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Professor Priscilla "Tilly" Shaw: Poet, Teacher, Administrator

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Professor Priscilla “Tilly” Shaw:

Poet, Teacher, Administrator

Interviewed and Edited by

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Santa Cruz

University of California, Santa Cruz

University Library

2013

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Interview History

A literary scholar, poet, and UC Santa Cruz faculty member in literature from 1966 to 1993, Tilly Shaw participated in this oral history interview in the spring of 2013. Shaw arrived in the second year of the campus, for the opening of Stevenson College in 1966-67, as a visiting faculty member from Yale. In 1967 the Board of Studies in Literature hired her as a tenured faculty member. She became one of very few tenured women during UCSC’s early days. Acutely interested in gender dynamics, Shaw discussed the evolving sexual politics that played out in the social and intellectual climate of the campus over the course of her three and a half decades on the faculty. The oral history also addresses some of her experiences and perceptions as a member of Academic Senate and other committees and as chair of literature from 1984 to 1988.

Like many faculty members hired during the relatively informal early years, Shaw recalls a certain degree of confusion about whether or not her initial campus visit constituted a formal job interview, and some surprise when she was offered an appointment. Later, in helping to shape the campus affirmative action plan, she had a role in creating explicit policies to guide hiring and other personnel processes. Also like many of her contemporary colleagues, she witnessed the gradual attenuation of the original vision for UCSC’s residential college system, brought on in part by the often competing, unsustainable faculty workloads collectively exacted by colleges, administrative committees, and boards of study.

Shaw touches repeatedly on the socioeconomic and familial circumstances—as well as the personal and intellectual proclivities—that shaped

her interests in comparative literature, poetry, and pedagogy. Throughout her career she sustained a deep wariness of economic and institutional elitism, combined with respect for some time-honored conventions of academic respectability—a complex, sometimes contradictory set of attitudes that she explores in the oral history.

The interview was conducted over four consecutive Thursday afternoons in March 2013, at my home in Soquel, California, for a total of about six hours of interviewing time. Shaw reviewed the transcript of the audio recordings, making corrections and clarifications.

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-Honnef, Head of Special Collections and Archives, and Interim University Librarian, Elizabeth Cowell.

—*Sarah Rabkin*

Interviewer, Regional History Project, University Library

University of California, Santa Cruz,

October 30, 2013

Early Life

Rabkin: This is Sarah Rabkin and I'm at my home in Soquel, California, on March 7, 2013 for my first interview with Tilly Shaw. So Tilly, let's start with when and where were you born?

Shaw: I was born in 1930 somewhere around Lexington, Massachusetts, probably in Boston. I graduated from high school and went to college in 1948. I think of those two dates, 1930 to 1948, as framing my growing up years because my family was enormously affected by the Crash [Great Depression] over this eighteen-year period. I've sometimes even meditated on the fact that my mother was carrying me in the first year after the stock market went, when my father had been playing it on a margin, on borrowed money. The bankruptcy laws were not kind to individuals in those days. So for the first fifteen years of my life my family paid off an immense debt, which I figured out once was ten times my father's annual salary.

Rabkin: Oh, my goodness.

Shaw: It's so daunting. It's unimaginable to me. It colored everything, including the fact that my mother eventually went back to work, although she had three small children.

Rabkin: You said "back to work." Had she been working before?

Shaw: As a young woman, until she got married.

So I had decided to organize my prehistory before UCSC around my becoming a woman professional, because that was a question that was of very great interest in the era that I was beginning in Santa Cruz in the late sixties. Where did women who in their rarity made it into the professions—what kinds of families did they come from and under what circumstances grow to adulthood? It's very clear to me that I was overdetermined to become a professional woman. I thought it would break up the narrative to frame it in this way.

So the first thing I want to say is that there were a great many PhD's in the immediate and extended family, beginning with my maternal grandfather, who was chairman of the German department at the University of Pennsylvania, and quite a distinguished scholar, probably the most distinguished of the family's group of PhD's. He was recognized by the Goethe Institute, and chaired that department a long time. That was in an era when literary studies were more cast towards philology than towards literature. But still, he was a distinguished person and a very cultured man, as my mother would say. He held open houses for his students in his home, first in Philadelphia, and then at Bryn Mawr. And his second wife, who taught at Curtis School of Music, also had a PhD.

But there was, additionally, an aunt and an uncle. And then my father, who was the first of his generation, both to go to college and to get a PhD. Then there was my mother, who was actually all-but-dissertation—and me—which makes six or seven, depending how you count. Which is quite a few.

And right in there with the PhD's, I'm going to have a category which I call "hungers." My father was the first generation to go to college, so he had a great

eagerness, a great greed or longing, a great everything for education, and for the life that could go with that. I always think that he married my mother because of her whole cultural ambiance and aura; he was marrying her family and what he saw as possibilities. My mother, of course, had grown up in it, so she didn't (laughs) pay much mind to it. But she had her own hungers because she never finished her PhD. She changed thesis topics a number of times. She was doing something much more like literary history than we would normally do today and she had to keep changing topics. Then the Crash came and she married and had children. So that interrupted that. But it stayed on her mind all the years of her life. So they were people interested in their children going to school.

Rabkin: Why had your mother had to change her dissertation topic multiple times?

Shaw: Well, these were textual editions—I only remember a conversation once about this—she would discover that someone had already done an edition. I think nowadays it's very unusual that people are disqualified if they propose a topic [where] there's too much overlap. You know, you begin a classic dissertation by surveying the field and saying what has been done and what hasn't been done, and why they need you, basically, and your contribution. But back in those days it was more likely to be an edition of an older text or something like that.

While I'm talking about my father's hungers, I should say briefly that his father was a contractor. He built a lot of houses in Lexington, Massachusetts, where we grew up. In fact, I lived in a house that he built, when that was still a small town,

before it became much larger, more a yuppie bedroom community for Boston. It changed its aspect after I left.

When my father was mythologizing his life, when he was preparing to die, really, he thought of his father as earthy and of a peasant root stock, with those values—a warm heart, he was much loved in the town. And [he thought of] his mother as the bearer of not completely satisfied longings for culture. There were those mixtures on his side of the family. There was a cello maker who used to entertain the Boston Symphony Orchestra in his home. But his own mother was outside that—she painted roses on velvet. So he had a lot of longings for culture because of that.

I had, from very early on, a working mother, from about maybe '36, when I was six, in first grade. We had cheap help to assist at home while she worked. My younger brother was about four years old when she went back to work. My parents had tried various wild schemes to get additional revenue, among them a candy store with very fancy candy in a poor district, which was unsuccessful. My mother was not only a working mother, she had a distinguished career, was really exceptionally successful. Years later, when there was a memorial service after her death, that would have been—she lived to one hundred—maybe thirty years after retirement, a whole throng of students came out to honor her and told story after story of her impact on their lives.

She taught French language. Almost everyone in the family were language teachers. She was also head of the language department. She was unable to get a job in the public school system because married women were not allowed to

work in the public school system in that era. So she taught, eventually, in a very fine private coed school, the Cambridge School of Weston, that I had then the great pleasure to go to for my tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades. She was well known in the Boston area and received the *palmes academiques* from the French government for her achievements. She was also dominant in the family.

Rabkin: What was her name?

Shaw: Hildegarde Washburn. She was outspoken right into (laughs) her years in the nursing home, in the last five years of her life. She had more sway politically speaking, had more power in the family than my dad did. My dad had long hours, so he was often gone, but she had a lot of visceral power. She was a memorable teacher. She could teach the very poor students and the brightest, too. So she handled a very large spectrum of students.

Rabkin: Did the Cambridge School of Weston have poor students?

Shaw: Oh, yes, because it was a progressive school and so it took people with slight mental problems, or artists—it took an odd assortment. It wasn't like Andover or Buckingham or some of those more traditional schools. And she would make contracts with students—she'd give them such-and-such a grade if they'd agree never to take French again. (laughs) In college, that is. But she got the maximum out of each student. It's always a problem with languages, that some people have trouble learning them, the way we teach them in schools anyway.

So there were a lot of PhD's in the family. There were some strong, unsatisfied hungers. I had a working mother. And finally, there was really violent marital fighting. So schools have literally saved my life, as many other people's, I'm sure, because they offered an alternative set of people and relations and processes, and the acquisition of skills, tasks to be performed and enjoyed and learned about. I always turned toward education. I remember when I had to choose which parent I would go with in the divorce, my most pressing concern was which school I continued to be at.

Rabkin: So your parents divorced at a certain point?

Shaw: Yes, after they paid off the extensive debt, when I was about sixteen, my father requested that they separate. So they separated, and though my mother was very unhappy about that, within five years we all had better lives because the source of tension was finally removed.

Rabkin: And you and your siblings went with which parent?

Shaw: Well, my younger brother and I went with my mother. My older brother was not provided for. He had just graduated high school. That's a whole separate story. He had been working for the railroad during the war. But then, when the war was over and people came back, it was hard to get work and he had troubles. My father was renovating the house to sell it and my brother sneaked into the basement and, I guess, took food from the refrigerator. My dad ended up reporting him for vagrancy. My mother was driving through Lexington to see her mother-in-law and he jumped into the car. The long and

short of it was that my parents were taken to court for it—it was a rather horrible story.

But after that, my mother began to try to take care of him. At first, we just had rooms near her school and we ate at the school. So it wasn't easy for her. But she very quickly bought a house of her own, and then my older brother came to live with her. He gradually became rehabilitated. That's its own separate drama and story. My parents were not able to handle my older brother. It was really armed warfare a lot in the family and my parents weren't able to handle my brother in adolescence. So he would get thrown out of the house, which is not much of a solution.

This violent fighting turned me towards school. I used to say, "My mind is my friend," and I've often thought of myself as being as much parented by my mind as by my parents. That's true and, of course, it's not true, too. My parents also liked school achievements, both of them. That was one of the things they had in common. So it was reinforced in that way, also.

I was what I would call the heritage child of the three children in the family. I was the closest in social class and background to my parents. The way it worked out in the family, of the three siblings (I don't really know entirely how that happened), but my older brother became working class and my younger brother, one of the first things he did with adulthood was to join the Young Republicans. He took another route, became an engineer.

Rabkin: This was a political departure from your family's politics?

Shaw: Yes, and set of values and affiliations. My older brother had been a "Junior," bore his father's name with "Junior" attached. Later in life, he had the middle name changed so that he was no longer a "Junior," changed it from Ellery to Edward (laughs). So George Edward Washburn.

In those days—we were talking about where women professionals came from—if a father didn't have sons, then he tended to do things with his daughters that were not always done with daughters. This wasn't the case, clearly, in my family. But there were troubles in the father-son relations and a lot of the configuration of the family was influenced by that. You see, my father had had less good relations with his dad up in the generation above, married late, and was kind of tied to his mother's apron strings. He was over forty before he got married.

In the next generation, I became very blatantly my father's favorite child, sort of his son, on condition that I be a girl, whatever that means. But it makes a lot of sense because I wasn't to challenge him too frontally and so forth. I must have enjoyed that initially, but I've since repressed it and at a certain point I put an end to it because it caused so much trouble in the family. I was called my father's pet. Well, nobody likes to be a favorite. It's a very complicated thing.

From that point on, I was kind of at a distance from everyone. One of the motifs of my life. I don't know whether it's because I'm cerebral or what, but it goes back to the way I survived. I stayed connected, but I kept my distance, didn't take sides. And, of course, it set me at odds with my own desires in a certain way because it was a dangerous environment to grow up in, for me, and I couldn't just follow impulse. I became careful about things and watchful. If I wanted to do

something I held back. It creates a certain kind of person. Probably good in schools but I had other kinds of difficulties—

For one thing, I had a complex academic attitude. Partly because we had all these different social classes among the siblings, I didn't really fully respect my parents as parents, as human beings. I thought the difficulties were connected with ideas they had about things.

Rabkin: Like, what sort of ideas?

Shaw: Well, they lacked common sense, really, or humanity. They got caught up in their fighting. My mother thought that I had it easy in the family and she wanted me to help her with my two brothers. She wanted me to put them first. So all those qualities that were generally required of women at the time, to defer to men and so on, ended up being reenacted in a different form in my family.

I can remember my brother getting upset at me—I certainly thought, later on—how I must have ruined his life to come in on it. You know, when he was two years old suddenly to have this bright little kid with curly ringlets understanding everything so quickly. And I won at games, except I couldn't because it caused trouble. It was very complicated—

It also made me suspicious of academics, gave me an anti-academic streak. I have had, all of my life, working-class friends. It affects my group bonding. I probably don't care enough about status. It's not only that I don't like luxury, but it would be easier if I identified more with my peers in certain ways. I always think of these attitudes as coming from the family.

The last thing I want to say is it was a very hard-working family. They got a lot of child labor from us. The war was going on. We had an enormous Victory Garden. We raised all the fruits and vegetables for a family of six, including my grandmother who lived with us, for the whole year, plus tomato juice every morning of the year. So that's a lot of labor. My mother was at school, so I had to start dinner, had to clean Saturday mornings. Everything was figured out. I made beds with my dad, my brother hung out the laundry, I took it in. So I got all those qualities.

Then they sent me on to the school life. In the meantime, we had the war going on and women poured into the workforce, then were invited back out in the postwar era. And that's when the vets were coming back, just as I was coming of age. That was the beginning of a really long expansion of higher education in this country, with the GI bill and the return, at a time when the press and the media were changing in the way they spoke about women, from Rosie the Riveter and women working in factories and contributing to the war effort. The double bed came back after the Hollywood twin beds and children came back into fashion.

Rabkin: The celebration of the housewife role.

Shaw: That's right. And of families.

So let me talk a little bit about schools. I adored my mother's school, the Cambridge School of Weston. It was just wonderful. It gave me a new set of friends, the way college does. A new lease on life. A lot of them were children of professionals, because it was a day school and a boarding school, both.

Rabkin: Did students come from far afield, boarding students?

Shaw: Yes, some of them. Some of them did. And then many came in on the train from Cambridge and Boston.

Rabkin: So you met peers from other communities.

Shaw: Yes, yes. They were very smart, interesting people. I love to see them now, too. I really enjoyed them. I felt, I must say, rather confined by living in a small town, even though I suppose in coming to Santa Cruz I was choosing something a little more rural again. Everyone formed cliques; we didn't get into Boston that much. Once you were classified, that was it.

Rabkin: What do you mean by classified?

Shaw: Well, you get labeled. Everybody has a sort of place in small towns.

Rabkin: I see.

Shaw: And the schools were still tracked. I was probably classified with the brains (laughs) Yeah, I liked a little more mobility.

Rabkin: Did you say you're still in touch with some of your high school classmates?

Shaw: Well, when I am, I love seeing them. I like them very, very much. That has continued. I was very happy to go to that school. I liked the freedoms of it. It was rather like going to college: classes met three times a week, didn't have a grid of classes every day. We didn't have to raise our hand or stand up. There was a free

time during the day that was called a lab period, where we could go to the art studio or follow up on homework in one of the subjects. I began to have intense conversations about schoolwork.

Rabkin: With peers or teachers?

Shaw: Both. Yes, the relation to teachers was very easy. I loved a lot of the courses, the work in English, but also math and biology, and music, the arts, and participated in the work program and field hockey. Just all the offerings. It was really a lot of fun.

Swarthmore College

And when I chose a college, I, in effect, chose a coed college fairly like that school, Swarthmore College, a Quaker institution outside of Philadelphia, quite small in those days.

Rabkin: And very selective.

Shaw: Well, yes. And as I didn't know at that time, more selective of women than of men because they were still trying to maintain a fifty-fifty student body. They had more women applicants than men. And they also had a Jewish quota, I learned later. That wasn't, of course, broadcast at the time. But it was also true.

I wasn't as crazy about Swarthmore. I don't know why. It's all mixed up with boyfriends and other things. But I don't feel I ever did anything I really cared about and felt a deep relish for [at Swarthmore]. I now have, later on in life, more

respect for Swarthmore than I did [then]. When people asked me, "How do you like college?" I always wanted to say, "Oh, I just love it." But couldn't.

I ended up being in—they had something called an Honors Program—and so for the last two years I studied in two weekly seminars and wrote papers every week for one or the other of those seminars. They had a system of outside examiners who came for trials at the end of the junior year and then for real at the end of the senior year. But I never became comfortable with writing papers. That really has adversely affected me, if anything, because there was no help in those days with—

Rabkin: No writing instruction.

Shaw: No, no.

Rabkin: It was assumed that you could do it, coming out of high school.

Shaw: Right, so if you suffered— It always seemed amazing to me that I did so much of it, because that's a lot of writing, all the weeks of the school year. But it was really only with my PhD dissertation that I experienced the beginnings of a breakthrough. I've done things in later life, like in graduate school I remember having to do a presentation and I had trouble with writing it up. I ended up just stopping. I got it to a certain point and then there was no more—but that was part of what was wrong, because as you know the editor comes in and starts polishing what's already [written on the page]. (laughs)

Rabkin: This is the internal editor, the internal censor.

Shaw: Yes, that's right.

Rabkin: And that was an even worse problem when we were writing on typewriters, than in the age of computers.

Shaw: Oh, yes. (laughs) Now you can keep it cleaned up, although continuing can still be an issue. I can't say I've solved it. I talk more than I used to but the writing problem has never completely figured itself out.

Maybe I should say a little bit about what I did in Swarthmore. I was a psychology major and I was deeply interested in psychology, probably because it helped me maneuver my life. But when I got to the end of my junior year, I couldn't stand the social science language. There's something about that language which is repellent to me to this very day.

Rabkin: Can you characterize that?

Shaw: Well, it's a lack of sensory content, a lack of liveliness. I like language that varies in its level of generalization, for one thing. And I don't like the categories. And so, because I was in the Honors Program, which consisted of basically eight seminars over two years, I was limited in how I could change majors. So I kept a psychology minor and ended up with a split French-English major, which then led me to apply to comparative literature for my PhD. You see, I had all those language teachers in my family background. So I majored in comp lit at the graduate level.

And so come the time when I visit Santa Cruz, I'm, of course, a natural for a literature board as opposed to a straight English department. When I started out

teaching, I had a French-English appointment at the Shipley School for Girls while I was still working on my PhD. Then I taught French for a couple of years at Douglass of Rutgers, while I was finishing. One of the readers of my dissertation happened to be head of the Yale English department.

Studying and Teaching at Yale University

Rabkin: Who was that?

Shaw: Louis Martz. And they used to hire a number of young faculty every year. They were just beginning to hire women. It was the first group of juniors. They had hired one tenure-level woman without giving her tenure, probably the best in the country, in Middle English.

I was by then very clear that it was a mistake for me to be trying to teach French (laughs) as a non-native. I wasn't completely gifted for languages either. So Yale was an opportunity to switch to English, which proved a great blessing. But I do want to say that, between my starting with psychology and the Honors Program, which was over-concentrated, really, for the undergraduate years, and then my being in comp lit, where I studied mainly French literature in graduate seminars, I had a spotty background. So my insecurities always had an objective aspect that stayed with me a lot of my life. One of the things that I enjoyed about coming to Santa Cruz was that we were teaching *everything* in those early years. It gave me a chance to teach Milton or Pope, things that I had not formally studied for the most part.

Rabkin: To fill in the lacunae in your own—

Shaw: Yes. That's right. Because there was nothing like a real survey course at Swarthmore, an overview. And also because, stupidly, I had avoided Yale English classes because I so disliked writing papers. And because the way courses ran in the graduate area at Yale at that time, the teaching was entirely done by graduate students. That is, they were organized around graduate student presentations, assigned so as to fill out the class time.

Rabkin: So you were learning from your fellow graduate students.

Shaw: Well, yes. I didn't usually take those courses.

I loved being at Yale in part because I loved being in a city. The school also had an extraordinary peer group and all the people in that group, most of them, became famous after a certain number of years. So it was really wonderful to have exchanges with them and there was great freedom. But it was also that I liked being in the city. There was an immigrant edge to New Haven. And I've had this adverse reaction to small towns, as I said earlier.

Rabkin: Can we jump back just a bit? I'd love to ask you what made you decide that you would pursue a PhD? Or was that already set in your mind long before you went to graduate school?

Shaw: Yes, I think so.

Rabkin: Because of the family background.

Shaw: I think so.

Rabkin: Mm-hmm. And what drew you to Yale?

Shaw: Well, there were only a few comparative literature departments in the country and it was on the East Coast, which is what I largely knew, and my boyfriend at that time went there. It had some quite distinguished people, Auerbach, for instance, and an émigré population because of the war. I'd done a French-English major, so that made me neither fish nor fowl, or it enabled me able to carry on both, I guess. I got a Fulbright to France, so that reinforced my directions—I wasn't clear yet about the limits of my capacity in languages. I was reinventing the wheel, while really probably following my parents.

Rabkin: With the language study?

Shaw: Yes. I also loved French poetry, that was another thing, the Symbolist poets in particular, which I think somehow I encountered at Swarthmore. So that was something driving me on. Those were the poets I liked the most when I headed toward Yale.

Rabkin: Were there particular people at Yale that you wanted to work with?

Shaw: Well, as I mentioned, Auerbach. I knew of Louis Martz and Rene Wellek, and a number of the faculty in English, Weigand in German. And not all schools yet were open to women. Princeton was the last. They had Blackmur and Francis Fergusson, whom I read in drama. I don't even remember now my really thinking about other places. I think it may have been the only place that I applied. It's really kind of absence of thought. And I did not get much advice either.

Rabkin: At Swarthmore.

Shaw: Ever. Anywhere.

Rabkin: So you did not have mentors at Swarthmore who were guiding you towards graduate school?

Shaw: No, I've not had mentors. I mean, some people had been kind to me. When I got my first job, somebody at Haverford began helping me, somebody in French, Larry Wiley, who had done unusual things with a French degree, sociological work instead of the standard lit-crit stuff. But no one at Swarthmore. I don't know how oriented that institution was towards graduate work, even. It was very student-focused as an institution. That's one of the things that slightly irritated me about it. It's a kind of odd attitude to have, isn't it?

Rabkin: Student-focused in what way and irritated you in what way?

Shaw: Well—I didn't get much attention and I don't know whether I wanted it or didn't want it, but I wasn't used to it. The thing I always hungered for was larger institutions. If I were to redo my life, I would go to a larger institution. It's true that public universities really came into their own after World War II, intellectually and in terms of research.

Yes, it seems kind of thoughtless. You see, the two schools that I liked, the Cambridge School and Yale, were quite different, actually. The classes were certainly kind of dead at Yale. (laughs) Well, I remember Rene Wellek; he was in the history of criticism. I knew his name. He was certainly one of the ones I was thinking of. He would come in and read a chapter from his next book. That would be his teaching. And there was Henri Peyre—at the time, he was very

famous, also—had written a lot of books, worked in the more modern period, who largely improvised in the classroom, spoke off the cuff. There wasn't much going on in the classes. It was going on outside. But they say that about schools: learning goes on in them but they don't know exactly where it's located. I felt that a lot about Yale. And Rene Wellek would say, "Well, you're here to observe the established scholars close up and see what that way of life is all about. It's a chance to observe it, have a little claim on it, or be near it."

Rabkin: Becoming acculturated to the academic life?

Shaw: Well, yeah. Or seeing it, seeing how they handle things and what constitutes it. Every level that you go up is less pedagogic, less student-attentive in a certain kind of way. That's how the rewards work too, right? Graduate instruction rewards productivity.

Rabkin: Scholarly production rather than pedagogy.

Shaw: Yes, that's right. I used to marvel at our own PhD program here, because the teachers are so much more present and available, it seemed to me, to the graduate students. I found the relationship very rewarding, a wonderful one in the years I was involved in it, because it gave you a kind of professional companionship which was distinctly different from being at the head of the undergraduate classroom. So I used to think back then to my own education, and think about how different— Of course, we were a much younger faculty. These were people in their eminence at [Yale]—they were pretty far along in their lives.

Now the other thing at Yale was that we used to meet regularly at the peer level. We had a group where we did texts together, actually. This was an era when textuality blossomed. You see, my parents were both alien to me intellectually in terms of their whole period being much more literary history. My father was very eager always to put labels on things—Romanticism, or Realism, categories like that. And my mother had done more factual work herself. And so that whole art or science of interpretation, which followed in the wake of New Criticism and of that very popular textbook *Understanding Poetry*, which found all these complexities of meaning in a poem and then talked about them eloquently and wound them into some kind of bouquet of unity (laughs) held sway a long time. It was very interesting, an era of discovery.

And then, at a certain point, when I was already at Santa Cruz, it began provoking its reaction, which I was very sympathetic to in its spirit, which was deconstruction. Because everything can contribute to unity but there are always some loose ends, always arbitrariness. And this is everywhere. I'm an optimist but I'm a skeptic and I never was a believer so I didn't worship at the work of art, either, as New Critics kind of did. There was a little coercion to admire its marvelousness.

Rabkin: During your graduate study—

Shaw: Well, it goes on forever and it's a type of attitude. There are teachers who put down the people they study and there are people that raise them up as idols to enhance what they themselves are doing as well as the objects they've chosen and the people they're talking about. I'm sure you have your equivalent

experiences. It's a little like going to church. It has some of that aspect, too, because occasionally you'd have a student who would not like that and be heretical in putting it down.

I'm going to go back a little to the fact that I majored in psychology at Swarthmore but didn't like social science diction. I just want to add to that I, in effect, used literature for psychology, as a form of still-life study, because, in effect, I'm studying human documents. So I really continued, under the surface, heavily psychological in my attitudes, because I could think about people through reading books. Especially later, when feminism came into the picture and was so central to my life, as I continued nonetheless to teach predominantly male texts, this brought in its wake another tendency, which was not to be interested in the characters of a novel psychologically as such, but to focus back in the author who was creating the characters.

So I was interested in what I called authorial psychology, rather than character psychology, which often separates me from other readers. Some people have very immediate responses, where they virtually treat characters in a book as real people. Whereas, as a woman teacher addressing male texts with students of both sexes, I felt I had to stand back and theorize the difference which being a man or woman made in how you identified with characters in a text, especially if only male characters were in the subject position or woman characters were being scapegoated. In teaching *Sons and Lovers* by D.H. Lawrence, for instance, when a woman student would chide the woman character for being such-and-such a way, we would need to develop how the male author *made* her that way and to replace blame with descriptive analysis. I was really driven into this, had

to step further back. It's a certain kind of sophistication, or a habit of mind, which isn't that common, necessarily. Some people have it and it's interesting. It's like Freud saying that everything in a dream comes from you and if you're weeping copious tears because someone has died in your dream, you also arranged for them to die. (laughs) It always has that double aspect to it.

So I continued very psychological and I made various attempts to read in psychology, in some period intensely, later in psychoanalysis. So that persisted and has always persisted. I've felt a little guilty about it also. I've always beaten myself this way and that about all sorts of things, but one of them is that I don't feel I'm socially active enough. I'm too individualistic, which is always unpopular, it seems, politically, in my concerns. (laughs) So I wanted to say that also, because psychology is sort of a middle-class feature.

Rabkin: How did you respond, then, when the Second Wave of feminism landed on that idea that the personal is political?

Shaw: I loved it. (laughs) I loved it. I'm going to have to handle that as a whole topic because I was in a couple of CR groups for a long time. That was a major intellectual awakening and rethinking.

Rabkin: Great, we can do that when we get to it.

Shaw: Let me just see these other things. [Shaw is referring to the topic outline.] I skipped over the fact that I ended up loving writing my dissertation and it's the first time when writing connected with true meaning. You must be used to that, as a writing teacher, the way young people can talk about this or that, where

they're sort of performative or exploratory, and can even be excellent, but they're doing it for other people, or testing their muscles, trying things out. Versus the moment when questions develop a kind of urgency for them, where they need to think something through for themselves. That happened for me with my dissertation.

Rabkin: Tell me more about that.

Shaw: Well, I was working on three poets. It was called *The Sense of the Self*. It was Rilke and Valéry and Yeats. It may matter that during a lot of that period I had a friend living with me while my husband went to Germany for the summer and we talked constantly. It's probably the closest that I came to mentoring. It's always taken this kind of peer form, someone who lent herself so I could stay with my materials rather than having to leave them.

I think it's partly the length of a project like that that forces a kind of breakthrough, the way the seminar papers never did, because that all had to gestate and be written and presented in a week's frame. I think I always had two of them a term.

Rabkin: Two of the seminars?

Shaw: Yes, at Swarthmore.

Rabkin: Each with a weekly paper?

Shaw: No, probably every other week and then staggered between the two seminars.

Rabkin: Still, that's a lot.

Shaw: Right. And you had to find your topic, also. So that's a lot of things to generate. I suppose you could have a hobby horse of some sort, but you tended to take categories, too, from other people. You're taught to do that, you're encouraged to do it.

But here was this whole shapeless thing that I had to write [the dissertation].

Rabkin: What were you doing with the three poets?

Shaw: Well, hmm. Maybe I should go look at myself and find out what I did then. (laughs) It was called *The Sense of the Self*. It was about the balancing between inner and outer realities, the play between them. It's very many years ago now, and I don't remember myself very well. I always envied teachers who would reach formulations and then remember them (laughs) so that they can speak them, whereas I always seem to start again from scratch.

Rabkin: But what *is* memorable is that breakthrough experience.

Shaw: Oh, yes. That I remember well.

Then I was offered an office at Haverford. Somebody gave me the use of that. So I used to go up there, which is a very good idea, always, because it's like going to a room in your mind and it becomes associated with that the activity. I would waste time there but there was a limit to how much.

Rabkin: Because you weren't in your own familiar surroundings.

Shaw: Yes, with all the potential distractions or alternatives.

Rabkin: So this office at Haverford became your dissertation writing space.

Shaw: Yes, for a significant amount of it. Maybe somebody was away for the summer or something.

And that was eventually published in the years that I was at Yale. Maybe for next time I'll just go back and look at that a little. It will be good for me mentally to see what I talked about. It had to do with the permeability of self, boundaries in these three poets.

Rabkin: So it really did reflect your interest in psychology.

Shaw: Oh, no question about it. I didn't use that language but there's no question.

Rabkin: Did you get useful feedback on the dissertation?

Shaw: I don't know what "useful" would mean. Isn't that interesting?

Rabkin: Were you sending drafts to your advisors and receiving responses?

Shaw: Well, Rene Wellek (laughs) was a kind of absent-minded elderly man, and didn't give much detailed reaction. Then one year he was away and I had a younger professor who had more reactivity. He insisted on my having a third section. I was going to stop with the two, the French and the German poet, but I added Yeats because of him.

I had a lot of talks with my friend, Chaninah. Those discussions went in and out about constructs and so forth. I have loved, my entire life, talking about poetry with people. I just adore it. I still do it in my old age. A lot of people talked about literary criticism as a parasitical activity, a secondary activity, rather than primary, as something lesser than the writing itself. But reading is for me just one of the central privileges, and then swapping thoughts with someone else, what I'm reacting to and not reacting to—what does this mean, and do you think that? It's just so helpful to have that triangulation with another person.

It's Rosie [King] I mainly do it with [now].¹ We get together periodically and we'll read through a book of poems. She'll read one out loud and then we'll say whatever we want to say. It's nothing fancy. There's no performance stress on it. But we're in the process of absorbing it. And then I'll read a poem out loud. We will go through a volume and they'll sort of be summoned into the room in the process.

And then with classes that was something that would happen, or when I taught contemporary poetry. Once in a while, as a luxury, we'd read through a whole slim volume of a poet, because there's an absorption that occurs just from the voicing, and from the taking in, in a group. Francis Fergusson used to do that with his students. He always read everything out loud. He couldn't do very much, because of that. But you can do that with classes sometimes, too. And I suppose that this peer group at Yale basically did that too, in a way, because it

¹ Shaw is referring to Rosie King, who was a grad student of hers in the 1970s and has long been in a poetry group with her—Editor.

was focused on a text and then there were these different reactions and we were thinking about them and going this way and that. Yes.

Rabkin: This is something we may want to talk about later rather than now but I'll be curious to hear your thoughts about how the pleasure in that activity of sharing responses to someone else's text relates to your own work as a poet. So maybe we can talk about that later on.

Shaw: Well, yes, when I talk about starting writing. That's a very important question, wonderful.

So I have these other things that I left out.

I sort of skipped over my teaching at Douglass, the women's college of the State University of New Jersey, Rutgers.

Rabkin: Before we go there, could I ask you another question about Yale?

Shaw: Yes.

Rabkin: I'm curious about the gender mix there and your experiences as a woman there.

Shaw: Well, this is before Yale. This is on the way to Yale. The main reason I want to talk about it is because it not only clinched my feeling that I shouldn't be in French, because I was appointed in French at Douglass, not in English, but it also exposed me to a public institution and a very special one in the height of enormous expansion. It attracted the spillover from New York City and I think maybe 50 percent of the students there—I've never seen class lists like that—

were first generation, the children of immigrants. I was head of French House there, so I lived right in among those students.

Rabkin: So this was a residential institution?

Shaw: Yes. It had commuting students, too, in New Jersey. It's sort of about a mile across town from Rutgers, which is a public institution. It's right outside New York City. It was very convenient to go to New York at that point in my life, much more convenient than from New Haven, on the other side, which is further out. There was bus service, in fact, and train service.

There were all kinds of things about those students, but I just got a whiff of that air. That put public universities into my head. I might add that I felt a certain disappointment, when I came out to the University of California [Santa Cruz], to realize how very middle class, particularly at that time, it was as an institution, except for the students who were transferring in at the junior level, when we were in those beginning years.

Maybe we can then go to Yale and talk a little bit about where Yale was. Yale was all men still at that time. They'd just hired this one woman in the seventy-person English department. Then they began hiring a few small fry like me. But it was basically still all-male, except that it was in a city, so that you didn't have oppressively a sense of the single-sexness as you can some places. You were on the streets of a city and there were people walking around there.

But there was also a class feeling about Yale. When I talked about my family earlier, I wanted to lead into my always being allergic to class reactions, to

anything that smells of elitism or certain kinds of slightly wanton luxury and privilege and superiority and unthinking moral reactions. There're a whole bundle of qualities. And there were class feelings about Yale, even though it was a tremendous treat to be there. I loved living in New Haven. But, for instance, just the simple things in the classroom—I didn't know [what] to call these young men. The male professors always used the last name, probably copying England, but I was uncomfortable calling people by their last name. Yet it was absurd, also, to call them Mister. And the first name was not appropriate either.

Rabkin: Too familiar.

Shaw: Well, nobody else did it. And that's one of the things always being measured with women anyways, not setting enough distance.

Then I want to say something about the grading scale. It was pre-grade inflation. They gave very few A's. They had a numerical scale and about the highest they gave was ninety-three. And they used numbers down into the sixties. So I tried to do that too and that was a very shocking experience for me. (laughs) Sometimes I felt a little like a maid—not everywhere, not in my upper-division poetry course, which was delightful and the young men were lovely. I liked them and they liked me. It was a respite for them to have someone like me in there as a teacher.

Rabkin: Someone like you in what sense?

Shaw: Oh, to have a woman and probably someone less cut and dried (laughs) or something or other. I don't know how I feel when I turn on Charlie Rose and I

see a whole table of suits. (laughs) I don't know what that feeling is. I mean, why do I have that reaction? He's a very intelligent man. But I just like a little more mixture.

So where was Yale? Yale was just edging toward hiring women when I left. The master's council which decided these things—they had colleges there, and they were split six-six. A few years later they joined with Vassar. Coeducation was coming into fashion and almost all the schools began making provisions as time went on.

Rabkin: Did Yale as an undergraduate institution go coed while you were still there?

Shaw: No.

Rabkin: Not until after you left.

Shaw: Several years after I left it did. One of the problems was they had a few women faculty and they couldn't make them fellows of the colleges because the masters were still undecided and so that was a problem for them.

Rabkin: Because of the masters deciding what?

Shaw: Split on whether the women could be taken into the colleges. So the only way for me to go into a college was as the guest of a student or a colleague and that in itself was a problem.

Rabkin: In other words, the masters of the colleges were split fifty-fifty on whether women could be formally affiliated with colleges.

Shaw: That's right. They talked about making us affiliated with the graduate women's dormitory (laughs), for instance. They were hung up on that. So I couldn't go into the colleges, penetrate to the inner sanctum, where certain males enjoyed exclusively male company. That was that.

Then there was a room in the library I couldn't go into either. It had a very choice collection. I had to stand at the entrance and request a book, if it was in there. And when I went down the study hall my little heels went click-clickety-click in that beautiful library which I will worship to the end of my days. It had an altar and everything.

Yes. So there were things like that. And, of course, in later years I took those things much more seriously. I didn't realize. You know, I'd been trained by men. That was my first, I guess, all-single sex school that I went to as a teacher. They were all coed until then.

The graduate school was a school apart. We had such freedom of movement and conversation, that what I felt there was the movement from graduate school to Haverford College. I went to Haverford with my husband, who had a job there in French, and I became a faculty wife. That was terrible (laughs) because everything had to be done in twos over dinner parties. It's a little like that period they sometimes talk about in women's lives, when they move into puberty. We were all individuals and we were all interested in things. There was just so much movement. But then I became tied to my husband in a certain way and the forms of communication were more conventionalized, the types of exchanges that happened. There wasn't dropping in. It was all different.

But being a graduate student was a lot of fun. That was an exhilarating period.

Marriage

My [future] husband inherited the furniture of his mother's apartment. She accepted a job at the Swarthmore infirmary. She was an RN. And she gave up her apartment and lived then in the college, next to the infirmary. So he suddenly inherited this furniture and this prompted his decision to want to get married, so he could make a little bit of a household.

Rabkin: You met at Swarthmore.

Shaw: Yes, and we then both went to Yale and I saw him also in Europe. He was the child of a Jew who had died in a concentration camp, an importer-exporter. My husband got out just before the war broke out. A business associate signed an affidavit. When he came here, he was going to be a violin player and he got jobs so he could continue practicing as much as possible. But then he heard Heifetz once on a film, and from one day to the next he stopped playing. When we were in graduate school, he went back to Europe and this all reawakened. He began practicing without the violin while he was still there, just with his fingers, and then when he came back he practiced like a crazy person, so that he had to go soak his fingers every twenty minutes in hot water in the bathroom. So all the time he was in Haverford he was dead-set on going back to the violin, which was the trajectory that got interrupted when he came to this country.

Rabkin: What was his academic field?

Shaw: He was in comp lit also, and he had native German and learned French. He really wasn't good enough for the violin. He was nine years older than I was. He's now dead. He began having more and more trouble with his jobs. He would get a one-year appointment but it wouldn't be ongoing. Then he got a degree in library science but he never, I think, worked in that. So it was one of those lives that was really messed up by the war, among other things. How did we start talking about him?

Rabkin: Well, you mentioned the shift into being a wife and how that was constraining in some ways.

Shaw: Oh, yes. So when I left Haverford he was off to Germany because he could reclaim citizenship if he went. But he wasn't happy there because he kept wondering what people were doing during the war. So he came back again. He supported himself somewhat by simultaneous translation, had done it at the Dachau trials after the war. He was very good at it. He would do about five pages an hour. He did some of that in Germany, and a lot too in this country, and translated some rather eminent books, actually. He remarried, somebody a whole lot younger, a very fine young woman.

Rabkin: How long were you married?

Shaw: Well, we were together about eleven years and about four of that we were married. I just knew that I couldn't go to Germany. And as it happened he came back anyway and terrible things happened. When he was driving to his job in Texas, maybe that's the time when we got the divorce, that's why I might have seen him, I was already at Yale—he totaled his car and his mother was with him.

She had to have a foot amputated. She did very well, actually, in this country. It was a good American story. And she was in Swarthmore for a long time. That worked out for her. So that was a kind of wild story. I liked him. But later on, when I saw him again much later in life, I just remember not being able to contain myself for gladness that I wasn't still married to him. (laughs) It was a very un-Christian attitude, but he was a difficult person, very mixed up. I found him interesting but we had a number of difficulties. And I was very upset to be divorcing, too, because I had been troubled by my parents' divorce.

So I applied for a scholarship to the Psychoanalytic Institute and I got analyzed. That's probably part of my bent towards psychology although I've gone so much deeper into things in subsequent parts of my life by myself. But that woman was very helpful to me and she probably had quite a bit of influence on me. She had certain goals for me, one of which was to leave my husband, and another was to finish my dissertation. So I continued seeing her. I drove down from Douglass once a week and stayed overnight with neighbors on the Haverford campus.

Teaching at Douglass College, the State University of New Jersey

Rabkin: Was there more you wanted to say about the experience at Douglass?

Shaw: There were certain negative qualities about this, or qualities that fascinated me about those students, being in contact with non-middle class pragmatism. But I definitely liked that demographic variety. I have always kind of craved it, from my own family on. It was one of the things pushing me out from Yale, much as I enjoyed being in the city demographically. But it still took

me years to discover what a fine institution the University of California is. You see, Yale thinks of itself as the center of the world. I had to count the number of Nobel laureates at UC before I began to see what a distinguished institution it really was.

Rabkin: So you had some standards or prejudices—

Shaw: East Coast, yeah.

Rabkin: —that coexisted with your skepticism about snobbery and class elitism. So it was a complicated set of reactions.

Shaw: Yes. Oh, absolutely. I accepted those judgments even as I didn't entirely want them for myself. It was always confusing and it's probably still confused today.

Rabkin: It must have been such a contrast, standing in front of those, for the most part, very privileged male Yale undergraduates, teaching classes, the contrast between that and working with the working-class students from New York and New Jersey at Douglass.

Shaw: Yes, that's right. And I knew them intimately in some ways, because I oversaw French House. Big rollers were in fashion for curling hair, or rather, straightening it. Dress is a great carrier of fashions in the East. I've led a very bicoastal life because my father left me a cabin he built for recreation in his old age. So I've had a perch in the East always. So every time I go back I'm reminded of [how] real estate, and clothes, and sometimes speech—all those distinctions

are more visibly maintained than they are here in California. It's harder for me to read the indicators clearly [in California].

Rabkin: Of class.

Shaw: Yes, and background. Also, I'm among people who probably think about it less. I mean, the East Coast really symbolizes California, whereas the West Coast is rather oblivious, in many regards, of the Northeast. Or they might think of them as uptight, non-mellow, or non-cool, something like that. There are some things that are just completely misunderstood on the East Coast about California, like what it's like to wear a Hawaiian shirt, for instance. Because back in those days it was thought of it as kind of cheap cloth, that kind of design. I don't know how it would be thought of now, because I'm not a pure source anymore. I remember writing an essay in the seventh grade about why New England weather was superior to California weather because it was more variable. I used to joke about it's being a mixture of paradise and sloth. People would come out and say, "Well, Californians don't read books." It's very hard to even describe what a sophisticated Californian is to an East Coaster, the earmarks of that.

Rabkin: So even recently in your annual migrations between the coasts you have continued to see differences and also inaccurate stereotypes being clung to.

Shaw: Oh, yes. Well, it's in my family, my cousins and—yes, because they are common stereotypes. They help the East Coast deal with hardship, a more difficult climate and so forth. We all bolster ourselves in various ways. So how long have we been going?

Rabkin: We could stop here or is there anything else you want to address before we close this interview?

Shaw: I received a junior faculty fellowship. I didn't want to go to Europe because I was in an English department there and I was trending away from my Continental life. I had learned tremendously from traveling in France and studying French. We all know how many million things we learn when we switch languages, they're just of all shapes and sizes, those learnings. But I didn't want to go there, so I came to California. I was involved with someone who was in California. So I set myself up in Manhattan Beach and used the Westwood Library. I came up to visit [UC] Santa Cruz in its first year and got offered a job.

A Position at the University of California, Santa Cruz

Rabkin: Just like that.

Shaw: Well, that's the way it seemed to me. I didn't know what was going on. People were all very informal and friendly. I didn't realize I was being considered for a job. But Harry Berger was the lead person in literature.² We knew each other, but not well.

Rabkin: At Yale?

Shaw: Yes, and I visited them when I was here and met the provost of the second college, Stevenson College, Charles Page. I guess I met the right people. I met

² See the forthcoming oral history with Professor Harry Berger to be published by the Regional History Project.

Francis Clauser, who had come expecting us to have a school of engineering and left when it was decided we wouldn't, for a while anyway.

Then I got offered a job. I didn't really realize that was going to happen. And at the same time I was offered a promotion. The one had tenure; the other didn't. I didn't think about that but I might have been a little bit afraid of tenure at Yale.

Rabkin: Why is that?

Shaw: Well, because I probably needed a second book and I hadn't done much writing during that year. I'd sort of figured out a project.

Rabkin: So at the time when you were living in California and you'd come to Santa Cruz and found yourself offered a job there, you were—

Shaw: Well, no, I then went back to Manhattan Beach down south [in Southern California]. But in the aftermath I got both these offers.

Rabkin: From Santa Cruz and—

Shaw: And Yale.

Rabkin: And Yale was offering to—

Shaw: Promote me to associate professor, which I had also not known was possible. Because they practiced a fair amount of turnover. They were used to hiring young faculty, and in those days once you'd worked at Yale, it was very easy to get jobs elsewhere. It's all completely changed now. So they didn't have any compunctions—they didn't worry about that kind of thing too much. I'd had

an appointment at some point with a chair telling me that it was very possible I would not stay on. He was advised to speak to all the young appointees and tell them that.

Rabkin: Essentially warning you not to have expectations of permanence?

Shaw: Right. I had come with that understanding. They maybe hired ten or twelve a year, even, and unlike the University of California, they probably had a tenure plan.

Harry had published his first book but then he'd written like a crazy person. He came out with a footlocker of manuscripts. He's still working on them. But it wasn't until John Lynch that he came to publish.³ John Lynch got him to do a collection of essays. Once he had that book, he began producing lots and lots of books. I don't know how many he has now but he's coming out with three somehow in this time frame, immediately.

We were all lured by Santa Cruz. It sounded wonderful.

Rabkin: So you were weighing these two offers, to stay at Yale or to come to Santa Cruz.

Shaw: Right. And here it was a public institution and it said, large and small. It was a chance to stay small as you grow large. It was a lit faculty. And Yale was this kind of school I wasn't quite sure about, though I missed its library forever. We have good library provisions but it's not immediately, physically, at hand the

³ See the forthcoming oral history Professor John Lynch, to be published by the Regional History Project.

same way— And this, of course, has been a very good town for women, too, to live in. The women's movement was waiting for me here, so I guess, thank goodness I came.

Rabkin: Well, maybe that's a good place to stop for now and we can pick up next time with the beginning of your life in Santa Cruz.

Shaw: In Santa Cruz, yes.

More on Shaw's Early Family Life

Rabkin: So today is March 14, 2013. This is Sarah Rabkin. I'm in my kitchen in Soquel, California with Tilly Shaw. We're here for our second interview. And Tilly, let's start by going back and revisiting the last interview. I'm wondering if there's anything from that interview you'd like to follow up on or elaborate on, before we move onto your UCSC history and reflections.

Shaw: Well, I thought I might say a little bit more about my father, because I think I failed to mention exactly what he did and also to explain that he had a kind of back-and-forth graduate career in which he went between the humanities and the sciences, between humanities and physics specifically. His PhD, his doctorate, he acquired in Germany, in Göttingen. He wrote a monograph on the graphite atom. I think he started at MIT and then did some graduate work in Harvard in Romance languages and then he went back to the physics. And then he ended up teaching Romance languages, I think at [SUNY] Buffalo and then for many, many years at Boston University, which was, to me, an anomaly at the time because it was a private urban institution, so it had some of the features of a

public institution and some of the features of a private. I think it was Methodist. I actually, in my snobby, young person's way, looked down on it a little bit because there are so many schools in Massachusetts and in the Boston area in particular, Harvard, all these Ivy League schools, and I thought it didn't quite make the grade.

He worked very, very hard. I think he probably taught sixteen hours a week. That's probably four courses a term, or an eight-course load. When I think of what we do later on. My mother, at the secondary level, was teaching about twenty-five hours a week, which is also quite an expenditure of energy. He taught Extension as well, which was on Saturdays, and he taught summer school when I was a child. That was all because of the debt that I spoke of last time. They were doing everything to try to pay that back and to save money in every possible way.

It's interesting to me, in retrospect, to think about him. When he retired, he went back to teaching physics, which seemed extraordinary to me because that was a great many years later. But, of course, he was teaching at the elementary level and some of those courses apparently stayed the same.

A Road Not Taken

When I look back on my life, there are certain things I would do differently if I had that possibility. I would go to a different college, to a larger institution. But I would also think seriously about working in the sciences because I've had this craving all these years for puzzles and so forth, so I probably have some of his

mixed DNA myself. I'm his child. I was certainly influenced as I was growing up. I adored math, for instance, and at the Cambridge School I went through the fourth year, where we had a kind of sampler course. We did all sorts of things, advanced equations; I got a taste for both differential and integral calculus. All that was just a lot of fun for me. But once I crossed over into college, I was more in the science requirement mode. I never got into it. Now I would think about all of that differently. The times have changed so much. It never really occurred to me to—

Rabkin: Has your interest in math and science influenced the way you do literature at all, do you think?

Shaw: Well, I'm not sure that it has. One of the things that I did between the two sessions was I went back and looked at my book, because you asked me questions about it that I couldn't answer. So I sat down and read it, found I didn't have a great deal of patience. Almost all my reactions were stylistic. Well, the times have changed a great deal in terms of how people write and also how they organize things and the tempo at which text proceeds forward. So it seemed very stepwise and rational in comparison, and a little boring. (laughs)

I think of myself more as a poet now. I'll get to that later, when I had that sort of gradual turning in my own life. But I do have, clearly, a double set of abilities. I can reason, and rely on it and value it and guide myself by it. But I love, also, to jump around and be intuitive and feel my way into things. So I move back and forth between those modes. I'm very aware, as an intellectual, that I've used them to check on each other, for the reasoning to try to follow up on the

intuitions, and for the feelings to check on ideas, see if they were being carried too far without bringing them back to the things that they were meant to describe.

I certainly chose literature because I liked that mixture of particularity and generality and the movement between the two. One of the great pleasures of literature is that it is embodied ideas, and you can talk about the ideas but you can also talk about the embodiment. I love that. I thought sometimes that my love of particularity was too extreme. Of course, that feeds poetry as well.

Rabkin: Did you find the emerging feminist study of what has been called women's ways of knowing affirming of your combination of intuitive and rational thinking?

Shaw: Oh, absolutely. I'm going to have to talk about that centrally, because once I came to Santa Cruz there was a whole period when that was a major focus of concern and where I had to rethink my relation to my old profession. I read a lot. I mentioned that I was in consciousness-raising groups, several of them, and there was a lot in the academy that was going on.

The Early Years at the University of California, Santa Cruz

But why don't I start with kind of the general stuff about the arrival in Santa Cruz.

Rabkin: That would be wonderful.

Shaw: Yes. You may have this from other faculty members also but I thought I would just talk about some of the general background things that I mentioned to you more informally in our preliminary discussion before we began doing the interviews.

There was a Master Plan [for Higher Education]⁴ that went through the legislature in California because there was enormous growth, both in population but also immigration into the state. That Master Plan committed to providing places at the University [of California] for all students who graduated from high school above a certain grade point average, and that was a certain percentage of the graduating class, regardless of the institution they graduated from. The University was thought of as an upper-division institution, which would be fed into by the community colleges. As such, the University was privileged as a teaching/research institution and the faculty were expected to devote their time accordingly, fifty-fifty was the understanding.

This part of the plan didn't quite work out that way. I think there were more four-year students that went to the University later on, when finances became more of an issue. UCSC was planned to grow originally to 27,000, to be a full-

⁴ "The California Master Plan for Higher Education of 1960 was developed by a survey team appointed by the [UC Regents](#) and the State Board of Education during the administration of [Governor Pat Brown](#). [Clark Kerr](#), then the President of UC, was a key figure in its development. The Plan set up a coherent system for postsecondary education which defined specific roles for the already-existing [University of California](#) (UC), the [California State College](#) (CSC) system of senior colleges, now California State *University* (CSU), and the [California Community Colleges system](#) (CCC). [The plan stipulated that] some form of higher education ought to be available to all regardless of their economic means, and that academic progress should be limited only by individual proficiency. . . The Plan laid out that the top 12.5% (1/8th) of graduating high school seniors would be guaranteed a place at one of the University of California campuses ([Berkeley](#), [Los Angeles](#), etc.); the top third would be able to enter the California State University ([San Francisco State](#), [Cal State L.A.](#), etc.); and that the community colleges (Bakersfield College, College of the Canyons, etc.) would accept all applications."
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/California_Master_Plan_for_Higher_Education

sized campus like Berkeley or UCLA. It was supposed to be unique, in that it would feel small while it grew actually very large. That was the way the slogan went. The way it [would feel] small had somehow to do with these cluster colleges that it was planning and with a special emphasis on undergraduate teaching, and even, in some cases, faculty doing research with upper-division students, rather than relying exclusively on collaborative work with graduate students. So this was the plan. It sounded just wonderful. I've always been drawn to the idea of a large institution, but I didn't think about it very carefully.

When I looked at it later, I came to appreciate that the faculty-student ratio was actually 1:22 faculty per student. And with the course loads that we eventually ended up with, this meant an average of about forty students a class. So it was really a significant difference from the private institutions that I was familiar with in the East, where it was more like a 1:10 ratio. And we, of course, had a somewhat privileged ratio when we were starting out, as all campuses do in this system. I have to probably stop and admire the success that the University of California has had in reproducing itself because I think that it would be safe to say that some of the other state institutions have not been quite as successful as they build new campuses in imparting to each of them the same quality that the University of California has succeeded in doing. It's probably because of all the tight regulations and the constant reviewing and shared personnel criteria.

It's not only that we have this rather unfavorable ratio, but in fact UC practiced what is called a weighted ratio, so lower-division students were counted less than upper-division students, who were counted less than beginning graduate students, and the highest of all were advanced graduate students or professional

students. And because of our supposed undergraduate emphasis at UCSC, one of our professional schools at Santa Cruz was canceled, the school of engineering. It came on much later. We didn't have a med school. It was very unusual to have a campus like ours that didn't and it was unfavorable in terms of the faculty. I learned to use that phrase FTE, full time equivalent.

Just before UCSC opened—this was all happening in the sixties—La Jolla had started, and Irvine. There were about three of us that were launched because they were trying to keep up with this Master Plan. But the University had just switched from a semester to a quarter system in the early sixties, because there was a theory temporarily in vogue about full plant utilization. The idea was to have a summer quarter as well as the three regular quarters. And this didn't really pan out because neither faculty nor students could—you get really exhausted with all this mental work so there wasn't as high an enrollment in the summer. And then came budgetary stress at the state level.

So what they did then was to cancel that summer quarter. So there we were, suddenly with a quarter system instead of a semester system. Berkeley is the only campus that succeeded in reverting to the semester system. Some of the reason for that is that the faculty don't like to teach as many courses at the same time. You see, you spread them out if you are on a quarter system; you have three terms as opposed to two. And so if we teach, say, five courses a year, that would be 2:2:1. But it would be 3:2 if it were a semester system. Or as it later became, four courses a year. I feel embarrassed to even say this to you because I know that you were a lecturer, so you were fighting against a seven-course norm.

Rabkin: Eight.

Shaw: Eight-course norm. So it started out as nine and then there was some attempt to give [lecturers] service credit also because there are always a lot of responsibilities that faculty of every kind have. Not only does the quarter system really forcibly elongate the year because you can't trim quarters when they're only ten weeks. I mean, one of their great virtues is they don't kind of sag the way semesters do—before you start accelerating toward the end of the term, there's a kind of—you know, you're tired and so forth. But to my mind, educationally, there is no question that, especially at the graduate level where you are forcing assimilation of new materials on top of gestation and then you're supposed to come up with a major term paper and all within ten weeks. It's all sort of jammed on top of each other. But the faculty could never bring itself, except at Berkeley, to go back to the semester system, even though we talked about it. And all that happened just before [Santa Cruz opened].

There were extraordinary student applications in those first few years of the campus. They were really on a par with the applicants to Stanford and other places. I've already spoken about how very middle class they were and that the only truly varied segment came from the junior transfers, which they were eager to have but there weren't nearly as many of them because it started filling in the upper division and encouraging the movement toward a full-fledged curriculum.

Now, whoever it was—I've always assumed it was Dean McHenry and I feel ashamed that I haven't read his [oral history]—I probably will go find it now that

I am speaking.⁵ But I wanted to talk right at the outset about the anti-departmental basis that is structurally informing the particular features of UCSC, because it's very important and a lot of the initial history of the campus involved an unraveling of these special features and a reverting or a movement back toward a more standard type of arrangement.

Initially, the faculty were not grouped departmentally. We were all simultaneously in a college and a board of studies, as they were called. The purpose of a board of studies was to enable us to get together to talk about disciplinary matters. They were bringing us together across different colleges. Although, at the same time, the colleges were used for major hirings in various divisions. The first college [Cowell] was used for significant hiring in the humanities. And then Stevenson in the social sciences. And then with Crown it was a special boost for the sciences. Then it became a little more open.

Stevenson College was quite a mixture of faculty. I think there were maybe six people in literature—I don't know how large the college was exactly. One was a Medievalist; another was a Germanist; one taught Russian literature. There was another Modernist besides me. I think Bob Durling was connected with Stevenson initially.

Rabkin: And Durling was in Italian literature.

Shaw: That was his major area later on and where he published primarily.

⁵ The full text of Dean McHenry's oral history is available through the Regional History Project's website at <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/mchenry>

We taught in classrooms that were all over [campus]. I might have taught in Cowell; I taught up in Crown. There was no specific place where humanities prevailed and where literature was grouped.

Historically speaking, reaggregation represented an attempt to put faculty more in clusters.⁶ It wasn't so bad in those first initial hirings, when they hired five or six of us. But even then, some of the people that I wanted to be close to were in some faraway college. In reaggregation, they tried to group people so that, for instance, Kresge became the college for modern literature and Cowell for earlier literature. They were figuring that all out.

And then I suppose still later—but that period I know even less about—is the building of the social sciences and humanities buildings. You get further intensification of those groupings. And sometimes these groupings were—you could call them regroupings—were explored when there were problems with a department. Like, psychology was having some factionalism, so they put them all in offices in Kerr Hall so that they could see if proximity would resolve and discourage this factionalism.

But the main reason that this became an object of concern was because of young faculty not making it across the tenure line because they were being pulled in so many directions and they were forming their bonds with people of often quite different backgrounds—and that may even have led to interesting work—but it

⁶ Reaggregation was spearheaded by the Budget and Academic Planning Committee in the 1973-74 academic year. About 10 percent of the UCSC faculty changed their college location so they could be located near other faculty in a similar academic discipline. For more on reaggregation see Irene Reti, Interviewer and Editor, *It Became My Case Study: Michael Cowan's Four Decades at UC Santa Cruz* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2013). Available in full text at <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/it-became-my-case-study-professor-michael-cowan-four-decades-at-uc-santa-cruz>—Editor.

was interdisciplinary and it took longer to develop and to produce publishing. It was probably less severe in the sciences because they had to, of course, have labs for scientists. Not all scientists are lab scientists. They were also, of course, aware that it was very important to become eminent in the sciences. So there were various kinds of favorings of the scientists, in a certain way, from the point of view of the humanities.

But in any case, the faculty initially were not grouped departmentally. This was one of the enormous pleasures of coming to Santa Cruz, really, that you had made available to you—you had access to people of all kinds of areas and you chatted with them around the halls and found out all sorts of things. Usually these people aren't even available to you. I enjoyed it enormously and it's one of the, in a way, continuing features of Santa Cruz, that it's much more open, I think because of this, to interdisciplinary exchanges and endeavors than many institutions.

Rabkin: Tilly, can you talk about any particular collegial relationships that emerged for you?

Shaw: Well, I tried to think about that, how deep it really went. It's probably more on the level of warm acquaintanceship and maybe improving my general education, knowing more about different kinds of work that are going on and being done, a certain kind of literacy, almost research literacy, than it does in my own case [involve] any kind of working together [with colleagues across disciplines]. My main interest was psychology but I found that with other literature people, and not with, mostly—I mean there were a few—Frank Barron,

maybe, who worked on creativity and who was more of a humanistic psychologist. So it's more a pleasure to be able to, even now in emeritus luncheons, talk with an astronomer or someone in chemistry very comfortably, or Peter Scott in physics, and so forth. There was a lot of social integration of the scientists but it wasn't a really deep exchange. But it made for a good ambiance and a hospitable one, in a certain sense.

Rabkin: What were the contexts of your interactions with colleagues from other disciplines? Did they tend to take place over meals in the colleges or in collaborations in the teaching of the core course?

Shaw: All those things. And there were College Nights.⁷ And there were social hours before the College Nights that people attended. There was an attempt to foster sociality much more than ever happened in Yale, for instance. But at Yale I had people that I knew, that I'd known as graduate students. And they were still there when I was appointed. So I had friends. I remember doing a reading group, for instance. I read some poems of Valery over many weeks with two colleagues. And the text group that I think I spoke of last time, which I enjoyed so much when I was a graduate student, was still going a certain number of years later. It was more formal, because we were now all on the faculty, and so it was less comfortable and casual. But it was still fun and it was enjoyable. It was a little more like a colloquium series than it had been and was more of a presentation and less of a joining in together.

⁷ College Nights (which still continue at UCSC in the present day) offer cultural programming and sometimes thematic dinners in the college dining halls. In the early days of UCSC, many faculty would attend College Nights and eat together with the undergraduate students.—Editor.

My one social occasion that I remember from Yale, to contrast then with what I experienced in Santa Cruz in a department of seventy, was a departmental meal at a rather palatial home, even cigarettes provided in a little cup on the table. I remember that in particular because the men and the women split after dinner and the men retired to the library for brandy and the women went upstairs to freshen their lipstick. And here I was, Solomon's baby, as it were, because my colleagues went off in one direction and the faculty wives went off in another. I went with the faculty wives. It was in that awkward verge before coeducation finally got rooted.

Rabkin: So your identity as a female trumped your identity as a colleague.

Shaw: In that instance, yes.

Rabkin: Interesting.

Shaw: Yes, very.

Rabkin: And did that stand in stark contrast to what you experienced when you arrived at UC Santa Cruz?

Shaw: Well, at UC the whole social life, which is a category unto itself—while the college was trying to set up its own social forms, and they were various at Stevenson, depending on who was provost—with the second provost, with Glenn Willson, who had experience in England, there was an attempt to create a high table, to knowingly establish traditions. But there were also faculty parties, because people didn't know each other.

The Changing Times

But by that time there was so much changing. It was the period when we were waiting for new records to come out with The Rolling Stones, Dylan, the Jefferson Airplane, and the Grateful Dead, who now have their archives on this campus. So there was a lot going on with popular music. And I'm basically a classical music type, a little bit diffident about jazz. And yet, this is a period of my life, where I'm back—as I was as a teenager, where I understand it as somehow mixing in some mysterious way with hormones and feelings (laughs) and so acquiring an appreciation. Otherwise, in my later self I don't particularly accord it much attention. I loved the music of that whole period. And it was very important everywhere. It was going on in the Fillmore and it was going on in faculty parties. I didn't even know how to think about it. Everybody was dancing and the dancing was a new form of dancing, so you could dance by yourself or with other people, because it was dancing at a distance. It seemed like wonderful music. Dress was changing and hair was getting longer. I never knew what was going on back at Yale. I closed one door and opened another one, and here these things were.

I arrived wearing dresses and I remember I wore my last hat as I came into California and then I never wore a hat again for a long time. I used to wear a hat to church. I began wearing pants and dressing more informally. There was a certain amount of marijuana around and I didn't know quite how to deal with that. I'd read about it in psychology textbooks. (laughs) So it was a very different social scene. And part of that was sponsored by the college, too. For quite a few years, they had big parties at my house because I had a house that lent itself.

They were always buffets and dancing parties. We would take the rug up and it would be largely dark and somebody would provide a dance tape. And I went up to the Fillmore to hear various things.

Rabkin: Since you're talking about social life, and mostly you've been talking about faculty relationships with each other, what about relationships between faculty and students at that time?

Shaw: Well, when the graduate program got going—histcon started almost immediately and the literature graduate program within a few years. Once there were graduate students around, they became part of the faculty socializing and there were very friendly relations, easy relations. They came to parties. And there would be lit board parties too. So they came, but not so much the undergraduates. That fear they have that as soon as there are graduate students around, the faculty don't favor the undergrads as much—that's probably somewhat justified. They feel a little more comfortable with that older age, even though I've become lifelong friends with a number of people I knew as undergraduates too, that life is offered up in various ways because they would settle in town or things like that. So I have friends that run quite an age range.

Let me say some other things. I talked about the fact that colleges were used for launching the hiring in major areas. I would say that this led to misunderstandings about the thematics of the colleges and also the power of the provost. It took me a long time to understand what administrators could and couldn't do, both as chancellors and as provosts on campus, because they had rather curtailed abilities, especially after those, first years. Initially, when they

were hiring so lavishly—you know, when I say I didn't know I was being interviewed, it's probably truer than it was later on, because people had a lot of hiring to do.

College-Board Tensions

But later on, there were a lot of tensions. Because say, we needed a classicist, and that classicist was to be a fellow of Kresge College, and then Kresge wanted a certain type of faculty member—and let's say we had an introverted classicist, or someone (laughs) who was very good academically. Then there would be fighting about—and the college would not necessarily treat the candidate very well.

Kresge had a particularly bad rep on campus because their thematics was to combat undergraduate loneliness and to integrate people better into tribes and kin groups. So it got a reputation for being touchy-feely. But that's partly also, once you've done humanities, social sciences, and sciences, then what do you do next? I guess Merrill told itself that it was doing the international. And then Porter became the arts. But then by the time you get beyond that— And anyway, by then the disciplines had very specific needs. So it just became a problem.

And then, were the students studying in the colleges? They were studying all over the campus. And what *were* the colleges? They started out with a fiction of fifty-fifty collegiate appointment and fifty-fifty literature appointment. And yet we were clearly teaching dominantly in literature. Sometimes the colleges would want two courses. So there was a lot to be slowly figured out, really, about this.

And almost all of it meant the colleges losing out, if you want to put it that way, or adapting, to understandable disciplinary needs and pressures.

Rabkin: Can I interrupt with a question?

Shaw: Absolutely.

Rabkin: You said something interesting about new hires, which were 50 percent within a college and 50 percent within a board. And yet sometimes the board that was doing the hiring would have a different set of standards and expectations from—the college and the board would have two different sets of priorities.

Shaw: Yes.

Rabkin: How did that get worked out?

Shaw: With difficulty. Some colleges were easy. The first college, Stevenson, was very easy about accepting people, so that was how you got such a large group of literature people in a college designed for launching the social sciences. But then a little later on it was all much more fragmentary, anyway. There were rather large-scale hirings in the first three colleges. But then it became much more difficult. And this was found not simply with the new appointments, but you had conflicting tenure recommendations, in which a junior faculty member would become very central to a college and the department would find that his or her level of research work didn't make the grade.

I think there was one case where the college recommendation beat the departmental recommendation. But those were problems and they were problems all the way up. This whole business of personnel functions was such a shock to me because as a junior faculty member at Yale I didn't bother my mind about it. It was all done up above and we didn't go to departmental meetings or anything, just this dinner party I described. (laughs) But here we had to review colleagues in the social sciences and everything in the colleges, because we had to contribute just the way the departments did to the personnel review.

Rabkin: So as a member of a college faculty you were responsible for evaluating—

Shaw: —and preparing the letter, yes. For colleagues in sociology and history and—

Rabkin: In matters of promotion and tenure.

Shaw: And review, because there are also merit increase reviews. You're constantly reviewed. You're reviewed almost immediately as soon as you get here and it goes on all the time. As a faculty member, you are always having to prepare your materials for review. And, of course, faculty were very upset to review people they felt unqualified to review. So this was solved this way and that but eventually those provisions went out. I don't know what year they went out.⁸

⁸ Chancellor Sinsheimer's reorganization program, which went into effect July 1, 1979, located the tenure review process entirely within the boards, with input only from the college provost. The exceptions were Oakes College and College Eight.—Editor.

Rabkin: For college faculty to evaluate each other.

Shaw: Yes.

Rabkin: Across disciplinary lines.

Shaw: Well, maybe they requested a college letter for college service for the overall dossier later on. But that provision, which had given full legal rights to the colleges, and which is part of what I call the anti-departmental bias of the structure, that eventually was removed. It's under the delegation to the Academic Senate, that provision. Because all these personnel actions are part of the faculty contribution to the personnel process, and then they're balanced by the administrative response, this check and balance system which characterizes the University of California. It was subdivided in the case of Santa Cruz faculty and that had to be wrestled out by this and that difficulty before it was finally resolved.

Stevenson Core Course

Almost all the colleges had core courses, so there's a whole kind of core course history that got worked out and what that experience was like.

Rabkin: Can you talk about your experience with the Stevenson Core Course?

Shaw: Sure. There was a desire for the students in a college to have a shared academic experience right at the beginning. It's a kind of nervous-making time because the anxiety levels are fairly high as students first arrive on campus. And it works against ordinary sorting by interests and so forth because people from

the sciences and the social sciences and the humanities are all put into the core course. So there're a great variety of individuals.

The faculty are also used to specialization, so they're not used to teaching in courses like that. It really goes back to your accepting that you're modeling what an educated human being [does], how you absorb new materials or materials that are more or less familiar, just how you handle that. Not every faculty member is comfortable with that kind of basis. This was an extraordinary situation, in a way. We were all new. It wasn't as if one or two people were new, but everybody was new. That's just amazing. So we all greeted this with pretty good spirit initially.

And then, of course, our natural attitudes slowly asserted themselves over a period of a certain number of years. So we did it, and then after a while we didn't do it. Almost all the core courses gravitated eventually to lecturers. The provost would probably teach in it and I certainly taught for quite a number of years in the core course and went through all those experiences, the experiences of devising curriculum, deciding what the curriculum should be. There's a whole politics to that. Somebody who's good at describing books gets his or her book chosen and it's actually a mistake. So there's a politics to creating the curriculum and gradually shifting it.

I think Stevenson ended up with a reasonable kind of course, depending on how you feel about these things. It was a great books course in a certain way. It had selections that were of a reasonable size so they weren't too big or too small. They eventually met, pretty well, the affirmative action requirements of a later

time so they weren't all by white males. (laughs) They had a lot of faculty lecturers in them, people who came in and lectured. But they didn't have terribly many faculty members anymore doing the sections. It became a specialized staff.

Rabkin: So initially, the Senate faculty in the colleges were teaching sections of the core courses.

Shaw: Yes, predominantly or almost exclusively, and then maybe supplemented by one or two [lecturers]. I taught many times. We taught different things, Wittgenstein and— It was always called *Self and Society* in Stevenson. And maybe did some Bob Dylan, maybe some early Marx, different things. We tried a lot of different things. We would have faculty group meetings, too, because the faculty were nervous.

Rabkin: Were all of the college faculty expected to be involved in the core course initially, in some way in the early days?

Shaw: Yes, initially. And initially, people were fairly good about it. It was a little rougher with the scientists but some of them did. The scientists always had less of a teaching load. It was more like three courses, one course a quarter.

Rabkin: My memory of the Stevenson Core Course—

Shaw: Were you a Stevensonian?

Rabkin: No, I was initially at Crown. But I didn't come until 1983. I started teaching in the Crown Core Course then. And my memory of that period is that Stevenson was unique in retaining a three-quarter core course.

Shaw: Yes, that's right. Well, that was by the time the core course was figured out.

Rabkin: Did it begin as a year-long course?

Shaw: Yes. And then, you see, the colleges tended to cut back. Stevenson didn't cut back and then it was forced to cut back. I think that was partly a financial forcing because by then they were hiring—they used the writing faculty. Did you, as a writing faculty, teach in core courses?

Rabkin: First as a graduate student and then as a writing faculty.

Shaw: I see. When you were in John Wilkes' writing program [Science Communication Program].

Rabkin: Mm, hmm.

Shaw: Well, that's interesting, isn't it? And in Crown?

Rabkin: Yes. Anything else you want to say about your experience with the Stevenson Core Course?

Shaw: Well, I found it very hard to teach it. But it was interesting. I was very textual. I taught a lot of poetry. And that was when I had ground under my feet, when I could take a little text and talk it to death. (laughs) So to have these big chunks of things—I found that hard to do—and I didn't know quite how to do it. It didn't seem to be entirely appropriate to be that freewheeling with first-quarter freshmen, training close thinking. I think some of the exposure is good. It's probably even good for the faculty members.

Rabkin: Exposure to a variety of texts and traditions.

Shaw: Yeah, I feel I learned things about myself from having to do all that, about how hard it was for me to just to deal with ideas, without that basing in textuality, or my enjoying particulars so much. I learned things about that. It's a particularly hard course to teach because everybody is in it. There's no pre-selection. Any kind of required course of that type is harder to teach because you've got the full gamut, people to whom it's natural and people for whom it's unnatural. And how to reach them all and how to get them all doing useful tasks requires more thought than we were maybe equipped to give it.

Rabkin: Were you reading student papers in these sections?

Shaw: Oh, absolutely.

Rabkin: And what was that experience like?

Shaw: Well, I had very mixed feelings about them. When I talk about these dilemmas about how to teach it—I was used to teaching literature and here I was teaching this other thing. But I commented on the writing and on the thinking and on the understanding of what was being read, in the way one does. It was less channeled than most of my teaching, so it was harder to do.

Rabkin: Challenging.

Shaw: Yes. Really!

There were other kinds of teaching in the colleges. We taught elective courses. There were different junctures. There was a time later on when it was asked

whether we should keep the colleges. What were the colleges? Were the colleges anything academically? There are sort of landmark moments. And there was a Senate inquiry that Carol [Freeman] chaired⁹ and Carolyn Martin-Shaw. And they came up with a proposal, which then quieted the questions for a certain period.

I don't know if that still prevails. It wouldn't surprise me if it didn't, where they thought of college courses of fewer credits. We had a standardized course definition at UCSC of five units, which was favorable to our faculty-student ratio, although people didn't realize it. Any course was worth five units. And the scientists always wanted to have smaller unit courses so they could attach a lab onto a course. There were probably other areas in which that was true. And this was proposed as a solution for the colleges, that there be one or two-unit courses that people taught as an extra load. But there was some of it done earlier because there was this myth about fifty-fifty and we were teaching, initially, five courses.

Rabkin: So, faculty appointments were 50 percent time in the colleges and 50 percent in the boards?

Shaw: Yes, and so sometimes you taught an extra college course if your board could spare you. So people taught things and sometimes I think they volunteered them. Bob Kraft, for instance, the astronomer, taught a course in Beethoven or a course in winemaking. Some of the more extravagant reports about UCSC

⁹ See Sarah Rabkin, Interviewer and Editor, *Teaching Writing in the Company of Friends: An Oral History with Carol Freeman*, (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2013). Available in full text at <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/freeman>

probably arose out of those elective courses. I remember teaching a course in feminism.

Rabkin: This was a college-based course?

Shaw: This was a college-based course, right. I might teach a course in women's lit or something like that, but I would teach that in the board. And so a certain amount of that was done. I think that was pleasurable for the faculty and it encouraged relations between the faculty and the students in the college.

At a certain point, a study was requested as to what college students did, whether they studied with the college faculty or not. Because always the question haunting us was: were the colleges simply residential? They were the site of the dean activities, the dean of student affairs activities, figuring out whether the students were in good standing and things like that. I served on some of those committees. Mark Messer, who was by then a retired faculty member in sociology, did a study that was much lauded and appreciated. It's probably available somewhere. I think it wouldn't apply now. But what he discovered was that sooner or later students ended up taking quite a number of courses from college faculty, not in the college, but they would go and seek them out in their disciplines.

Rabkin: Not necessarily within the residential college with which they were affiliated.

Shaw: The faculty were in those residential colleges, yes, but they weren't necessarily college-offered courses.

Rabkin: So a Stevenson student, for example, might go over to Crown and take a Crown College course offered by a faculty member there?

Shaw: No, a student might come and take a poetry course with me, who had met me in Stevenson. It was that kind of thing. And we knew students initially. We were all very open to this experience of meeting everybody.

Rabkin: I'm sorry to interrupt but just to clarify about that study, did the study show that students actually develop relationships with the faculty in the colleges and then seek them out in disciplinary courses as well?

Shaw: They ended up studying with college faculty. I don't know whether it was 40 percent of the time or what, but it was quite a high figure, and everybody was intrigued by these results. But in those early days it was probably just absolutely more contact. There were probably more College Nights. We had initially a viable advisor arrangement, where we all had advisees and the only way that students could see their evaluations was to make an appointment with their advisor. So that forced them, if they wanted to see what people said about them—

Rabkin: The evaluations weren't sent to their mailboxes, as eventually they were.

Shaw: No, but that happened very soon because a lot of students didn't get to see their evaluations, so eventually that had to change. But I, who go way back, have very positive memories of the advising role, positive in the sense that even if the student never studied with me I enjoyed recurrently talking with the

student from quarter to quarter, and I used it to pick up information about everything. I remember knowing a lot and advising a lot, saying, "I've heard such and such," or this person intrigues me. I did a lot of advising and it was very pleasurable for me because I was communicating my own enthusiasm.

Rabkin: And it sounds like that advising relationship was mutually beneficial, in that the students had close, ongoing contact with their faculty advisor and you got to absorb a lot of information about the students' experience of the college.

Shaw: And of the campus, yes. Information about the campus. And also, I was at the same time forming an impression of the student, so there was that mirroring function that was being performed, of how I saw his or her achievements. I thought those initial records were extraordinarily informative, so that I got, to my mind, a very clear sense of the student from the cumulative records. I never later on had a chance to see them unless I happened to be on a college honors committee or something like that, when I would see a whole student record. But normally I didn't see it, later on.

The Narrative Evaluation System

Rabkin: These were the accumulated narrative evaluations from all the students.

Shaw: Yes, and I take the trouble to say that because I personally am less enthusiastic about evaluation than many faculty members I know. I don't think evaluation is as informative as many people find it. When you say someone is 100, or A-plus or B, I don't find that very informative. Partly, I'm formed by the [Narrative] Evaluation System. I retired exactly when letter grades were

beginning to be required. They were starting to come back in. But I found [narrative] evaluations, even though you could sort of side-step into description in some ways in evaluations, but I found evaluations in general quite informative. I certainly did in those early days. I was sorry when that era came to an end. I enjoyed that relationship.

Rabkin: So the Narrative Evaluation System, for you, was a useful tool?

Shaw: Right. But it also totally destroyed me.

Rabkin: As a writer of narrative evaluations.

Shaw: Yes, I just found it very, very, very difficult. I'm a bit of a procrastinator and it was easy for me to put them off. I found them difficult to do, but I tended to individualize them. And they always had multiple audiences, which was tricky.

And then there were other things. For instance, I had to face up to certain self-clichés, which kept evolving. So that was an experience. One quarter I had to use such and such word all the time and then two-quarters later I had to use another word all the time. It just pleased my palette. (laughs) And that was weird. It was very hard to do. It's quite a drain on faculty, especially if you are at all conscientious. I'm a person who has fewer automatisms than a lot of human beings. Some people can kind of slogan it out and I think they find it easier. But I have to stop and think about it. And some students are harder to think about than others, either because they're more run-of-the-mill, or because they're more eccentric, whatever the reasons. So it was wearing.

Rabkin: Did you feel isolated with that burden or did you find sources of support and collegiality around the challenges of evaluations?

Shaw: (laughs) What would they be?

Rabkin: I mean, did you know colleagues who were also struggling with them? Did you give each other mutual support?

Shaw: I don't even know what that language means. You know, one of my early theme songs, it's not as true now, is: there is no help. (laughs)

Rabkin: I'm thinking particularly about—I used to struggle with them too—they would pile up. And I had the pleasure of co-teaching a course with somebody who was very efficient about pumping them out.

Shaw: Oh, really? That helped?

Rabkin: She and I sat down together—because we were co-teaching this class we could do this—we sat down together in a room and didn't leave until we had finished the evaluations. So that is one example, I guess, of the kind of thing I was thinking of.

Shaw: And that helped you for the future?

Rabkin: It did. Because I watched—she was very conscientious and she was a very thorough, careful, individualized evaluation writer. So she was not skimping on useful, substantive evaluative language, but she had devised ways of doing it that worked with her.

Shaw: She had a kind of mental checklist where she went through categories or something, which is a very smart way to do it because you cover then important bases.

Rabkin: It had been tremendously isolating for me, carrying the burden of these things. And hearing you talk about the difficulty that you had with them, it just makes me think about all these faculty members just burdened individually and in their lonely offices with this process, and wondering whether there was any sense of mutual aid?

Shaw: Well, it was occasionally offered and we heard about people with menus and so forth. But basically, no. When I was a department chair later on, there were people who didn't do their evaluations, which would be the extreme case. I sometimes did them and I did them well when I did them. But I didn't always do them and I think I retired without— It was very easy for me not to do them.

Rabkin: Was it possible to be promoted and get merit increases and so forth without having completed narrative evaluations?

Shaw: Well, it was held over your head as lecturer even more.

There were people who didn't complete them. This was one of the problems of evaluations and then people didn't have full records. And then there were always some—they varied tremendously in type of evaluations, also. I mean some of them were almost direct translations of grades, like my diagnosis I've just received: moderate to severe. (laughs) And it was very expensive to the institution.

I want to say some more things about the colleges and then maybe next time I'll start on literature, if that's all right.

Rabkin: That's perfect. That's great.

College Majors

Shaw: Before the campus went the other direction, it first tried to establish majors within the colleges and to justify the unit academically. It encouraged the development of new major programs within the interstices, as it were, of the disciplines. Stevenson had one and Porter had one. It came out of the spirit of the campus, too. The one at Stevenson was Modern Society and Social Thought and I think it was probably reasonably respectable. It involved team teaching. In terms of the public institution point of view, very small numbers [of students] were involved.

Rabkin: Small numbers of majors.

Shaw: Yes, probably, so it was very luxurious teaching. I think it was maybe predicated on team teaching too, so that would make it luxurious. But I think it was probably a reasonable major. And the aesthetic studies major in Porter, which they worked hard to get developed, involved work in two arts and also criticism. So that was also a legitimate major, both because of the two art forms and because of inviting the students to not only perform, but to think about performance and to evoke the traditions of reviewing plays and concerts and things like that. I remember that David Swanger was very upset [when] that got knocked off at reorganization.

Rabkin: The college majors.

Shaw: Well, that particular one got knocked off. I don’t know whether legal studies started at-large or whether it was college-generated. And, of course, we had things on campus like community studies and feminist studies, too, or women’s studies, that sprang up and then got institutionalized by Helene [Moglen] pushing for that in various ways.¹⁰

So that was going on. I have a feeling that some of that has continued. I think legal studies maybe has gone out. Community studies has been weakened.¹¹ And history of consciousness is, I think, at a juncture now.¹² It had no faculty at one point and then it was given three or four faculty. You need about three faculty at core to plant a program well. There are some areas where that’s been possible. It’s also brilliant hiring, often, at a certain point that helps with it.

Stevenson College in the Early Years of UC Santa Cruz

Let me talk about a little bit about Stevenson. The first provost was Charles Page.

He was a sociologist. I think of him as eccentric, a little wicked look in his eye.

¹⁰ See Irene Reti, Interviewer and Editor, *Helene Moglen and the Vicissitudes of a Feminist Administrator*, (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2013). Available in full text at <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/helene-moglen>

¹¹ For the story of community studies at UC Santa Cruz see Sarah Rabkin, Interviewer and Editor, *Mike Rotkin on the Rise and Fall of Community Studies at UCSC, 1969-2010*, (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2013) library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/rotkin and Sarah Rabkin, Interviewer and Editor, *Community Studies and Research for Change: An Oral History with William Friedland*, (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2013) <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/friedland> —Editor.

¹² For more on the history of consciousness program at UCSC see Cameron Vanderscoff, Interviewer and Editor, *James Clifford: Tradition and Transformation at UC Santa Cruz* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2013) <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/clifford>; Irene Reti, Interviewer and Editor, *Edges and Ecotones: Donna Haraway’s Worlds at UCSC* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2007) <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/haraway>; and Cameron Vanderscoff, Interviewer and Editor, *Hayden White: Frontiers of Consciousness at UCSC* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2013) <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/hayden-white-frontiers-of-consciousness-at-ucsc>.

He hired a motley college [that was] in contrast to Cowell that was run by Page Smith and Eloise. I wrote a poem about the Smiths later called "Noblesse Oblige." It's in my book.¹³ Page Smith was excellent at founding a college and then I guess retired fairly early because of the thing with Paul Lee.¹⁴ [Page was] a highly articulate man who was a successful scholar with a great eye to pedagogy, just terrific for founding a college, very articulate, but also the embodiment of privilege, tweedy and so forth.

Charles Page was nonstandard. Following Charles Page would come Glenn Wilson, who had gone through the British system and had an eye to establishing traditions. He tried to get the head table going and all that, and was good about decorum. He had a certain bemused dignity. Stevenson was just a weird place. Charles was a freewheeling soul and less concerned with appearances, a little more swinging.

It's sort of odd for me, at the end of my life, to realize how many of my human connections are from Stevenson in this town, partly because I've known them so long. I didn't know what the college system was. Nobody knew. I thought, well, maybe I'm supposed to go around from college to college and be here for a while and there for a while. So I went from Stevenson to Porter because I wanted to be closer to Joe Barber. I wanted more of him and that was a way to do it. I taught a course with him there, probably in this very aesthetic studies major that I'm talking about.

¹³ *Swimming Closer to Shore: Poems by Tilly Washburn Shaw* (Santa Cruz, CA: Hummingbird Press, 2002).

¹⁴ Paul Lee was an assistant professor of religious studies whom UCSC did not advance to tenure. See *Page Smith: Founding Cowell College and UCSC, 1964-1973* <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/smith> for more on Smith's collegial relationship with Professor Lee.

Rabkin: What was the course that you and Joe Barber taught together?

Shaw: Well, it might have been something like psychoanalysis and art, but it was probably mainly literature. And there was a study group there that involved Pavel Machotka and various other people, and quite a bit of art history that was also psychoanalytic in its underpinnings. That was fun. When I was there, Jim Hall was provost.

I left Porter at a certain time because of the [denial of tenure to] Lynn Sukenick, which alienated me from the poetry faculty there.

Reaggregation would naturally put me in Kresge. And I had this philosophy anyway of moving from college to college. You see, people knew me at Stevenson, so my word had a different kind of weight than it did when I was a newcomer to Porter. These things you don't add into your ideas. (laughs) And when I went to Kresge, I was among the oldest faculty there. Again, I didn't know anybody much. So it was a whole different type of relation.

Rabkin: And you went to Kresge because at that point the literature department [board of studies] was relocating there.

Shaw: Well, yes, the modern part of it was to be there with Murray Baumgarten and John Jordan. Helene [Moglen] had overseen this—it was happening during her tenure as dean [of humanities]. She had wanted to have the rest of literature elsewhere, but when denied, then she was given that position in feminist consciousness, which enabled the hiring of Donna Haraway for Kresge, which

was a wonderful appointment.¹⁵ That whole search was very exciting. Each presentation of the candidates was a major event.

I got offered [later] an opportunity to return to Stevenson. I accepted that. So I then I ended up back at Stevenson, where I felt more at home even though there was a whole male guard there—Carlos Noreña and John Halverson and Bill Shipley. They were all very male-oriented. They were friendly enough but I was sort of out of the group. And as I will talk about next time, that whole issue of finding women companionship, given that I was at the head of a certain age bracket, was a problem for me. Because the women were mostly in the staff area or were faculty wives. Already, of course, it was being talked about, because the plan had been to have 50 percent women and men. And then they were hiring only men. So that began to be added up.

The Changing Climate for Women at UC Santa Cruz

And then there were certain things that were happening out in the larger scene. Sex got added to the civil rights legislation—I think that was '64—initially probably in order to try to sink it—but the bill passed anyway, because [President] Johnson went all out for it. And then it became the success of the legislation, in that the complaints just poured in about sex more than about race.

And there was an appointment in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, I guess, that checked into some of these complaints and put pressure on

¹⁵ See Irene Reti, Interviewer and Editor, "Edges and Ecotones: The Worlds of Donna Haraway at UCSC," (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2007). Available in full text at <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/haraway>

institutions of higher education because they got a lot of federal monies. They did a study involving double appointments, husband and wife appointments, and they found that it was so biased, or so patterned, let's say, in favor of the males. The women were in adjunct positions or soft money appointments of various sorts. For just a brief period they held up grants. So people sat up and took notice and affirmative action plans began coming in and they had to meet them. I was quite involved in that. And poor McHenry was beleaguered from the start. The thing that hit him first was intervisitation. Do you know what that is?

Rabkin: No. What does that mean?

Shaw: (laughs) He didn't want visiting between the sexes.

Rabkin: Oh!

Shaw: This is way back—we went so far, so fast.

Rabkin: When I was an undergraduate in an old and dilapidated Radcliffe College dormitory, they still had three-inch hooks on the insides of the dorm room doors that were intended to enforce parietal rules. So when a woman had a male visitor in her room, once that became allowed, you had to hook the door so that it would stay open three inches, so that the dormitory matron could patrol the halls and make sure that there were at least, I guess it was, three feet on the floor of the room at any time.

Shaw: That's right.

Rabkin: So this is the kind of thing you're talking about?

Shaw: Yes, and at Swarthmore College it was the same thing.

Rabkin: And this came up for Dean McHenry in the early days of UCSC?

Shaw: Yes. And the whole campus got up in arms against him. So he had to give in.

Rabkin: He wanted to disallow visitation between the sexes.

Shaw: Right. And he always used that phrase "bedroom intervisitation." (laughs) It's just a case in point about obfuscation. That happened almost immediately upon my arrival on campus. Then it went on from there. That was just the beginning. I don't know how far it's gone, whether they began protecting people who didn't want to be in coed situations and dealing with other types of problems. I guess they went to mixed dorms.

But yes, that was the first thing that happened. Then there came pressure on faculty hiring, to hire more women and also more people of color. And McHenry was pretty gauche about that too. He said that we wanted to have fifty-fifty but there weren't enough qualified candidates. (laughs) So people became more sophisticated about how to find candidates and they stopped talking about bright young men and so forth. But there were very few. I hunted up a few; there were two at Cowell. And then there was me.

Rabkin: Two women faculty at Cowell, period. Or two tenured women—

Shaw: Well, there was Mary Holmes, who was a lecturer all the way through. And then there was this woman in music, Julia Zaustinsky, who ended up

having a lot of lawsuits with the campus. And that was it. Audrey Stanley came a little later. She came in maybe in 1969, something like that, and started out in Stevenson.¹⁶ And eventually Ronnie Gruhn, in Stevenson.¹⁷ And Sigrid McLaughlin, who was in Russian, who didn't stay very long. Carolyn Elliot, who left to head the women's center at Wellesley. They didn't have very many.

Rabkin: So you were in a very distinct minority when you arrived at Stevenson, as a woman.

Shaw: Well, right. Of course, I'd been at Yale! (laughs)

Rabkin: So you'd had some experience with this.

Shaw: Yes, I was just getting around to thinking about these things. Douglass was more mixed, but Yale had almost nothing. It had that male ethos. I was younger, so for a long time it was a different issue as a classroom teacher, too. The sexual difference is experienced differently at different ages. But I felt it through many of those years and it became a major issue. And, as I say, I was in these consciousness-raising groups. I'll talk about that next time. Let's see if there's anything I want to close with.

I do want to maybe just talk again about how unusual it was for everybody to be new. It's so rare, those situations in life. We don't even think about it, but the social group stores a lot of information. It does a lot of presorting, so that when you come into it, it knows who are its usual leaders, for instance. And sometimes

¹⁶ See the Regional History Project's forthcoming oral history with Audrey Stanley, who indeed did arrive at UCSC in 1969.—Editor.

¹⁷ See the Regional History Project's forthcoming oral history with Isebill "Ronnie" Gruhn—Editor.

those prejudgments are confining, but it's also wild not to know who is a good chair of the faculty and so forth and so on.

Rabkin: Because you were part of such a brand-new institution.

Shaw: Yes, you're just meeting all these people and so nobody knows. It takes a while for that all to shake down and to become clear. Sometimes we made the wrong choices. We were also so ready to greet each other and to engage. And that was sort of fun, too. And then there were all these changes happening around us. We started talking about affirmative action and I was talking about the popular music and the dancing. You'd just had the Free Speech [Movement] at Berkeley a few years earlier. We were leading into what we call the sixties later on. Hair was growing longer. Dresses were changing. People were wearing granny dresses. It took us a long time to get things figured out. And that was interesting, to go through that process. Yeah, we made a few mistakes.

Rabkin: Well, Tilly, would this be a good place to stop for now?

Shaw: Yes, sounds great.

Rabkin: And next time maybe we can launch into the dawning feminist awareness and your experiences with that.

Shaw: Yes. And with the department and setting up the lit major. Yes, those two things are really wonderful. Okay.

Rabkin: Thanks, Tilly.

Committee Service at UC Santa Cruz

Rabkin: This is Sarah Rabkin and it's March 21, 2013. I am in my kitchen in Soquel, California with Tilly Shaw and we are about to begin the third in our series of oral history interviews. Tilly, we were going to begin this time by talking about your Academic Senate committee service.

Shaw: Or my committee service, because some of this involves administrative service as well as academic, although mostly it's Senate.

I guess I should begin by saying that I had been a junior faculty member at Yale, in which I had done absolutely no service at all. I was never successfully placed in a college because they were just getting used to the idea of having women faculty and that was not resolved. Although I didn't appreciate the great luxury, I was completely free just to do teaching and research.

So when I came to the University of California, though I came as a tenured faculty member, which sounds like experience, I was really very inexperienced. Then I got plunged into this campus, which had a terrible time filling all its positions because it had a full set of Senate [committees] to fill, but it also had double structures for its faculty, because it had both the college and the, as they were called, boards of studies. So that's three structures that we had. We were the second college. And those were regulation size dictated by the mother institution, which itself was rife with regulations.

I was pressed into service and so was everybody else. And we all did it early, before our proper ages and before our proper experience, really. We had very

young chairs of departments and they had no choice. Although we were just beginning, we had to do these appointments.

Chair of the University-Wide Subject A Committee

One of the first appointments I got was I was asked to chair the Subject A Committee. Of course, I, like many people didn't know what Subject A was, coming from the outside. I came through just a little bit too early for some of the curriculum-changing research that later provided intellectual direction for writing programs. I was just a little bit too soon. I think historically probably when Subject A started, Rhetoric, in the traditional sense, was the intellectual basis or graduate discipline—informing the teaching of writing in the early part of the century, when that kind of training about sentences and the kinds of clauses you used and so forth, still was a much more developed skill and teaching subject. So when it came into the university, it probably went back to that era. And then, I guess Subject A was a designation for admissions requirements and there was probably a Subject B at one time too, I don't know what it was, probably in mathematics. But it had, by then, that stigma designation of needing remedial training in writing. And I think it was probably a gender-determined selection, the way women are very often made secretaries of committees because they're women. So writing was also a little bit associated with that, although that varied, it turned out, from campus to campus.

I knew nothing about writing. I'd never taught writing. I had, God knows, a great deal of trouble with writing, and with speaking, for that matter. But there I was. I was young and noisy. I had definite ideas and I can't even remember what

they were. I feel rather embarrassed to even mention them to you because you devoted your own career to teaching writing and have shaped your life around writing, and so it's ridiculous that I should be talking about this.

I very quickly became also the statewide chair of Subject A, what they call the University chair of Subject A. And that was partly because they were looking to make gestures towards the new campus. But, of course, many of the positions were hotly contested, like, for instance the Committee on Educational Policy or Personnel. And I was only an associate professor, after all. But they wanted to draw Santa Cruz in and that was a committee chair that was less desirable. And so for a couple of years I ran the University-wide committee on Subject A. We met maybe twice a year.

I engaged in a political action within the Senate which (University-wide was the Assembly) to get rid of the Subject A exam, which then later came back. Because at just that juncture—and I'm not saying that this was the correct thing to do (laughs)—but at the time I came with my East Coast snobbery and so forth and I thought it was rather amateurish, the Subject A exam. I guess the committee got together and created the exam and then handed it out to the campuses. And I thought maybe Princeton could handle that better. They had just introduced an essay section. And so I went after the Assembly. I was one of very few women there; I didn't even know how to dress. And made speeches and so forth (laughs) and successfully got the exam out. And then, of course, at not too long a time after it was reinstated, I believe. Maybe it shouldn't have been but I don't even know anymore, though I had opinions at the time.

That gave me sort of a whiff of the whole University-wide scene because I went to a couple of Assembly meetings. I used to deal with the rather powerful head of the University Committee on Educational Policy because we were working together. And there were very conservative people that believed that the University should hold the line.

Rabkin: In terms of academic standards.

Shaw: Yes. So that this kind of basically stigmatized arrangement should persist. It was beneath them— This was pre-university work. This was felt in math and in writing. There was always agitation about languages, too. These were the three, even though in different ways these were all profoundly central as bases for higher-level activities in those general areas. But some people felt they were just below university standards, even though there's so much learning that goes with writing, or goes with learning a language, and suddenly understanding that there are other centers you can be in to see the world.

So there was a whole strand of conservatism that tended, in fact, to find its way to the Subject A committees, like at Berkeley. So I would meet these people. I saw the Senate in operation, not on our campus, which was never too interested in it initially, but on the others, and began to get a sense of the kind of institution UC was, with all this developed faculty experience in administration balancing the administration itself and the kind of back and forth between the two types of elements.

So that was my baptism, Subject A. (laughs) And there, as in a couple of the other committees, I had that experience of large groups of men not being experienced

with having a kind of trembly woman speaking in their midst (laughs) and this sort of skewing the responses. I would read research later on how things equalize as soon as you have two, three, four—a little nucleus of minority members in a social or institutional setting. Then things begin to standardize. But I remember what that felt like. I remember warning the chair of the University's CEP to be careful of that very factor. I don't even remember now the context, but I remember warning him to just watch out for the fact that I was a woman. It's interesting, isn't it?

Rabkin: To watch out for what aspects of you being a woman?

University of California Press Editorial Committee

Shaw: Well, to just handle very carefully his public exchanges with me because of the fact that it was a skewing factor. The other place where I felt that extremely was when I was on the UC Press committee for a year.

Rabkin: What was the press committee?

Shaw: Well, they have an editorial committee. It's a very large committee of about maybe twenty members from the different campuses, for the University of California Press. They meet to decide what the University of California Press is going to publish or make other decisions because there were certain monograph series in linguistics and— They had different holdings. That was kind of a plum, to be on that committee, but I was the first woman to be on it. So that's another place—

It's just too bad that I couldn't have done it later on, because I've exposed to you how terribly inexperienced I was. I did it within just a couple of years [of arriving at UCSC]. The person who was the representative, Neal Oxenhandler, on the lit board, liked me and he thought he was doing me a favor. So I was on it for a year. And then I think I went on leave and I resigned rather than trying to continue on the committee because I was really quite uncomfortable.

In my tenure there, one of the people I especially admired was Hugh Kenner, for his work on modernism. He published extensively and was a wonderful storyteller. He had been on the committee for a long time. That was one of the treats and terrors of it. (laughs) And what we did, is we were given manuscripts, supposedly appropriate to our own area, and then we did a little presentation to the larger committee about whether a manuscript should be published or not. There was quite a bit of grant funding for the press so it was a relatively protected publication that didn't have to earn its way. It was a very interesting committee, of course, to be on. It's sort of like a book review section. It has that variegated aspect because they were publishing in all kinds of areas.

Rabkin: And were you privy to discussions about books and various areas?

Shaw: Yes, this is the point where they all came together for the meetings, and the editors were there. And we would vote. They would do a presentation and we would vote. That was another place where I felt that my being a woman skewed things—you know, if the vote was split, it was skewed because people were torn. They didn't necessarily want to vote me down when I was young and a woman—they were gentlemanly, and I was aware of that.

Rabkin: Tell me more about what it was like to be the sole woman on this twenty-person committee?

Tenure Battles in the Literature Board

Shaw: Well, the next time that comes up is in the lit board, actually, because I was the sole woman functioning in the personnel actions in the tenured rank. There were by then two other tenure-level women faculty in literature, Helene Moglen, who was dean of humanities, and the other, Marta Morello-Frosch, either a member of CAP or chair of CAP, even. So neither of them participated at the departmental level, because they were going to see the files later. The rule was you could only participate at one level. Already this represented a considerable change from the first years of the campus, two new tenured women in lit occupying important positions on campus—a first woman dean and probably a first woman chair of CAP—not to mention the eight or nine young women, the entire junior rank in lit, about to be reviewed for tenure. UCSC was clearly making an effort. But these changes were now going to be tested at the tenure line. The last junior male had just been promoted in lit with strong service and teaching, but minimal publications, and then we began doing the women, case after case, over several years, the tenured male lit faculty and I, their lone woman participant in the discussions. It was a very difficult and confusing time for me.

I wouldn't now want to judge any specific decision and certainly there were other forces operative here—the fact that the campus had temporarily stopped expanding and was tightening standards as one consequence, emerging from the

start-up to a more steady-state, in which junior faculty increasingly were urged to put their careers first and the campus had to make do with a less generous faculty-student ratio.

I've just now read Michael Cowan's interview on Helene's tenure as dean and also talked with him about it and he somewhat changed my view of it all.

Rabkin: How so?

Shaw: Well, almost all the women failed to get tenure. At the time, I was critical of Helene—well, I talked about the fact that Helene, as a dean and human being, seemed relatively comfortable making negative decisions, was exhilarated or got personal and emotional satisfaction in taking a tough stand, what she judged to be a tough stand. I wasn't sure how I felt about that. I hungered by then for more women colleagues and wished that were a more prominent goal of hers. And I got overexposed to some of these cases, knew firsthand about the scapegoating of the creative writing candidate, for instance, by my male colleagues, of student-faculty sexual connections that clouded the case in regrettable ways, of a letter in the file that had to be corrected at my initiative, etc., all of which were invisible in the final dossier. On the other hand, Michael reminded me of Helene's really significant accomplishments. She did good things with the positions she freed up by not tenuring people. So the strength of linguistics, for example, comes out of that and history of consciousness got firmly established, both excellent programs that deserved to flourish.

Of course, I knew myself—and I should probably talk about that separately—about the struggles with women's studies, which was put under the humanities

division. Michael refers to that as a student-run program. It had associated faculty from other boards plus a lecturer as coordinator, Karen Rotkin, a highly intelligent, profound person. But basically, that unit eventually got three or four ladder faculty of its own and that really put it on the map. Of course, one of them was Bettina [Aptheker], already a star as a graduate student. He just reminded me of these accomplishments.

You see, Michael came immediately afterwards. He felt that his own time as dean was an infinitely easier time, when he succeeded her. He had many more positions to [fill] and he didn't have to get them in these damaging ways that involved struggles. He has a really—he doesn't play that up—but he has an outstanding affirmative action record, in a way that Helene didn't exactly. He made appointments, not only of people of color, but he was just better about minority advancement in every way than Helene, who was there as the first woman dean. She had quite a bit of trouble.

Rabkin: Shall we come back to committee service and finish that up before we—

Co-Chairing the Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Equal Employment

Opportunity for Women

Shaw: Yes, why don't we do that? I was co-chair of the Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity for Women in 1971 and I think did that for a while. The other co-chair was someone on the staff. It came at that turning point in the early seventies. I was on it for three years. What we were

charged with was drafting the affirmative action plan for the campus. So that's in the early seventies, five years into my tenure on campus.

Remember, I was very vague about whether I was being interviewed or not interviewed. Indeed that was because hiring was done by networking [early in the campus's history]. It was not systematic until after affirmative action. So this was the beginning of turning away [from] informal practices, where you would simply call up a colleague at one of your prestigious institutions and ask for the names of several bright young men.

Rabkin: And they used the term 'men' advisedly.

Shaw: They just used it. They didn't even think about it. So I went through all that information. I learned, of course, a whole lot about where women got their PhD's and where they didn't and how that was determined further back. So in the sciences, biology is an area where there were a lot of women PhD's, whereas they were particularly minimal in engineering and physics.

Rabkin: Was your charge on this committee to help develop campus policies and procedures regarding hiring?

Shaw: It was to develop a plan. This followed in the wake of the Civil Rights Act in 1964, where they had added sex, hoping then fewer people would vote for it. It had passed anyway. And then the claims started pouring in, and the preponderance of claims were for sexual discrimination, rather than minority discrimination, because the women were more middle class or whatever.

And sometime in that period—this is a matter of history—somebody in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare held up federal funding, which was very important to institutions of higher education in the sciences, over this issue. It didn't go on that many years, but it was the thing that set affirmative action in motion.

Then people began developing what were called affirmative action plans. This had to be very carefully thought out, because you couldn't force somebody to hire a candidate just because they were black or a woman. Candidates had to be qualified. But you found out where there were pools of qualified [applicants] and you had to demonstrate that you'd been systematic. And then there came a period where you had to be more resourceful about finding potential candidates to increase the diversity of your pools. You might just go to Harvard at first and then you'd remember about institutions in the South, maybe institutions of color or whatever.

So there were all kinds of things we were reading and finding out about. And eventually people began to think about what affected diversity at the lower levels. There's been a whole history, and individuals on campus who know a lot about this. There's someone in psychology for whom this is a prime area, Cathy Cooper, who has written a number of books on it. She has retired now and I think she has an administrative appointment in that area now on campus helping with admissions.

So there was a tremendous amount of work to that. Julia Armstrong¹⁸ was involved in it, maybe a bit later on. It was a very interesting committee to be on. There was someone from the Lou Fackler Cogeneration Plant. That’s always interesting, to have contact with people from other areas than your own area.

Rabkin: Lou Fackler recently completed an oral history.¹⁹

Shaw: Yes, well I think he was on that committee. I remember Brewster Smith in psychology, a man who received the top honors in his field and wrote extensively, but was not a visceral person. He was on the committee with one of the rare individuals who was actually fired on this campus, Roberto Rubalcava. I think he may have been running EOP when it was first started. I have various memories of him. He could revert to fairly atavistic, street behavior (laughs) and throw it at Brewster Smith. And, of course, I’m irresponsible enough that a part of me wanted to laugh because I’d just never seen the likes of this in the academy. He was finally fired because he was so divisive. In all fairness, I have memories of him—he cared very much, Rubalcava cared a lot about education.

I remember Latino students coming onto the campus, and what it was like to have them in core sections, as a teacher to realize their English problems were a haunting from another language. I knew about languages but I didn’t know quite how to generalize, the most effective ways to teach and lead students towards a more uniform, standard English—it was still pretty standardized in

¹⁸ See the Regional History Project’s forthcoming oral history with Julia Armstrong-Zwart—Editor.

¹⁹ See Irene Reti, Interviewer and Editor, *Louis F. Fackler: Founding Campus Engineer, UC Santa Cruz* (Regional History Project, UCSC, 2013). Available in full text at <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/louis-f-fackler-founding-campus-engineer-uc-santa-cruz>

those days. And I remember encountering some of these students later, who were successful young professionals, how thrilling that was. Yes, it was a time of big change.

We didn't want quotas. There was a lot of learning.

Rabkin: What were your guides in forming an affirmative action plan for the campus? Were you either informed or constrained by the federal civil rights legislation itself, or were there other pieces of legislation or University systemwide regulation that guided you?

Shaw: I don't remember now. It was setting up procedures and they had to do a form so they could check on searches. We debated topics, like if you have an equally good affirmative action candidate and a mainstream candidate, do you give preference to the affirmative action candidate?

Rabkin: Were you inventing these policies out of whole cloth?

Shaw: We were drafting these proposals for the chancellor and Julia Armstrong, who was then or later overseeing it. There probably was some plan that was set in motion, that was campus-created, an affirmative action plan. And it might still be on record or it might not. But Julia is probably the person who would know best how we moved into that era.

Rabkin: Had she been hired as affirmative action coordinator for the campus? What was her position?²⁰

²⁰ Julia Armstrong (now Julia Armstrong-Zwart) was hired by Chancellor Robert Sinsheimer in 1981 as Special Assistant to the Chancellor in Matters of Affirmative Action and Informal Grievance. She later

Shaw: I don't know. She always was around in the chancellor's office. She may have had a legal background without having an actual law degree. She dealt a lot with the campus lawyers and had that carefulness of oral presentation.

I was [recently] an outside search committee member for the new appointment in creative writing. And it's gotten so much more intense, the detailed scrutiny of hiring procedures.

Rabkin: The hiring process?

Shaw: Well, the carefulness of it in every regard, maybe because of lawsuits, I don't know. We have several times had internal candidates and procedures—all that developing of equity in search happened over time. It took thought and figuring out and instructions, what you should do and what you shouldn't do.

Rabkin: What issues do you remember grappling with being on this committee that was looking especially at the status of women?

Shaw: Well, of course, it was going on when I was also thinking about feminism. So some of that was just interesting, finding where the women were and thinking about that a little myself, because I really had double sets of abilities.

Rabkin: In what sense?

Shaw: Oh, like my father, I was very comfortable with mathematics and enjoyed sciences but I went off into the humanities. I might redo my career direction if I

became Assistant Chancellor for Human Resources. She oversaw the Affirmative Action Office, the UCSC Title IX/Sexual Harassment Office and several other offices. An oral history with Julia Armstrong-Zwart is forthcoming from the Regional History Project in early 2014.—Editor.

were to live a second life. I talked earlier about how we thought about what kinds of family situations produced professional women. There were very fine papers on the generic *he* (which I stopped using). There were regular research presentations, interest in women's theater and women's poetry readings. Courses started coming into the curriculum. I think of it all as simultaneous with the development of affirmative action.

Jean Langenheim²¹ was our first full professor and she came as an associate, also. So I was, of course, interested in her circumstances, her history, and how she had been [part of] one of those husband-wife teams at Berkeley, but she had been on soft money and the husband had moved up the ladder. Then she went to the Radcliffe Institute for Women and was mentored by [Kenneth] Thimann and then was brought out here by Thimann in his sort of post-career from Harvard, when he took over the launching of the science division on this campus and served as the first provost of Crown.²² She remained a friend of that household. All that kind of thing was very interesting to us.

Committee on Academic Personnel

I was going to talk next about being on the Committee on Academic Personnel. I remember trying to deal with the problem of the fact that men negotiated harder for their initial salaries. We talked about these issues because we were beginning

²¹ See Jean Langenheim's memoir *The Odyssey of a Woman Field Scientist: A Story of Passion, Persistence, and Patience* (Xlibris, 2012).

²² See Randall Jarrell, Interviewer and Editor, Kenneth V. Thimann: Early UCSC History and the Founding of Crown College (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 1997). Available in full text at <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/thimann>

to be concerned about equity, equity within our own system and then in the larger University of California as well. I mean, you would see, like in literature where [a male professor] got an accelerated promotion to associate professor and that did not usually happen with the women, for whatever reason. The department chairs didn’t do it; the individual didn’t do it. So there was writing about that and there still is. The CEO of [Facebook] who has been speaking recently came out with a book I haven’t read.²³ Sheryl Sandberg was talking about some of these things.

Then we were sort of publicly aware, like Barbara Walters, of trying to push against the glass ceiling, Harry Reasoner not wanting to work with Barbara Walters—all these problems that women faced. All of this was in the air and very interesting. All these different committees.

CAP is a marvelous committee to be on because it’s like being on a research Olympus. It’s a thrilling overview of the different kinds of projects that are going on on the campus. When you look cumulatively at a lot of personnel dossiers—they always have their letters—and just what is going on in a university, you can’t help feeling a kind of interest and pride.

The chair of the budget committee—it was called the budget committee in those days but it’s real name was CAP [Committee on Academic Personnel]—would talk with the chancellor after we’d had our meeting, and we’d go back and forth if there were differences. But that was mainly done between the chair and the chancellor. That was the juncture of the faculty line and the administrative line in

²³ *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead* (Knopf, 2013).

the university structure. At the end of the year, there would be no names mentioned, but the annual report would report divergences between the faculty line and the administrative line. And if there were too many of those, a chancellor might get himself or herself in trouble on the Senate floor, if there were too much resistance between the two, or fighting, whatever you want to call it. That's where the faculty had leverage. Sometimes that would even start here. There would be cases that people would be concerned about. But pretty much it's gone now, even though some of those years were hard.

I was on CAP for a while. I think I probably wouldn't have been on these committees later on but I've loved that part of being in the University of California and I loved being on the Committee on Planning and Budget, also. That oversees other types of things. It has a lot to do with physical planning. I was on it a couple of times and one of the times it was chaired by an economist, Bob Adams.

We were constantly building. The lead time on these things was enormous and sometimes mistakes were made. Again, that's a place where faculty—it was a way of giving faculty feedback to the staff people. I think it was Wendell Brase. He did a lot for the campus. His tactic was to get in buildings for the sciences, so that the other divisions could have their share in turn—you know, it's all very formulaic in the University of California. You get so many square inches for each faculty FTE, all these things that became familiar to me—full time equivalency FTE, student FTE's and faculty FTE's. UCSC had a problem with it because the campus wanted the scientists to have contact with the colleges but they couldn't stretch the space a lot, and the very fact of the colleges took space from the

overall campus allocations. So all that had to be figured out and feedback had to be put into the system.

One of the times I was on it, Geoff Pullum, a very eminent linguistics faculty member, was chair of what was a flagrantly affirmative action committee. It was made up entirely of minority faculty members and women faculty members and Geoff, who was white. I think he was a rock star or something. So that was very interesting. We were kind of a rambunctious committee.

Rabkin: So what was that dynamic like, with the white male chair and everybody else representing women and minorities?

Shaw: Well, he had consented to it. It was a conspiracy with, probably, the Committee on Committees. You know what the Committee on Committees is? Yes, I know. I remember laughing at that at the beginning. It was a plot to get a voice with a strong feed into one of the major committees in the Senate. Frank Talamantes was on it. Julie Dryden was also an experienced staffer—I think she replaced Cathy Clauer as the Senate [staff] person, whatever that title is, secretary or something. She was a very smart person. She forged for herself an individual role.

So she used to speak up in these committee meetings. The committees were actually very reliant on her for history, for transmission of information from one chair, or set of members, even, to another. She had always that background information. She was very strategic in her thinking. I still remember the first item, especially me, as a woman sitting there and suddenly this voice (laughs) because it's a secretary, basically, a note taker, very respectfully making

observations that are extremely substantive. She had that relation with all the committees that she served. She probably served the most important committees.

Rabkin: So she had an authoritative voice—

Shaw: —that she created for herself out of no precedent.

Rabkin: She was both a woman and a staff member to these academics.

Shaw: Yes. And see, later on she ran the Senate. Cathy Clauer probably started it off and then she took over Cathy's position when Cathy retired. She was an exceptional person. She knew a lot and she had a lot of thoughts about everything. I think she worked in the chancellor's office, also. I don't know whether she was an assistant to the chancellor. She had really excellent decorum even though (laughs) she was so irregular.

Rabkin: Irregular?

Shaw: Well, because the university is very hierarchical and nobody expects a secretary to be speaking up like that. That reminds me of something that another administrative assistant in one of the colleges said to me that made me sit up, also. She talked about male faculty getting credit for women's work. That led to my rethinking, oh, departmental assistants and all that, and how not only the actual work, but the conception of the work often came from women rather than from men. You see, the institution lauds the chair, always. But it may really come from the staff. In fact, this was always an institutional problem. For instance, I became department chair, who was going to train me? It was always the staff

people who did that. They weren't supposed to but they knew everything and they often did it.

Committee on Committees

I was on the Committee on Committees several times. In the end I thought, well, it's not too good a thing to be on because then you end up putting your friends on, loading them with service work because you remember whom you know. But it's the one committee you vote for in the Senate. You vote for them and then out of that comes all the other committees. It is rather rare that the Committee on Committees is challenged when it proposes a slate of members for a committee. It happens occasionally. Michael Cowan, in his interview, talked about somebody from the Senate floor when he was nominated to be chair of the Senate, somebody standing up, probably a scientist, and asking whether that position wasn't meant to be occupied by someone of great research distinction. And then he and Irene [Reti] laughed in the interview. But rarely was the Committee on Committees challenged. However, in order to get on the Committee on Committees, you had to be fairly well known. because you had three or four divisions of faculty voting for you. So you had to be known by scientists and by people in the arts and in the social sciences and humanities.

Rabkin: So the fact that you were voted onto the Committee on Committees reflected a certain—

Shaw: I was known, yes. Partly it reflected that I was an early founding faculty member of Stevenson, I went way back. Yes. It's been very strange to go through

these later years and realize I don't know everybody anymore. I used to know everyone.

More on Women and Tenure

I should probably talk [a bit more] about that period when I was the sole woman in the meeting of the tenured faculty, because Helene Moglen, who was also in literature, was dean, and Marta Morello-Frosch, who was also tenured, was on CAP, the Committee on Academic Personnel. So I was the only woman faculty meeting with the tenured male group in literature in a situation where there were, I think, nine junior women faculty.

The story that happened again and again on campus was that it was wonderful to be here but we were seduced into just all kinds of things that were fascinating—into conversations, into reading in broad and various ways and so forth. And as a result, people's productivity was not immediately reinforced, and especially they were many times not getting disciplinary reinforcement, that is, reinforcement in their own fields. They might be talking to someone in another division, for all you know, because that's the way the colleges were set up. This could have been a wonderful thing if we had anticipated enough, but probably we couldn't, and figured out ways to remedy it. And everything that happened subsequently, with both reggregation and later with reorganization, was done in an attempt to be more supportive of junior faculty members in terms of their eventual promotion.

So we began losing junior faculty. Of course, the tenure line was the real big line. Santa Cruz had been responsive to hiring both minorities and women but then it didn't necessarily support them when they came here, or they weren't careful. We had so many bosses and then the very confidentiality of the UC review process, into which so much time is invested and thought and what all, but a lot of it doesn't get back to the individual. So it's both a wonderful system and terrible in its way.

Rabkin: Say more.

Shaw: Well, you have colleagues—isn't this ideal—reading your work and discussing it among themselves. They might tell you in the hallway that they liked your work or something (laughs) but the person who really should be hearing this discussion is you. Later on, because of the great pressure to shift confidentiality understandings, these letters were later in a redacted version made available to the candidates, so that at least the written appraisal, if not the discussion, became available to the younger faculty.

Rabkin: These were letters prepared by members of the department to send on to the dean, assessing the performance of a faculty member.

Shaw: Yes, in literature there were ad hoc committees that took on individual [reviews] and then there would be a general board meeting, and that ad hoc chair prepared a draft that went out over the signature of the chair and went on up to the dean, and the dean added a letter and then it went on up to CAP. That's the way it worked. It's a very heavy faculty investment. People are reviewed all the time. When you're hired as an assistant professor, you're

reviewed and followed the next year. It's kind of crazy-making, in a way.
(laughs)

I mean, one wonderful thing about the University of California is that it does recognize excellence. For better or for worse, if you come in as a Renaissance scholar and then you switch to American studies, or you come in in Latin American literature and you start getting interested in Latin American documentaries and film, and you're good, the University will accept that, and promote you even though you're not what they hired and you may not even be what they need. It's very interesting. You're considered on your own merits. Many places are not like that. Maybe we're too much like that. And also, many places off and on had tenure quotas, so that they might hire a lot of junior faculty members but they couldn't afford, institutionally, to promote them all, whereas you get promoted here if you are good and if you bring distinction to the campus.

Of course, for a long time the University was operating in a mode of expansion, and so always added new positions. There was less of a crunch. Then when we hit steady state and you couldn't count on that, things began to feel different. So when I was talking about Helene and Michael earlier and the different natures of their deanships—Michael's was an easier time, he said, than Helene's because she wasn't getting any new positions.

So this was a whole period in the campus's history. The consequence of founding the campus was being paid for, really, by the extra energies that it required,

which were often taken out of young people, junior faculty. And almost everyone held positions too young, in terms of their careers or experience.

Rabkin: This is Sarah Rabkin. It's March 28, 2013. I'm in my kitchen in Soquel, California with Tilly Shaw. We're here for our fourth interview. And Tilly, there are two areas that we have not yet delved into deeply that have come up in the course of our first three interviews, one having to do with feminism and the other having to do with your work as a poet. So let's start by talking some about feminism. You've referred throughout our earlier interviews to the pervasive impact of the evolving gender politics on campus, the growth of the second wave of the women's movement and how that affected campus culture and politics and your experience at UCSC. And you've talked a little bit about having been a member of feminist consciousness raising groups during that era. And it sounds as if that was an important part of your experience. So why don't we start there.

Shaw: Okay. And I do want to slip in before I begin, that I think I should say just a little bit more about literature because I feel a certain obligation as a lay historian to talk about what it was like to found a discipline.

Rabkin: Absolutely.

The Rise of Feminism and Its Impact on UCSC

Shaw: Okay. So about feminism, I thought I'd begin by just talking a little bit about my own circumstances. There were very few women for quite a while on campus. There were maybe two or three in Stevenson, out of maybe twenty-five, I'm not quite sure. There were two in Cowell, one was a lecturer and one was a

musician. And originally, there were very few people of color. There were, of course, steno pools, secretaries. There were faculty wives; there were women students. And a bit later there were consciousness-raising groups. But women were in relatively short supply.

I think for quite a while I made do with women students. I formed bonds with younger people until fairly late in life. There came a certain turning point, probably late middle age, where suddenly I was on the other side of a divide, and I could feel that in my teaching, especially. But until then, I was with the students, and I got my companionship from women students. There were some faculty wives who were very important to me. And, of course, there were a lot of very wonderful individuals in that group. I was particularly aware of Maggie Berger, Harry's wife, because my human life, my social life, changed a great deal when they separated.

I always had a craving for more contact with women. And it's also true that, intellectually, my bonds were not really formed with peers a lot of the time. I got them where I could. I have also some pretty long, fifty-year friendships with people who aren't even here, where I keep in touch by phone and sometimes by writing and visits, like on the East Coast, where there's a stronger explicitly literary intellectual component, because my own interests are pretty eclectic and broad.

So it was wonderful when the women's movement happened and especially to see more women in the public domain and watch how they handled all sorts of

things and what they had to say. Lots of books became available. Suddenly the world was full of information about women's lives.

Rabkin: Were there particular books that were important to you?

Shaw: Yes, sure. The Feminist Press [publishing house] was very important and one of their best sellers was Agnes Smedley's *Daughter of Earth*, a book I just adored because it brought together two things that I fret about. She satisfied my psychological longings but she also had a sociological eye, so her writing had a rural prostitute, or a real cowboy, a laundress—there was so much information about America of that time. I loved reading that. But there were lots of things. They began bringing women's theater to town. And then the [In Celebration of the] Muse series began so there were all these women poets.²⁴ I went to a lot of them. I had all kinds of reactions. It took me a long time to absorb everything because I wasn't sure that this or that was poetry or it wasn't. But it all washed over me and it was very interesting to be exposed to it. I did a lot of thinking about it.

Campus itself was receptive to affirmative action and that's to be said about it and I think still in a certain way is. It's pretty PC actually, politically correct. Then that, of course, led to the personnel crunches just a little later on, which I was talking about some last time, where I was listening to men talking about women in personnel session after personnel session. And very often women were voted down. So it was associated with negative outcomes.

²⁴ In Celebration of the Muse is a literary reading featuring Santa Cruz County women writers and has been taking place since 1982. See <http://www.baymoon.com/~poetrysantacruz/Muse/MuseHistory.html> — Editor.

Rabkin: Did you see an element of misogyny or patriarchy in those conversations?

Shaw: Well, those phrases wouldn't have rolled off my tongue, as they do yours. But I kept wanting to say after a while that I was "shut into a male academic locker room." I was listening to conversation between males about women, which to me was a different sort of conversation. I reached a very weak, pale, impotent generalization, that women don't make very good men. You know? It doesn't sound like anything, but I decided that was the basic problem. Since we are actually brought up to contrast with each other—men are not supposed to be women and women not supposed to be men, say, to be mannish. And the bonds between them are thought of differently. There are distortions there, and especially in literature, which has an important strand of emotionality, and also involves choice of material. So there are all sorts of ways they differ. The men would be discontent with this women candidate, and then with that— And it's true that the women probably were not as strong as they were to become later on, because also the campus by then was fairly well established and people were simultaneously more aware of their need to tend to their careers and turn things down.

Rabkin: Are you saying about those personnel meetings that your sense was women brought a new and different set of strengths and ways of relating to their work and to the academy, and that they were being judged by criteria that had been developed in a male world?

Shaw: Well, yes. I mean, that's—yes, sure, that's fine. You could say it that way.

Rabkin: I'm curious about how *you* would elaborate on that?

Shaw: None of it is that conscious, alas. That's one of the things that makes it so difficult— And you know, with academics it's always rationalized. So it's presented in the form of arguments and counter-arguments with evidence and so forth. But the basic dissatisfaction which is under that often remains unaddressed— And a lot of it, as I say, has to do with the handling of emotions or with what materials interest you, or with things as primitive as wanting to engage with colleagues of the same sex. You know, even that phrase today, Chick Lit, I mean, if we had a comparable term for Chick for men— I've had to spend my life with the opposite of Chick Lit. I've a few times just dug in my heels and said, "I'm not going to do this anymore." I remember saying it once over *Julius Ceasar*. Because it was Shakespeare, I thought it was good ground to take my stand on. But there are too few women in that play. (laughs) They're used for special effects. It's all about men—their relations to each other, patricide, fratricide. I sort of groan now when I get another coming of age story about a man, since what I'm hungry for is coming of age stories about women—women as subject, their location in the world, not always women as objects.

So I went through that whole period [when] the entire junior rank was women and the entire senior rank was men, except for me. Most of the women ended up not getting tenure and there were various degrees of bitterness about it. This was kind of traumatic for me. One of the things about these situations was that I felt a certain pressure from the times to overdefend the women. I wasn't comfortable expressing my own mixture of feelings. I've now recovered, but that was an alienated time for me, the underside of some really good things that happened.

I remember, also, getting really crazily angry for a stretch of time, too. That was rather hard as well.

Rabkin: Angry about?

Shaw: Well, because I was suddenly picking up on a whole series of male signals that I had lived fairly obliviously with for a long time. I remember having conversations with certain particularly obtuse men (laughs) and I would offer to explain what the situation was like for me as a woman. Every time I would start to say something I'd get rebutted. At a certain period of my life, this brought me into anger. They weren't able to hear me out. It wasn't even ideas about men and women so much. It was ideas about the academy. I was an overbeliever in the mind. I said, the mind is my friend and I really believed in the mind, but that it should be guided by all these other things underneath, that were often the determinants, was somehow disturbing to me for the period when I was working it through. I became very skeptical as a result. I went through alienation. I didn't know where to turn, really. Men were often poor listeners, incurious, whereas I grew righteous, having had to devote so much of my life to male literature.

I did a lot of thinking as a result of it. I decided to teach more women's texts. I didn't want to spend my entire life serving male consciousness, as I put it. It was very modest. Sometimes I would teach an entire class of women's books, and certainly with contemporary poetry I could do fifty-fifty, but with the earlier periods when I was supposed to teach the modernists, a fifth of the class would be women poets, and some poets of color, too. I didn't always know how to do that very well. But I did that until the end of my days.

There were all kinds of things going on. There were conferences on campus and certain kinds of research that I was very interested in. There was a lot of local work on the generic *he*. That was my first reaction when I went back to read my book, that I'd used the generic *he*. (laughs) I got that out of my system forever and a day. About how the "he" part of it was overgeneralized and underspecified, and that if you were the same as the universal you didn't have to pay attention to how universal or specific you were being at any given moment. I remember a girlfriend and her daughter and me going to the beach and her saying, "Everyone should bring his towel." And we were three women. And then, my finding older examples where the male generic was replaced with a plural, the way we do orally (their towel). That example was from *Jane Eyre*.

But myself, I was much more interested in literature, in the issue of being a subject or an object. That was where the consciousness in the books was. I began to realize that it made an enormous difference whether the movement in the novel was in the man or in the woman. I ask myself why it took me so long to become aware of this and what I was doing instead? I paid attention to what men students did when they read women's novels and where they found their points of entry, did a lot of thinking about that. I hunted up a piece that actually was very finished, in which I wrote about cross-sexual identification in a Yeats poem, in which I lay out a lot of the abstractions about how that was set up.

Rabkin: Can you say more about what that means, cross-sexual identification?

Shaw: Well, that was about a specific poem where a man was identifying with a woman. I talked about the framework for that, how whatever your

characteristics you're classified as a man or a woman. It's a binary classification. We're more aware [now]. When they ask you whether you're black or white, the country isn't satisfied with those options anymore. So some things are becoming much less binary than they used to be.

So I talked about the relation between the either-one-or-the-other, on the one hand, and then you have all these gradations because the differences within a category are actually larger than the average differences between the categories. So you have this odd kind of overlap between gradations and either-or. In this particular piece, there were various kind of psychoanalytic arguments. One of the reasons we don't notice that we are reacting differently as a man and a woman is because we're agreed on what we're reacting to, which we see as the same object, even though our relation to the object is a different kind of relation. For me, it's same-sex and for the other person it's opposite sex, a me versus a you. So we have differential reactions. And what we notice is that we're talking about the same thing, so we miss that really invisible but significant difference— It's this kind of question I was drawn to— I don't know why I was so interested in it. I guess it's because I've lived so much of my life before I started really thinking about these matters. So I thought about that. And it affected my teaching, too.

Meanwhile my writing was changing as well. The writing in the times was changing too. Expository norms have shifted a lot. You probably know more about that than I do.

Rabkin: Say more.

Shaw: Well, there's an encouragement to be more informal, to be less anonymous, to situate yourself and reveal yourself, and also at periods to think of discursive writing as creative too. All those things come into play. I'm the sort of person who's had the experience of people correcting me all of my life. I'm irregular, or something or other, and so if I write anything—I put in a little pleasure word and people want to change it to another word. (laughs)

Rabkin: Can you think of an example?

Shaw: Well, I just wrote a poem where I was doing some of that. I've been writing back and forth with my friend in the East about it. Where I make the jumps and don't fill in the interstices, then people can't necessarily follow me. I like to do that but then it doesn't make sense to them, so they try to straighten it out. Then the pleasure goes out of it for me.

In any case, this is all a lead-in to say that I ended up signing up for Women's Voices, a women's writing workshop that used to take place in the summer up on campus.²⁵

Rabkin: Tell me more about Women's Voices.

Shaw: That's when I addressed the matter, as it were. I went into that not knowing what writing poetry was and then somehow I came out writing poetry.

Rabkin: That was the beginning of your—

²⁵ Women's Voices was a very dynamic feminist writing workshop that took place during the summers at UCSC from 1977 to 1986. Workshop leaders included nationally known feminist writers such as Gloria Anzaldúa and Audre Lorde.

Shaw: —writing. It was sometime in the seventies. It was Marcy Alancraig, who now teaches at Cabrillo who ran that, and somebody else. There was actually another writing workshop that was run by the male writers on campus. It was residential. But that's when I began. It was a totally wonderful time. It's the only time when I've written with intense pleasure. I always call it honeymooning. I couldn't wait, when I was teaching, for Tuesday afternoon or evening, I was on a Tuesday-Thursday schedule, and then I could sneak in a little writing poetry before I had to do my prep and start looking at papers for Thursday.

Rabkin: Tell me more about the Women's Voices conference. Did it bring in people from all over the country?

Shaw: It was a writing workshop and they had both fiction and poetry. It was all women. It had both day students, of which I was one, and then people up on campus, some of whom came from quite far.

Rabkin: So it was mostly local people.

Shaw: There were some local people. That's where I met Maude Meehan, for instance. And there was somebody else from the Moonjuice collective. There were two people from that.

Rabkin: Moonjuice collective?

Shaw: Yes, a local woman's collective that published a number of volumes. It was in the bonanza of women's writing. It was wonderful. I can't even remember the last name of the very good poet who led our group. It was really fun for me. I remember a poem she wrote about a slip.

So there I was in a class. We did different people's poems. I don't think I had any poems, so I don't remember what I did. But then we had a little reading at the end. It was probably a two-week session. And we were supposed to each read for five minutes. I didn't have any poems, so I had to write my five minutes. I didn't tell anyone what I was going to do. Then I read them. I was very fond of my first poems, particularly of one of them.

That was a time of total delightfulness. There were so many possibilities that I didn't know which ones to choose. It was my first writing. I remember Claire Braz-Valentine saying, "Oh, you can write about such and such for the first time, how wonderful." (laughs) Yeah, what a treat that was. I've continued writing. I did eventually put together a book. I guess it was 2002 or so. I wrote some poems that I very much enjoyed.

Rabkin: Were there mentors or teachers affiliated with Women's Voices or elsewhere who were important to you as you were beginning to write?

Shaw: Well, you always use that word "mentors" so blithely. (laughs) And it makes me ask myself, were they not there? Did I not have my receptors open, or what? I was thinking that maybe I was self-taught, even though I have had a very institutional life. When I was rereading that piece I spoke of on cross-sexual identification, although I have references in it, it has none of the standard terminology that was kind of slogany, almost, during the period I was writing it. Somehow I've always managed to make myself a little out-group, whether it's that taste for putting in the perverse but delightful word, or whatever. That makes me a poet too but it gets me into trouble. I haven't had the opportunities

for constant exchange that I'm sure I would have enjoyed because I just love talking with people about anything. I do that some now with Rosie [King]. We'll read a book of poems together and we'll just say whatever we want to say. But a lot of my life I really haven't had anyone at hand, easily at hand to do that with— And when you talk about mentors, well, who would they be?

Rabkin: I was wondering whether there were people running the workshops, the groups of people in Women's Voices, for example, who were teachers?

Shaw: Well, Marcy Alancraig is a teacher. She teaches at Cabrillo. She's in fiction, of course. And they were very supportive, no question.

Rabkin: And at the same time it sounds like you were finding your own way, to a great degree.

Shaw: Oh, yeah. That was very helpful, actually, to write poetry. Because then I separated out the academic writing and the poetry writing. I worked quite a bit on some of these pieces. Like, as I say, this Yeats piece is a cross-gender identification piece. But I never—and people have tried to help me. Murray Baumgarten tried to do a few things. He's very entrepreneurial. I was helped too when I got my first job by someone on the Haverford faculty. He was very kind to me. And then I have this friend, Chaninah, whom I spent a summer with. We talk constantly about intellectual matters. She's the one I've had the most sustained exchanges with— And then the person I spend January with—is also—she's in eighteenth century but she's in literature. So we have a lot of exchange too.

I don't know really—I don't know what the answer is to all that. It's interesting to think about. Some people get into these group relationships very readily. I'm a little skeptical about them. I'm not a groupie exactly, even though I've been in groups all of my life. There's a certain vocabulary that goes with it and people start using that language. I never do that. Of course, one of the effects of that language is to say, "I'm a member! I'm a member!" It's not my style.

Rabkin: You've resisted that kind of group affiliation as a way of identifying yourself.

Shaw: Yes, I don't quite— I like some of the words that have come into vogue, like I like the word "site." Well, you know it's been a period of many changes of vocabulary, because of the French—

Rabkin: Yes, and in this case "site" —

Shaw: Location. Yes, because the ordinary word would be "location." They are sort of new metaphors. They have a little bit of a glamor tinge to them at the same time that they do that membership thing. I notice, even with fashions, that I see them when they're coming in but I only pick up on them at the very end when they're going out! (laughs) It's a terrible way to be.

Rabkin: What's an example?

Shaw: Oh, anything. I don't know. I even know which friends are going to come in with it, too. *Gen X*, or I don't know what. 24/7. Neologisms. Or, with what I would call a grammar error, using I, with John and I, when that started coming in.

Rabkin: Using that as an object?

Shaw: Yes. And usually it's a doublet. Or, it didn't happen as readily with the plain *with I*, as it does with *with John and I*. Yeah.

Rabkin: As in, "He sent a letter to John and I."

Shaw: Yeah.

Rabkin: So in this case the fashion is a departure from strict grammatical correctness.

Shaw: Yes, but you see with a generic "he" you, of course, had to either violate number or gender. And the purism—

Rabkin: Or pluralize everything.

Shaw: Well, that's the oral solution, but that often violated what I call number. So "everyone should get her towel," or, "everyone should get their towel." And that's very old, actually, in English, that plural possessive with the singular.

Rabkin: Yes, you're kind of stuck unless you avert the whole problem by saying something like "all people should get their towels."

Shaw: Yeah. And I used to use "one" a lot. But then I got chided for that too.

Rabkin: Well, we started talking about relationship to groups so I wonder if this would be a time to say something about consciousness-raising groups.

Shaw: Oh, yes! Well, they were very important. I was in two of them and there were about six or seven people.

Rabkin: Were these with campus colleagues?

Shaw: One I called the younger consciousness-raising group; that was campus. And then the other was also. Campus, but not ladder faculty, for the most part. The second was motley, more mixed in terms of age. It had one of the campus psychologists, Sheila Hough, who was at Stevenson and did lots of things, very smart, but was not a standard academic. Who all was in them? Several faculty wives, grad students. And these later on became social groups. We would have meals and things like that long after we stopped doing this leaderless group stuff and trying out various exercises and so forth.

Rabkin: Tell me more about that, about the consciousness-raising aspects of these groups.

Shaw: Oh, you're going around the group and telling one person the qualities you like about them. There was a lot of exploration. That's like a therapy group, isn't it? It's the exploration of—I suppose they're face-to-face taboos.

Rabkin: Was that aspect of the groups influenced by the encounter group movement?

Shaw: Yeah, probably.

Rabkin: Was there also a specifically feminist aspect to your groups?

Shaw: Oh, yes.

Rabkin: Tell me more about that.

Shaw: Well, like Karen Rotkin and Margie Price. Those were the campus people. Karen had this paper on things being phallogentric and we talked about all that and probably about sexual experiences. I don't even remember now. We just let the taboos go down and talked about things that we hadn't usually talked about.

Rabkin: What was that experience like for you?

Shaw: Oh, it was very interesting. I thought about the various times that people had attempted to—I don't even want to use the word "*rape*" because I was too much in control of the situations—but just that type of behavior in various odd men was one type of thing that came out into the open. It was probably more about sexuality than anything [else]. We had plenty to talk about. Were you ever in one?

Rabkin: I was in high school.

Shaw: You were! What fun. Oh, that would be a great time to do it. So much is unspoken. I've often thought in late life how little is said, really. I mean, there's so much that's not said.

Rabkin: Yes.

Shaw: It's just incredible, what a small fraction—it's interesting.

Rabkin: So the feminist movement was giving you a context in which to break through some taboos in what people talked to each other about, especially what women talked to each other about.

Shaw: Yes, absolutely. Yeah. It made me think about men and women and it made me think about the academy, also, how it was primarily a male institution, and even though it offered a lot of people a way out of situations—which was the way I first encountered it—it was also a carrier—maybe that’s why it affected me so much—it was also a carrier of relatively conservative social values, and it imprinted them, even. And thinking of what it did to women, how it kind of turned them into androgynous creatures, you know, sort of male women and what that was all about. I don’t know that that was talked about so much in the CR groups. I used to think about it. It may be in some of the books that I read, Germaine Greer, or, I don’t know. There were a lot of things coming out at the time.

Rabkin: Was the consciousness-raising group experience happening at the same time as your personnel experiences?

Shaw: I wasn’t talking about that. I, of course, wasn’t supposed to.

Rabkin: You weren’t bringing up your personnel experiences in the CR groups?

Shaw: It may have. Could it have been after?

Rabkin: I was just wondering whether experience in those groups was helpful or influential in any way?

Shaw: No, it didn’t help with that kind of thing at all, partly because I was the only faculty member in those groups. There were some graduate students and Karen [Rotkin] was a lecturer at that point. I was probably the only one with those worries.

And, of course, in retirement I've had a very groupy life, too. I've been in writing groups now for—I don't know how far back that one with Chuck [Atkinson] goes—it's probably forty years, a very long time.

Rabkin: You and Chuck are in two different poetry groups together.

Shaw: Right, well one of them is more recent. The first one—that goes way, way back. I was probably fresh out of Women's Voices when I started in on that one. Barbara Bloom was in that, and Anita Wilkins from Cabrillo, and Rosie King. It was originally a group of all women. Then Chuck came in and David Sullivan for a while. It's been ongoing. The three of us have been in it. I remember when David came in. I was reading a poem and he came up to me afterwards and asked about writing groups. And then he was in it. Afterwards he went down and got his MFA at Irvine and then he came back and got a job and has been teaching at Cabrillo for all this while.

Rabkin: This is David Sullivan?

Shaw: Yes. David Sullivan. So it's only the three of us that go way, way back, plus Rosie. I remember when Chuck started writing, when I was his faculty advisor for his thesis and he began bringing in his poems. He's always been very good about showing his work. He was a very gifted writer. Some people just have a way with words. And then he deliberately cut that back—I remember that period—and wrote much more plainly. And that style got used to itself. Very interesting.

So do we want to say just a few things about literature?

Chair of the Literature Board, 1984-1988

Rabkin: Absolutely. Let's turn to literature. We have not talked about your experience as chair in lit from 1984 to 1988, and some other aspects of the evolution of the board of study and department.

Shaw: It's so unusual to be in a board where things aren't set. In most places where I've been you've fitted into forms that were already established. So I wanted to talk quickly about the fact that we had to keep changing what we did, adjusting it to how things worked out, adjusting to larger sizes—

Rabkin: As the campus grew.

Shaw: —adjusting to different personalities, all those kinds of things. That meant institutional changes. And we had to stop and figure, so that I was no longer interested in thinking about anything after a certain point because I'd done so much of it. Particularly the core courses were planned so many times and there were so many dream elements that come into doing that planning. Or faculty recommended things they'd done elsewhere, which may or may not have fitted UCSC. It's something that's worked out over time.

Rabkin: So a radically different experience in a very new program, where little is set in stone, and you're spending a great deal of mental energy dreaming and conceiving of how you're going to be and then trying to put in place the mechanisms to get there. That's really such a different beast from coming into a department that's long established.

Shaw: Absolutely. And you fret in the long-established [programs]. They're very kind to you and they give you one pretty course to teach (laughs) and then you have to do the junior work for all the others, or something like that, and you're unhappy because it's all pre-set. This is a whole different state of affairs. And I remember some of the things—you know, it all fades with time, but I remember when we had the senior thesis requirement, the different things that happened there and how there were just some amazing senior theses that got published.

Rabkin: Could I just interrupt to ask, initially, were all seniors graduating from the literature board required to write a senior thesis?

Shaw: Yes, UC, or maybe UCSC, stipulates that majors meet a graduation requirement. That was our first idea for a literature major.

Rabkin: Which is easier to do when you're a smaller department with fewer students per faculty.

Shaw: No question. And it's better suited to some students than others.

Rabkin: Did that become a problem at a certain point?

Shaw: Oh, yes. But the problem that, for some reason, always struck me the most was that some students didn't graduate who really deserved to be out in the world.

Rabkin: They got stuck on the thesis.

Shaw: Yes, they never finished their thesis and that stopped them from graduating. They left but they never wrote it. I ran into someone in the library

just the other day, someone I loved. She told me I was her favorite teacher. I hope I had nothing to do with her slow progress on her thesis. (laughs) But she finally finished it. She worked at the library, so she was at least still on the premises. So that's a real drawback to a senior thesis. But mainly we got bigger and then we couldn't do it anymore.

So then we had senior orals, which I enjoyed, even though I got nervous sometimes because you would suddenly be sitting with your colleagues who would be having conversation with students. We did this three times a year. And there would be these days when you'd be circulating all over campus doing these exchanges. The students figured out ten texts they wanted to focus on, so that involved a certain amount of faculty [supervision]. I thought that was a pretty good system and it brought us together as a faculty, led to interesting conversations.

But then they began to run out of faculty for that, too. They used graduate students and TA's to have enough faculty to do it.

Rabkin: Was that because the ratio of students to faculty was growing over time?

Shaw: Probably. There were also, of course, individual students who succumbed to terror. And although that's a very important experience to master if you have it, it was also upsetting. Because if they do almost anything, they're likely to pass. But if you can't get anything out of them—

Rabkin: Oh, so a student would come for their orals and have stage fright—

Shaw: Totally! Totally. Yes, extreme.

Rabkin: And lose the ability to say anything at all.

Shaw: Yes, they were unable to function. That would occasionally happen.

Rabkin: Oh, how painful.

Shaw: Right. So now they've replaced it with a senior seminar, because it's from either our campuswide or systemwide [administration] that we have to have a senior requirement for graduation.

Rabkin: Some kind of senior exit, capstone-type requirement.

Shaw: Right. I have the feeling that we probably don't have a very good curriculum because the faculty only teach four courses and there are certain service subtractions from that and we cover a lot of bases, so we're spread too thin.

So that was one of the changes that had to do with size.

And I remember starting the graduate program, which I think we did earlier than I remembered it happening. Because there was already quite a bit of resistance among certain faculty members to doing it because their life was filled up and there was a little bit of a fear that graduate students would displace undergraduates, also, in the faculty's affections and interests and focus. I talked to you about how we planned that to be French, German, and English and how it's ended up an English graduate program, primarily. We had a few French people, Michel Joyet. And Miriam Ellis, maybe. We took some local people. And so we discovered that. We had to figure that out. And we had problems offering

graduate courses because we didn’t have enough density of students—we only had two or three students—and how to handle that. And yet it was important to have graduate student classes, even though there were always very bright undergraduates, so that students developed a certain *esprit* and learned to talk with each other. And we had proseminars. All this. It’s a lot of flux.

I was involved with history of consciousness, too, so I had double exposure. And I remember sitting in on things with Norman O. Brown and [Herbert] Marcuse, and [Gregory] Bateson was another one I was very interested in. I’ve enjoyed my colleague contacts, even though I haven’t had sustained intellectual exchange with them. I like the public occasions and they’re very interesting to me. I enjoy reading my colleagues’ work, when I do that. And I loved the graduate program. I didn’t even know that I was going to but it was really fun to have graduate students. I was quite involved with it for a period. I don’t really qualify, because I’ve been so bad about publishing. And that began to affect things after a while.

Rabkin: How so?

Shaw: Well, because graduate students need to get jobs and the developing of those connections to the outer world is essential. But I loved working with graduate students. I was involved with six, seven, eight theses. I still have friends among the people that I worked with.

The department, over time, formed clusters. I don’t know how that’s worked out. Some of them have wanted to pull away and have been sources of factionalism, like the World Literature one. Or in a different way, American studies—it finally broke off. There is something potentially colonial about such groupings. And

some of them have been quite good, like the Premodern, maybe. It's kind of amorphous. Especially in the Modern period, we have much less sense of ourselves. And creative writing has been part of it and I've always felt that that's a kind of conflict of interest, from the point of view of creative writing.

Rabkin: Tell me more about that, about the relationship between creative writing and literature as a whole.

Shaw: Well, all the creative writing people tended to be anti-literature. They're better integrated now, I can say, having just been the outside member on that search committee. They seem to be much better. And the profession has changed because creative writing has been integrated institutionally, so now it's available at the undergraduate and graduate level in many, many institutions. It's been a blooming of creative writing. It's moving from a conservatory to a liberal arts base, so that you have the academic skills now compatible with writing in a way that they weren't so much at an earlier period. They don't seem to be as restless as before. All the [creative writing faculty] always talked ill of the lit board. And I, of course, was in between—that's the story of my life. I always have these split identities (laughs) and I'm listening to ill being spoken about things or people I care about, feel positively about. It's hard.

Rabkin: That's interesting, that institutionally as well intellectually, you have found yourself occupying these middle spaces.

Shaw: These slots. (laughs) Yes, or I'm sensitized to them.

I have my own degree in comparative literature, but God knows, it was never very comparative. I mostly took courses in French at Yale. I didn't take English. It was only the criticism that was somewhat international. But it's not a really comparative department. It's sort of porous to other areas. But it's more of an administrative unit. And it was open to histcon, so that added a lot of enrichment in both directions. It added extra course structure and things.²⁶

Chair of History of Consciousness

I was chair from 1984-1988. It was an interesting experience. I did it because I was such a failure at it when I chaired history of consciousness, so I had to sort of redo it.

Rabkin: In what sense, would you say?

Shaw: Well, history of consciousness didn't have faculty in that era, so it was borrowing faculty. It was close to a student-run program, a little like women's studies in the early years. It gained structure from subgroups, but that potentially factionalized it, rather than pulled it together. It attracted nonstandard students, who tended to be anti-authoritarian. And then here I was, a little self-deprecating woman, as chair, briefly. (laughs)

Rabkin: How did you become chair of histcon?

²⁶ For more on the history of UCSC's History of Consciousness Department see Cameron Vanderscoff, Interviewer and Editor, James Clifford: Tradition and Transformation at UC Santa Cruz (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2013) <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/clifford> ; Irene Reti, Interviewer and Editor, Edges and Ecotones: The Worlds of Donna Haraway at UCSC (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2007) <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/haraway> and Cameron Vanderscoff, Interviewer and Editor, "Hayden White: Frontiers of Consciousness at UCSC," (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2013) <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/hayden-white-frontiers-of-consciousness-at-ucsc>

Shaw: Oh, I was one of many loosely affiliated faculty. They were offering chairships to everybody. (laughs) I mean, not just histcon, but the whole institution was always having trouble getting itself chairs. And everybody did it too early and inappropriately.

Rabkin: What were your main responsibilities or activities as chair of histcon?

Shaw: Oh. Well, I kept it together administratively. I was drawn intellectually to it, the people who were involved in the program. I liked the students a lot too, some of them.

Rabkin: So why do you refer to it as a failure?

Shaw: Oh, because they were picking on me. Gary Lease took over, I think. They thought that I was concealing things from them, or whatever, that I was a capitalist authority or something, (laughs) they were politically paranoid, I don't know what.

Rabkin: "They," the histcon faculty?

Shaw: No, the students. Because they had these clusters and they were very outspoken. I don't remember what the specific issues of the subgroups were. Several of them were political, for one thing, which is not my strong suit. They were clustered around Jack Schaar and so forth.

Rabkin: So your stint as chair of lit felt, in part, like an opportunity to do it better—

Shaw: Yeah, to rectify that. Well, I've had experiences like that in my life. I remember flubbing my oral exam when I graduated from Swarthmore because I just—well, I sort of froze, I suppose. I remember the examiner asking me the same questions I'd answered in writing. I'd given him my answers but he wanted me to give him his. (laughs) I was just stupid about a lot of things.

Rabkin: That sounds like a setup.

Shaw: Well, that's life. But then I did very well on my doctoral orals because I was determined not to repeat that.

And this was fine. I learned a lot.

More on the Literature Board

Rabkin: As chair of literature.

Shaw: Right. The lit board was somewhat difficult because it had so many elements, and later went into receivership for a time. Marsh was the next chair. And maybe Michael Warren had done it briefly before I took the chair.²⁷

When I talk about chairs being in a relatively weak position on campus, because the power of the budget was deliberately given to the divisions rather than the departments, so it was located on the level above. But it's also probably my looking at it from the inside that makes me think that. For one thing, the way it was set up, there was very little at the center. I mean, there's staff there at the center. But in terms of faculty surround for the chair, there's not much feed-in, I

²⁷ See the forthcoming oral history with Michael Warren.—Editor.

guess is the way I would put it. And that was a period of sudden growth. I don't think that was done too well, actually, now that I think about it.

Rabkin: So, did it feel somewhat isolated, that position?

Shaw: Well, that's what I'm saying, that it was all an individual matter, in a way. I had some people that were helpful to me. I guess they were the chairs of the graduate and the undergraduate committee. One of them was Marsh and one was Julianne Burton. I would talk with them about things.

Rabkin: What were some of the issues going on in the department at the time that you had to deal with as chair?

Shaw: Well, we did a lot of recruiting. But we got given some positions from above that we hadn't asked for, which was kind of interesting. They thought we were parochial. It was Ronnie Gruhn, who was perhaps academic vice chancellor at the time, who thought we were parochial. She was right. But we were also rather centrifugal already, so I don't know if we needed more elements. She gave us a position in Russian and one in Japanese and one in Chinese, lone positions in each of these areas.

Rabkin: (whistles)

Shaw: It's also taking us out of the European, English, American configuration— Well, we also had Latin American—

Rabkin: So as a department, you were literally all over the map.

Shaw: Right. And we hired in creative writing also, made two appointments. We had six-year plans because there was beginning to be expansion on campus. Those are major efforts. The hirings. The plans. I don't know how important they are, but they are major efforts. You have to get them out of the units and hopefully you're a visionary or something. (laughs)

Rabkin: What did you find most gratifying about the chair position?

Shaw: Well, I like overview and enjoy thinking institutionally. And being chair puts you into relation with everyone, so I got to know people better through working with everybody. But there's a problem with chairs, in that there's no provision for their training. So the training is done by the secretaries or the office managers. I was just unfamiliar with the procedures. Page Stegner and Forrest Robinson wrote a letter to the top of the campus complaining about me. They were in the wrong, but I also was aware how ignorant I was. That kind of experience, which is, I guess, getting a thicker skin or something— Yes, it's in the nature of the beast, probably.

Michael [Cowan] was a totally wonderful dean to have. I met with him weekly. We had a very good working relationship. We always had plenty to talk about. It was such a large department in his division, so he set it up that way. But that was a very nice way to set it up. So it kind of compensated for my not always having an advisory center to talk things through with.

I remember Julianne Burton helping me revise something I wrote. That was just an incredible experience—talk about mentoring. She is so gifted at that! Oh! That

was one of the most excellent experiences of my life. I should have done it a few more times. (laughs)

Rabkin: Tell me more about that.

Shaw: Oh, just the way we worked through it and the things she said to me and got me to. I've been talking about people who want to correct me, because I'm too abrupt or peculiar in my choices. And she somehow got around that so that it was still me. (laughs) It was just magnificent.

Rabkin: What kind of document was it?

Shaw: Oh, it might have been the six-year plan, or something like that.

Rabkin: A self-study document.

Shaw: Yeah. That type of thing. You know, they're always asking—as soon as there's growth, they wanted to know why it should be in this area or that area, or choose between them. She's really good at editing. That's one of her real gifts, editing. She's done that as creative work, actually, putting things together that were scattered and making a whole of them. So, talk about pleasures. That was a real pleasure.

The board was fairly easy on me. I tend to be too minimally authoritarian. So I have some limitations. But it made me feel better. I felt a little more competent at the end of the experience. So it achieved my personal goals.

Well, is there anything else you want to talk about?

Final Reflections

Rabkin: Well, before we stop, I'd love to invite you to step back a little bit and talk about any reflections you have from the perspective of an emerita who's been retired for a while, about UCSC and the directions it's taking, and has taken, and might be going in the future.

Shaw: Oh. Well, I don't entirely know, first of all. I'm impressed with how it sounds in the press. I suppose that's more the sciences than anything. It's particularly fortunate our having had Lick astronomy through all these years, when it isn't even really an undergraduate structure. It's been an area of so many astonishing discoveries, one after another, going on now for decades. I'm impressed with the quality of some of the appointments, because many of these people who have been very strong faculty members, like Sandra Faber, but also Jim Clifford and Donna Haraway, came as relatively junior faculty, and have really strengthened [UCSC]. And after listening to Michael [Cowan] and reading Michael on Helene [Moglen], I am now impressed with what she did as dean, in a way, of reshaping when they tried to get linguistics out and her standing up for them and getting new appointments, and then building a very good linguistics faculty. And riding the bumps on feminist studies and how that is now just having its first graduate class this fall or next fall. And grateful for what [Chancellor Robert] Sinsheimer accomplished, ultimately. A little concerned about humanities. I think Bill Ladusaw is an excellent dean, so I have a lot of confidence in him.

With my own life, I'm sorry I wasn't more productive. It's very odd to read this piece, for instance. I've been rereading myself as part of the interview and it's really ridiculous that I didn't publish more. It's too bad because I certainly have enough thoughts. I think about what I would have had to do and so forth, you know, packing too much in.

And then being more connected to the world, also.

Rabkin: Say more about that.

Shaw: Oh, well, that's part of what publishing is all about. It's being connected to that community. I'm sure that has something to do with being a woman and even doing most of my graduate work in French, so I didn't get fully initiated into the profession. But it's been enjoyable anyway.

Rabkin: So not having published more is a regret. Are there particular things that stand out that you are most pleased with as you look back at your career at the university?

Shaw: Oh. Well, I loved some of the teaching. Even as the students shifted some, and I liked having that increased social range, we always had wonderful students. It was really just a pleasure. Especially students who really connected—you know, every now and then there's someone in this world who really connects with what you're saying. That's thrilling. And interesting then, to hear what they have to say back.

And I loved being in California. I had prepared for this interview a whole little section on climate, how I got here, coming from New England, as I do. I had a

Fulbright to the south of France, and that was where I first encountered this climate. I think it has a lot to do with my coming to California. And I've loved being here. I love New England, too, of course.

Rabkin: You have spent most of your life migrating back and forth between those climates.

Shaw: Yes. I'm rooted in both of those places.

Rabkin: And you talked a bit about that in one of our interviews. Is there anything else you'd like to say about your perspective on that?

Shaw: Oh. Well, that's the one problem with age. I can't go back forever. I'm due back this summer. My mother last went when she was ninety. But I guess it teaches you to find doubleness wherever you are, or to remember that there are other very pleasurable possibilities.

Rabkin: That has been a theme in this interview, hasn't it?

Shaw: Yes. (laughs) In my life.

Rabkin: You have continued to migrate in not only geographical ways, but intellectual ones as well.

Shaw: Yes, right.

Rabkin: Anything else, Tilly?

Shaw: No, I don't think so.

Rabkin: Well, thank you so much.

Shaw: Well, thank you.

About the Interviewer and Editor:

Sarah Rabkin taught in UC Santa Cruz writing program and environmental studies department for over twenty-five years. She holds a BA in biology from Harvard University and a graduate certificate in Science Communication from UCSC and has conducted oral histories for the Regional History Project since 2007. Her book of essays, *What I Learned at Bug Camp*, was published in 2011.