Interview with Gayle Graham Yates

Interviewed by Professor Clarke A. Chambers
University of Minnesota

Interviewed on November 22 and December 5, 1994
University of Minnesota Campus

Gayle Graham Yates - GGY
Clarke A. Chambers - CAC

CAC: I'm interviewing, this afternoon, Gayle Graham Yates who has been here as a graduate student in American Studies, and then on staff, and the founder of Women's Studies since the early 1970s. The interview is being conducted on November 22, 1994 in my office, which is 833 Social Science. I welcome you to the view down the river.

GGY: Thank you. It's a delight to be chosen by you to be a part of this project.

CAC: It's remarkable the variety of folks that this institution can house, and the agendas they have, and how they perceive it. It's not a single vision at all. Any historian has really got a task of piecing it . . . which is an historian's task always. As I suggested before we turned the machine on, it's always nice to start with a little intellectual, academic autobiography . . . where you came from. I know you're southern. I know you were trained in philosophy and literature; but, what did that mean? Did you have some teachers or some persons in your life that really influenced and turned you in certain directions? That's where we'll start.

GGY: As I was preparing and really thinking about coming to do this interview and you had said you wanted me talk about my intellectual autobiography . . . that went all the way back to childhood for me—as I'm sure it does for most of us when we become reflective about it. I learned to read when I was three. I grew up in Mississippi out in the country out on a highway but pretty far out in the country away from a small town Shubuta and a just somewhat larger town named Waynesboro. My mother was a teacher; but, my father was a farmer with a tenth grade education. My family was not an intellectual family. My mother was a teacher and had been to a little Baptist college so there was very much a traditional southern piety, both religious and political in my mother's life. Much of what I learned about the world, from my very earliest days, was as a reader. I didn't grow up in a home that had lots of books; but, my mother sent for library books from the state lending library and I devoured them.

CAC: Did you have siblings?

GGY: I had an older brother, who was far more comfortable growing up on our farm and the rural and politically and religiously conservative environment. I think one of the major factors that sent me in the direction that my whole life has gone and certainly turned me into the intellectual I became was my participation in the Methodist church. The Methodist church was my father's church and my family went to the country Methodist church. The Methodist church is what was called institutionally connectional, which meant that the Episcopal system and even in the deep south in the rural areas, we were aware of it as a national church in contrast with the other church that white southerners would . . .

CAC: Like Baptist was more free-standing?

GGY: Right . . . Congregational. Also the other feature along with that national kind of institutional link was the fact that it was far more likely to have an educated clergy. The Methodist church had followed settlement west establishing colleges as well as congregations. The church college which I went to ultimately was Millsaps College in Mississippi. It was also very influential in organizing youth and student events, which were far more educational for me than school. As a fairly young teenager, I went to Conference-Wide, which were state workshop kinds of activities, which these clergy persons, some of whom had been trained at the Divinity School at Yale University or Boston University . . .

CAC: You say clergy persons. They were probably mostly men?

GGY: They were men and we used the word clergymen, of course.

CAC: Because that's what they were.

GGY: When I was age sixteen, the Methodist church decided to ordain women and I was active enough to be quite involved in the institution of the church; so, I followed the general conference, the legislative body of the national church, as it debated the ordination of women issue. The minister in my church in town—I had gone to the town church as a teenager—was an older man who was very sensitive to social justice issues, and sensitive to that issue, and said things like, "Oh, when you're an adult, it won't be much of an issue anymore that women are clergy." He encouraged me.

CAC: The race issue? Were these mixed? This was the 1960s, right?

GGY: No, the 1950s.

CAC: The late 1950s.

GGY: I was born in 1940; so, I was sixteen in 1956 and I was graduating from high school that year. I was sort of a year early.

CAC: Things haven't really begun to break for [unclear].

GGY: But, this same group of people, these clergy*men* whom I knew, who were the best educated people of my acquaintance, and they were people who were church leaders state-wide; therefore, they were not just from my local organization. There were meetings, spearheaded from Millsaps College with a partnership, behind closed doors with Tougaloo College, a Congregational owned college that was kind of a prestigious college for black students. A faculty member name Ernst Berenski, who I think was Polish, an eastern European refugee, scholar, had somehow gotten there and organized seminars between Millsaps College students and Tougaloo College students. This got black and white students together. It was against state law to have interracial gatherings. One could be arrested for participating in an interracial gathering. I was much younger than sixteen . . . probably fourteen when I was invited to go to interracial meetings. With my parents, to say I was going to a church meeting with the minister was acceptable; but, it was my version of . . .

CAC: Did they know it was illegal?

GGY: They knew it was illegal; but, they didn't know I was going to meetings that had black people in it. While other young girls go off with boys and do sexual things, I went off with ministers and did interracial things as a young teenager. [laughter]

CAC: [laughter] One is as dangerous as the other.

GGY: They would be small meetings with five or six very able, very brave—as I look back on it—black and white students. So, we had workshops and those kinds of things under the sponsorship of the Methodist church. The way that the Methodist was organized at that time was it was segregated—but national. That is, there was a jurisdiction called the Central Jurisdiction, which was the black churches. Our Geneva South House father was bishop in that part of our Methodist church. The white congregations were organized into what were regional jurisdictions so that my jurisdiction was the Southeastern Jurisdiction. The churches that served African-American congregations were Central Jurisdiction. That was the institutional segregation of the church when I was a teenager. That fell with the Civil Rights Movement that desegregated public schools and other institutions.

CAC: That must have been happening when you were at Millsaps?

GGY: I was an active student [unclear], right. My intellectual beginnings are one with my social justice and activist beginnings. My reflections on how I came to be a member of this university but also the kind of scholar I am is that it is threefold: institutional, thoughtful or intellectual, but also activist. There are three legs to that same stool in my consciousness. They

come more profoundly from the church. That was the window to a gracious kind of life and to social issue kinds of identification. Unlike lots of people whose own work is the focus, because I didn't find the kind of support I needed growing up until college really in the school or my home or the community, I found it in the institutional church and then in the college I went to. I didn't understand it to talk about it this way, at the time; but, I trusted the institution to make life better, to be the avenue. I saw myself as having power to participate in making change for good by being chosen to some extent because they saw me as bright and eager to be an activist. From very young teenage time and it was continuous at Millsaps College then, the kinds of things that I had done with church groups were almost a branch of Millsaps College. College was just a wonderful continuation of those kinds of experiences.

CAC: You're describing a place where you had a safe home, so to speak.

GGY: Right. I had a safe home; but, there was money and authority to make things happen from my youthful point of view. There was, of course, a patriarchal and a patronizing kind of dimension to it, as we would look back on it now.

CAC: It's a safe home and in its way empowering to you.

GGY: It was empowering. Then, I took full advantage of using the power. In terms of continuation in the Civil Rights Movement activism, I wasn't so much involved in SNCC [Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee] as I was involved in the Methodist student movements actions; but, we were kind of teamed with SNCC in some of the things we did. One of the things I did play a major role in was desegregating the facilities of the churches resort in North Carolina at Lake Junaluska. I was the president of the regional organization at some point toward the end of college. We held our meetings there and we threatened not to have our meetings there anymore. Then, we threatened to picket and then my group were going to make good on the picketing. I was the chair of it; so, we were invited to negotiate with the board of trustees of Lake Junaluska, North Carolina. It was a church resort owned by the Southeastern Jurisdiction, the white part of the church. We met with them. At that moment, I remember learning about compromise. They were all men. There was another woman who was black. There was were just four or five or us. I think two of our students were black and three of us white. One of the trustees was a retired admiral, and there were several bishops, and big time church people, some of whom had summer homes at that resort place. One of them was Claude Evans . . . his teenager Sara Evans was in residence one of these summers. Claude Evans wasn't on the board; but, they had a home or, at least, they spent summers there. We met with the trustees and they told us that they really didn't want us picketing. We were going to picket if they didn't desegregate the facilities. They said they might desegregate the dining hall and those kinds of things but not the swimming pool. They weren't going to have us bathing black and white together. Then, they prayed over us, I recall. We opened our eyes and I started saying, "We want the swimming pool, too. We want it all desegregated." The admiral nudged me and said, [whispered] "That's all your going to get today, Gayle." That day my group settled . . .

CAC: It's too bad you weren't Baptist because they [unclear].

GGY: [laughter]

CAC: A total immersion.

GGY: The next year, we came back and we went swimming together.

CAC: You had no idea that the student YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association] was, for example, were doing this all across the country at that time and earlier . . . desegregating conference places?

GGY: We did know that.

CAC: You were aware of that?

GGY: It was part of a movement. Yes, we were aware.

CAC: You were aware of being part of a movement?

GGY: Right. This was 1959 or 1960. It was probably 1960 because the Greenville sit-ins and the Nashville sit-ins were 1959-1960. Those organizations, the Y's and the other Protestant student movement national groups, were loosely coordinated. Then, the officers met in an organization that was called, in my time, the National Student Christian Federation. I went to those meetings for several years. The years after [unclear] were the end of college and the first two or three afterward.

To focus a little more on college and then how I got here . . . I did it all in college. It was just the most wonderful experience for me. I was an actress. I won the acting award. I played Rosemary Sidney in *Picnic* and won an acting award. I read great drama and learned about the theater. I had thought I would be an English major; but, it was not quite what I wanted when I took some English classes and I took language. I took Latin. I hadn't had the opportunity to have foreign or classical languages in my little high school. I took German, and I loved it, and did reasonably well; though, I didn't make straight *A*s because I was such an activist. I did it all. I majored in philosophy probably because it was more the professors than the subject. They seemed the most rigorous, the most exciting, the most wonderful. I didn't take much history. I didn't get much history ever. [laughter]

CAC: Too bad.

GGY: But, one of my favorite professors was Ross More, who was the American History professor. I had a Current Problems in History course with him. I remember once saying,

"Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could take American History, and American Philosophy, and American Literature all at the same time?"

CAC: Ahhh.

GGY: I had no idea there was such a thing. I did take a course in American Philosophy from my Philosophy professor. I was not terribly focused intellectually; I was just in love with learning. I was a writer. I was president of the writer's honorary and I was president of the leadership honorary. I was president of most everything there was to be a part of. [D.] Clif[ton] Ware, who is on our music faculty was president of the Methodist student movement on our campus and he didn't do the state and national kinds of things I did; but, he and I were good friends. Betty was his same year and they were married his senior year. He and I worked together on campus Methodist stuff. I ran an arts seminar and had people from the national Methodist stuff, *Motive* magazine, which my husband was eventually a staff member of and I was on the board for the person who was editor then, Roger Ortmeier. That magazine was Methodist student owned and they did a lot of work in the arts. I just thought the church did things in fine arts and social activism. There was a national seminar when I was a college student on citizenship and Christian living. It was just called the Citizenship . . . a UN [United Nations]-Washington seminar. I'm sure it was my junior year that I participated in that. There were two delegates from each state. The topic was disarmament. We went to the UN and we toured the UN. We met Hubert Humphrey. He and John Brademus were speakers for this conference. We had to go to our own senators and talk about this issue of disarmament. I think there was some particular bill we were learning how to encourage them to support. Mine, of course, was James Eastland. I had to go and talk to James Eastland about supporting disarmament. [laughter]

CAC: That's good training for the academy, too.

GGY: That was very good training. In terms of doing American Studies, it was again the way I was introduced to intellectually transformative political participation . . . going to the UN and meeting senators and representatives in a seminar context.

CAC: It's experiential learning, which we kind of like to talk about now.

GGY: Then, we did the same kind of thing. We had an arts seminar—where actually my husband and I met. I was the chair of an arts seminar and our friend, B.J. Styles, was the staff person for this Methodist arts seminar. He invited his friend, Wilson Yates, to come and participate. After a whirlwind romance, we got engaged in New York. We met Edward Albee, the playwright, met Uta Hagen, and went into the little sales galleries in New York. Alfred Barr, who was the curator, the founding director of the Museum of Modern Art was our tour guide for this arts seminar. Picasso's *Guernica* was still in the Museum of Modern Art. It was there a long time after that; but, that's when I really learned about it from Alfred Barr himself talking about it. All of that was my . . .

CAC: So far, it's a pretty lucky story.

GGY: My finest graduate education actually was that national Methodist stuff, which I got more through the church . . . though my college was a church college.

CAC: I understand.

GGY: Then, Wilson and I were married right after I graduated from Millsaps, and I went to Vanderbilt for a year, did a master's of arts in teaching in American Literature, and took a couple philosophy courses. I essentially had a minor in philosophy. Then, we went to Boston. We had the sex discrimination story. I didn't apply anywhere but Vanderbilt after Wilson and I got engaged because he was already at Vanderbilt as a seminarian.

CAC: He was already set on a . . .

GGY: He was already settled there. We just were there for one year and I did that degree. Then, we applied several places and we were accepted at different places. He was accepted at Harvard and I was not accepted at Harvard. I applied to the English Department at Harvard. I didn't know about American Studies. I might well have been accepted into the [unclear] program. It was probably the first of many adult rough experiences of sexism that was in the family and with our closest people as much as the public. If Wilson was accepted at Harvard, that's, of course, where Wilson was going. It didn't occur to us to commute. He couldn't choose to go the place I was accepted to; so, I sort of went along and was a student wife at Harvard. I applied, sort of at the last minute, and went to Boston University [BU] to the seminary. Then, I taught freshman English and changed to the English Department at Boston University. Those years were really not very good ones from the standpoint of my career or my sense of development; but, I loved living in Boston and I learned a lot. I have a lot of knowledge of Harvard, and Boston, and Boston University.

CAC: You were establishing a marriage, after all.

GGY: We were establishing a marriage and Natasha was born. We hadn't planned on having her quite so soon; but, we did. I do love the city and appreciate having that connection with Harvard; but, my BU time wasn't particularly wonderful. I'm making this story too drawn out. We arrive here.

CAC: You say "we." There was something for Wilson to do at Minnesota?

GGY: As he was finishing—we spent five years in Boston—he did apply to places for jobs. The jobs were still available.

CAC: He wanted to be a teaching theologian?

GGY: Right. He didn't ever mean to be clergy.

CAC: Was he ever ordained?

GGY: He was, but only after he came here and after he got that job. He might as readily have been a Religious Studies professor. One of his immediate colleagues is on the Sociology faculty at Rice. He was in a program in religion and society, which is the same umbrella program that houses the American Civilization program at Harvard, an interdisciplinary program with three fields: social relations, sociology of religion and then a third field, which for him was arts and ethics.

CAC: So, he took on here?

GGY: He came here to his job that he still holds at United Theological Seminary because it was the job available.

CAC: It was very early. It didn't have a long history at that time.

GGY: It was just a few years old.

CAC: Yes.

GGY: Five, maybe . . . we came in 1967. I think that institution had begun . . . it moved here; it was a consolidation of two former seminaries. He looked at two or three places and I corresponded with American Studies. My adviser in my program at Boston University said, "A friend of mine in the American Civilization program went out to the Minnesota . . . His name was Barney Bowron. I'll write to him." Sterling Lanier was that professor's name. I'd had early American Literature . . . Anne Bradstreet and those folks . . . a year long course with him. He was advising me about what to do if Wilson should come here and that did work. We were fortunate in that way and Wilson was committed to my having a chance—but after he had his chance. That worked out all right. It was far better for me here than the other places I'd been for graduate programs, Vanderbilt or BU. Styles was born twenty-seven years ago today, just a few months after we had moved here. I was welcomed by Mary Turpie and began course work in the winter quarter of 1967.

CAC: With a baby and all?

GGY: With a tiny little baby and a four-year old in a new place, the coldest place I had ever been. [laughter] It is still cold to me. Wilson is now acclimated and serving as dean at his institution. I hear him saying things like, "It's just brisk," sounding like a native. I'm not acclimated to that extent. That's my intellectual autobiography until I arrived here.

CAC: And you found what when you got here in American Studies? You found Barney Bowron. You found Mary Turpie.

GGY: I didn't get to know Barney. He was not well the first year or two.

CAC: That early.

GGY: Then, there were some courses that he offered that for some reason I wasn't able to take. He hadn't retired yet. I remember going to his retirement party some years after I had entered as a student.

CAC: Which in a way was a disability retirement, wasn't it?

GGY: Yes. I didn't get to know him. I've actually gotten to know Lucy Bowron in recent years a little bit. He was here. Mary Turpie was assistant chair.

CAC: But basically, there was no core faculty at that time?

GGY: No.

CAC: Except for Mary Turpie who was the full-time director.

GGY: She was not full-time director even . . . perhaps, she was.

CAC: She worked at it full-time.

GGY: She worked at it full-time; but, I think it was 50 percent in the English Department. There had never been any core faculty. At that time, though Barney was officially chair, she did much of the work. The faculty who taught almost all the students, it seemed to me, included David Noble and Mulford Sibley; so, in terms of there being a core of people . . .

CAC: One was in Political Science and one in History.

GGY: Mulford Sibley was in Political Science and David Noble was in History. Many of the students took his American Intellectual History . . .

CAC: You bet.

GGY: . . . which was a year-long seminar. He had a lecture course and also a seminar on that subject. The lecture course was a five-level one that lots of graduate students took . . . hundreds, over two 200. Mulford offered various topical kinds of American Studies courses but in the realm of political theory or American political participation. Some of my cohort group and I took Radicalism in American Political Thought with him, a seminar he offered, I think more than

once. Mary Turpie taught the Intro[duction] to Graduate Studies seminar, one section took Ph.D. students and one, and I think even two sections, for master's students; so, there were fifteen or twenty students each in three sections of an Introduction to Graduate Studies seminar. Then, in addition to that, she taught, what we now call, the Practicum, the teaching seminar, to advanced Ph.D. students, to supervise their getting ready to or beginning to teach one course or a sequence of courses for an Introduction to American Studies.

CAC: I had to take, as a junior faculty member when I came here in 1951, that year-long seminar with Mary.

GGY: I've heard those stories.

CAC: It was a good thing.

GGY: I've heard that from a number of people. Do you want me to talk about the beginnings of the program and move away from my experience?

CAC: Sure, what you know directly.

GGY: As I understand it, one of the ways people got trained to do American Studies was to work together with Mary from the very beginning on that seminar. When new faculty would come, she would include them with the current graduate students so that everybody, in fact, had this same year . . .

CAC: We did the next week's syllabus every Friday afternoon or whatever.

GGY: So, there was a common syllabus?

CAC: Yes.

GGY: Some of the things I've learned from teaching in other settings or teaching introductory material for American Studies is that the uniqueness of the Minnesota program is its early coverage of five fields, the interdisciplinary character of it being at least across several departments. There were limits to what part of it they covered as you pointed out in your remarks at our conference. The earliest Ph.D. program was Harvard's, which was very much history, and literature, and then a third field with social and political theory maybe as that field. It was really a blending of using American history and American literary materials and methods for doing historical studies and literary studies. At Minnesota, there were course requirements across five areas: literature, history, a social science, an arts area, and philosophy or religion or a theory area; but, most everybody took either a philosophy course or a religion course that was more theoretical and then, what was then called, a Foreign Civilization and, of course, language requirements like other degrees required, and then a dissertation that was interdisciplinary. The curriculum design, planned for students to do course work across those fields, then was threaded

down to the undergraduate program. The undergraduate program was never very big, as I understand it . . . sometimes not as big as the graduate program. For continuity the syllabi were planned centrally—or Mary may well have done it herself. Then, the students in Mary's teaching seminar were taught to teach the syllabus and they were taught how to do lessons across these five areas but blending methods.

CAC: From my experience, that's an accurate description.

GGY: When I came as a student, that was well-established. I didn't quite understand that that wasn't what American Studies was everywhere. I think Mary Turpie does deserve the credit for including the arts areas in American Studies not only here . . . I wouldn't be surprised all over the country.

CAC: Arts, including music?

GGY: Arts, including music. She took some leave time and got some grant money. She stayed with teaching so much of the time but for very short periods. She did a list—I'm sure you've seen them—really a volume, a thoroughly annotated list . . . one on painting, one on music, and one on architecture. They were all expertly done, very carefully done, with good comment not just description. It's a good analytical kind of work.

CAC: But done in mimeographed form?

GGY: Done in a low budget and given away. This summer in Berlin, I had dinner with the professor of American Studies in Hamburg and she said that she still has in use these Mary Turpie lists that one of our graduates had told her about and she sent for. I have some of the files from Mary Turpie's office in my office and the files show requests for these lists from just everywhere. They were distributed quite widely and really, as I looked into the beginnings a little bit, only in recent years have I appreciated how much influence she had on those . . .

CAC: These were references to primary materials?

GGY: Right, they were all primary materials. The list of paintings is a list of paintings, where . . .

CAC: Yes, and where they were.

GGY: . . . they were and what they show but then a little comment on it. They're pedagogical rather than scholarly in the sense of applying theoretical interpretations to them; but, nevertheless, there are locations and they contexturalize the paintings historically and socially. I enjoyed taking architecture a lot as a student. I discovered the subject of architectural history as a graduate student and took Donald Torbert's course. I think of those three volumes, the architecture one is my favorite and perhaps the best done; but, I think Mary Turpie probably

thought she knew music best. She did a very sound job of all three of them and I would claim that she influenced the field of American Studies to cover those art forms and not just literature, and history, and some social or political commentary.

CAC: I suppose I shouldn't intervene too much because I'm just a channel through which you should speak to posterity; but, they were denigrated by many of her colleagues—not all of them—because they were not true scholarship and they weren't in print form.

GGY: Yes, yes. I understand that. In fact, it may be one of my missions in recent years, including the memorial service for her and the national award we now do. In the National American Studies Association I've been trying personally to see that she gets the attention she should but on the basis of the legitimacy of that work. Perhaps, we still have that bias or maybe we have it worse than faculty did in those early years of the program, that materials prepared for teaching or prepared for identification is somehow not as worthwhile.

CAC: It gave a lot of elbow room to the person who was using it to do her own analysis.

GGY: Yes. But, it's certainly quite valuable.

CAC: She was a towering central figure and I think that your speculation is probably correct that that three-quarter sequence was hers. I remember her saying, "Of course, if ever you wish to substitute anything on this theme for next week, that would be all right." But, when you were very junior, you didn't reach out very much.

GGY: Or graduate students . . . all of my contemporaries in that seminar were all . . .

CAC: That's a remarkable syllabus in another regard. It did in fact draw upon a variety of primary materials. We read the *Federalist Papers*. We looked at art slides. We listened to music. We read poetry and novels. So, it was interdisciplinary at that sophomore level, as I recall.

GGY: Yes. In the early years, I suppose for the record for somebody who is not aware of what American Studies has been at this university, it's certainly the case that this was the centerpiece program of American Studies in the world for a number of years, in the early years. The Harvard program was at Harvard University and it was quite a good program. Henry Nash Smith was the first Ph.D. in American Studies. The book *Virgin Land* was his dissertation from Harvard. The early group included Leo Marx, whose book the *Machine in the Garden*, is one of the major works and also came out of his dissertation work at Harvard. Those men came here . . . Barney Bowron and that group of people who were students of F.O. Mathiessen at Harvard. They had the inspiration that was, I think, political and social as well as academic . . . that this program would teach learned citizens or learned citizen leaders. There was that kind of implicit statement in their rhetoric of the early years. It was not only interdisciplinary in that it made

literary folks and scholars of history look at their material in different ways but it did have a mission to the world.

CAC: To the republic.

GGY: Or to the republic, yes. I think a mission of representing the republic in the world in a different way.

CAC: Yes.

GGY: Because there were international students who came here and it was immediate post World War II. In terms of this program in this location, I don't think it was ever insular.

CAC: Do you think it fit a Land-Grant institution in that sense that it did have in mind the citizenry, the community, the republic?

GGY: It certainly fit. I hadn't thought of it as only coming . . . The other places that started American Studies and did lots of Ph.D. work were Yale, and Penn, and Harvard.

CAC: Private.

GGY: They were private. I was beginning to talk about the group of people and the work, the group that came to be labeled the Image, Myth, and Symbol School. Here I'm . . .

[End of Tape 1, Side 1]

[Tape 1, Side 2]

GGY: Henry Nash Smith's book, *Virgin Land*, was published while he was a faculty member at Minnesota. The subtitle is *Myth and Symbol in the West.* The *Machine in the Garden* is Leo Marx's first book. It, too, was published when he was a faculty member here; and it's similarly on the theme of, in this case, transportation, the railroad, the development of technology, and the ideology of technology conflicting with or paired with the ideology of the frontier and the ever progressive American frontiersman at home and the new world as the new Garden Eden, but again dealing with American self-understanding as mythic, dealing with a unified concept of American character or American personality in mythic terms. Two of the famous works of early students in the program, of course, are John William Ward's *Andrew Jackson: Symbol for an Age* and . . . Ward used Jackson not as a military figure or leader but as a figure who is represented in many, many ways in his culture and caught the imagination of people of his time and later as signifying or symbolizing his era so that the figure could be a person or it could be a form of technology but looking for American character, looking for a unifying or holistic concept of who the Americans are.

CAC: Do you have a memory of how long Henry Nash Smith and Leo Marx were here?

GGY: I think certainly less that ten years each.

CAC: A serious scholar could look it up. I just think that we think of those two figures, plus Barney, as really molding a field there, a way of looking at life. I think their tenure was relatively brief.

GGY: Yes.

CAC: And they're so powerful.

GGY: Those books made a big difference though.

CAC: Ohhh, yes.

GGY: Everybody was asked to read those books and they were identified with Minnesota. Actually, they started as their dissertations at Harvard. Their students here followed that model. Image, myth and symbol became an easy label for what they did. It was such a formative time for the American Studies field. The journal, *The American Quarterly*, was started here. Tremaine McDowell, I understand, was the founding person. He founded the journal, *The American Quarterly*, and it moved shortly, I think, to Penn or somewhere. It didn't stay here long; but, it was founded here. Even the networking that became the American Studies Association is claimed to have been founded here. I haven't seen that documented. All of those things seem to have been actively begun here with this new mode, not just interdisciplinary but interdisciplinary with a strategy for doing it, the image, myth, and symbol thinking, and with not only literature and history but arts, and other social material, and with a kind of political flavor or citizen flavor is probably the better word than political flavor. In a way, their institutional influence is not so important as their intellectual influence. The institutional leaders maybe were Tremaine McDowell, and Mary Turpie, and you say Ted Blegen.

CAC: He never taught but he was the administrator who really gave them the green light.

GGY: That's what I mean by institutional leadership . . . the fact that somebody was supporting it with funding, and structure, and organizational skill. Then, there were these faithful people working at it, making it their central work whether they taught some classes for English or not. That certainly included Barney Bowron. Barney Bowron's own intellectual contribution was significant. It had that right combination, perhaps, in those early years, from the mid 1940s to the mid to late 1950s. So, though Leo Marx and Henry Nash Smith didn't stay long, they did advise some important dissertations and even their students almost came to be blended with them as the same people. When John William Ward came back to be given the honorary doctorate the year before he died, he commented that people merged him with Henry Nash Smith; and he said, "But he was my teacher and now for *Andrew Jackson: Symbol for an Age* and *Virgin Land*

to be mentioned together . . . ?" In our minds, none of these people were our teachers. I go back half the life of the program and when I came as a student, we read all those works but none of the people were here any longer. The ones who were students and the ones who had been faculty were sort of merged in our consciousness. Also, those are key works. The people who do American Studies itself not only all over this country but in other . . . I know the American Studies work in Europe now pretty well. They read the *Machine in the Garden* and *Virgin Land.* That's the heart of American Studies.

CAC: Even though the American Studies folks here have given that up some many years?

GGY: Oh, I really am speaking historically.

CAC: Of course.

GGY: They say they've given it up; but, you still, somewhere along the way, read those classics.

CAC: Oh, you read them. I'm saying that it doesn't influence a dissertation [unclear].

GGY: That's right.

CAC: It's a different mode.

GGY: That's right. Those are the words . . . having a *school* of American Studies, image, myth, and symbol and it having started here but also having started here as the field was starting internationally. The reasons were very different in Europe. I taught on our exchange with the University of Munich a couple of times and I've lectured in eight or ten other places in Europe. They started American Studies after World War II for better ways of understanding how to cope with this new power in their lives. This Salzburg seminar in 1947, which some of the Harvard American Studies people organized and people from a number of European universities went to, started a program called American Studies that was far more a response to American history and dealing with contemporary American culture, the immediate post-war culture . . . how they were going to cope with the Marshall Plan and . . .

CAC: The Fulbright grants made it possible.

GGY: Yes. But, they didn't start with the same motivation.

CAC: Of course. Right, right.

GGY: The motivation was a citizen one in this country and a nationalistic one to some extent, maybe not in any puffed up chauvinistic way but a nationalistic one to better teach and understand the U.S. materials. For Europe, it was how to cope with this new power in this new way; so, learning American English instead of the British English language was one of the strong

reasons for it and learning about American popular culture. We would use the language popular culture more recently. There's not nearly as much history as there is literature read in European American Studies programs; but, they learn to read creative literature. The students, especially learn to read in order to read economic literature, political literature, journalistic sources. They are learning the language in order to participate in an international environment where Americanization is the factor they've lived with in their daily lives. The reasons are very different.

CAC: I understand.

GGY: But, the starting times were similar. In terms of doing the history of this university and it's contribution in American Studies, I think we should underscore several times . . .

CAC: Bravo.

GGY: . . . the importance of this university to the international phenomenon and particularly in this country of the . . .

CAC: It would be interesting to make a list of persons even from this campus who went out as Fulbrights . . . Hungary, Romania, Germany, Austria, Africa, Australia, Italy. It's just all over the place.

GGY: Yes. Again, I was thinking of the works.

CAC: Yes!

GGY: I was told that the first book on the shelf of the American Studies library at the University of Frankfurt, which, of course, is a major setting in Europe for American Studies and other cultural studies, was Tremaine McDowell's little book *American Studies.*

CAC: Ahhh.

GGY: Lots of people saw that little book as the model for how to do it.

CAC: This matches other interviews I've had with people, that the influence of this university in agronomy, and engineering, and psychology world-wide is just remarkable.

GGY: Yes. Also, in addition to these works that came from here, an awful lot of our Ph.D. students—I don't know the percentage—are from other countries. There were three people from Norway who just came to our fiftieth anniversary conference: Ole Moen, who is sort of my age, I would guess, and Steiner Bryn, who graduated recently . . .

CAC: You and I shared a chap from the People's Republic of China.

GGY: That's right. He was our first graduate, our first Ph.D., from the People's . . . Jun Xing Lots from Taiwan . . . I don't remember any of them except Colonel Kim and lots of Koreans are named Kim. When I was teaching the Introduction to American Studies, I had a military—the equivalent of West Point or at least a military academy in South Korea—student who would go back there to teach.

CAC: That was some program you came into.

GGY: Yes, yes.

CAC: You got your graduate degree, a degree chaired by Mulford Sibley?

GGY: That's right.

CAC: It combined your interests in, by now, women's affairs, which clearly had a deep root, and in religion?

GGY: Yes. I took course work around religion. In fact, I had thought I would do more with religion than I did for my dissertation. I've gradually moved out of that area.

CAC: It was a point of beginning. [unclear]?

GGY: It certainly was a point of beginning; but, my dissertation was on Ideologies of Contemporary American Feminism and I used a method of paradigm analysis. My second reader, Clarke Chambers, drew circles around the word every time I wrote paradigm to teach me that . . .

CAC: Good idea but [unclear].

GGY: . . . I didn't have to use that forever. [laughter] It was already a tired idea maybe by the time I used it that way. When I came here, the women's movement was really just getting underway as a very public kind of movement in 1967-1968. There were some women's liberation meetings sort of organized among graduate students. Toni McNaron had come back from MLA [Modern Languages Association] and organized some graduate students. She didn't go for long; but, I went to a group that met a number of times.

CAC: Were these more than consciousness raising?

GGY: No, they were no more than that.

CAC: Not that that isn't enough.

GGY: Many of us identify our feminism as starting with reading Betty Friedan's book, *The Feminine Mystique* in 1964. I had a little bit of that kind of consciousness in my Boston days with a group of women friends there, most of whom are either social workers or Ph.D.s now. There was also a faculty group. I think they consciously did not include students; but, I knew a little bit about the group. It had a funny title like Council on Women's Progress. I think it started out to be Council on Women's Programs. That may not be quite right. Some *Daily* reporter published its name wrong. They thought that was a better name; so, they called themselves CUWP—that's what it was—the Council on University Women's Progress. Anne Truax was very involved in that, and Shirley Clark, and there was another woman in Sociology who didn't stay here long but a sociologist.

CAC: Carol Rose?

GGY: No. Oh, Caroline Rose would have been; I'm sure she would have been. She was on my dissertation committee.

CAC: [unclear] because she died soon thereafter.

GGY: Yes, she died not long after that. I hadn't ever met her when she served on my dissertation. Mary Turpie had urged her to.

CAC: Was Mary Turpie part of this group?

GGY: I think it was a fairly broad-based group. I think there was a fairly large number of them. Prominent among them were Anne Truax and Shirley Clark. I remember going to a meeting—maybe they did invite graduate students at some point—when Mimi Gohlke, who now uses the name Madeline Sprengnether, had just come and was on a program for that group, a panel about how women struggled. Mimi was the first woman to do the doctoral program that she was in at Yale . . . I don't think the whole English Department but her area of English at Yale . . . that first woman kind of situation. They were fairly purposeful about changing the environment for women. It was truly a women's rights advocacy kind of group. Of course, going far back, you know a lot about that. There was the Women's Continuing Education [The reference is to Continuing Education for Women, CEW; the Women's Center was a separate agency.] program in the Women's Center, which was seen as an information and counseling kind of service for women. To be activist on behalf of women was new in those years when I was a graduate student. There were forming on some campuses women's studies courses, some where the term *women's studies* arrived on our campus, not first. Like American Studies, this campus was an early one for Women's Studies to be formed. It was in this context of activism that we had on our campus this sort of mirroring of the national movement groups, NOW [National Organization for Women] and such groups being organized. I think this Council on Women's Progress was somewhat the liberal organization with the people who tried to organize the Women's Studies being the more radical, more of them students, more of them untenured faculty

or contract, or part-time, or more a marginal kind of faculty, and people from the community. Though people from the community often meant they were students in some form.

CAC: Sure.

GGY: The first offering of a Women's Studies course was offered under the umbrella of American Studies. An activist group of women who wanted a course called Women's Studies took it to Mary Turpie. I was not a part of this.

CAC: They were graduate students and you were just getting your degree at this time?

GGY: I came in 1967-1968. This morning I tried to write down some dates. I think the women's liberation groups on campus, the sort of popping up groups, were 1968 and 1969. I think the year I'm talking about now is 1970-1971 when there was organization enough to propose a course, though it was informal organization and sort of grass roots organizing and I think student led. This group took the proposal to Mary Turpie. It may have taken it to lots of other places . . . I don't know. She was willing to fund it; but, she was also was willing to control it. She offered that there could be a course, that American Studies would pay for it; but, she would choose the instructor. Elsa Greene, who had been your advisee, was the person she chose.

CAC: Elsa had been one of the three who had proposed the memorandum, in any case.

GGY: Oh, okay. Again, on each of these points, you may know a lot more than I do.

CAC: I'll interview myself later. [laughter]

GGY: Interview yourself, yes. [laughter] I think I'm accurately reflecting the place I was in those years.

CAC: I understand that.

GGY: I was a current graduate student not yet having had prudence even and was new to this state. I'm digressing a little bit. I liked being here and I liked being a graduate student; but, it was more new to me than living in Europe has been, after living in Boston and in the south—not just the weather, which I did suffer from and tried to deal with. I liked the openness in the political . . . certainly, greater political liberalism than I'd grown up with. Not so much on campus but certainly the cities were more culturally staid than I was comfortable with. The kind of expressiveness or flamboyance that I would have been more at home with was largely absent. I liked the sense of inclusiveness in my graduate program and I certainly felt that it is the most egalitarian. My graduate program, in my time was the most egalitarian setting I've ever participated in. I really felt we belonged to a community, faculty and students together. We just had different roles. We didn't have different statuses, or a lot more power, or whatever.

CAC: Yes.

GGY: Faculty didn't exhibit a sort of dominance over the students in a way that's all too common. That was just wonderful. I also had a rather unhappy outsider kind of feeling about being here. At the university, I was a student; one is temporary as a student. I didn't have a sense of belonging. I didn't have a sense of knowing how to have access, how to find out who was inside, and how one could be inside either in the university or in the community.

CAC: Do you think we were too big and too sprawling in that sense?

GGY: Could be. That's preface to a background for the . . . I know the facts and I participated at the level of sort of going to the public things; but, I still know very little, like who did the memorandum? I know that there was one and I know something about several different groups. I suspect there were several not necessarily competing but just several different groups and some of them kind of fizzled, and some of them were effective, and some of them sort of got their heads together but didn't know what to do. There seemed to be several different points of agitation for something called Women's Studies.

CAC: I've set myself the task of finding that original memorandum and many people have seen it and say, "Oh, yes," but they don't have a copy. I'm going to run it down for posterity. I'm told it was a fifty to seventy-five page memorandum, which could have been done in eight or ten pages —at least that's what is said.

GGY: Who were the . . .

CAC: Elsa Greene, Andrea Hinding, and a young woman by the name of Phipps in Psychology.

GGY: Susan Phipps-Sanger, now Susan Phipps-Yonas.

CAC: That's legend; but, I'm sure somewhere the document will show up.

GGY: I was a graduate student in American Studies and glad that it was going to happen. I did hear, and maybe it was from Susan . . . Actually, I know Elsa least well; though, I've had some contact with her since then and Andrea, I had a good bit of contact with, then, for periods of time. Another parenthesis . . . I'll just wander. There was a year when things had gone kind of badly a few years after. Come up about ten years. Andrea, and Shirley Clark, and Marcia Eaton, and Nancy Anderson, and I were part of a women's support group which we called the "Big Women" because we all had offices that were visible and important; but, we also felt, as a body, sort of threatened by circumstance. We banded together and had a wonderful relationship for, I guess, a couple of years. So, I got to know Andrea fairly well and Susan Phipps-Sanger—she was at the time—was participating in Women's Studies. That year was 1970-1971, I think. The following year, the program was established on an experimental basis and Toni McNaron was chosen as the coordinator. I finished my Ph.D. in 1973 with my book. *The Ideologies of*

Contemporary American Feminism became *What Women Want: the Ideas of the Movement* a couple years later, published by Harvard University Press. Wilson and I went away for 1973-1974 to Cambridge. When I came back, I was hired half-time by the Women's Studies program and half-time actually by United Seminary where I started a . . .

CAC: I didn't know that.

GGY: I was hired in an office on a half-time basis as director of their new master of arts and religious studies program; so, I developed a curriculum and developed a set of guidelines for them in half my life and the other half of my life was designing the Introduction to Women's Studies and the senior seminar—I guess that was the following year. I designed the first Women in Literature course that was taught here, as such. There had been a few courses taught around themes but very few courses. It was the third year of the life of the program that I taught the Intro sequence the way it came to be for a number years, a big lecture course with undergraduate teaching assistants.

CAC: What was the governmental structure of Women's Studies at that time? You became the coordinator when you came back from Cambridge?

GGY: When I came back from England, for two years, Toni was the coordinator.

CAC: Oh, I see.

GGY: I was a part-time, half-time faculty member.

CAC: Could you describe the structure at that time?

GGY: It was governed by a committee appointed by the dean of CLA [College of Liberal Arts]. The committee was made up of faculty—not all CLA faculty; most of them were—and students, and maybe administrator members. Anne Truax was a member of the group. She was director of the Women's Center. I don't remember whether Andrea Hinding was chair of it at that time. She served as chair of it, maybe, at the very beginning when the first Women's Studies committee was appointed. When I came, which was only the second year of its life as an experimental program, there had been one prior year where there had been this course. That was all there was to it but a course under Women's Studies. The way it was organized . . . the governing group was a committee appointed by CLA faculty and student members; and they made all the decisions about its life like a faculty would make in a regular faculty. Then, there was a coordinator chosen by that committee and that coordinator was Toni McNaron who was the coordinator for a three-year term. The faculty who taught the courses for the Women's Studies program which that year, for the second year, had courses leading to a major; so, shortly there would be graduates majoring in Women's Studies. There were quite a few courses needed for that and they were taught by regular faculty who volunteered their time, or their time was loaned by their departments, or far more by graduate students and contract faculty members like

me who taught hired by that committee, the Women's Studies committee. That was the way it was governed through the time I was chosen coordinator and then chair.

After two years of my teaching part-time, half-time at United Seminary and half-time for Women's Studies, and teaching that big intro course and the Women in Literature course—I taught essentially a full load for part-time salary plus my other job—they had a national search for a coordinator and an assistant professor. I wrote down the dates to be sure. It was the spring of 1976 that the search ended with my appointment; but, it was a national search with lots of candidates and lots of attention paid to it. I got the job. There were two more years of temporary life for the program. They were intense and heady kinds of years. They were very creative kinds of years, making up courses, making up curriculum, making up a program. When I was hired, Shirley Clark was chair of the committee. She was, at that time, assistant vice-president for Academic Affairs. Her appointment was in the College of Education. She also was adjunct faculty in Sociology. She was trained in sociology and had been an active feminist of the liberal stripe for a number of years. Edith Mucke, who was director of Continuing Education for Women, and Truax, who directed the Women's Center, were both on that governing committee. Susan Phipps-Yonas was a graduate student and participated in it. Graduate students participated very thoroughly. I'm not going to remember all the names; but, there were several graduate students who were just as outspoken and participatory in the decision making as the faculty women. There are a number of faculty women who are now on our campus in leadership roles in feminist affairs who were already on campus or shortly to come to campus who felt they couldn't afford to participate in Women's Studies because they were untenured and because of the likelihood that they would not be tenured in their departments. I think of both Shirley Garner and Ruth Ellen Joeres. Shirley Garner, Mimi Gohlke, and Toni McNaron were, from the beginning of their being hired here, kind of three [unclear] friends with one another. They have similar interests. Toni was tenured already and she was the coordinator. Shirley Garner felt she couldn't come. She also hadn't done anything . . . none of us.

CAC: It was new for all of you.

GGY: It was new for everybody. I had the advantage, which was quite accidental . . . Again, it was my interests following me to be able to do my dissertation on women . . .

[break in the interview as someone knocks on the door]

GGY: For some women, it wasn't a matter of their commitment. I think it was a realistic assessment of what their departments were like.

CAC: Oh, yes.

GGY: It was very unpopular among senior faculty women.

CAC: Particularly in some departments and particularly in English?

GGY: Particularly in some departments. Ruth Ellen Joeres who has, of course, recently has chaired the Center for Advanced Feminist Studies, came to German not that early, not in the very first years of the program but she was here by the time it was made permanent and she felt she couldn't afford to connect with it from German. Also, these women's work hadn't included training in anything pertaining to women; so, the best the program could claim in some context was to be about women. The advocacy dimension of doing Women's Studies was extremely threatening to many departments.

CAC: And there were many on the committee itself, particularly graduate students—this is in the form of a statement that will be a question—were assertive about finding persons who would have a feminist point of view to teach there courses and work them up?

GGY: That's right and we were trying to figure out what having a feminist point of view meant. In some ways, my dissertation gave me an advantage of not only having done the dissertation but the fact that Harvard University Press had published it and that it was . . .

CAC: Thinking through basic issues.

GGY: . . . that I had thought it through but that it was on the subject of ideologies and to be able to differentiate and not just to have an either/or kind of sense of she is or she isn't. I think I was able to help shape, at least in the organizing group, a sense of multiple possibilities for the feminist perspective; but, there still was a kind of true believer's sense and a beleaguered sense on the parts of some of them, particularly the graduate students but also the younger faculty. Janet Spector, of course, was the chair of the search committee that hired me and was in a very influential role in the Women's Studies group and Riv-Ellen Prell came shortly.

CAC: Both of them in Anthropology.

GGY: Both of them in Anthropology. John Modell served on the governing committee, the Women's Studies committee.

CAC: I was told Ed Griffin.

GGY: Ed Griffin served on it one or two years in the period that I was chair. Since I participated in the faculty for two years prior to my being the chair, my memory blends those years together.

CAC: Of course.

GGY: Again, my theme, as I thought this through today . . . my two roles are intellectual and institutional. I think of my work as institutional. As I thought about my church growing up, I am at home in the institution but I think that my skills or my sense of institutional comfort even served the program well because I didn't see the institution as the enemy.

CAC: Which some did.

GGY: Which some did. I wanted to be within the university. I didn't want to destroy it or attack it. I wanted to make room for this program that we all wanted. We did have those two years short of the permanence battle . . . the first two years that I was chair were almost utopian among us. We felt as if and behaved as if we had this quite wonderful common mission to transform the university and the world on behalf of women but to bring not just the subject of women and not just help for us and other women to get jobs in the university but a whole new vision of how to see everything that we know. So, we all believed in that together. Our means for getting there and who was admissible once we got to the kingdom were different questions.

CAC: I gather from other persons whom I've interviewed that the coherence you describe, the agreement on really basic mission, was broken somewhere along the line? This is also in the form of a question and not a statement.

GGY: Yes. I guess I don't know that I said it that way before and I stare out to the top of the hill to be able to say it; but, the sense of transformation was not unlike my sense as a young person in the Civil Rights Movement or what I found in American Studies in the goodness of doing American Studies in this way. We use our intellectual powers for the <u>good</u> of the citizenry. Then, when we discover that we women are cut out of a lot of things, then we do some more to bring us, ourselves and our daughters and other women, into this good body of citizenry. I do think we had a vision that is in effect what has taken place world-wide in feminist scholarship of changing the way we know what we know. I do think that we had that insight. I do think that's the direction that feminist scholarship has gone and I do think that we've achieved that in large part. I think that's happened in this institution and in many others in higher education, in schools, in all kinds of intellectual enterprises. We had so little actual power and it was so . . .

CAC: Which means so relatively little budget, right?

GGY: So relatively little budget. We were quite different and it kept getting prolonged when we were going to be permanent or we were going to have anything.

CAC: You mean that day was postponed?

GGY: It was postponed. When I was chosen coordinator, we did have a review, an internal and external review, like departmental reviews but this was for the assessment of its quality to move beyond the experimental stage. Finally, it was the spring of 1978—we should check the record; it could be one year off—when we were lined up to defend it in the college. We, by this time, had a whole curriculum of courses for an undergraduate major. Several of us had contributed but I had in a major way. We had a lot of students. We had some courses at the five-level, which meant we had a graduate component, and we had a lot of graduate students teaching in the program, a fair number of people interested in the program, with several faculty members in

key places willing to support us. Fred Lukermann was dean by that time. The way I remember that spring is we spent the entire spring—I being the leader; I being the person standing up in front—going to the CLA council meetings, the CLA assembly, and the various councils of CLA with the dean defending the program.

CAC: To a skeptical faculty or to an affirming faculty?

GGY: [sigh] To a cautious faculty.

CAC: Okay.

GGY: There probably were no more than six meetings but most other things like that take one.

[End of Tape 1, Side 2]

[Tape 2, Side 1]

CAC: . . . of the process regularly [unclear].

GGY: The process for establishing it as permanent, right. I'm really describing a feeling; but, it was one of the most disheartening, disappointing, negatively transforming periods of my life. We had worked so hard and inside Women's Studies, we had been so united. I personally had a very favorable reputation on the campus. I, in fact, had been singled out, perhaps. I was the leader. My book had been well-received. It was just out, had been out a little over a year; but, the fact that it had come out and gotten good attention . . . I made a good impression on all kinds of faculty. I probably, at that moment, had the biggest national reputation I was ever to have, as much on the basis of the Minnesota Women's Studies program being strong, being a model for lots of other Women's Studies programs. The syllabus for the Intro course and so forth were distributed all over the country and many of them were my creations or, at least, I had participated in designing them. I was asked to consult about forming Women's Studies programs in a number of other places. So, I had a strong sense that I was doing a good thing and the group had a united sense that we were. Of course we ought to be made permanent and we were unfairly being almost harassed by just having to defend just every detail of every piece of the program for this permanence decision. Eventually, it was passed in the CLA assembly and the dean . . . I know longer remember exactly what needed to happen legislatively for it to be made permanent. I now know enough to know that there lots of different it could have been established; but, we did it the hard way—and we did it. What followed was very, very disappointing. We were all so tired that we really turned on one another.

CAC: Can one guess that the divisions were there implicitly and covertly?

GGY: The divisions were there anyway. We hadn't had any kind of talk about a lesbian/straight split and around the country in the women's movement and in other women's studies program, there were some rumblings of straight women not treating lesbians as . . .

CAC: Pennsylvania, California State . . .

GGY: Right. We hadn't had that kind of split. We had gotten along very well.

CAC: Although, both factions were represented on the . . . ?

GGY: Both factions were represented; but, they didn't feel like factions.

CAC: I see.

GGY: I don't want to go into letter detail about all of that; but, there was that. [sigh] Then, there was the sort of [unclear] going socialist feminist, radical feminist from a political socialist kind of standpoint. There were several faculty members who thought that we weren't going far enough in that ideological direction. But, I think most of all, it was just very personal. I got trashed, to use the language of the time, in a way that really set me back for years. I was accused of using my reputation to foster my own career and not really serving the program. I thought I was serving the program. I had moved my primary sense of identity to the Women's Studies program and, in fact, it was costly to my marriage and my family who felt that my first loyalty was to Women's Studies and not to them. It was just weeks after that permanence battle that there was a kind of confrontation in which I was told that I wasn't suitable for continuing in my office.

CAC: Having seen them through to establishment?

GGY: I held on to the office . . . but, it wasn't ever the same anymore. I had invested far too much personally; that is, I had invested in that set of relationships as my primary friendships as well as my colleagues. I continued for three more years in the chair; my office was made chair. But, there was lots of contentious infighting. We were given eventually two more positions. My position was a core faculty position; but, I was untenured so we had everybody being very junior.

CAC: I'm guessing there weren't many tenured women in fields that one would draw upon for Women's Studies at that time. There would be soon but not then, generally speaking.

GGY: No, no.

CAC: Did you, at this point, then go back to American Studies?

GGY: No, not right away. I stayed in Women's Studies. I thought this destructive interaction would end. I thought I could ride it out and see it through, and I did believe in my work there

and our work together; so, I stayed in the chair. I served five years and that was just at the end of the second year. [sigh] I developed some more courses, participated in the founding group of the Center for Advanced Feminist Studies, though wasn't really active about that but was a part of the planning. I was asked to teach the Intro to Graduate Studies in American Studies my second year in my regular appointment; so, the year of that conflict, I had taught the Intro to American Studies. Almost from the beginning, even clear through the 1970s, there were no, or then just one, core faculty members in American Studies; so, we taught one course a piece. So, from early on, I was part of the American Studies faculty as soon as I was on a regular appointment and taught the Intro to Graduate Studies. It was one of my three or four courses that I taught even while I was chair of Women's Studies. I was part of the faculty in that almost all of the faculty was adjunct faculty and taught that very important course. In fact, I've come to believe right down to this year that the American Studies program is really shaped very decidedly by the faculty member who teaches that Intro seminar for Graduate Studies . . . not even the director of Graduate Studies as much, I think, as the person who teaches that Intro course. Certainly, I had that kind of role.

CAC: More so than the dissertation writing seminar?

GGY: More so than the dissertation writing seminar. It's introducing *the* field to the students. What do we do in this field? Mary Turpie did it for my generation. Roland Delattre had become chair of American Studies. Mary Turpie had just retired in those years I was doing part-time, and going off to England, and so forth, before I came to the university full-time as Women's Studies faculty. He asked me to teach it. I'm not sure why. Perhaps, because I was one of the few who had a degree in it or if I had the time available. I don't remember. I was pleased to do it, and eager to do it, and quickly started having lots of graduate students who wanted to work with me. In fact, it was a good route for Women's Studies from the very beginning for people who did Women's Studies wanting to do graduate work to go to American Studies.

CAC: You bet.

GGY: I liked doing it and I was a very active part of the American Studies faculty from the start. I taught just the Intro seminar and taught a full load . . . probably it was half-time teaching and half-time administration. I think it was 1981 that I resigned the chair and then 1983, I asked to move to American Studies.

CAC: What follows—I'm just going to intrude here very briefly—is a page and a half of courses that you invented once you were back in American Studies, so to speak.

GGY: Yes.

CAC: Southern African Women's Literature, Comparative Cultures of the U.S. South and Southern Africa, British and American Fiction, Gender, Ethnicity, Race and Class, American

Regions and Regionalism . . . so that in American Women's Studies . . . Women and Contemporary American Religion . . . You had a very inventive time.

GGY: Yes, both in Women's Studies and when I moved back to American Studies, I've invented almost all the courses I've taught and I've invented a version of things like the Intro to American Studies for graduate students; so, my teaching has been made up. I haven't just filled in a period, or filled in a time slot, or taught a course that's been designed by somebody else.

CAC: It's a striking variety of courses that not many of us could produce.

GGY: It has been fun. Yes, I think inventiveness and imagination are parts of my teaching so that the design itself of courses is really as primary as writing an article or even a chapter of a book. They follow the same kinds of lines of using materials and ideas from across disciplines; but, I really am more problem oriented. I get interested in the subject and then I end up teaching about it or books start appearing and I use them for teaching.

CAC: You would count that in the rewarding side of the experience of being in a large research university where you can try out all these different things that you get interested in?

GGY: Yes, and having very few restrictions on what one can teach. To put it the other way, there aren't a set of slots you have to fill up to be sure the students get taught certain areas.

CAC: Browning and Tennyson . . .

GGY: So, I make up what I want to teach. I think that the other experience, the creation of Women's Studies, and the leadership role, and the creation of courses, and the program itself, and working with the students that it took to bring that beginning was certainly one of the high points of my career; but, getting to serve as director of Graduate Studies in American Studies was certainly the other. When Ed Griffin asked me to be director of Graduate Studies after I'd . . . In fact, I was still in the Women's Studies program. My budget line was in Women's Studies and we're so department located. Your budget line, and your tenure home, and those locations are so strictly departmental; that's one of the harmful parts of being in this big institution, I think. Ed Griffin asked me to be director of Graduate Studies while I was still appointed in Women's Studies. They weren't connected in anybody's mind, including Ed's though I had thought about it and hoped to move to American Studies if it didn't look like it would work any better for me in Women's Studies. So, he asked me to be director of Graduate Studies and then a year or so later, I asked if I could move my appointment. Again, in that role, somewhat like I had in Women's Studies, I made up new courses but made up new versions of the Introduction and the dissertation seminar. This time I was teaching the dissertation seminar not the Intro; but, I taught them in a row. I chaired a committee but it was at my instigation and my sense of need to revise the curriculum, which may or may not be successful in terms of how it's turned out now. We fairly thoroughly rewrote the American Studies curriculum making more of the seminars . . . American Studies itself, though interdisciplinary. My expectation was that these would be taught

by a number of different individuals who had adjunct appointments as well as at the core; but, we had several people having moved to the core by the time that had been done. That's my doing, too. Again, it's working with a program. I think the most satisfying relationships have surely been with the graduate students who were my advisees but my students. I was, like many new faculty members, pretty much focused on my own work, maybe to the point of neurosis, on my own sense of direction. As I've grown older and mellowed, I'm far more concerned about what we're giving our students, are doing to them, or what the students gain from being here. By the time I was doing the Graduate Student directorship, certainly in the classroom just on a day-to-day basis, I had become very concerned about what we were asking students to invest their time in and to do their work on. I've been concerned that it's important enough for them to make that investment. I view teaching as a relationship finally, not a conveying of information or sharing my expertise . . .

CAC: Sure, sure.

GGY: . . . but my developing with another person who has talents and interests in ideas and possibilities, something that makes them able to be productive in our field or makes them have a better life on terms that they come to. That's where I find my real success has been and that's where I finally think it's been worthwhile. It is the graduate students in American Studies. I don't think it's because they are Ph.D. students; but, it is because we're at a big university. I don't get to teach students over a long enough period of time in their undergraduate days to get to know them enough to know whether I'm helping them figure out how to do their lives.

CAC: I think at a large research university, that's common in many disciplines and programs.

GGY: I often think of my work in terms of the individuals. It's things about their lives not so much what they've produced.

CAC: What they've done . . . what they are.

GGY: Linda Oxendine, who you also taught . . .

CAC: Yes.

GGY: . . . who has done so well, and gone back to Pembroke State University, and is thinking about publishing her dissertation, which I think as soon as she gets it out, I think it will be well-received. It's on tribal museums. She and I believe, though we haven't documented it, that she was our first Native American person to graduate in American Studies.

CAC: Many people have testified in these interviews I've done and I certainly would myself that the American Studies graduate students did create a community persisting over many decades regardless of what changes there were in the program and were the saving remnant—not that there

wasn't a good faculty and a good program. It attracted the kind of imagination of persons who wanted, like yourself early on, to work across traditional lines.

GGY: Yes.

CAC: Could you comment a bit on the . . . There came a time—I'm learning; I don't know when it was—where the core faculty in American Studies grew and this meant that the adjunct faculty became less important to the teaching mission of the program here at Minnesota. Can you date that or say something about where it came from and what it's consequences were?

GGY: When Mary Turpie retired there was one core faculty member hired. That was Roland Delattre. That was, I think, 1975. Then, there was a second position obtained for a core faculty position and Elaine May was hired in that position and she negotiated that her husband Lary May be hired as well. Over time, those positions came to be two full-time positions. That still, for several years, was a kind of contained core faculty. There was still lots of need for teaching to be done and students to be sent out to seminars in departments other than American Studies itself.

CAC: Some time along there, David Noble shifted his line from History to American Studies.

GGY: I was the first; though, there probably are at least a half a dozen other people who inquired about it, who would like to have.

CAC: But the college wasn't [unclear]?

GGY: It wasn't the college. Those faculty members, who were the core faculty, were very jealously protective of who would be the core faculty. I'm wrong . . . Gerry Vizenor, who was in American Indian Studies, transferred in first and Ed Griffin was the chair at the time. There was very little done procedurally other than to welcome him in. Yes, the dean has to do it officially. There is at least a semi-official need for the departing department to allow the person to go and the receiving department to accept that person.

CAC: Oh, of course.

GGY: There was a very nasty battle over my move to American Studies, much to my surprise. There were several faculty members who voted against my being able to move. The person who stood up for me and at least one of the people who saved the day was Gerry Vizenor, who I will love for life if he never does anything else. I have his furniture and there's a little plastic bear which is an emblem of his tribe, Ojibwe, that he left with his things. I'm Gerry's heir in all these important ways, including that he stuck up for me against the forces who would have excluded me from my very own home. The people at the core of that were the core faculty, who really didn't want the core faculty to expand. They developed, in the middle of things when I asked that my position be moved, a very elaborate set of procedures for the transfer to be done. A year

or so after I moved—the vote was substantial that I be allowed to move but it was pretty nasty—David Noble . . . I don't think there was much opposition but he had to jump through the same hoops. He, of course, had been so central to American Studies that it was really kind of silly.

CAC: He came from a department of forty-eight members, after all, plus or minus.

GGY: Yes. But, there were also others that would have . . . I know David Born talked about it once. I don't know whether he ever put his name forward. He's in the School of Dentistry, which meant crossing college as well. Karal Ann Marling was hired in the position that Donald Torbert was in, which was in Art History line with a sort of perpetual loan to American Studies. Karal Ann is probably the most productive one of all of us with a big national reputation. She uses, in all of her public life, "Professor of Art History and American Studies;" but, she wasn't . . . I don't know the particulars. I don't know that she ever actually tried to move; but, she wasn't . . .

CAC: Adjunct faculty can always use that title.

GGY: Right. But I mean there was a time she would have liked to have moved into the core.

CAC: Yes, I see.

GGY: I don't know any of the details of whether she approached it or what. Certainly, for several years, there was a really prickly kind of sense of some people may want to but they may not even though they teach for the program. Then, there have been several people who have, after David Noble, moved. It's hard to say how many more positions there have been. The Gerry Vizenor position, the American Indian Studies position, has been filled by two different people in sequence and it's now again going to be open. There were two new lines given, one with American Indian Studies and one with Chicano Studies. Mario Mantanya was hired and only stayed here one year. Allan Kilpatrick was hired in American Indian Studies and American Studies and he stayed two years. In both their cases, they were core faculty. I'm identifying who the core were and some of the difficulties around the core faculty. In both their cases, they were very unhappy that they weren't given the graduate student access and the kind of role in the program that they thought they should have; and to pursue their own work, they went somewhere else.

CAC: It's hard generally to hold minority.

GGY: Yes. Carol Miller has moved into the program. There are seven to nine of us who are core faculty. When George Lipsitz came, now about seven years ago, he was a part of the group of young faculty that Fred Lukermann mortgaged some retirements for to bring in this group of young faculty in what was called a mega search.

CAC: In the Humanities?

GGY: In the Humanities. George Lipsitz was one of them and he chose American Studies. The faculty member apparently could choose which one of the possible departments they wanted to join in this college search and he chose American Studies. His training is history; cultural history is his field. He actually didn't have an American Studies degree or a past American Studies experience; but, he liked the cultural history focus. With David Noble's being there and that's Lary May's focus, he saw himself as fitting there. I think his first year, certainly his second year, he was given the introductory seminar as his teaching assignment. George is very much focused in culture theory. He's brilliant. He's charismatic. He's very articulate. His point of view is consistent with the point of view of lots of people in the Humanities, coming out of European culture theory and emphasizing theory more heavily than other parts of our work. He drew the students and very quickly the students wanted to work more and more with him and wanted to do the kind of work he did; but, he also introduced the field to them. He introduced the field in terms of <u>his</u> field . . .

CAC: Of course.

GGY: . . . that is, he taught the introductory seminar not as a history of what had gone before as American Studies but as introduction to culture theory and popular culture. That was a big ingredient in the change that took place.

CAC: And then he departed?

GGY: Before he departed—I always have my dual themes of the academic strand and the institutional strand—Ed Griffin left the chair after serving, to my mind, in a superior way for nearly a decade. David Noble was chosen chair and David's best skills are not administrative. As one of your History Department colleagues said, "It would be difficult for David to administer a Band-Aid." David took the chair with the understanding that George Lipsitz would be associate chair and would, in fact, do the work. He took the chair as a part of, what seemed to me, a highly political move on the part of some of the faculty members. Elaine May was in the dean's office. It was she who was the centerpiece of the group of people who wanted to change the direction of the program. With that combination of David in the chair, with the program essentially rudderless, and George being everybody's star, the program changed very dramatically, very quickly. The new curriculum that I chaired the committee to put in place meant that there were a lot more graduate seminar offerings potentially offered in American Studies itself and, quickly, with this influx of new faculty members, part of them from new hires and part of them from people moving their positions into American Studies, there were a lot more courses taught at the core and there was a sense of an incoming student that that was the main thing American Studies was. So, that changed very rapidly and it was those three factors as the chief ones.

CAC: Then, Mr. Lipsitz left and left a vacuum.

GGY: Then, Mr. Lipsitz left and left a vacuum; but, it wasn't really a vacuum. It was a wind tunnel that both Elaine and Lary May were prepared to fill. In terms of the subject matter, Lary May follows the kind of thinking and work that George Lipsitz does. He doesn't have the charisma nor the personal finesse . . .

CAC: Yes.

GGY: . . . but, I think George's popularity and his brilliance. Finally, we'd got an open factional division to that faction . . . by now, several of whom were in the core faculty. It just narrowed the scope of influence so that it appears that most of the people who used to be on the adjunct faculty have fallen away themselves; but, they also have been given no role in this last period, no meaningful role to play. Elaine May has come back as chair this year, as you know, and it's possible that her considerable organizational talent as well as her ability to get things done will change the program for the better. It has become, I think, far too insular and far too singular about being focused on culture theory and popular culture in history since World War II. There's still so much residual sort of pleasure in American Studies that I think people would come back if given a chance. I'm really in a funny position there. I'm sort of a rerun of my Women's Studies. [laughter]

CAC: In the meantime, you've had the opportunity to do a great deal of teaching abroad and reaching out in that sense, which has its own rewards, as well?

GGY: Yes, that has been very rewarding. On campus, I've volunteered for things. I volunteered to be a tour guide at the Weisman Art Museum, and I am part of the new Residential College this year, and a number of things like that. I think the biggest thing that I've done, that's both occupied my time and been very satisfying professionally, has been to go teach in Europe two terms on our exchange with the University of Munich. Then, I was invited to help set up an exchange with Humboldt University in Berlin, which is underway. This coming spring, I'm scheduled to go to the University of Amsterdam. I have lots of very good colleagues, particularly in European settings but now former students, like Stella Kozer in Brazil and other places in the world. Then, the fiftieth anniversary conference that we did recently was my idea. I hoped for it to be a gift, even a gift of healing . . . the effort that I put into it. I wanted American Studies to be strong and good; and if remembering what it has done and seeing what it does now in the same context would be helpful, I'd like to contribute that.

CAC: I felt a real sense of strengthening as the three day conference went along . . . to see old graduate students who were doing such a variety of things. That's another thing about American Studies that's interesting . . . the number of non-academic really highly professional, wonderfully exciting things that those students were doing.

GGY: Yes, yes. There are good students there. I'm teaching the junior seminar this term. I just have some delightful people who are full of interest.

CAC: We have a lucky life.

GGY: Yes. Yes.

CAC: Usually about this time, my agenda runs out . . .

GGY: [laughter]

CAC: . . . and that of the person being interviewed as well. Do you have any final reflections about the university generally? That's a dumb question.

GGY: No, that's the kind of question I ask. [pause] I guess I'll start an entirely new subject. I thought you might have asked me somewhere about my Judicial Committee process, which I would have been . . .

CAC: I didn't pick that up.

GGY: I'm not proposing to start it.

[break in the interview]

CAC: We were cut off because we ran out of time the last time we were together, which was November 22. Now, we're back and it's Monday, December 5, 1994. We're picking up in my office again at 833 Social Science. You'll recognize this is Clarke Chambers' voice and we're picking up the interview with Gayle Graham Yates. The last words—I played back five minutes—were concerned with the Judicial Committee process in your case. That may be a good place to leap right in.

GGY: As I was thinking about what I said in the early part of my interview . . . I have perceived really all my life, but certainly as a faculty member at the university, that my <u>own</u> work is as much institutional as it is personal/professional.

CAC: Careerist.

GGY: Right, what we call service in our three-fold mission of the university: scholarship, teaching, and service. I've seen all three of them as mattering equally; but, if anything, service or participating in leadership has been at times central but always essential for me personally.

CAC: For your own personal rewards?

GGY: For my own personal rewards but also I felt that's what my work is; that is, as Roger Page used to say, "A citizen of the university," is as much my work as teaching students in the classroom or publishing, though according to the record that was drawn up for my Judicial

Committee case, I published more books than anybody else who was an associate professor at the time I was an associate professor. I had published three books all with University Press and all well-received. I'll just run through my history of participation in leadership campus-wide to build up to the point I want to make about the process I went through and the disillusionment it caused in the Judicial Committee process. When I was hired full-time as chair of Women's Studies, the committee that directed the work of the Women's Studies program was a college-wide one so from the beginning I had not only college-wide but [unclear] university-wide. There would be representatives from other parts of the university. Shirley Clark, who was chair of that committee when I was hired, became my very good friend and we worked together well. When we splintered into parties, we were the members of the party that got labeled liberal and, therefore, out. Shirley, at the time, was assistant academic vice-president. Part of my learning the ropes of the university, I'm sure, was a kind of apprenticeship with her in that she was the chair of the governing committee that oversaw my program. I met people and learned about the running of the university both from inside Morrill Hall in that sense of working with Shirley. As the chair of this developing program, I had to develop skills at interpreting the program to chairs. I was a member of the college chairs group and so forth. I participated in the search committee that nominated to the president Fred Lukermann for the deanship and learned a lot about how the university works in that process; Of course, I was a very junior faculty member at that time.

CAC: You were tenured?

GGY: I was not tenured. I was not only not tenured, I was on an appointment called a contract. [laughter]

CAC: Soft.

GGY: We'll let that go . . . on a soft contract, right. I had the kind of status in the university from the visibility of that role as chair of Women's Studies. In that committee, we met and saw the dossier of many, many of the leaders of our faculty. That search, like many searches for officers at that time, was geared to inside candidates; that is, it was a national search but the balance was favorable toward inside candidates.

[End of Tape 2, Side 1]

[Tape 2, Side 2]

GGY: . . . or was. Actually, the structure has changed; but, at that time, it was nominated by some faculty committee.

CAC: Sure.

GGY: Then, in more recent years, I've served on the Senate Committee for Faculty Affairs and at the present time, I'm on the Senate Committee for Educational Policy. For three years, I chaired the [Horace] Morse Alum Teaching Awards Committee. I've had a lot of experience with governance at both the college level and the university-wide level. One of my observations has been that in the last six to eight years, maybe longer, we've shifted from the directive we had with the search committee that yielded Lukermann's deanship to the present when more of the senior officers come from outside so that more of . . . people who work in Morrill Hall and the deans of the college. Particularly, the current dean of CLA is the only one in my memory, and maybe the only one in all time, who came from the outside. I believe that there is a substantial division between the faculty and the administration now, whether it be college or university administration. The faculty often go their own way or certainly feel their primary loyalty either to their profession or their department. To some extent professional loyalty and departmental loyalty has been primary for people who teach in big universities forever; but, I think it certainly at this university, as I think it has nation-wide, has gotten a lot worse in this period. I regard that as worse. I think citizenship in the university is better for us all. I think one reason the faculty feels so alienated from the leadership is that it's been outsiders and it's been people who come in making careers of being administrators as opposed to coming from *among us.*

There was a lot of good will when Nils Hasselmo came back . . . that he's *one of us.* He went away to be academic vice-president but he came up through our ranks and he's *ours.* Then, in my own case personally, I felt even more the loss when the search for the academic vice-president didn't yield Shirley Clark, who was acting academic vice-president when Nils was brought back as president. It seemed to me that that was a big blow for the university. I couldn't separate my own personal offense. Even at that time, I felt that she was certainly one of my closest friends in the university as well as a leader I had admired, and been together with, and one who had stuck up for me and lots of other people I thought highly of. That individual loss of Shirley's leadership coupled with several people who came in from the outside, as in the case of Leonard Kuhi, who came in for the two years after Shirley was not appointed to that position. He was very ineffective. I served on the Senate Committee for Faculty Affairs during the period that he was academic vice-president; and he just didn't perform very much at all, much less at a very high level. I think one of the problems is the outsider administrators who see their jobs as running a university as opposed to some kind of sense of building and running *this* university. I think our faculty has a combination of those features . . . of being very high powered people—in many cases, from exciting graduate programs—who have been trained to believe that <u>their</u> field and getting ahead in their field is all there is. Then, they come to departments which have a great deal of feudal-like power. The younger faculty have reinforced this sense that what you must to do be successful in our field is publish, and publish, and publish, more and more at higher levels, and that there's no point in doing anything but that. Even serving students in classes is not something that they have high priority for. Those are my opinions.

CAC: If I could interpose there . . . You're not alone in that observation. I've done now fifty-five interviews. This is a recurring theme from many different provinces.

GGY: Yes. I build this up and I could talk about any one of those points or times; but, to the point of my own promotion problem . . . The American Studies faculty is made up, of course, of people with adjunct appointments from a different number faculties and just a few core people, which doesn't work very well when we're dealing with questions of personnel. Elaine May was an associate dean with Craig Swan as dean. He was acting dean for two years after Fred Lukermann stepped down. Fred had appointed all these officers and one of them was Elaine May, who had been promoted to professor as a dean. The American Studies faculty . . . that group of around thirty of them who were full professors wherever they were and, therefore, they were entitled to vote on professorship. David Noble was serving as chair of American Studies. Two years in a row, that group of people voted overwhelmingly to promote me to professor. The first year, the vote in my favor was twenty-two and there were two negatives votes. A few people didn't vote. The next year, the vote was twenty-seven in my favor and one negative vote. [sigh] Each year, the dean turned down the promotion; it was Craig Swan both of those years. The recommendation of the college P&T [Promotion and Tenure] Committee was divided. The recommendation went to the academic vice-president, who, both of those years, was Leonard Kuhi. Keep in mind, my closest friend in the university had been acting academic vice-president the previous year and Craig Swan served on the search committee that participated in not nominating her to stay.

After two years of that happening, of my being turned down, it was appealed to the vice-president who wouldn't do anything about it; so, I didn't get promoted. I decided to take it to the Judicial Committee. Bob Morris was chair of the Judicial Committee at the time I presented the case, the spring of the second year. Those two years were 1989-1990 and 1990-1991. It was the spring of 1991 that I asked for the Judicial Committee to review it. The dean who had hired me, Frank Sorauf, who by this time was Regents professor of Political Science, volunteered to be my advocate . . . probably the best possible advocate in the university. We developed a case. Frank advised me that I needed to go at it from every possible angle because he had, of course, been before the Judicial Committee many times on the other side as the dean who was being sued for promotion or some other matter. He said I shouldn't think of it as a legal case in the sense of making one clear argument but I needed to approach every possible angle. One of the was that the American Studies faculty had made the case badly, which was true. It was a sloppy mess. David Noble had allowed things that were plainly written in the CLA guide for promotion and tenure that shouldn't be done; but, it was done. The vote was favorable. Frank advised that I needed to take every point. Hy Berman had chaired the committee. David Born and Jean Ward had served on it. The second year, they had used the same dossier that the first year had been gathered. In that dossier were a wonderful letter from: Caroline Helbrandt, the former president of the MLA, the Modern Languages Association; a wonderful letter from Janice Redway, former editor of the *American Quarterly*, who, by that time, had gone to Duke University, where she's a very superior faculty; a letter from Bill Ferris, which was positive, who's the director of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture. My most recent book had been *Mississippi Mind* about Mississippi culture since the Civil Rights Movement. Then, there was a kind of wishy-washy letter from a woman who did not even have an academic appointment, a woman named Mary Emma Graham, who I'm sure they asked because she is

black . . . for no other reason. She's a prima donna kind of woman whom I had met at the University of Mississippi, who had gone with her husband to Boston where he got a job at Northeastern. She was made a kind honorary fellow at the Du Bois Institute at Harvard; so, she used Du Bois Institute stationery and, therefore, looked like she was from Harvard. It wasn't a totally negative letter, just sort of negative. Then, there was a terrible letter from Lois Banner. I could have told them that she'd write a terrible letter about anything I did or anybody like me who did American Studies per se as opposed to her version of ideological women's social history. There were ten letters and all the rest of them were very, very good.

CAC: There were internal letters as well?

GGY: There were internal letters as well. There were letters from students, former students and current students. They weren't supposed to have current students and I knew that. It was poorly done. There were those letters. Hy Berman, at a party at Eastcliff when I asked, "Hy, why didn't you know a little more about that?" said, "We thought you were a shoe-in." Craig Swan, with my colleague, Elaine May, as one of his associate deans didn't and Leonard Kuhi who was the two-year academic vice-president didn't. The way the case was made in American Studies was one of the issues Frank had me deal with in the case. It had been turned down by the dean; so, he had me deal with the question of how thoroughly the dean had reviewed the case. The college P&T Committee wrote a very cursory kind of evaluation. It didn't give any real basis for why they would turn it down; so, he had me do that. Oh, I'm forgetting the details; maybe, they don't matter. Craig Swan was the acting dean; but, then he went out of office. Julia Davis was hired and brought on board. It's the following year before my case is even touched by anybody. The Judicial Committee waits all these months to do anything at all and there's a new chair of the Judicial Committee by this time . . . David Ward. Finally, in the fall, Frank Sorauf pushed for the committee to appoint the panel and to get busy. He asked if I were willing for him to try to appeal to Julia Davis to settle it without going to the Judicial Committee. He said, "She has a clean slate. She could do this." She didn't . . . he appealed. Frank Sorauf, one of her predecessors, went to her and made the case for her. She declined to do that. I was on sabbatical, as was Frank. Essentially, I spent my sabbatical dealing with this case. The case was finally heard in January. I came back from Mississippi where I was working on a project and spent January in Minnesota to do this damned case. [sigh] Julia pressed it relentlessly. It was as if her honor was at stake. I had never met her until the first day of the case. It was her predecessor's doing. The members of the Judicial Committee panel were very poorly organized and very much inclined to look at everything at its surface value. My sense is the Judicial Committee panel just never got it. My sense is that the problem was <u>very</u> political, that what went wrong in my case was <u>very</u> political. Frank got all this evidence . . . like Gayle Graham Yates is the only associate professor in the college who has published three books with the University Press. He figured out how much money I was losing by not . . .

CAC: Sure, sure.

GGY: He was, at any moment, the most brilliant person in the room . . . whatever he said. He gathered Geneva Southall, Ellen Steckert, Ed Griffin, John Howe. John had helped me from the beginning in setting up the case; and he worked closely with Frank in setting it up, as the person from within American Studies. These were the people who were going to testify for me. David Noble was supposed to be on my side and he testified on my behalf. There were a number of delaying strategies. It was just a nightmare. It went on for several hours for several days. At one point, when we were establishing who was going to testify, I wanted all the deans and vice-presidents and so forth to testify. Gerhard Weiss, who before that I'd thought of as a friend, was chair of the P&T Committee. Everyone of them testified. Shirley Clark was willing to testify on my behalf by phone from Oregon, where she'd gone by then. As we were establishing the procedures, they brought in some surprise witnesses. They had lined up Fred Lukermann and Sara Evans to testify against me. It was clear who had cast the "no" vote. I knew that from the beginning because Sara Evans had been one of my detractors from the split that came early on in Women's Studies. [sigh] We traded off Shirley Clark for Fred and Sara; so, we didn't have to deal with them testifying against the promotion. But, nobody from inside the faculty who had voted had written anything in the file saying why I shouldn't be promoted. They kept talking about the Banner letter . . . the vice-president, Craig Swan, the dean, the associate dean, Gerhard Weiss. They trivialized my book *Mississippi Mind.* They would say they didn't know what to make of it, in effect. Gerhard said something like, "It was nicely written," like, it's a nice little book. Over and over again, Craig Swan said, "The Banner letter essentially expresses my views." None of them came prepared for the case. It was so clear. They weren't prepared when they acted against me and they weren't prepared when they testified.

CAC: The Judicial Committee panel was not pressing?

GGY: The judicial committee panel wasn't pressing. Some wonderful things did happen. Sally Kohlstedt, who was newly an associate dean, and an American historian, and was on the American Studies faculty, and had voted in my case, was one of the people who testified in my favor. She came in and she said, "I know Lois Banner. She's an ideologue."

CAC: [laughter]

GGY: "People in our profession just don't pay any attention to her." Frank and I had lunch everyday during this horrendous process and he came waving an envelope one day. He said, "This is going to make your day. Ed Griffin has come through for you." Ed had gone back to his files and found the lecture Lois Banner gave at the women's breakfast at the American Studies Association [ASA], a lecture that was her presidential address when she was president of the ASA. I do have to say parenthetically . . . the year Lois Banner was elected, my friend Bill Ferris had nominated me for the presidency. I wasn't on the ballot; but, I was one of the last five or six they talked about. The reason I was not finally put up was—quote—it's always a full professor. Lois Banner has never taught American Studies, or held an American Studies job, or held a job on a campus where there is an American Studies program; but, she was elected president of the national ASA . . . the first woman because they put two women on the ballot.

She's a member of that party that's kind of taken over American Studies . . . the women's historians and the cultural theorists who have made common cause. [sigh] Ed Griffin had gone back to his files, and found this speech, and underlined parts to read into the testimony at the Judicial Committee hearing in which Lois Banner said perfectly straightforward, not tongue in cheek, "We must educate the men. We must bring them along. We must show the male graduate students and our male colleagues what they must do," that kind of switching, patronizing into the female gender. [laughter] Ed Griffin just read this into the record. This was who Lois Banner is in the profession. There was lots of that kind of affirmation of my position from the people who testified on my account, except for Larry Miller in Chemistry who was on the panel. The panel members just didn't get it. It seemed like some little surface squabble and maybe my work wasn't very good. They didn't probe and Julia Davis was just pushing as if her life depended on it. It was a terrible, terrible nightmare.

But . . . eventually, they found in my favor; but, it was months. It just took months to decide. It went to the president. Frank appealed to President Hasselmo to act without it going any further, at which point Frank believed the president could do it. Nils declined. He said it had to go through the process, the regular process, which was that it should go to the academic vice-president or the dean. The Judicial Committee, I learned at that moment, does not deal with the substance of the issue but only deals with the procedure. A qualified academic officer, or his or her designated person, or panel must deal with the substance. So, the Judicial Committee's two choices were for me to send it back to the dean, who had just argued against me, or the, then, new academic vice-president, [Ettore] Jim Infante, whom I had seen only once. He wasn't somebody I'd known personally or had any previous contact with. It seemed to me that with him I'd have a fresh start; with her I wouldn't. So, that was the choice I made. It went to him and he just sat on for just weeks and weeks. In the meantime, I went to Cambridge, England, for four months and, then, I came home and was getting off to teach in Germany in a few weeks. I was just home a few weeks between those two bits of Europe. He just sat on it. He phoned me at some point and asked me some questions. He had gathered some information from other people. At this point, I thought I had won in the Judicial Committee and I couldn't imagine it not being approved by this officer. He told me on the phone that he had read over my book, *Mississippi Mind*, four times and that as a mathematician, he wasn't quite sure what I was doing and why hadn't I asked for some other letters? Frank had made the case on the basis that we'd make the case that I get promoted on the basis of . . .

CAC: What letters were there.

GGY: You don't add something else. He, eventually, much to my surprise, declined to promote me. I really was so strung out. It upset me more . . .

CAC: This had been going on for three or four years by now.

GGY: It was two years I let it go and then the second year I decided if it didn't go through that year . . . It shocked me every time. It shocked me that the vice-president wouldn't act in my

favor and overrule the dean each time. It shocked me each time that the new dean wouldn't think, well, goodness, I can clean up after my predecessor. If she'd been as strong as some of the faculty around here, she would have done it that way. I've tried very hard not to be bitter and that's been tough.

I think it's an inherent flaw in the Judicial Committee process that that faculty committee doesn't have the power to act in a substantive way. I think that's a flaw in itself. If it's a committee, a panel of peers, acting on something like a promotion or the other matters they deal with, then like a court of law, they should be a jury if it needs to go to a court of law. I hadn't understood that. I may have heard the words; but, I hadn't understood it that clearly until I went through that process. It seems to me it's not worth it for anybody to go through that process when all they are going to say is that the procedures were irregular. Then, it goes to an administrator who is much further removed from the situation than they might be as faculty colleagues or as peers anyway from other colleges. Thus, it points up the weakness of the faculty governance process. I've similarly felt that the SCEP, the Standing Committee on Educational Policy, and the Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs have had a similar kind of flaw. In a sense, we mimic the federal government of the United States; that is, we have a Senate that's the faculty and, then, we have an administration. I think, by now, in a far more accurate sense, we've made it a corporation . . .

CAC: Ahhh!

GGY: . . . where your business is doing what your department does and nothing else. I think we've been deprofessionalized.

CAC: In a governmental sense.

GGY: In a governmental sense. The Senate Committee . . .

[break in the interview as the telephone rings]

GGY: Perhaps, that's enough of that.

CAC: It's a commentary on the larger problem of governance and faculty involvement therein and its cost to individual members of the community, citizens of the community.

GGY: Yes. It points up how anomalous the units I've been in involved in are; that is, they are not big departments. If a person's primary work is in a big department, then, if you're part of a program that has a mix of faculty from two different locations, there's nobody to really look after something like the promotion process in the same way it's looked after in a big department; but, also things can really run amuck with people's live but the kind of work the unit does. I think our course work in American Studies and Women's Studies suffers in a similar way. There's not an organizing intelligence. It's collective. It's rather what individuals say they can

do or what can be bartered and bought. That kind of anomaly doesn't work very well in the institution which is built on these heavyweight departments. Then, the power is in an administration that's central.

CAC: You're pointing at a real systemic problem as you see it, sure.

GGY: I'm riding horse, I guess. I do think as long as those people holding those offices in the deanships, and the vice-presidencies, and so forth in Central Administration were ones of us, that had come from our ranks and potentially were coming back into our ranks, it wasn't as troublesome as it is now when there's not that sense of loyalty to the institution or participating in the institution and making it better.

CAC: You suggested a moment ago, an analog that was perceived, if not real, between the federal government processes and the university governance of running like a corporation. That analog, as I listen to others, holds good in this sense at least; that is, the judicial system is clogged as it is in the outer world [unclear]. [unclear] world and the Judicial Committee just can't handle the business, apparently, that's forced on them. There's an old principle that "Justice delayed is justice denied."

GGY: Yes.

CAC: It does string out. It's a real systemic problem that you're pointing to.

GGY: I went away and taught in Munich and have had lots of affirmation in other places; but, it was rough for me. I had to sort of come back from the dead, which I'd had to do a couple of times before.

CAC: A lot of people were damaged.

GGY: I know I'm not the only one. The kinds of things I hoped to do within the university are shut off to me . . .

CAC: Yes.

GGY: . . . because I'm not promoted for one thing; but, that took up so much of my time and energy that I had to just come back emotionally and professionally. I allowed myself a year or so to heal from it. In some ways, that's among my highest achievements. I didn't just get bitter and . . .

CAC: We talk a lot about family values these days and I would guess, in your case, that strength of family was one [unclear].

GGY: The family I grew up in wasn't but . . .

CAC: I'm talking about your own.

GGY: . . . our children and Wilson and I have a strong family.

CAC: Yes.

GGY: They were helpful.

CAC: It's significant, Gayle, that just in the last year, you undertook to chair the fiftieth anniversary of the American Studies program, which was another program committee but within a larger context of the college so many of us in the American Studies program came from not the core faculty but from the adjunct faculty [unclear]. Do you care to say something about how you pulled . . .

GGY: How I pulled that off? [laughter]

CAC: It's an inspiration to begin with. Then, you had to raise money and you had to get speakers.

GGY: It was the usual; I had to fight life and limb to do it. It was my idea and I wanted us to have a big party but also bring people back who had done interesting, and serious, and important work in whatever they had done related to American Studies. I proposed it in the American Studies assembly. Lary May as acting chair of American Studies at the time and he just fought it. He just didn't want me to get to do that at all. Finally, Ed Griffin moved that the committee that I proposed, which was all the former chairs and the current chair, and Betty Agee, who is secretary is a graduate of the program, and one of the chairs of the affiliated faculty who was Rose Brewer from Afro-American Studies . . . that committee was chosen and we moved from there. Essentially, I arm wrestled with Lary about the form that the conference would take. It was a very active committee; but, primarily, it was active between Lary and me wanting it our way. His way would have been to have several big names speakers, not necessarily our graduates, come and do lectures on American Studies. My way was more the party idea. Probably in the end, our compromising to do all of what both of us wanted to do made it work because I think it was probably more effective as it was, which included big name speakers but big name speakers who had been affiliated with our program in some way as faculty or former students and a number of graduates. In fact, the criterion for the graduates we invited to come back was that they have published their dissertation of some work or they had succeeded at a high level in administration or something in their fields. We also, on each of the panels, tried to have somebody from three different generations. The generation might have just been a decade. Sometimes, there were two and sometimes, there were four. Those two criteria, which weren't ever mentioned in the actual event, turned out to work rather well. The committee met a lot of times. We distributed the tasks of organizing a session among the committee members; though, 85 percent of the people in the topics were the ones I proposed in the first place.

My friend, Marcia Eaton, from the Philosophy Department, suggested that I apply for a McKnight grant for the conference. The university has some money that was given undesignated from the McKnight Foundation and the president designated it to be an endowment for special events in the Arts and Humanities. It's that fund, not an unlimited fund but it's really a very generous fund which a faculty committee makes recommendations for distributing through Anne Hopkins' office. I wrote a proposal for it and got a good grant. The college also gave a little bit of money for it. We didn't pay honoraria to the speakers but paid their expenses. David Noble was the keynote speaker and the first opening plenary session was Leo Marx who had been here a nine-year period . . .

CAC: A very crucial nine years.

GGY: . . . in the early years of the program and George Lipsitz, who has been here recently. Then, we had panels on feminist studies out of American Studies, on museums, architecture, and arts, on religion in American Studies, on literature, history, and culture, all of which are . . .

CAC: And folks who created careers outside the academy?

GGY: Outside the academy and then there was a session of current graduate students who had done papers in conference settings or had published something. Then, there was a wonderful wrap up session, which Clarke Chambers did. [laughter] Fred Lukermann participated in it as a wrap up speaker and Cecelia Tichi, a recent president of the American Studies Association, who is at Vanderbilt University.

CAC: I know that many of these sessions were taped. Is that right?

GGY: All of them were taped.

CAC: Were the informal breakfasts [unclear].

GGY: The ones that were just decade gatherings were not.

CAC: But the one for Barney Bowron?

GGY: The ones for Barney Bowron, and Mary Turpie, and Mulford Sibley were taped.

CAC: So, they are on little cassettes like I'm using here?

GGY: Yes.

CAC: What is the intent for the use of those?

GGY: Nothing has been definitely done; but, it does occur to me to try to write something out of it . . . if not myself write an article about it or even it may be good enough to do a volume, a proceedings kind of volume. At least, they will be available to anybody who wants . . .

CAC: Where are they going to be?

GGY: In our office.

CAC: The American Studies office?

GGY: The American Studies office.

CAC: Have you made duplicates of them?

GGY: We will.

CAC: You see what I'm leading to . . . my project?

GGY: Could you . . . ?

CAC: Duplicates should be made because it's very easy for someone to borrow those tapes and misuse them . . . I mean . . . many of us are techno twits and don't know how to do this.

GGY: I'll see that duplicates get done.

CAC: Then, they should be deposited with this project.

GGY: I'll do that. I'll see that you get a set of them.

CAC: A lot of them were reflections on the history of this program and it's larger context of American Studies nationally.

GGY: That's right. That's what I asked people to do in the initial invitation.

CAC: In the one session that I heard, that's what happened.

GGY: Many of them did that.

CAC: Yes.

GGY: They varied. I also gave them latitude to do whatever they wanted to.

CAC: Of course. But, the sessions on Mary Turpie, and Mulford Sibley, and Barney Bowron certainly reflect on the history of this program and the various kinds of folks who ran it. It would be very important to have for this historical project.

GGY: There's another one just as useful if not even more so . . . a breakfast session the first morning on the founders, the founding in the 1940s and 1950s. That one was tape recorded. Some of the medium old timers were part of that and said something about their experiences in the early years.

CAC: Good. This, perhaps, should be off camera but I'm putting it on tape that it really is important to preserve that.

GGY: Okay . . . to hold me to getting those tapes to you.

CAC: We have a little more time. Would you care to say something about your work overseas? I know that you've taught several times in Germany and have done research and lecturing in England as well.

GGY: Yes, I've enjoyed that a lot. The Germany part of it is one of our several exchanges in this university that I was able to participate in. For more than ten years, we've had an exchange with the University of Munich. I put my name in to go and have taught twice in the American Institute at the University of Munich. An institute typically is a department in the German system. I taught a course in women's literature and a kind of overview course on the U.S. South, an interdisciplinary course in American Studies.

CAC: What did you learn that you brought back home from that experience?

GGY: Oh, lots of things. Let me just summarize. I've spent several sabbatical times in Cambridge. The last time I was in Cambridge . . . I have a Cambridge college that I'm affiliated with. It's the equivalent of Women's Continuing Education at Cambridge; but, it's a college . . . the Lucy Cavenidge College. The last time I was hosted by Tony Badger, who is the new, in the last five years, Paul Mellon professor of American History at Cambridge. He was sort of involved in American Studies all his career and has come to this country for some of the American Studies meetings. Then, Frank Thistlewaite who is our graduate, I got acquainted with in Cambridge. He's known as Mr. American Studies in the U.K. [United Kingdom].

CAC: He got an honorary degree from them last year.

GGY: Yes, I know about that. Charlotte Erickson was the executive secretary for American Studies in the U.K. and I got to know her the last time I was in Cambridge, too. I haven't actually lectured very much in England. I've gone and done my own work. I did a book on Harriet Martineau, who is the American traveler in the U.S. I did my research at Cambridge the first year after my Ph.D. and then another half year. All of these different times, I've been

affiliated with Lucy Cavenidge College. I went to Manchester College at Oxford to do some research for the Martineau book lots of years ago. Then, the teaching in Germany is more recent. I was invited to go to the European Association for American Studies and read a paper on Harriet Martineau. Berendt Ostendorf, who is the director of American Studies at Munich, is very active in that association. I met Dorthea Steiner, who is the Salzburg American Studies person, who is just very dynamic. She was a Fulbright here at Minnesota. She invited me to come speak at her university. Usually, I've given a lecture on history, theory, and methodology of American Studies in the United States but sort of the way it was done at Minnesota. The thing they wanted me to teach is women's literature because typically there'll be one person who knows very much about it at all. I've lectured in probably ten other sites in Europe . . . Bergen in Norway. Then, last summer, I went to Berlin and helped set up a program with Humboldt University in the former East Berlin. I walked through the Brandenburg gate both directions, east and west; so, I've had that experience. I learned an enormous amount more than I taught, I suspect.

CAC: That's often the case.

GGY: American Studies in Europe is far more for learning the American English language, and learning American culture, popular culture, but economic culture, and how to understand operating in the United States or the Americanization of their countries.

CAC: Ahhh.

GGY: The older generation, even of Americanists, will speak British English. They were trained in the British system. I've been, a couple times, to the German-American Studies Association meeting and got once in Graz to the Austrian-American Studies Association meeting. The older Americanists will speak German . . .

[End of Tape 2, Side 2]

[Tape 3, Side 1]

GGY: The faculty and students of American Studies typically study American English language and American cultural subjects, contemporary culture as well as American imaginative literature and some American history, though not nearly as much American history as Americanists in the United States emphasize American history. I've taught courses here on the U.S. and international perspective, actually not on the U.S. and Europe but C. J. Liu and I did a course on comparative U.S. and Chinese cultures and Earl Scott and I team taught a course on the U.S. South and Southern Africa. I'm going to do that course in Amsterdam . . .

CAC: Oh, how exciting.

GGY: . . . in the spring of this year. I'm going to go on another exchange with the University of Amsterdam. I think the biggest change in my teaching that my experience in Europe has

worked is to be a lot more direct and basic in teaching U.S. students; that is, I think it came home to me how much our students, just like their European counterparts, need to understand how the U.S. government works, how the U.S. economy works, where we're coming from. I do things like look at the documents of the U.S. Constitution and the Declaration of Independence.

CAC: You make the assumption, don't we, that students who were born here know the culture?

GGY: And they don't. It's worse than a lot of the Europeans. The European students specialize greatly; so, they don't know a lot of the general information that our students tend to know. They know an enormous amount about the United States but it's popular culture. It's clothing, and pop music, and movies, and so forth. The ones who major in American Studies either are reading literature or reading history and culture. There's not really interdisciplinary American Studies the way we do it. American Studies in Europe began as a response to World War II . . .

CAC: Sure.

GGY: . . . and the interest in learning how to function with this power that was the United States on their soil, in many cases. It was their motivation. Another thing, the more sensitive, the more liberal ones, the ones in Germany who are Social Democrats, or [unclear] Party members, or whatever, almost invariably have specialized in some kind of African-American or Native American material, like Berendt Ostendorf is a specialist on African-American music.

CAC: I'm guessing that, for Germany particularly, that interest in American Indian goes back 140 years.

GGY: Yes. I did what lots of Americans living abroad learn. I learned a lot more about my own country but since my subject was American Studies, I learned more about my subject, too, from living and teaching in Europe. I also just loved it. I felt at home. I have no way of explaining how much at home I felt in Munich. I went to church during Advent and listened to the music.

The second time I went—each time I went alone, and Wilson and the children stayed here, and Wilson and the children came to Munich for Christmas—I was bearing this burden of this case. Frank took it back to the Judicial Committee once more after Infante acted against me and tried to persuade them that Infante had only looked at it administratively instead of looking at the substance of the case, which both Frank and I believed. The Judicial Committee wouldn't hear it again on that basis.

CAC: It was a way to heal.

GGY: It was very healing. I loved the music. I loved the people. My students were so eager. The professors are held in such high regard as contrasted to in this country. [laughter]

CAC: Do you get a sense that the students in American Studies have changed in the last twenty-five years?

GGY: Oh, the students in American Students have changed the last eight years. Mary Turpie told me, "Keep admissions in your own pocket." I didn't understand that until it got out of my pocket. When I was director of Graduate Studies . . . I think each of the previous directors of Graduate Studies back to Mary Turpie had been very eclectic in their sense of who to let in.

CAC: The dissertations that were written would indicate that eclecticism survives five or seven years of study.

GGY: Right. There is that and then people were encouraged to go their own way. I think during the years Ed Griffin was chair and the years I served with him as director of Graduate Studies, we encouraged students just to go in all sorts of directions. People come from different ages. People come from different sorts of places. There are just applicants by the dozens; so, you can just admit who you want to.

CAC: It's a program that still much sought after?

GGY: Right. As soon as Riv-Ellen Prell was director of Graduate Studies, the control of the program including admissions to Graduate Study and everything else came firmly into the hands of Elaine May and her clique. [sigh] The admissions came to be younger students who were very much like one another. George Lipsitz's charisma, as I said earlier on the tape, drew students to him personally and, therefore, drew the students into this group. Now the students know—the students have to be taught—whose goodwill they must curry. The students who come are students who have very high numbers, the GRE [Graduate Record Examination] scores across the board are way high.

CAC: They are quick and bright.

GGY: Their grade point average is very high and they've come from prestigious colleges or they're the top student in the college if it's a smaller college that they might have gone to. They're off to the left wing; but, they all know how to talk culture theory. They all come here knowing that. They're of a cloth and my opinion is they aren't encouraged to veer very far into subjects beyond those that are the interest of the current core faculty. [sigh]

CAC: For fifty, sixty years nationally, there was kind of a coalition of history and literature . . . literature first, perhaps . . . literature and history with clusters in the social sciences, art, and architecture, etcetera. That would be true nationally whether it was a civilization program or not.

GGY: That's true.

CAC: Has this been eroded nationally as well as locally?

GGY: Yes. I think that women's history has influenced American Studies nationally and Women's Studies and Ethnic Studies. The women's historians came into American Studies in large numbers sort of as a group.

CAC: It was a place to get certified and get a degree.

GGY: Yes. Then, the cultural studies followed a little behind . . . coming into being the literary critical theory that's similar to the cultural theory that's basic for the cultural historians and to some extent art history. It's a humanities phenomenon. It does have a common root, I think, in European phenomenology and then, the psychoanalytic, and deconstructionist, and post-structuralist theorist from Europe. It's rhetorically political; but, it's not politically activist.

CAC: Which would be another difference from an American Studies program rooted in [Vernon Louis] Parrington, for example.

GGY: It's decentered. The heart of the—to make a subtle pun—post-modernist doctrine is that there is no center so that knowledge is decentered, and society is decentered, and morality is decentered. I think American Studies nationally has bought that as a doctrine.

CAC: [unclear] stronger, you're right, in departments of literature and humanities.

GGY: Literature and humanities. American Studies came to it a little later. In fact, Elaine and Lary May were the program chairs of the national convention, I think, the year it hit. I worry for American Studies nationally now because it's no one thing. It's decentered in a way that it can't afford to be. It's not the home for the people who do American Studies that it once was.

CAC: It's decentered here as well.

GGY: Oh, yes, indeed. It's really a terrible spot to be in for me because I'm a member of the core faculty; but, the core faculty being this kind of amalgam of people, of some people whose original appointments were lots of other places . . . General College, and American Indian Studies, and mine in Women's Studies. I'm the only person on the core faculty who has a degree in American Studies. Many of the core faculty members didn't even have a knowledge of what American Studies was before joining our Department of American Studies. There are people like Riv-Ellen Prell who was very unhappy with her department and her department very unhappy with her. She came from Anthropology and while Anthropology has an ingredient in the new mix of what American Studies has been nationally and on our campus, particularly, with Roland Delattre's interest in it, she doesn't have any American Studies kind of perspective to contribute. She rather wanted to bring what she did to American Studies. It's a really strange mix. New people are transferred in. The governance is really in terrible shape. In a sense, it has officers who run the program with very little faculty accountability. In that sense, it mirrors my criticism of the university, university-wide. There is an assembly ostensibly which is the faculty and

voting members of students; but, no business is conducted there to speak of. There are faculty members I literally have never met who are members of the affiliated faculty.

CAC: The adjunct faculty.

GGY: Of the adjunct faculty. Then, there are the seven members of the core faculty, sometimes nine, who have very, very little in common with one another. Yet, the course work is going increasingly toward the center because these people have to have something to do. I want to teach core courses for students in the major as a core faculty member. It's not thought through. It's been mixed politically and institutionally. There are some virtues to the way it is organized now; but, there are also lots of problems.

CAC: This is a continuing story.

GGY: It is a continuing story. I can stop with that judgment of this. [laughter]

CAC: Are there any other areas of reflection [unclear]?

GGY: I think I've reflected on enough.

CAC: Thank you very much.

GGY: Thank you for having me.

CAC: You have enriched the record.

[End of Tape 3, Side 1]

[End of the Interview]

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