Parkinson's and more about what one can do and can't do when one has that. What kind of a disability it is and what kind of abilities or strengths actually come out. That was her perspective.

I thought about that but I really did not want to make Parkinson's part of my teaching of classics. I thought it would be distracting. I didn't want to be

identified as the person with Parkinson's. I think people relate to you differently, once they find that out, that you have an incurable degenerative and rather brutal disease. So I kept, from year to year, evaluating what I should do. It wasn't so much of a matter of principle that I didn't say anything. It was that I never found the right occasion to say it. I kept looking for a possible right occasion but one never presented itself.

I had a wonderful retirement party with my family and friends at Cowell, up at the Cowell Provost's House. I thought maybe that would be a place where I might say something. But then when I was there, enjoying the day, it seemed really inappropriate and not in the spirit of the party. It was a very uplifting time for me, and it would be kind of a downer to announce at that point that one of the factors in my deciding to retire a bit early (I was sixty-three) was that I had Parkinson's.

I was worried about when symptoms of it would strike in such a way as to be obvious to other people that something was wrong. I certainly didn't want to start forgetting Greek forms in front of the class. I didn't want to start slurring my speech so that people could not hear me or understand me. I was writing up and down on the board but each letter would get smaller. Someone pointed that out to me about 1997. So I began just writing deliberately uphill to compensate, and it came out even, so I was able to just overcome that. Basically any symptom that appeared I tried the same strategy, which was whatever it made me do, I'd consciously try to address it and reverse it, reprogramming myself. My sister would note that my right arm was stiff when I walked around, for no reason. I

would consciously work on that so that arm became more a part of my regular movement. Movement disorder is part of Parkinson's symptoms.

But it can attack anytime and completely unexpectedly. Unfortunately mental capacities are one of the things it attacks. I did not want that—and I figured that I was risking it ten years into the disease to be teaching. So I decided to retire in 2007, after thirty-seven years of teaching. I never did announce it publicly in any forum. After I taught my last class, I began talking about it with other people. More people began knowing because I was going to a Parkinson's group in town where people who have Parkinson's support each other and share information. It was a very nice group to be a part of and I made good friends and those friends knew friends at the university. So word got around that way. But I never made any official announcement to anyone, any group or at anything public.

I never solved the dilemma. I don't know if it was a good thing for me to do it that way or not. The same is true with this interview—I've been bouncing back and forth about whether I should ever mention it. I didn't solve it. I just thought maybe I should throw it in before we take up some of the threads from the last interview. Because I do not want to end the series of interviews with a discussion of Parkinson's.

It's not anything I'm ashamed of or afraid to talk about. In fact I think that Parkinson's has become an interest of mine—the way I've handled it or coped with it is as a researcher. I've turned myself into a research object. I research myself in relation to Parkinson's. I do lots of reading in the neurosciences and about Parkinson's in particular. It's interesting stuff. I wish I was not an exhibit

in the long line of evidence about Parkinson's but there it is. I spend a lot of time doing research on it, reading about it, talking about it with other people. I've led sessions and given presentations to Parkinson's groups. It's become quite a large part of my retirement life. So I guess that would be one large component of why I decided to retire when I retired.

I never wanted to die with my eraser and chalk in my hand. I always thought I'd want to have some experience of that last phase of life, where you could do what you wanted to do and felt like doing it, because you were unscheduled. It's what I call the "every day is Saturday feeling." That's a nice part of it to experience. It's a different mode of life. I've never been identified completely with my work. I enjoyed my work. I loved it. I wouldn't trade with anyone. Many people offered to trade with me, trade jobs with me, and I wouldn't even consider it. But it wasn't all of me. There were a lot of other things I wanted to experience in my life, close contact with family, for example. A little bit more travel. Certainly reading lots of things that I had to postpone.

I've always loved long, complicated narratives. When you teach, you don't really have time to immerse yourself in those books. I love to immerse myself in some other world, very foreign and distant from myself, about something I never want to be a part of, actually. Those are the books when you increasingly get busy teaching, that you can't read. Those are the things I love the best and I think open up more of my imagination and new horizons than anything else I read.

But by the time I was in my last five years of teaching I think I read short stories and novellas at the longest. Longer narratives—I'd start them and got busy with something else and put them on the back burner. I probably had the

highest pile ever of unfinished novels by my bedside. I kept starting other things, hoping I'll streak through but always hit the same dilemma. That is, I had other priorities that had a date on them. I had to do them first. Reading a novel would not have a date on it, so it got pushed aside. Pretty soon I would lose the thread of the narrative and I had to start reading it over again anyway.

That was one thing I was especially looking forward to in retirement. And also, I got very interested in film. I didn't have enough time, in my mind, to make up for all those years when I didn't take film seriously, or see very many films, and to make up for times watching children's films, rather than films that I would prefer to go to.

Vanderscoff: (laughs)

Lynch: I also love a wide variety of music, so the opportunity to spend more time listening to music, listening to things over again, and reading about music—because although I love music I really knew nothing about it in the sense of scholarship or book learning or discussion. I only knew what I liked and what I didn't like. I didn't know why in most cases. So I spent a lot of time on all three of those things. I treasure the opportunity to spend time on learning new things. It's now six years of retirement doing that. I also did a bit of writing, not much.

Vanderscoff: Like on what?

Lynch: I've been writing a series of sketches based on classical learning, but they are more like a humor book. I've done a number of these sketches and I thought I'd put them together and see if anybody's interested. It's based on scholarship

but it's not scholarship. Of course, I don't have to worry about whether it's scholarship or not anymore. I'm not in that race these days.

I also try to keep reading Greek and Latin. I read particularly the New Testament. I taught that quite a bit my last years. I especially like reading the New Testament, not for theological instruction, but for linguistic and literary reasons and narrative interest. Sometimes because I feel I don't read enough Latin, I use the bilingual edition with the Greek on one side and the Latin translation on the other side. So I'm reading it in both Greek and Latin simultaneously. That's fun to do.

I hoped to continue keeping up with my other languages. My first project was to try to revive my modern Greek, because I thought sometime when I retire I'd be wanting to go to Greece, so I'd need to work on my modern Greek. I have spent some time on it, but then the opportunity to travel never came. I did read a couple of stories and poems, and worked on some conversation. But I think it's probably pretty eroded again. With the Parkinson's, I didn't figure how difficult it would be to travel. It is difficult. If there were a magic carpet, I would be in Athens every weekend, or in London, or in Dublin, or Edinburgh, places that I really enjoyed seeing and living in.

Vanderscoff: You talked about these long, more complex narratives that you hoped to have time for. Have you been doing reading like that?

Lynch: Well, the first thing I did was I reread *War and Peace* in the new translation. I'd only read the Constance Garnett translation. The new translation is much better. It takes *War and Peace* out of the configuration of the Victorian

novel. It doesn't seem like a Victorian novel anymore, not about who's going to marry who and why. It really does bring alive the narrative about the battles and the politics involving the battles. The, who's going to marry who, and when and why is more of a secondary plot when you read it, or at least as I read it, this time.

I love Kristin Lavransdatter. Although I know nothing about 13th century Sweden, I was fascinated. Again, there was a very old translation—not like Constance Garnett, not just a Victorian translation. This was a translation which consciously tried to use archaic English words. So you had to read it with a dictionary, looking up five or six words a page at least. That is fun to do if you're a linguist and have time. But I wanted to also read all the three separate volumes. There are twelve books. You get the sense of a great narrative sweep, but you miss that if you're looking up a lot of the words. I've also dipped back into *Ulysses*. It's still a daunting task for me.

Vanderscoff: (laughs)

Lynch: I did read it once all the way through. I've never read *Finnegan's Wake* all the way through. That was going to be my next possibility. Those are the sorts of novels I love. *The Iliad* and the *Odyssey* remain my absolute favorites, and the *Aeneid*. If I read Latin, I tend to read the *Aeneid*. Although when I started reading the *Aeneid* recently, I said, "I've taught this and read this so often, I should really be reading something else." Life is short. The *Aeneid* is not.

Vanderscoff: And what sort of involvement have you maintained with UCSC? Have you taught any classes; do you go up to campus much at all?

Lynch: Surprisingly—I thought that I would be going up regularly but I spend more time at the soup kitchen than I do on campus. That was a surprise to me. I don't know what it is. I never wanted to be interfering with what's going on, say in the classics program or the literature program. The people who are there now are the ones who are running the program and it's for them and by them. They don't need to have any advice or interference from somebody who's not actively involved. I never go to meetings, even ones I could go to. We didn't extend the vote to the emeriti faculty in literature and I think that was the right decision. But there are meetings you could participate in, where you could add your voice, for whatever it's worth. But I haven't done anything like that.

I did go back one year, I think it was about three years ago, and taught a Plato class with Harry Berger, co-taught it. That was fun. I realized that I still remembered my Greek forms. If the Parkinson's has attacked me cognitively, I was not aware of it yet. I was waiting for someone else to tell me things that I'd forgotten. Everyone forgets a name or two. But I didn't see myself to have acute memory problems or other cognitive problems when I was teaching. I liked the students. I enjoyed the course. It was a mix of undergraduate, graduate students, people from town, and ex faculty members, emeriti, a whole bunch of Plato enthusiasts.

We had some good discussions. Harry Berger, who was I think 87 at the time, 86 or 87, was still in good form. And I think he still is. His hearing is a little bit deficient but his thinking is still there and his talking is fine. I learned a lot from working with Harry closely. I'd taught with him several times over the

years, but not in the last decade. So I had a chance to catch up with what he had been doing with Plato in that last ten years.

But I would have to say that I didn't want to do it again for other reasons, especially because I treasure my unscheduled existence. I think we met twice a week at first and then we met once a week. But after a while students wanted to meet with me and talk about their papers, or about Plato, or wanted me to be on their senior exams. I love talking with students, but when the year was over I said, what am I doing? I have other things I want to do in this phase of life. I've done the student thing and as much as I enjoy it, I don't want to extend my retirement as a pale reflection of my work years.

Harry wanted to do it again the next year, or something like it. I think he ended up teaching with someone else instead. I did enjoy meeting with him. We met together and that was part of the fun for me, was just meeting one-on-one with Harry and planning what we were going to do and ask in the class. He's quite a shrewd teacher—knowing how to present things and strategies of getting people to talk in the classroom, what kinds of questions to ask. That was good.

But I think that's it for me, as far as teaching goes. I do give presentations on occasion, as I said, to Parkinson's groups on Parkinson's related matters.

Vanderscoff: What do you talk about specifically; what's the thrust of your presentation?

Lynch: My big thing is exercise as the key, exercise as medicine, and the question of dosage. That's the big question for exercise. No one can spend seven years in a

study to find out what the proper dosage would be. It's not worth the time and expense for most people. So I do that.

Also, I am in a small group that includes Harry Berger and Forrest Robinson, which meets in the Abbey Coffeeshop. I would say we were meeting once every two weeks and now it's down sometimes to once a month. We haven't been meeting this summer. It's been very good to meet with colleagues. We talk about Plato and we talk about Shakespeare and we talk about Melville. We've been spending a lot of time at the end of the session on Yeats's poetry. So we're just picking stuff in turn. Each of us got a chance to pick something and brought it in and talked about it. Very informal, but I really enjoy doing that.

For me, it makes reading extra meaningful to think that you're going to be able to talk about it with somebody. I remember things a lot less if I just read them to myself, or if I go to a movie by myself and don't talk about it with anyone. I remember it a lot better if I go with someone and talk about it.

Vanderscoff: There's something that you said to me once, off the audio, speaking about Parkinson's. You mentioned a statement that Michael J. Fox made about it in terms of how he feels it's impacted his life and his perspective. And as a way of reflecting about how you've worked with this illness, would you mind sharing that statement again, and your reaction to it.

Lynch: I do admire Michael J. Fox. He's done a lot for research on Parkinson's disease and his heart is really in the right place. We also will get a chance to see his TV series, *The Michael J. Fox Show*. He plays someone with Parkinson's this

fall. I think it's NBC. But in one of his books—and I heard him talk one time also—he said that if he had a chance to go back and choose between the life he was living before he was diagnosed with Parkinson's (which was early, he had early onset Parkinson's)—I guess he would call it the slightly empty-headed actor/celebrity type, that's how he would characterize himself, not really thinking about anything except himself and the usual superficial things—choose between that Michael J. Fox and the Michael J. Fox that emerged after he got diagnosed, in which he really took an interest in helping other people and helping society and contributing, rather than just taking and celebrating, and being a part of that society, [where] he was a major contributor, he said that he would choose the latter. That is, he would rather be the Michael J. Fox with Parkinson's who did all those things rather than the selfish Michael J. Fox without Parkinson's.

That's an admirable thing to say. I couldn't say that myself. It is way too brutal a disease. It may not seem it because when you have Parkinson's people have good days, and you can cover up a lot of the symptoms. But it is a totally random and exasperating disease. I feel sorry for all those people who have it.

I hope that Michael J. Fox is instrumental in finding the cure. That's his latest campaign, to find the cure, no longer coping with Parkinson's disease, having hope with Parkinson's disease, but curing it. There have been setbacks in the research because of government funding but progress is being made. It's frustrating—you hear about something and say, something must be right at hand, but usually it's a breakthrough at stage one of the whole process, and stage one is just an indication that there's some interest. Then they have to start testing

it out to see if there's any harm. The final thing is the gold plate standard in the field—how you get something in use and approved for use in Parkinson's or any other disease—the seven-year double blind study.

I'm in one right now. I volunteered at the Parkinson's Institute in Sunnyvale to be a subject and I'm in my seventh year of a study in which I've been taking two envelopes of white powder a day and getting blood and urine tested three or four times a year, and having telephone interviews, and written interviews, and cognitive tests and all that stuff to see how things are going. The results will be interesting. I'm getting impatient to see what they come up with when this study ends, which will be a year from this September.

Something like 87 percent of these trial drugs end up being discarded. But if only 20 percent go on to some other stage and get approved, it will be a contribution. I feel as though I owe it to the people who made the medicines that are now available, which made it possible for me to do something for the next group. I hope they find something that helps. I hope especially for Michael J. Fox, and Mohammed Ali, who also has put a lot of money into the Ali Research Center in Phoenix, Arizona. It would be nice to see a breakthrough in one of those places.

Vanderscoff: So you talk about Michael J. Fox feeling that there've been these negative aspects physically, but somehow in terms of his perspective, he actually is glad about the process relative to who he was beforehand. So when you think about Parkinson's in terms of perspective in that way, what do you make of his statement and how do you feel yourself?

Lynch: There are definitely positives for me. I understand that some of what I am experiencing is positive. I made friends that I would have never met; they're really good friends. I would have never met them because of the nature of academics and the nature of how society is broken up. There are people who have a lot of the interests that I have but we just never would have known each other except over Parkinson's because of the busyness and the dispersal of modern life. That's been good.

I do feel as though every day when I wake up and I feel good, I appreciate it in a way that I didn't appreciate every good day before. Most people don't. That kind of valuing and feeling that there's more meaning and positiveness in life—I think I have been benefitting from developing that kind of perspective.

I know there're other things I could point to. I mean, it did give me an opportunity to contribute to medical research. I've actually been in eleven clinical trials. Not all of them have been for a drug, though. I was in a balance clinical trial, one on symptoms. I'm participating in the genetics 23andMe thing. I don't know if you know about that project. Sergey Brin, who is one of the founders of Google, is the principal leader of it. He has the genetic marker for one kind of Parkinson's. His parents had it too. His wife runs this genetics project called 23andMe, and they put together a Parkinson's group that they're studying. I fill out information and do spit tests and other things like that. I think they're headed for 10,000 members just in the Parkinson's group. They're not all people with Parkinson's. They also asked people who didn't have Parkinson's to participate in this as controls. So it's going and they send information pretty regularly. It's interesting. It's pretty technical. I was hoping there would be more

surface information, but in fact it has to do with genetic markers that are labeled with these horrendous labels: RKKL2 and all that.

Vanderscoff: (laughs)

Lynch: But it is interesting. I was on a MRI functional test where I was in an MRI machine, given a little tiny computer, and asked to answer questions. They were scanning my brain while it was going on. It wasn't a test. It was to see how a Parkinson's person is different in terms of different kinds of cognitive skills. There were no right and wrong answers. There were answers that a Parkinson's person might give more often than a non-Parkinson's person. That sort of thing. That was at Stanford. Opportunities to contribute to the ongoing scientific research in the medical field and Parkinson's in particular—that's been a positive.

It is positive to find a new research field to be interested in. I really do spend a lot of time reading neuroscience. It's interesting stuff. The brain is probably the new frontier of the 21st century. It's going to be the thing that people are going to learn the most about. It's incredibly complicated. There's nothing in the world more complicated than the human brain. There's also nothing more illogical and irrational. It just defies understanding at a face-value level. It's filled with paradoxes and mirrors and switches.

Vanderscoff: So speaking in greater detail about your life now, you mentioned a little while ago that you spend more time at the soup kitchen than you do up on campus. So would you mind talking about the soup kitchen, if it's become such a significant involvement for you?

Lynch: I started volunteering at the St. Francis Soup Kitchen in the late nineties, just on the serving line. And then someone asked me if I'd be interested in being on the board, in 1999. So I joined the board and I've been on the board since 1999, although I took two years off when I was away from Santa Cruz a lot and I wasn't able to go to meetings.

But when I was not on the board during those two years I found that I really missed it. One of the first things I did when I got back to town was ask if they would like me to be on the board again. They said yes. My major function has been grant writing and fundraising, but also participating in the overall development of policy, supporting the directors. There are some great people who work there, again a lot of people who I would not have met except through that work. They're incredibly devoted, dedicated people who spend a whole day, at least, just serving others, and working hard.

Many of the volunteers are in their late seventies now. There is a problem of age in the group in general. There's been so much commitment and steadiness among the volunteers that we need to do something to bring in a younger generation to keep it going. Because it's a very good program. It feeds people in need—giving something on the order of 48,000 free meals a year. That's significant. It's a very well-run program and I have found it interesting to work in it. I have enjoyed the collegueship of the people on the board and the two directors of the program. It's not a part of town that I even spent much time in before. It is quietly serving a worthwhile function in the community and helping the people who really need help.

Vanderscoff: Before we go on to discuss your family a little bit, is there anything else that you'd like to say about what takes up your time now and what interests that you have?

Lynch: As I said, I'm doing the reading and watching of films and listening to music. It's a very fortunate time to experience all of these artistic resources because they're all readily available in electronic forms. So I have my Kindle going and I have a Logitech Squeezebox on which I listen to radio stations from around the world anytime I want. And that includes all kinds of music. They have a 24-hour Gypsy Violin station and a 24-hour Gypsy Jazz station, for example. It's just amazing and some of the best jazz stations in the world are in France and Great Britain and Germany. I like jazz. I like Motown. There's a wonderful Motown show from Oxfordshire in England, once a week. And of course there's Spotify and iTunes. When I go to the gym I load up my iPod with music. I think of that hour at the gym as music time as well as exercise time. I listen to music regularly, including through the whole night. I'm a 24-hour a day radio person. I have something on at all times when I am sleeping.

Keeping up with friends. It is nice to have time for that. I do something with Gary Miles just about every week. He's a classics colleague who retired before me, and I knew even in graduate school. Mary Kay Gamel spends time here because she's still teaching. Harry Berger: I see him apart from the literature group. I've gone for lunch with John Dizikes and other colleagues a few times in recent years.

Lunch becomes more important. I never used to do lunch with people. I often skipped it or didn't need one. But now it's really a good time, either that or

a late afternoon glass of wine or a cup of coffee with people from the university or people from the Parkinson's group. I have social activities going just about every week, probably five days a week. I know people always say, when they retire they look back in hindsight and say, how could I have ever worked eight hours a day and still keep up this pace? Because it feels as though the days are incredibly full. I am rarely bored. In fact, I'd like to slow the days down a bit. There was, incidentally, a very interesting article in the *New York Times* about the aging mind and its relation to the perception of time. Too complicated to talk about here, but I'll show it to you sometime or I'll send it to you.

Let's see, what else do I do? I try to do things around the house, to contribute more to the common good of housekeeping and yard work than I used to, although physically that can be tough on me. I can spend time happily pulling weeds and doing gardening-type things, but then the next day I'm unable to get out of bed because of soreness and stiffness.

And then, of course, there are the grandchildren. We have two children and three grandchildren. We've just come back from visiting our grandchildren in Minnesota. I try to go there at least twice a year; my wife goes three or four times, at least, maybe five times. She travels more for her job, so she can stop off on weekends in Minneapolis. And they all come here once a year at least. They come to family gatherings in Massachusetts on occasion. Grandchildren are a real delight.

And there's always Skype. We often Skype on Sunday afternoons. It's fun to do that. I cannot condemn technology entirely when there's Skype. It's brought so much to so many people. And it's free.

Home in Great Barrington, Home in Santa Cruz:

Closing Reflections on Family

Vanderscoff: Now, I know on this most recent visit that you went back to Great Barrington, to the house where you grew up. And as a way of reflecting on the ongoing significance of family in your life and the role it's played, would you mind talking a little bit about this visit, the house now, and so on.

Lynch: Well, it's the same house that I grew up in with twelve or thirteen people. But now there's only one. That's my Aunt Jenny, who's 91 years old. We had her 90th birthday celebration last summer, and we had forty or fifty people in the family who came. She keeps the house up beautifully. She's in great health and in great shape, and in good spirits. She's a little lonely, I know. She'd like to have us all closer together and visit more often. She's been the focal point for bringing the family and its disparate parts together again at least once a year. We've gone back to Great Barrington just about every summer, except for the two years we were in London. It's something we look forward to doing. It's not a chore—to many people it would not seem like a very romantic or attractive vacation, to go back to your hometown and visit your family. But for us, that's what we wanted to do. Not Paris, not Tokyo, or the wilderness somewhere, but going back there regularly. And we always enjoy it. They have Tanglewood, of course, and theater, dance, and film festivals. Great Barrington is a great town. It was, as I think I told you, selected last year by the *Smithsonian* magazine as the best small town in America, the best! Not one of the best. With my limited experience of small towns I'd have to say I agree.

Vanderscoff: (laughs)

Lynch: But it's fun to do that. The summer before, we had the grandchildren there too, and my daughter and her husband. This summer they couldn't visit because they're going to come here in October. They have the dilemma that many parents have and that changed my whole world, which is children's sports and activities that are in the summer. If you want your kids to be involved in those, you can't travel the whole summer. It's a tradeoff and we took the tradeoff to stay with the kids for sports. And our daughter's doing the same.

Vanderscoff: So as a way of coming towards a conclusion then, what sort of a role has family played throughout your life, in terms of grounding your decisions, impacting these other areas of your life that we have spent so much time talking about, like your career.

Lynch: That's a good question. I think I myself didn't appreciate how important family was to me until my parents died. They died within a year and a half of each other. When my parents were no longer alive, I realized just how much I had done just because I was their kid. I was doing what they wanted me to do, and trying to live up to their expectations. Not because they incited fear or pushed me. It was because I really wanted to please them. When they were gone, I really felt down for about a year or so, maybe more. I was a completely different person. Even though they were three thousand miles apart from me and hardly ever traveled themselves—they came to California, I think they probably came once, my mother twice—they were just central to my life.

I think that's probably one of the chief reasons why I look forward to spending my vacations in that town, because of the great support they gave me. I said at my retirement party that I could make a good narrative to support that I

had a really deprived childhood. I could cite the family income that we had, which was very little, and the lack of material goods and advantages because we didn't have a car and my parents didn't drive.

But that would be a completely bogus narrative, despite the evidence I could cite to support it. My sister and I were treated as a prince and princess. That's the way we were brought up. We were not from the poorest family in town, we were from royalty, made up royalty. (laughs) I don't know how they did it. I wish I could have done more of what they did. It was a sort of magical parenting. I know they didn't read any books about parenting. I don't think they had completely happy family experiences themselves. They each came from a very large family, and there was a lot of sorrow and conflict and poverty and disease on both sides. But they came through with strong determination and with a completely different kind of attitude.

And my Aunt Jenny, also, who was really a second mother. She lived with us, my whole life she lived in the house. She's not just an intruder aunt. She's lived there continuously. So it was—in a way it may not seem so, but it was a very supportive family. It may not seem so because it was not an intellectual family. We had no newspapers. We had no books. TV came very late. I think we got one a couple of years before I went to college, a black and white set. But it was a very supportive environment in terms of knowing that no matter what you did you could always go back there and they'd take you in. (laughs) Lovingly and willingly they would take you in. You couldn't fail and that was a very good feeling.

Vanderscoff: (sighs) So if you think of that as the place where you were brought up in, with that sort of an embracing family, would you mind speaking just a little bit more about this house here, this house where you've raised your own family and the people who have spent all this time here with you?

Lynch: It's a great house. It's an important part of my retirement, actually. I love living in this house. I love where it's located. I can walk to places, downtown, I can walk to Harvey West Park. I can actually walk to campus—I can walk back from campus more easily. And it's a house that I feel comfortable in. I like the old feeling of it.

What happened—we actually, when we were first married, lived in Felton in a cabin on the river, a completely different kind of existence. But then we had kids, our son was born in London and so my wife got used to having two kids in the city. In London, we had no car and that seemed to be an advantage. Sheilah said, "I'm resistant to going back out to the cabin in Felton with no visible neighbors and we have to drive everywhere, pack up the kids in two car seats and drive at least six miles before you hit anything." So she said she'd like to live in town.

And strangely enough, this house is one we used to drive by to go to Felton every day and Sheilah used to say, "That's the house I'd most like to live in in Santa Cruz." We told a real estate agent that one time, and she called us and said, "You know, your house is going to go up for sale." There had only been two previous owners so it didn't come up for sale very often. It was built in the 1890s, 1892.

And so we got it. It was a strange mechanism. There were fifty-two people ahead of us in line to see the house, but I came up with the idea to make a full-price offer, sight unseen. And we did that. The owner accepted it because she didn't want people to traipse through her house. So the idea of just getting what she wanted, sight unseen, was very attractive to her. There are always ways you can back out of a deal, if the house turned out to be a safety hazard once we saw it. It was subject to our approval, our conditions. But we didn't back out of it. Maybe we should have, because it did need a lot of work. Sheilah spent a long time supervising the reconstruction of it. But that got interesting too because it became a research project. We researched the house and ended up winning an award for sensitive restoration from the Santa Cruz Historical Society.

The house became of interest, even though redoing a house is largely boring. It becomes interesting if you can make it interesting by some sort of research angle on it. I've been very happy living here. It has a nice feel inside. You'd think it would be very noisy because there are lots of cars going by but I find it extremely quiet. Today we have the door open, so it's a little bit noisier. It's quiet, it's meditative; it's a good place to listen to music and to read. It's restful. Sheilah is going to retire next year, so it will be nice to have two people here. Because her job is really quite demanding, she's away from town a lot, travels a lot, to India and Palestine and all kinds of far off places. But I know she loves the house and will enjoy it in her retirement.

Vanderscoff: And for the record, would you mind saying what it is that she does?

Lynch: She's director of social concerns and family life at the Diocese of Monterey. So she works for the Bishop of Monterey. She enjoys her job. She went back to school herself after the kids left for college, and got her master's in pastoral theology. It led to this job, which she finds very satisfying. She doesn't like the commute. The commuting back and forth to Monterey is not easy because it's really only a two-lane road and one accident will throw you off for the whole evening. But she's going to work one more year.

Sheilah is much more attached to the house than I am. A lot of what you see in the house is hers, rather than my doing. We will probably travel a little bit more when she retires. Our traveling will not be tours—no Caribbean cruises. You'll never catch us on a cruise. But going to Minnesota, where our grandchildren are, or to where my son and his partner lives—he has a long-term girlfriend and they live in Union City. As you know, he's a standup comic. He's got a good reputation in the Bay Area, but he's now working to extend it out. He's also a writer and a teacher. His long-term girlfriend is doing a residency in dentistry. She's a full-fledged dentist now, and she's doing her residency at the moment. I think they're both in pretty good spaces in their lives and doing things that they like doing. Are there other family things you want to ask about?

Vanderscoff: I feel like that—

Lynch: I think I told you, I was very surprised that family ended up being so important to me because when I was thinking about my life as a kid, I never thought about marriage or homes or kids. I always thought about a job that I liked and getting involved in reading and research. I always thought about career things first. Career things ended up being last in my priorities—important,

but not nearly as important to me as family. It is surprising how that happened. I think it was probably again that magical formula that my parents had for instilling family values and the importance of family, in a very nonintrusive way: Sheilah is very family-oriented too. She's happy not to go to Rome or on a Caribbean cruise in the summer. She goes to my family's house and she likes it there, Great Barrington. She's been really accepted and adopted as a member of the family, a full-fledged member. But the whole family thing is something that does surprise me.

I was talking about such things with a friend of mine who teaches at the Harvard School of Public Health and he agreed that we thought that life would end pretty much around sixty. Because most of the people in our town—it was a very working class town—most of the people drank rather heavily and smoked heavily and didn't eat very well. It was rare to find a male who was alive in their sixties. There were some females alive in their sixties, but sixty seemed to be what you could hope for or shoot for if you were a male growing up in that town. All of that all changed in our lifetime. Life expectancy went up for many reasons. Certainly not smoking and not drinking as much and eating better and better medical care are part of that.

So now we're both thinking, now that we're in our seventies, what is all that about? We never thought that far ahead. We never saw as far ahead as this last decade. It seemed like icing on the cake, this last decade, sixty to seventy. We didn't know any males growing up who lived that long. The seventies will be a challenge. I don't have a model to follow. My parents instilled the importance of having a house as a focal point, a steadying point. That's something that's

changing in society, but it's something that I obviously still cling to. I like the fact that there's a place where we are stabilized.

There probably won't be many people in the university anyway, who worked only one place in their whole life. I may be one of the last. Because I never even taught anywhere else, as I told you, not even a class, never even graded a paper anywhere else. I had school-type of jobs, stocking in stores. But this is the only job I've ever had.

And a dog. That's another thing I learned from them—my parents always had a dog and I've always lived with a dog. I've continued with that. That's another mark of stability because you don't, unless you're a thoughtless person, lightly take in an animal and incorporate it into your life. We've always made decisions under the assumption that we were not going to move, that we are going to be here to the end. So you make a different set of decisions about your life if you think this is where you're going to be.

I know when retirement came on, many people asked, "Where are you going to go?" as if Santa Cruz is over now and you're going to live somewhere different. I can understand the call of living somewhere different but I'd prefer to live here, both for the sake of continuity, but also because there's a lot of savoring I have not done yet. And that's what I'm trying to do in the slowness of retirement, savor things.

Vanderscoff: That's great. So before we close out, is there anything else that you'd like to say about any of our span of topics across these last few months? Is there anything that comes to mind?

Lynch: Well, I'm sure I'll be horrified when I see the transcript.

Vanderscoff: (laughs)

Lynch: I do think that I had some interview days which were better than others. I hope I have a chance to cut some things out. (laughs)

Vanderscoff: Yeah, of course you'll have a chance to review and if you want to make any changes, of course, you'll have the opportunity to do that there. I just want to say, on my end, before we close out this record, my gratitude for all the time that you've put into this. You've welcomed me into your home. I've stuck around and had dinner and gotten to know some of your family. So both professionally and personally, I'd like to thank you for this process.

Lynch: You're very welcome. I enjoyed it. And I thank you for putting in the time for I think a fairly meager subject, the more I think about myself. (laughs)

Vanderscoff: (laughs)

Lynch: But you did make me think about a lot of things that I had not thought about. As I told you, I am not a past-oriented person. I don't think about the past very much at all. This has forced me to do that in a good way, I think, not in a bad way where old people just talk and reminisce—but it made me go back and look at stuff that happened, or didn't happen, or that I thought happened. It made me look back at records and books and catalogs and kind of refreshed my memory and put all these things in perspective.

Because all of the years just mush together when I look back. It seems to me that it was just one year, a year when I was teaching. I may have said this to you offhand or off record or even on the record, that one time at a reunion I was

talking to two ex-classics students from here and I talked to them about a discussion in the *Aeneid* class that they had both taken. And it turned out that the discussion actually took place in only one of those two classes, because they were ten years apart, exactly. I had put them both in the same class because it was all the same to me—but they were actually ten years separated. It took me a while to sort that out in my mind, that I had taught Virgil more than once and the years had just collapsed. I don't think this is a sign of senility or Parkinson's. I think it's just a phenomenon that comes with age that the past seems to flatten out for most people. It's hard to separate the marking periods.

So my teaching life kind of merges. I'm glad when they put the badges on at Alumni Weekend, they put the year on there. Because if they didn't, I would say, "You were together, weren't you?" and in most cases they weren't.

So thanks for putting me up with me and doing all this. I really did enjoy it.

Vanderscoff: Well, good. Thank you.

About the Interviewer and Editor:

Cameron Vanderscoff is a freelance oral historian and writer based in New York City. His work with the Regional History Project includes a series of published oral histories, such as *Hayden White: Frontiers of Consciousness at UCSC, 1978-1994* and *James Clifford: Tradition and Transformation at UCSC*, and *Look'n M' Face and Hear M' Story: An Oral History with Professor J. Herman Blake*. In addition to his ongoing collaboration with the Project, he has a range of public and family clients in California and New York, including a new partnership with Columbia University on the Phoenix House Oral History Project.

Cameron is working towards an MA in oral history at Columbia, focusing on applied ethics in the field. He graduated magna cum laude from UC Santa Cruz with BAs in history and literature (focus in creative writing). For him, all of these threads come together in oral history, where individuals become authors through life storytelling, and historical experience becomes literary narrative. The opportunity to elicit and revisit these stories is an ongoing education and a privilege. He likes to do other things too, like writing fiction, playing the blues, and traveling with a notebook.