

An Oral History of

## Roy Harvey Pearce and Stanley Chodorow

On September 14, 1998

*[NOTE: INTERVIEW SEEMS TO BE TAPED OVER ANOTHER RECORDING. FADED VOICE AND A LOT OF BACKGROUND NOISE]*

1   **PEARCE:**     —since a lot of this involves especially my role vis-à-vis other departments. Not  
2   just search committees, but ad hoc reports. And ad hoc reports were confidential.

3   **CHODOROW:**   That's correct. We are not asking for that kind of detail. And where people  
4   had talked about individuals. Sometimes they had spoken sharply. Generally, this is not a  
5   confidential conversation. It would be in the library. And material which is really confidential  
6   should be kept that way. It is in your head. On the other hand, I think you can probably say  
7   something about both the successful and unsuccessful recruitment attempts without—

8   **PEARCE:**     Naming names.

9   **CHODOROW:**   Naming names. Without really violating the confidence here. The fact that you  
10  wanted to hire somebody that couldn't or—

11  **PEARCE:**     It's not good to straighten out what's the name of that lady who was the—

12  **CHODOROW:**   Anderson.

13  **PEARCE:**     —place out of history. Great talent for having two plus two, come out to be five.

14  **CHODOROW:**   Yes. I will tell you that I tried to get—

15  **PEARCE:**     —Motivation, psychologizing people, the [David] Bonner – [Keith A.] Brueckner  
16  quarrel, for examples. I would just pick a few things over the weekend and look at it again.

17  **CHODOROW:**   Well, I have to read it in its manuscript form and I tried to get Dick not to  
18  publish it, but he had committed too much to it already at that point. No, I must say that Brad  
19  and I are interested almost exclusively in the intellectual history. Which is a very—it seems to  
20  me a very interesting—

21 **PEARCE:** Oh, that's very interesting for my department especially. It's an interesting thing,  
22 but that involves—I can never forget sitting when I was being talked to by a group of scientists.  
23 [James] Arnold—Brueckner was—came back and forth. But Arnold, Kamen, Dave Bonner,  
24 Caseria [?], Martin Kamen, other guys. Telling him very clearly that right now things look good  
25 finding FTEs for people in the humanities, but that it wasn't going to last. Eventually, the  
26 scientists would start to use Guggenheim [Fellowship] money and such. Using university  
27 research money. At the outset, most of the research funds were given to the humanities and  
28 social science. The scientists just didn't need them. And I got a solemn pledge that right down  
29 the line there wouldn't exist—this is bad chronology. But that there wouldn't exist a better  
30 parameter, for example. And of course, it's just not so. The sympathy on the campus might  
31 sense for the humanities—not so much for the arts. The arts appear to be a kind of exotic sport  
32 that people are willing to go after it. But the solid humanities—history, literature, philosophy—  
33 except of but the philosophy of mind because of cognitive science. These things are just not first  
34 order of priority. And I could give you a most recent example I heard. I keep being informed  
35 about recent departmental developments and you know, the department is now discovering that  
36 it has done—I think brilliantly—an African-American literature, Mexican-American, Chicano  
37 literature. Beginning in Asian-American literature. The department is trying to put some  
38 emphasis in recruiting people who could fill those areas up, aside from the foundational stuff.  
39 And so the department—were an East Asian scholar was thinking of Korean-American and  
40 indeed he had somebody in mind. One of our own Ph.D.'s who had a Ph.D. in English. Now  
41 teaches in Korea. Published articles on Wallace Stevens and [*inaudible*]. Anyhow, that's not the  
42 issue. But the administration comes after—what's the committee called now?

43 **CHODOROW:** The Program Review Committee?

44 **PEARCE:** Program Review Committee. Asked the department to recruit a Buddhist. Yeah.  
45 Because it's anxious, you see, to fill out religious studies. And the logical place for a Buddhist  
46 would be anthropology because of Mel [Melvin] Spiro's work and comparative religion done in  
47 anthropology. But just a notion. Pay no attention to what the department needs are. Oh well,  
48 these times it's the engineers who are gobbling up everything.

49 **CHODOROW:** Let's go back and talk about the good old days. How was it that you were  
50 recruited here in the first place?

51 **PEARCE:** I've heard mix stories about that, as I was telling Brad. Andy [Andrew] Wright had  
52 a seventieth birthday luncheon for me. John [Jonathan] Singer was there, Herbert York, Roger  
53 Revelle, Leonard Newmark—and they got talking about how I—who recruited me. And it got be  
54 a bust between York and Singer. Singer maintaining, he called Charles Feidelson at Yale,  
55 whom I never knew personally [*inaudible*]. Herb York maintaining he'd gone to Berkeley to find  
56 out—he probably—both places were probably right. But there was a little intention between—all  
57 I know is that I had a phone call from York asking if I would be interesting in wanting to come by  
58 and see him. Came by and I suggested that he talked to Andy Wright, but meantime, apparently  
59 they'd called Gordon Riggs [?] who told them about Andy Wright. It was well-known that people  
60 were people ready to leave Ohio State. This is—if you think that Governor Reagan was rough  
61 on cap issues, you should have seen the beautifully eponymous man Novice G. Fawcett, the  
62 president of OSU [Ohio State University] who locked the doors on, left the speakers, and so on  
63 and so forth.

64 And it was a big vote of confidence/non-confidence, about the year I was in France. That would  
65 have been '62, '63. And anyhow, that talk plus names—Herb came to see it. Asked what I would  
66 dream of as the department of English. And I told him dreams of the department of English—I  
67 dreamed of the department of literature. I Told him a little about my dreams. He asked me to  
68 write out what I would propose. And as I was saying to Brad, there was a document some place.  
69 In those days, I typed my own letters and used carbons. And I sent a letter off to Herb—kept my  
70 own carbon which has disappeared. Which I thought I had put it in the department of literature—  
71 of files, but they could never find it. If such a document exists. But it was pretty explicit. Then I  
72 was invited out. Spent couple days. One important morning, sitting around the people I named  
73 and spent some time with Herb [Herbert York], a little time with Keith [Brueckner]. Went up to  
74 Los Angeles to see my mother-in-law. And about a month later, here's Keith Brueckner saying,  
75 "You've got a deal." And I remember Marie pulled out one of my mother's fruitcakes and Keith  
76 with an enormous appetite ate a half of it. So anyhow, but he—anytime I suggested to them  
77 Sigurd Burckhardt—it was because Sigurd was in German and also a great [*inaudible*] scholar.

78 **CHODOROW:** Where was he then?

79 **PEARCE:** He was at Ohio State. This part of the so-called Ohio State map. I suggested  
80 that—since I suggested a separate department of linguistics charged with teaching the modern  
81 language, the classical language to be taught undergraduate. Modern language is used orally  
82 compared to Latin, Arabic, or whatever. I suggested Leonard Newmark who had been in Ohio

83 State a few years before. It was part of a blow up who had gone to Indiana. Ohio State English  
84 department was crippled by this thing that lost about six people. All except for [*inaudible*] who  
85 stayed. Claude Simpson, I the Americanist, Morton Luther [?] went to Harvard—he probably  
86 would have gone anyways. Sigurd was leaving German—other people. It was—English  
87 department never recovered. And the great lesson to be done negatively—in virtually one  
88 generation you could wipe out the department.

89 **CHODOROW:** When had—you must have been thinking about a building of a single  
90 department of literature before this whole thing took place. When did that idea start to develop?

91 **PEARCE:** Well, I think it started to develop—thinking I was doing in the middle of the 50s, I  
92 was on a panel on the hundredth anniversary or the seventy-fifth anniversary of OSU. A panel  
93 chaired by a man named Wells Bouchet [?], who died last year, who was head of the  
94 educational research bureau or something like that. Went on to be dean of research at  
95 Columbia Teachers College. And in the course of this panel which recruited people from various  
96 departments and the dean of graduate studies, I began talking about crucial notion of the  
97 disciplines. That I was—we were working towards which was defining education and [*inaudible*]  
98 as a discipline. Indeed, I got tied up in summer meetings of future educational principle  
99 standards of the NEA. Gave a keynote address called Education and Discipline. Wrote a report  
100 the second year and so forth. But that notion—literature as a discipline. Then I published what  
101 was turned out to be a crucial article in my career, an article called "Historicism Once More"  
102 which I tried to publish in PMLA [Publications of the Modern Language Association]. It was  
103 turned down nastily by René Wellek. And it turns out later I learned that Harry Rulin [?] tried to  
104 publish it in comparative literature. It was the nastiest bit of rejection I ever got in my life.

105 Then on a hunch, I sent it to Mr. Ransom who I got to know. John Crowe Ransom at the *Kenyon*  
106 *Review*. Of all places those people were so [*inaudible*] new criticism. He published it. And  
107 actually, Rulin replied to it. And it got anthologized and got around. And it embodied the idea of  
108 disciplines of the historical dimensions of literary study since it's a historical dimension of all  
109 humanistic study. I one time said to Herb or Keith or somebody, "Why don't we just have the  
110 department of history, nothing else." Because that's—we all are—in one way or another we all  
111 are historians. And the whole thrust of my work got into American poetry. My other work—my  
112 last collection was called, *Gesta Humanorum: Studies in the Historicist Mode*. And my work  
113 brought the word historicism into literary vocabulary. This was 1954. There never was a

114 movement called new historicism in my pattern. Indeed, my students—my Ph.Ds.' were not  
115 really an imitation of me in any kind of way.

116 They just believed in the historic dimension. In fact I used that ugly word "historic" because  
117 "historical" wasn't strong enough. Kept rebutting these ideas. The introduction to my *Gesta*  
118 *Humanorum* book which was published in what '88. The postscripts to my savagism and  
119 civilization book which was republished by the press—the UC press in '88. I think I translated in  
120 German which was a full five thousand copies in German translation. But the little preface to my  
121 *Gesta Humanorum* would have been my last attempt to bring these ideas of the historicity—  
122 especially with regards to literary studies to bring these ideas together. I didn't expect when I  
123 founded the department of literature that people would be new historicist in my rather  
124 specialized sense. Right now, I don't think I'll ever finish it. I'm working on a piece called  
125 "Literature Ideology and Redemption." Because I believe through historical studies, human  
126 beings at the humanistic level become redeemed. I just believe that. And that's the underlying  
127 theme of my *Savagism and Civilization* which goes back to 1954 in its first version.

128 And my continuity [*The Continuity of American Poetry*] and a collection of essays called  
129 *Historicism Once More* which I dedicated to all the scientists who had proven [*inaudible*]. And at  
130 last, *Gesta Humanorum*. So I suspect that—as I started to say, I didn't expect the people  
131 coming would subscribe to my notions. [Sigurd] Burkhart, for example, was the purist new critic  
132 I've ever known. Wrote a theory called [*in German*]. And Andy is a conventional literary  
133 historian, saved by the fact that he has impeccable taste. As we began to recruit people, I  
134 recruited people who were doing cutting edge work in their own discipline. A lot of them tied to  
135 Ohio State. Carlos Blanco [Aguinaga] had left Ohio State. Besides [*inaudible*] Hopkins [?], I  
136 recruited Carlos. Bernhard Blume has been professor of German at Ohio State while I was  
137 there, then he went to move on to be [*inaudible*] professor at Harvard. And according to our  
138 pattern, our plan, we persuaded him to leave Harvard six years early and finish his time out with  
139 us. We recruited younger people—Jack Behar who never came through for all sorts of personal  
140 reasons.

141 **CHODOROW:** Did Robert Elliot come—

142 **PEARCE:** Robert Elliot came the second year.

143 **CHODOROW:** So the first year it was you and Andy?

144 **PEARCE:** I had Andy, Sigurd, and Leonard Newmark.

145 **CHODOROW:** And Leonard has been in the English department at Richmond?

146 **PEARCE:** At Ohio State. He was in linguistics for one year at Indiana when he got his Ph.D.  
147 But part of my master plan in the document, was that there would be a separate department of  
148 linguistics. But as I said, the early recruiting wanted people at the cutting edge. The first group in  
149 French, Michel Benamou, Fred Jameson, then William Marin [?]. Incidentally, one of the dumb  
150 things that actually Scott Anderson says, these people all left us this year—that's the effect of  
151 the group—because they felt that UCSD is a science university. They left. Michel Benamou was  
152 offered—died at 49—the directorship of the Center for 21st Century Studies at Milwaukee.  
153 Kathy [Kathleen] Woodward, my student, went along with him and now is the director. Jameson  
154 had always dreamed of going back to Yale. To home. But that proved to be a mess because he  
155 went in French and the comp lit people, then all post-structuralists demanded Phyllis Miller,  
156 Harold Bloom—who else? Geoffrey Hartman—simply wouldn't let him in.

157 So he went to Santa Cruz and then now is at Duke where he has his own nest. And then Marin  
158 [?], like any Frenchman was called—what he was called [*in French*]. He went. We had the same  
159 problem, so subsequently with people in French. Michelle [*inaudible*] was called [*inaudible*].  
160 Jean-Luc [*inaudible*] [?] as called to be director of some institute of philosophy. And went back  
161 to Brown [University]. Although he always maintained that he promised to stay here only three  
162 years. Hoping that the department is at Marseilles [?] now, now the senior person who is  
163 French, but who is—he's from Copenhagen. He says he will never—he doesn't want to go back  
164 to France. But anyhow, this crazy notion of this woman who had no understanding of the  
165 structure of the university. But these people were all recruited. None of them were neo-  
166 historicists in my sense, even in their research. But I would say that as the profession has  
167 developed, there's a new form of neo-historicism. Crucially different from mine. Mine assumes a  
168 human agent, and new forms of historicisms aren't interested in agency. They are interested in  
169 [*inaudible*] and Foucault's notion of power. And Louis Blanco [?], who were wrote the article on  
170 the new historicism. It was called the—neo-historicism—it was called the MLA surveyor [?].

171 **CHODOROW:** Yeah. The redrawing boundaries from—very good piece of work.

172 **PEARCE:** But that—the two youngest people, I don't know. I think they tend to be what  
173 they're called, fashionably now, constructivists. The notion being that literary documents are  
174 social construction and they're not interested in human agencies. A notion like redemption,

175 through historical understanding—which is what I believe in—allows me to be comfortable. Just  
176 is foreign to their beliefs. Except for—I think some of the people [*inaudible*] I understand were in  
177 African American literature. And of course, our great protégée was Francis [Smith] Foster, who  
178 was combined Ph.D. We sent her to San Diego State, we brought her back, she blossomed and  
179 then for personal reasons, primarily, she went to Emory—after a difficult divorce. And now is  
180 endowed chair and is along with Henry Louis Gates and a few others. Very important people in  
181 African American studies.

182 **WESTBROOK:** So in the late fifties, you were trying to put together this idea [*inaudible*]. I'm  
183 sure you said—

184 **PEARCE:** Let me say that I don't think I ever thought of the united literature department until  
185 I was asked "would you come to—"

186 **CHODOROW:** This was the opportunity into which those ideas fit.

187 **PEARCE:** It was the spark. Yeah.

188 **CHODOROW:** What about the notion of the department that you were going to recruit people  
189 in various fields. So you ask a classes in German, in French, in Italian, in English, and so on.  
190 Into this comes eventually, we've got writers who are fundamentally artists. How did that  
191 happen?

192 **PEARCE:** I didn't plan on any program [*inaudible*]. Bob Elliot who succeeded me as chair,  
193 recruited Sherley Williams but not as a writer. Well, as a poet, but not the notion of having a  
194 writing program. But this—simultaneously emerged the notion of recruiting writers as writers.  
195 And recruiting writers as composition teachers. Two different categories. I don't know how the  
196 letters worked out, but in a sense—what's his name?

197 **CHODOROW:** Cooper.

198 **PEARCE:** Coop [*inaudible*] and Barbara Thompson [?] hasn't really come to. Although  
199 Linda Brodkey whose work I only know about, is apparently a very powerful figure in Warren  
200 College writing. But we recruited—this is the thing, Nicole Takovich [?] using her married name.  
201 She's still married, but uses her maiden name for work. We recruited her primary to run Eleanor  
202 Roosevelt College writing. And she was also an American. I said, you know, pretty good. You've  
203 got this—I thought her dissertation was good enough to send to the press to be reviewed as a

204 possible book and they were enthusiastic. Then she sat down. Wrote a totally different kind  
205 book, which I don't think is very good. And then she said—this is an interesting problem  
206 [*inaudible*]. She apparently unilaterally said, "I'm finished writing. I'm going to go back to the  
207 department." Even though I think you could have been a case out in terms of recruiting letters,  
208 that she had a commitment. Rosaura Sánchez didn't argue with her. And I now think they are  
209 now running with a lecturer or something.

210 **CHODOROW:** Yes. I think with—exactly with a lecturer.

211 **PEARCE:** But the writing thing, we just recruited—let's see, who came next?

212 **CHODOROW:** Was it [Michael] Davidson? Who might have come as a—

213 **PEARCE:** No, no, Michael—we recruited Michael—that was interesting history. I had, you  
214 know, the archives of poetry. This happened because one day because Mel [Melvin] Voigt in the  
215 Stacks building B—is what it's called—said, "What would you do if you were starting a library?"  
216 And I said I would do what we've got in the sciences, be the cutting edge. So I suggested that  
217 we start the archive. And they raised a little money, used Kathy Woodward as a teaching  
218 assistant. Then I heard about Michael who was teaching half time, attending the same. I asked  
219 him to see me. I was dean then. I had a little power, little money. I asked him to come and he  
220 came. So we hired half-time in the library and half-time as curator funded by the dean of the  
221 Office of Graduate Studies. Half-time in the department. And gradually, his own poetry is very  
222 powerful. And he's one of the twenty-five or so poets that remain in the country, I think. But  
223 meantime, he was writing. He's a very powerful person. Wrote the book on the San Francisco  
224 Renaissance, a more recent book. He'd just finished another book. And writes poetry at the  
225 same time. But I think the first writer per say, we recruited a permanent position assuming that  
226 Sherley was going to be involved was Fanny Hoff [?].

227 **CHODOROW:** I was wondering about whether Fanny was going to be next.

228 **PEARCE:** She was a—there was a—I remember a big quarrel in the department meeting  
229 over Fanny versus somebody else. I can't remember who somebody else was. And then we  
230 recruited, partly African-American literature, partly in poetry, which is true. Which has been a  
231 powerful figure. And in the community, particularly the stuff at the La Jolla Museum. And then  
232 they decided that having a writing major that are unlike most writing majors in the country. One  
233 that would have rigorous literary requirement, a second language requirement—which the



234 writing majors very often complain about because they just want to be writers. But it's the  
235 second most popular major in the department. And now the department is putting—hasn't done  
236 an MFA, which I think is right, but letting writing be one of the options for exam [?].

237 That has just begun, I don't know how it's working out. I have suggested, as a matter of fact,  
238 that the new Ph.D., which was my invention—I invented the undergraduate major, I invented the  
239 undergraduate honors program, I invented the new Ph.D. That I thought about 1960. I had to  
240 bide my time until the department was ready for it. I thought about that program—which was  
241 comparative. You have to do work in two literatures [*inaudible*] work in theory. I had to prepare  
242 two short papers and one long papers for the qualifying. I had suggested to the department that  
243 they allowed one of the short papers to be a piece of creative writing. Because so many young  
244 Ph.D.'s now are also trying to be writers. I don't know what the department has done about that.  
245 I'm only in touch directly with [*inaudible*]. William Tay is my spyglass for the department. Of  
246 course, Rosaura's still suspicious of me. Just no contact whatsoever. But I figured it would be  
247 better with Michael being in effect, co-chair. He was called vice-chair—

248 **CHODOROW:** What—could you talk a little about the foundations about the Revelle  
249 curriculum? In what way literature was—

250 **PEARCE:** Yeah. The Revelle curriculum. First place, it assumed something like the  
251 humanities sequence that I—its main inventor was Sigurd Burckhardt. The reason and intention  
252 was that—we tried it for a year and it seemed like didn't work—was that there would be a  
253 different faculty lecturer each week. People in the humanities, philosophy, and literature, and  
254 eventually history would in a way volunteer their services. It's so interesting how difficult to get  
255 people to teach cooperatively—or they don't get enough pay. Plus the using TAs [teaching  
256 assistants] and writers. That was part of the original scheme. The idea was that there would be  
257 different kinds of writing programs in the other colleges as there are. One thing we didn't plan  
258 on—we planned on TAs and one of the difficulties with Steve [Stephen] Cox, who's if I may say  
259 so power mad—gradually sneaked in lecturers which took away spots from TAs. And Chris  
260 [Christine] Norris and—what's her name? The world championship —

261 **WESTBROOK:** Jordan.

262 **CHODOROW:** That's Eve Jordan. She holds swimming records.

263 **PEARCE:** But that we didn't plan on. Although we did plan on using TAs not just from  
264 literature, but from history. And of course, didn't—in Eleanor Roosevelt College, suddenly  
265 anthropology TAs find themselves in principal writing program. And you should hear the bitching  
266 from Roy D'Andrade and other people at anthropology making these TAs work so hard.  
267 Compare to sciences where you worked—well my son was here for a year—fifteen to eighteen  
268 hours a week as a RA [residential assistant], TA. But that was—it was like the plan for teaching  
269 languages. And you'd Support students, native speakers with a little training, for many  
270 departments.

271 **CHODOROW:** What—do you want to say something?

272 **WESTBROOK:** It seemed to me that Leonard Newmark suggested to you in passing that the  
273 way that they set up [*inaudible*] was quite innovative at the time. Unlike any other university.  
274 Was that the [*inaudible*]?

275 **PEARCE:** That was absolutely innovative.

276 **WESTBROOK:** Could you say more about that, as far as—

277 **PEARCE:** Well, one of the—Leonard who has a very strong feeling about Revelle College—  
278 I'm sure they're bitter about what's happened to Revelle College. Leonard felt that when you  
279 learn a language, there are special problems if you're post-adolescent. You have to develop  
280 techniques. One of the ways you would do that would be to teach students a little about the  
281 major language. And so they were—and still are—lecturers on beginning linguistics tied to the  
282 language teaching. Literature took over the teaching of Greek and Latin. Actually, with a little bit  
283 of help from philosophy, I think. George [Georgios H.] Anagnostopoulos and Ed [Edward] Lee  
284 helped out a little bit.

285 **CHODOROW:** And also you have for history.

286 **PEARCE:** Yeah. That's right. AI and—

287 **CHODOROW:** Allen Matmorsen [?] has taught Greek.

288 **PEARCE:** Yeah. That was planned, too. That the administrative center would be in  
289 literature. And we would—classical languages, we recruited Dick [Richard] Freeman. I  
290 remember Claudia [?] was here then. Claudia Dien [?]. And we recruited Freeman as a

291 classicist. Hebrew being a classical language. And we had Jim [James] Monroe for a year. For  
292 two years. Although he was Hispano-Arabic [?], he did teach some beginning Arabic. But then  
293 he was summoned to Berkeley in Comp Lit and Mid-Eastern studies where he strives. That's  
294 [inaudible] library stories. We were buying libraries all over the place. And we bought—poor  
295 Jim—the library of a great Italian Arabist Levi Della Vida. In fact, Mel Voigt says there's a  
296 standard journal with the library—a file which the library already had. So Mel just gave the  
297 journal to Jim. But I remember a few years ago that was—it was—I don't know if Penny was still  
298 in the library and when it was. George Sotte without consulting anybody gave the whole Levi  
299 Della Vida collection to UCLA [University of California, Los Angeles]. And I had learned about  
300 that through a colleague, Father Burns [?], the epistimist—medieval epistimist who was on the  
301 first or second term, the press committee [inaudible] crawling over the fact that UCLA was  
302 selling off the duplicates of Levi Della Vida for a dollar a volume. But I had learned this and I  
303 went to—I don't know if it was Penny or [inaudible] quite angry. Because here we had Michael  
304 Meeker and the hopes of developing Mid-East studies somehow. And I told Michael about this  
305 and he goes [inaudible] "well, the Levi Della Vida collection contained a lot of standard  
306 reference books." I don't think—I hope that's not going to [inaudible] confrontations with the  
307 [inaudible].

308 **CHODOROW:** Let's talk a little about the other people who were being recruited. For  
309 example, do you know anything about the recruitment of Baraclough?

310 **PEARCE:** No. That was a great mystery to me. So far as I know, the first historian tied on  
311 with Gabe [Gabriel] Jackson. And that was—I was involved in that because Mayor Brookoff [?]  
312 managed to get into the personal press of my enemy. Called me one time and then wrote me.  
313 There's this very hot young and hispanist at Knox College. He's writing this great book we're  
314 going to publish. But never published the articles—just sitting here doing his work. And so we  
315 actually asked him to visit. I remember [inaudible] he delayed the visit because he was  
316 performing Laertes teaching Hamlet at Knox College. Came out with a special beard. But  
317 beyond that, his history remained a kind of mystery to me. One of the mysteries was that for  
318 whatever reason John Galbraith didn't throw himself into recruiting the history department. And I  
319 don't know. Baraclough—I mean who just scandals around him—showed up. One time, John  
320 and I went to Chicago—I was going on to New York—to talk to, what's his name? He was at  
321 Northwestern [University] and now he's your adjunct professor in world history.

322 **CHODOROW:** In world history, who would that be?

323 **PEARCE:** Adjunct professor.

324 **CHODOROW:** Oh! Lepin Saprianas [?].

325 **PEARCE:** Saprianas [?]. Yeah. We went to see Lepin Saprianas [?]. We had dinner with  
326 him and his wife. And I remember she said they just couldn't come here because she had  
327 reactionary relatives in La Jolla. She didn't want to be close to them. But that was the only time  
328 I'm aware of John being aggressive in the recruitment of history. Baraclough, he just showed  
329 up. I don't know who did it.

330 **CHODOROW:** What about Dick [Richard H.] Popkin? Was he here by the time you got here?

331 **PEARCE:** Yeah, we both the same year. I am the senior humanistic at UCSD by one month  
332 since the Regents approved my appointment earlier than his. But he had his idea of a  
333 historically ordered history—philosophy department.

334 **CHODOROW:** Which would suit you very well.

335 **PEARCE:** Yeah. And he recruited Av [Avrum] Stroll was to represent modern philosophy.

336 **CHODOROW:** Except he was trained in classics and—

337 **PEARCE:** Yeah. And there was a young classicist who went back to—

338 **CHODOROW:** [Jason L.] Saunders?

339 **PEARCE:** Yeah. Who was pretty awful.

340 **CHODOROW:** He went to New York, I think.

341 **PEARCE:** He went to New York? Who else [*inaudible*].

342 **CHODOROW:** Well we had Stan—

343 **PEARCE:** Stanley Moore! Stanley Moore came as the Marxist. He was the [*inaudible*]. And  
344 Dick was in seventeenth-century. They were training David Norton to finish his degree, then he  
345 went away. He did eighteenth-century, Scottish commentary and such. But that idea gradually  
346 faded when Dick left, across the department. Although, Ed Lee [*inaudible*]. Ed [*inaudible*] is now  
347 chair.

348 **CHODOROW:** This is chair again.

349 **PEARCE:** You see, they made him a full professor finally.

350 **CHODOROW:** Yes, well he finished his book. A very, very good book. What about some of  
351 the other people who were recruited [*inaudible*]? The humanities departments you just named,  
352 essentially with yourself and with Dick Popkin and somehow actually gave Jackson [*inaudible*]  
353 because he was the state member of the group. But then I was here. I came in '68. And I was  
354 aware of the recruitment of the political science founders there. But you must have had  
355 something to do with the other social sciences—Joe [Joseph] Gusfield, Mel [Melford E.] Spiro—

356 **PEARCE:** Well, yeah. I was—we began with psychology. And I was part of the search and I  
357 guess the ad hoc committee for George Mandler. It was Mandler who led in the recruitment of  
358 Mel Spiro, who then built his own—best of all anthropology department in the country.  
359 [*inaudible*] Sociology, I don't know. I remember being on ad hoc committee for sociology after  
360 Gusfield was recruited. I think maybe Mandler was involved in recruiting Gusfield.

361 **CHODOROW:** Could you talk also about the Leonard's breaking off and founding of  
362 linguistics? Because he came in your department to start with.

363 **PEARCE:** Yeah. Just for one year. By agreement.

364 **CHODOROW:** By agreement.

365 **PEARCE:** By agreement. Yes.

366 **CHODOROW:** And had he a conception that he brought with him aside from the language  
367 teaching function—what else?

368 **PEARCE:** The language teaching function which he considered to be a service job, which  
369 he would run—be run by one person of the department. He wanted to build the department  
370 especially of linguistic theory. That Ed [Edward] Klima—he had a superb group at one time.  
371 Klima retired—before retirement, Klima retired. The department was not as strong as it once  
372 was.

373 **CHODOROW:** Brad you have other—

374 **WESTBROOK:** I actually have questions about the establishment of the department  
375 [*inaudible*]. Once you came here there was a [*inaudible*] historicism—

**[END OF PART ONE, BEGIN PART TWO]**

376 **WESTBROOK:** So, I mean it was quite possible—certainly I think [*inaudible*] graduate student  
377 to get a Ph.D. and not have to have a command of the history of any particular literature.

378 **PEARCE:** Well, actually, that was part of our notion, too. Although the first mode of getting  
379 a Ph.D. was through qualifying examinations which were in part traditional. Covering areas of so  
380 forth and so forth. But we were always unhappy with that. And actually, Fred [Fredric] Jameson,  
381 who came up with the idea of dropping the qualifying exam as such and requiring papers.  
382 Qualifying papers on which a student will do exam. That's still so in the department. The student  
383 is required to work up a bibliography in the area of a qualifying paper which is in the long run  
384 which points towards the dissertation. And to be responsible for the basic texts surrounding the  
385 dissertation. But still the emphasis was on the paper.

386 **WESTBROOK:** Was there ever a core reading [*inaudible*]? [*crosstalk*] Because I don't think  
387 there was. Why would that be something to have [*inaudible*]?

388 **PEARCE:** No, I don't think there was. Because we were so small, we thought that the  
389 chairman of the Ph.D. committee plus the committee could advise the student informally. I  
390 remember the most brilliant Ph.D. exam we had early on was taken by a guy who calls himself a  
391 free-lance writer now. Just never managed to—he's one of our three—I was going through a  
392 list—three Ph.D.'s don't have regular jobs. David Clayton [?] and we discovered one part of his  
393 oral, we hadn't read much Old English literature. So we said, "Come back and we'll re-examine  
394 you again in a couple of weeks." Well he read the whole body of all of the Old English literature  
395 only in a couple weeks. He's extraordinary brilliant guy. Got into a job in German. In Frankfurt,  
396 they kept for two years longer than his two-year term lease. Never [*inaudible*] job in the first  
397 place.

398 **CHODOROW:** What did you imagine to be the size of the department when you started?  
399 When you projected size and scope, how did you think about that?

400 **PEARCE:** Well, I suppose we imagined a department about half the size of collection of  
401 separate departments of literature around the country. And one of the things that when I was a

402 member of the department's executive committee, not long after I was chair—you looked at—  
403 you add the total number of people in literature in Irvine from the various departments. And  
404 UCSD was one-third that total number. Whereas the district department was pretty much close  
405 to what Irvine was. The department has been punished. First place, it saves the university a  
406 great deal of money in administrative costs. And yet, unlike three or four or five separate  
407 departments, it doesn't have that much representation in an academic setting, circle. And yet, I  
408 was promised on a stack of Bibles by the scientist who recruited me, that this would always be  
409 taken in account. And that the department would never suffer from the fact that its infrastructure  
410 was smaller than that of all the departments of Irvine, so forth. It's bitter irony.

411 **CHODOROW:** What about the changes that have taken place? I think, if you care to say that  
412 in the 60s projecting what the intellectual structure in the department [*inaudible*]. And had you  
413 thought about the French literature and the German literature, English literature, so on. But you  
414 didn't think about very much was colonial literatures and Chicano literature and African-  
415 American literature.

416 **PEARCE:** We thought about Chicano literature.

417 **CHODOROW:** Did you? Even that early?

418 **PEARCE:** Yeah. In the 60s. Yeah. That was one of our—but we didn't think about African-  
419 American—

420 **CHODOROW:** But now you have North African—you have franco [*francophone*] for North  
421 Africa and so forth.

422 **PEARCE:** Well, but we have of one of our people in French is in North Africa. In franco [?]

423 **CHODOROW:** In francophone, North Africa. What that does—and this is what, in a way, the  
424 thrust of the question—and has done in history as well—is that the traditional structures of these  
425 fields have been in a sense exploding. They're much broader. So there are fewer people in any  
426 given thing. In history, for example, the addition people in East Asia used to be one. They  
427 usually have a Chinese expert. Now there may be three or four in the department the size of  
428 UCSD anywhere. Likewise, you might have had one person interested in African-American  
429 history, now you may have two. And you'll have two Chicano history types. And so, the  
430 extinction of the number of fields and sub-fields of it changes the complexion of the department  
431 even though the size of the department remains the same.

432 **PEARCE:** Well, that's a point toward what I said earlier that that's why the department  
433 presently is interested in African-American, Mexican-American, Asian-American. And it just  
434 recruiting in that direction. It means that although the department would like one comparative to  
435 be Medieval. We thought we had such a version—we thought we had such a version in David  
436 Crowne. But David never came through. I actually had personally arranged and they had  
437 accepted to publish his big book. And they wanted all—all they wanted was to do introduction.  
438 The *[inaudible]* got a him whole year off for it to *[inaudible]*. All I did was sail his goddamn boat.  
439 It never came through. That's *[inaudible]*—it's the people who don't come through that break  
440 your heart. And you could—we know why Tom *[inaudible]* with his health hasn't come through.  
441 David, I could never understand. Jack Behar and his wife had acute diabetes, was blind—Oh,  
442 god it was awful. You could always understand that. But still, Frank Randall [?] I just couldn't  
443 understand. And in a small department, you depend upon such people. That's why, say, a small  
444 department of English, like the one at Hopkins which hires only at the senior level. Lower the bill  
445 and it's just because they never had. And they pushed up to the ranks. And if as in UCSD, they  
446 have to hire at the junior level. And I think one thing that's happened at UCSD—and I think it's a  
447 good thing—is it's harder to get tenure. I think the department of literature was very soft in  
448 letting people get tenure simply because their dissertation *[inaudible]* publisher is the worst part.  
449 That was part of the mood of the sixties. It's no longer.

450 **CHODOROW:** No. Not while I was doing it. *[laughter]*

451 **WESTBROOK:** *[inaudible]* establish the department *[inaudible]*. When that happened, you  
452 were *[inaudible]*. It has always kind of astonished me that *[inaudible]*

453 **PEARCE:** Well, that was one of the things that was part of—

454 **WESTBROOK:** *[inaudible]* Was that controversial at all?

455 **PEARCE:** Not among the students. I think it's a mistake. In fact, I had—in part, this was to  
456 be made up now for the new Ph.D. program which has an introductory required sequence,  
457 which as I envisioned it—had its first quarter primarily in textbook studies. Even though the  
458 department has not textual scholar, nonetheless, when you're trying to teach students—and  
459 they would have a section on contemporary critical theory and then the whole thing about  
460 literature and cultural. The first section I called my draft that the department adopted, was text  
461 and textuality. And even there's more textual scholars, nonetheless, I thought if you brought Bob  
462 [Robert] Hirst down from—this is the editor of the Mark Twain stuff—down from Berkeley for a



463 couple of sessions, you could learn so—it's just a better learning how to understand what's  
464 going go. In fact, I could—even though I'm not a textual scholar, I've learned enough of a textual  
465 study that I did the historical side of the author—which is finished. The first of these editions to  
466 be complete. Last year was [*inaudible*].

467 But I could have done what I have done when the Friends of the [UCSD] Library was much  
468 more active than it is now. There were, you know, every other month an evening meeting. And I  
469 went to the lectures on the corny title, “how to tell wrong from right”—on textual scholarship. You  
470 could do this. I have long ago—we've talked about a possible Korean-American emphasis.  
471 We've talked about Lee Young Khan [?], our own Ph.D. Teachers in Korea. He's got the usual  
472 training in Korean literature. The state's view and modern American literature. But, hell, I think  
473 anybody can work up anything, I have to say. When I went to Berkeley to teach, after my year at  
474 Ohio State, I was told to teach a course in early American literature. I had had no such course.  
475 My dissertation had to be—the colonial period, but that had nothing to do with literature. I was  
476 told to teach a course in modern American literature. I had no—In fact, I had to work in  
477 American literature as an undergraduate and one course as a graduate student. And yet I  
478 worked these things out. Because you sit up all night—it's worse the second time around, but  
479 it's possible. And I always thought that guy Lee Young Khan [?—he taught Korean-American  
480 literature initially, but could also work up the tradition Korean stuff.

481 **CHODOROW:** Do you have any other—anything you want to say? This has been  
482 fascinating.

483 **PEARCE:** I could tell you one amusing story. Back in the end of the department, I got an  
484 emergency call from the Academic Senate [*inaudible*]. They were recruiting the chairman of  
485 surgery. And they were having difficulty because one member of the ad hoc committee from  
486 San Francisco was being stubborn about this. And Kathleen Downes [?] talked to me and  
487 wanted me to be the chairman of the committee. I said, "My God!"

488 **CHODOROW:** This was the ad hoc committee?

489 **PEARCE:** This is the ad hoc committee. You could write. You've got to write a report which  
490 would pull the San Francisco guy in but still be honest. And I did, then he agreed. [*laughter*]  
491 [*inaudible*] some simple scientific jargon. So then we got Marsha Orloff.

492 **CHODOROW:** The power of the written word. John Kent Calvert who said that his entire  
493 career was based on the fact that he could write. In fact, he's—one thing he said that he's—it's  
494 something he's passed on to his own members which was not always taken very seriously: "It  
495 never manage what's decided as long as you get to write it". [*laughter*]

496 **PEARCE:** Well that's how it works out. [*crosstalk*]

497 **CHODOROW:** And that's exactly what that ad hoc committee was about. Anyway, this was  
498 terrific. And this is a series. And there are archives and I hope that whatever papers you have  
499 that relate to early history of the campus would come here to the archives.

500 **PEARCE:** All my stuff—in fact, I'm having to vacate my office over the next academic year.  
501 The department has run out of space, so—I got a position. If you're an emeritus, you get five  
502 years. But if you were passed the five years, as I am, you're given an extra year. Although I was  
503 going to have Brad come my office and look at my file in my office. I'm going away until  
504 Christmas vacation. I can't take myself to it, but those are the papers which have to do with the  
505 department. At home, I have all my own manuscripts and correspondence with my own Ph.D.'s.  
506 There are a lot of AA [?] there. There is a lot of hot stuff in the file in the office. An account of the  
507 celebrated Ron [Ronald S.] Berman-Pearce quarrel, for example. The account about the time  
508 Seville [?] shook her [*inaudible*] little kids to the department—the Marxist department. The guy  
509 who forces [*inaudible*]. A kind of [*inaudible*] when surely [*inaudible*]. That's all in my office.

510 **CHODOROW:** It is one of the ironies of modern American academic life that a field like  
511 literary studies, which are typically not taken very seriously in the university, are in the center of  
512 most public commentary. And is in fact extremely controversial and the center of a lot of  
513 people's attention—we're not on the campus, we're not in the department. The typical response  
514 is they didn't teach Shakespeare that way when I was a student. They didn't teach biology that  
515 way when I was a student, of course, but that's a different matter.

516 **PEARCE:** No. The other thing I think that people understand about the humanities in  
517 general is that the humanist is the agent for his own society coming to grips with text of facts, or  
518 whatever. And in that perspective humanities change—necessarily change every so often and  
519 of course they don't teach Shakespeare that way. Of course they don't teach Hawthorne, or  
520 Melville, or Wallace Stevens the way I thought. Doesn't bother me whatsoever. Humanist is a  
521 conscience of the—kind of—and that was the important thing that those guys who are on the

522 first recruiting meeting understood about why I dedicated my text to the *[inaudible]*. David  
523 Bonner was very good.

524 **CHODOROW:** He himself was attempting to change the way biology was taught. A  
525 sympathetic to the notion that there is a different point of view. Very good.

526 **PEARCE:** No. Well that was on—the vice-chancellor has a great role here. That's why Paul  
527 Saltman *[inaudible]* the department literature of rotten vice-chancellors. Because he knew  
528 exactly how we should be. When the Shakespeare problem came up, he called his old friend at  
529 USC [University of Southern California] in the *[inaudible]* university extension to get the input.  
530 *[inaudible]* this very good and fair about this. I don't know anything about the recent chancellor.

531 **CHODOROW:** Very good. Okay.

**[END OF INTERVIEW]**